Strengthening families | Protecting children

Framework for practice

Practice tools and processes

Queensland Government

Contents

Introduction

The Strengthening Families Protecting Children Framework for Practice is a strengths-based, safety-oriented practice framework that guides child protection practice in Queensland. A strengths-based, safety-oriented framework is one that is designed to help all the key stakeholders involved with a child — the parents, extended family, community, child protection workers, supervisors and managers, non-government organisations (NGOs), partners, lawyers, magistrates, and even the child him-/herself — keep a clear focus on assessing and enhancing child safety at all points in the child protection process.

The framework begins with a commitment to always viewing families in context and constantly eliciting families' strengths, knowledge and wisdom throughout our work together. The process is organised around a rigorous and balanced assessment and planning process that is developed collaboratively with children, their families and their communities. This assessment process provides the focus for families, professionals and helping networks to work together to develop and implement detailed plans that describe the day-to-day actions everyone will take to ensure and enhance children's safety, belonging and wellbeing.

This document is the second in a series about this framework. The Foundational Elements document introduces the background and underpinning of the framework and includes descriptions of the best hopes, values, principles, knowledge and core skill areas associated with the approach. These elements, particularly the core skills, are operationalised by an array of practice tools and processes that workers can use in their everyday work with families. This document introduces these core practice tools and processes, implemented in other jurisdictions, and identified as effective and able to be built on.

The Framework for Practice explicitly views child protection as a change process and child protection workers as facilitators and change agents. What comes in the pages that follow are some of the 'tools of the trade' for this work. Each of these tools helps to make easier some of the difficult aspects of engagement, assessment, planning and process. They help to provide a bridge from the values and principles to the day-to-day work with families. Some of these tools are, or will become, part of key organisational processes that will be undertaken with every family the department works with. Others will be used at worker and supervisor discretion when they are needed or when workers and families feel they will be most helpful.

All of these tools are designed to deepen practice; to make it more collaborative and participatory; to ensure that practice is robust and rigorous; to create action steps and plans that allow children, young people and families to thrive; and to ultimately work more effectively in seeking to strengthen families and to secure enduring child safety, belonging and wellbeing.

Core skills	Practice tools and processes
Engagement: the development of effective working relationships	• Solution-focused inquiry • The Three Houses • The Family Roadmap • The Future House • The Immediate Story • Foster carer profile
Assessment: critical reflection and robust decision making at key decision points	• Collaborative Assessment and Planning Framework • Structured Decision Making (SDM) system • The Safe Contact Tool
Planning: collaborative processes for building rigorous change plans	• Circles of Safety and Support • The Safety House • The Safety Planning Framework • Child- and family-centred safety plans
Process: focus on processes that support and reinforce the practice	• Appreciative inquiry • Enhanced intake • Regular group supervision and case consultation • Strengthened family group meetings • Enhanced partnerships with NGOs, partner agencies and the courts • Continuous quality improvement efforts

Solution-focused inquiry

Originating with the work of Steve DeShazer and Insoo Kim Berg at the Milwaukee Brief Treatment Center, solution-focused inquiry (SFI) is a 'questioning' approach or interviewing practice based on a simple idea with profound ramifications — that 'the areas people pay attention to grow'. SFI provides strategies for workers to efficiently and effectively facilitate a change process by using questions to elicit a vision for change. SFI assumes the family is competent to change should they decide to do so.

SFI supports the development of a constructive working relationship with families by eliciting this vision for change and then focusing on 'actions of protection' and strengths in as rigorous a way as we focus on the 'risk' or 'danger'. Whilst there is no particular formula, workers will learn when to use a particular type of solution-focused question to elicit the information they need or to facilitate the change intervention.

Types of questions include:

1. **Miracle questions** are used to help children, young people and families create goals and vision what they will be doing differently in their desired future.

   Let us imagine it is six months in the future from now and all the problems that brought us into your life are totally resolved. What would it look like? What steps would you have had to take to get there?

2. **Exception questions** uncover instances when the problem could have occurred but did not, and help obtain a balanced picture of the family, creating a vision that change is possible.

   Can you tell me about a time when this problem was not happening? When was that? How did you make that happen? What kind of difference did that make for your child?

3. **Scaling questions** help create discussion and understanding of danger and safety. It is not the number that is important, but the conversation that follows the scaling process. Scaling questions can also help elicit 'next steps' to change.

   On a scale of zero to 10, where zero being your child is not safe and will be immediately hurt, and 10 being your child is now completely safe, where would you say things are? What are you already doing or what is already in place that has you this high on the scale? What would need to happen to bring things up by one?

4. **Position/relationship questions** help to see a situation through the eyes of other people, and can be very enlightening when imagining how other people, such as their child, are seeing or experiencing things.

