

NATURE of Maltreatment:
SURROUNDING CIRCUMSTANCES

This assessment domain is concerned with the nature of what accompanies or surrounds the maltreatment. It addresses what is going on at the time that the maltreatment occurs or occurred. It serves to qualify the maltreatment by placing it in a context or situation that 1) precedes or leads up to the maltreatment or 2) exists while the maltreatment is occurring. By selectively assessing this element separate from the actual maltreatment, we achieve greater understanding of how serious the maltreatment is. In other words, circumstances that accompany the maltreatment are important and are significant, in and of themselves, and qualify how serious the maltreatment is.

Information used to assess this domain includes:

- The duration of the maltreatment
- History of maltreatment
- Patterns of functioning leading to or explaining the maltreatment
- Parent/legal guardian or caregiver intent concerning the maltreatment
- Parent/legal guardian or caregiver explanation for the maltreatment and family conditions
- Unique aspects of the maltreatment, such as whether weapons were involved
- Caregiver acknowledgement and attitude about the maltreatment
- Other problems occurring in association with the maltreatment.

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**What surrounding circumstances accompany the
alleged maltreatment?**

- Premeditated
- Cruel/bizarre
- Deliberate
- Progressive in severity
- Several victims
- Alcohol/drug related
- Unprotecting non-maltreater
- Multiple maltreaters
- Unusual object used-gun/knife
- Extreme use of threat
- Intentional/unintentional
- Accessibility in time, place
- Justification for use of force
- Crisis present
- Chronic stress
- Spouse or partner abuse
- Domestic violence (power, control, coercion)
- Accessible to the maltreater
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