   I notice you scale yourself as a nine on a scale of 10, indicating you are solidly in recovery from using drugs. If your baby could talk, where do you think she would rate you? What do you think would get her to that number? What would her worries be, if any?

5. **Coping questions** acknowledge difficulty and help people discover skills they possess and supports that helped them survive challenges and difficulties.

   I imagine that raising five children under the age of six on your own must keep you very busy. How do you manage day after day? What helps you to keep going?

6. **Detail questions** are useful to elicit details of goals and help to operationalise the change process in small steps of actions and behaviours.

   - What specifically are you going to do?
   - When are you going to do it?
   - How are you going to do it?
   - Is it 'doable'?
   - Who will notice that you are doing it?
   - What difference do you think it will make?
   - On a scale of zero to 10, if 10 is the highest and zero is the lowest, how confident are you that you will do it?

Collaborative assessment and planning framework

The collaborative assessment and planning framework[1] is a tool that enables a balanced and comprehensive child protection assessment to be undertaken *with* families and their networks. The process of case 'mapping' involves the use of the collaborative assessment and planning framework to organise all the key information known about a child and family at any given time into key domains relevant to the goal of enhancing ongoing safety, belonging and wellbeing for the children. The framework is used collaboratively with all the significant people involved with a child — the parents, the extended family, child protection workers, supervisors and managers, lawyers, magistrates, other professionals, and even the child him-/herself — and is used from the first point of contact with a family right through until case closure. The collaborative assessment and planning framework is also used in supervision and case consultations to bring clarity and focus to casework and case planning, and is a critical step in the development of rigorous and long-term family-centred plans.

Four domains of inquiry

The collaborative assessment and planning framework is organised around four key questions[2]:

1. What has happened/is happening within the family that worries us? (Harm and complicating factors.)
2. What is going well within the family? (Protection and belonging, and strengths.)
3. Safety and wellbeing scale: On a scale of zero to 10, how safe is it for the children in the care of the family at this point in time?
4. What needs to happen for the children to be safe and well in the future? (Identifying future worries, collaborative goals and action steps to achieve these goals.)

As these four domains illustrate, the collaborative assessment and planning framework focuses on understanding what has happened and what is happening within a family in relation to the safety, belonging and wellbeing of the children, and then working together to plan for the future. Including all four key questions or domains of inquiry ensures a balanced assessment focusing on the worries as well as what is going well, that the safety judgment is made explicit as part of the assessment and planning process, and that the focus is on moving forward from the past toward building future safety and wellbeing for the children.

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1   The assessment and planning framework has been adapted from the Signs of Safety risk assessment and planning framework (Turnell & Edwards, 1999; The Consultation and Information Sharing Framework (Lohrbach, 2000); and the Massachusetts Safety Mapping Framework (Chin, Decter, Madsen and Vogel, 2010).
2   Adapted from the four domains of inquiry within the Signs of Safety approach (Turnell & Edwards, 1999; Turnell & Parker, 2009).

Collaborative assessment and planning framework

WHAT ARE WE WORRIED ABOUT?

HARM

Times when a child has been, or was in danger of being, significantly harmed (physically, developmentally or emotionally) as a result of actions/inactions by the caregiver.

COMPLICATING FACTORS

Things that contribute to greater difficulty for the family and that could make it more difficult for the family to protect and care for the children and/or for the agency and the family to work together.

SAFETY & WELLBEING SCALE

0

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

What are the worker, team, family and/or network looking for from this conversation?

GENOGRAM/ECOMAP/ CIRCLES OF SAFETY and SUPPORT

Who is in the family and network? Who cares about the child/family? Who is willing to help?

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

How does the family identify themselves culturally? Which family members/community members/agencies need to be involved in the assessment and decision-making?

CURRENT SDM SAFETY AND FRE LEVELS

On a scale of 0 – 10, where 10 means the children are safe enough for Child Safety to close the case and 0 means there is not enough safety for the children to live at home at the moment, where do you rate the situation? (Place different people's assessment on the scale below).

WHAT IS GOING WELL?

PROTECTION & BELONGING

Actions, taken by the caregivers or network, that have protected the child from harm.

Actions, by the caregivers or network, that have promoted enduring connections to family, community and culture.

STRENGTHS & RESOURCES

Positive factors, resources or capacities in a child or family's life that help or could help the family to enhance the children's safety, belonging and wellbeing.

10

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN?

WORRY STATEMENTS

What are people worried will happen to the child if nothing changes?

Consider if statements are needed to cover:

- Safety
- Belonging
- Wellbeing

GOAL STATEMENTS

What needs to be demonstrated, over time, to address the worry statements and to ensure the child is safe, well and connected to family, community and culture?

ACTION STEPS:

What needs to happen next, to work toward the goals? Who has agreed to do what, when? Recommended SDM guidance?
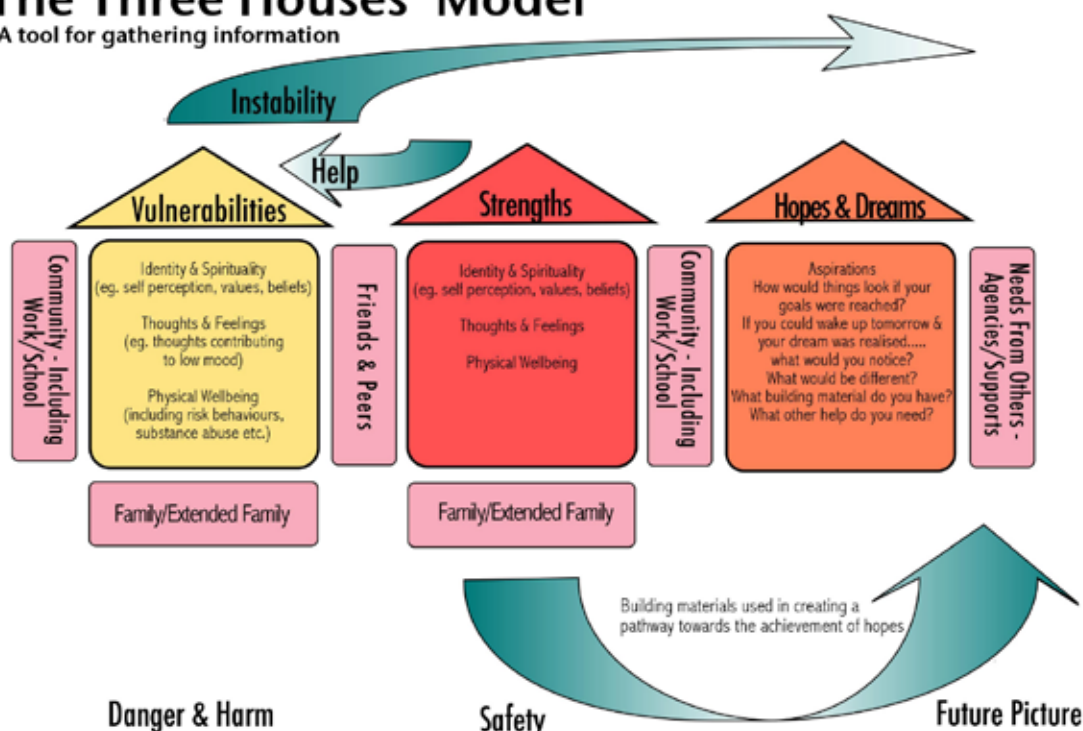
The Three Houses©

## Hearing the voices of children, young people and family members

Developed in New Zealand by Nicki Weld and Maggie Greening, the Three Houses is a practical visual tool to help parents and families identify their own strengths, hopes, dreams, and vulnerabilities. The tool was designed to be used by child protection practitioners in everyday work situations with families to understand the views of children, young people and family members. It also assists them to understand and participate in child protection assessment and planning processes.

A simplified version was developed for use with children and young people (and can also be used with adults and in family conferences). Using drawings of three houses (or any other images that the child or young person relates to), the tool explores the child's or young person's worries about their lives, the good things or positive things that are happening in their lives, and their hopes and dreams for the future.
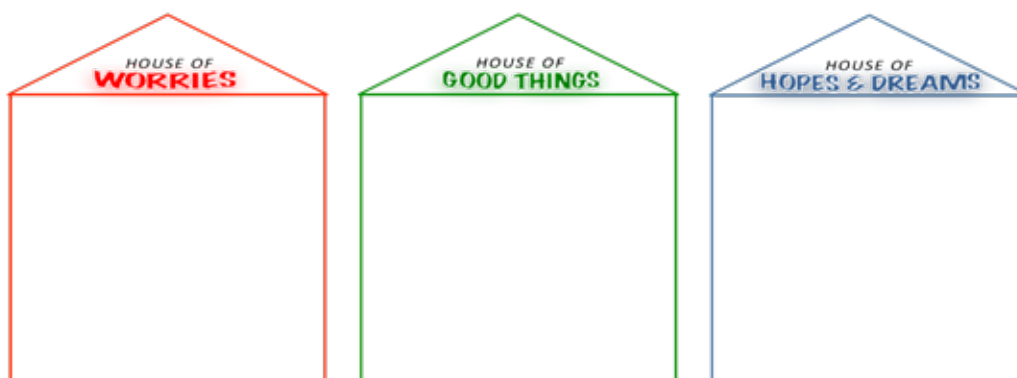
The Family Roadmap

A visual, family-centred assessment and planning process

Eliciting the views of parents and family members can be a difficult task for child protection workers, particularly when they may be angry or scared, may have little trust in professionals and may feel anxious about the possible consequences of speaking openly. The family roadmap is a solution-focused, strengths-based and family-centred process designed to help workers, parents and family members work together more effectively in talking about the family's current situation, and mapping a way forward to future safety, belonging and wellbeing for the children. The family roadmap is a visual process that takes place up on a wall, on a large table or on the floor, and family members are actively involved in writing and creating their family roadmap.

The family roadmap process starts by inviting the parent or family members to describe what life is like when things are at their best for their family, and then moves to a description of what life is like when things are at their worst. This provides the opportunity to acknowledge that every parent and every family has difficult and challenging times when they are far from their best. A path or scale is then created between these two positions. This enables the family to describe where they see themselves at this point (relative to life at its best or worst), what has happened that has enabled them to do as well as they are (wherever they are on the path) and what they would need to do to move closer toward their vision of life at its best. The family roadmap process also identifies who has supported or who could support the family in achieving this and explores the obstacles or roadblocks that the family has already dealt with and may deal with in the future.
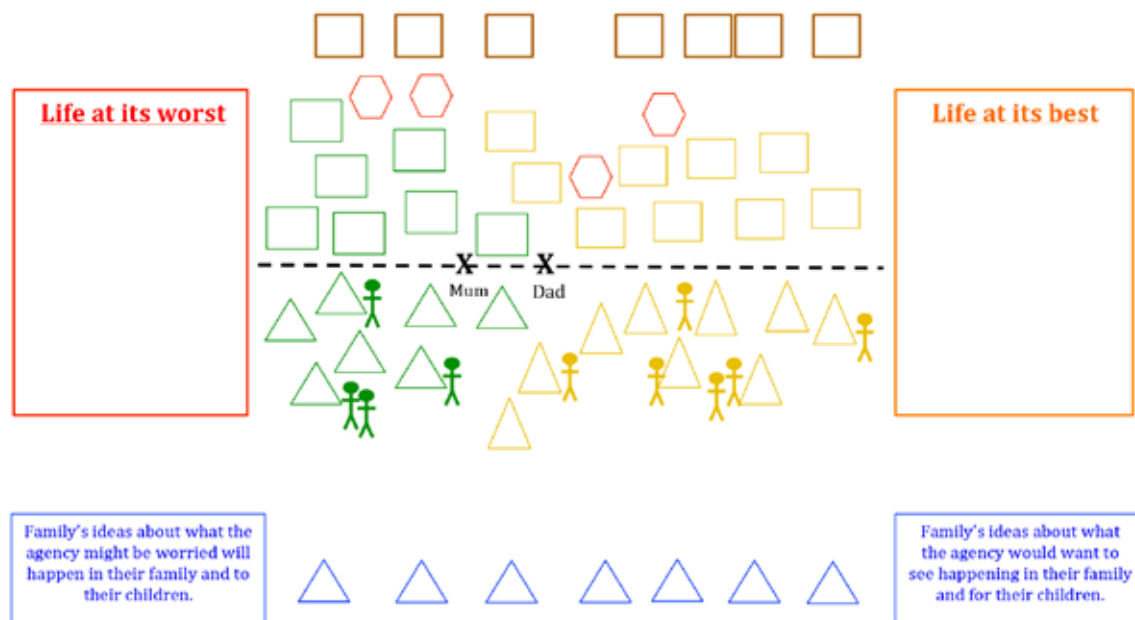
Structured Decision Making® system

## Bringing the art and science of child protection practice together

There are regular and predictable key decisions that need to be considered in almost every child protection case. The structured Structured Decision Making® (SDM) system, developed and refined by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency's Children's Research Center (CRC), brings the best of child protection research and aggregate data into a set of decision support tools. These tools are used as a guide by workers to support practice at key decision points, providing consistency of decision making and congruence with research, best practice and organisational policy.

In particular, SDM helps to highlight the differences between the concepts of harm and risk. Immediate harm is focused on situations that could imminently hurt a child and is assessed using the safety assessment tool. Risk is focused on the likelihood or probability of harm occurring in the future, an assessment made with an actuarial risk tool called the family risk evaluation (FRE).

The CRC has worked to integrate the SDM system with this Framework for Practice. This ensures the SDM tools are not misunderstood as forms that need to be simply filled out.

The *foundational elements* of the Framework for Practice (such as the values and principles) underpin the approach and should be present in a practitioner's work at all points. The core practices (such as the collaborative assessment and planning framework, Three Houses and others) give practitioners methods for bringing collaboration alive in their day-to-day practice and can be used at any point in their work with families. The SDM assessments help to ensure the framework continues to be guided by valid and reliable tools at the key decision points. Together the overall approach helps to bring the art and science of the field together and create the best outcomes for children, young people and families.

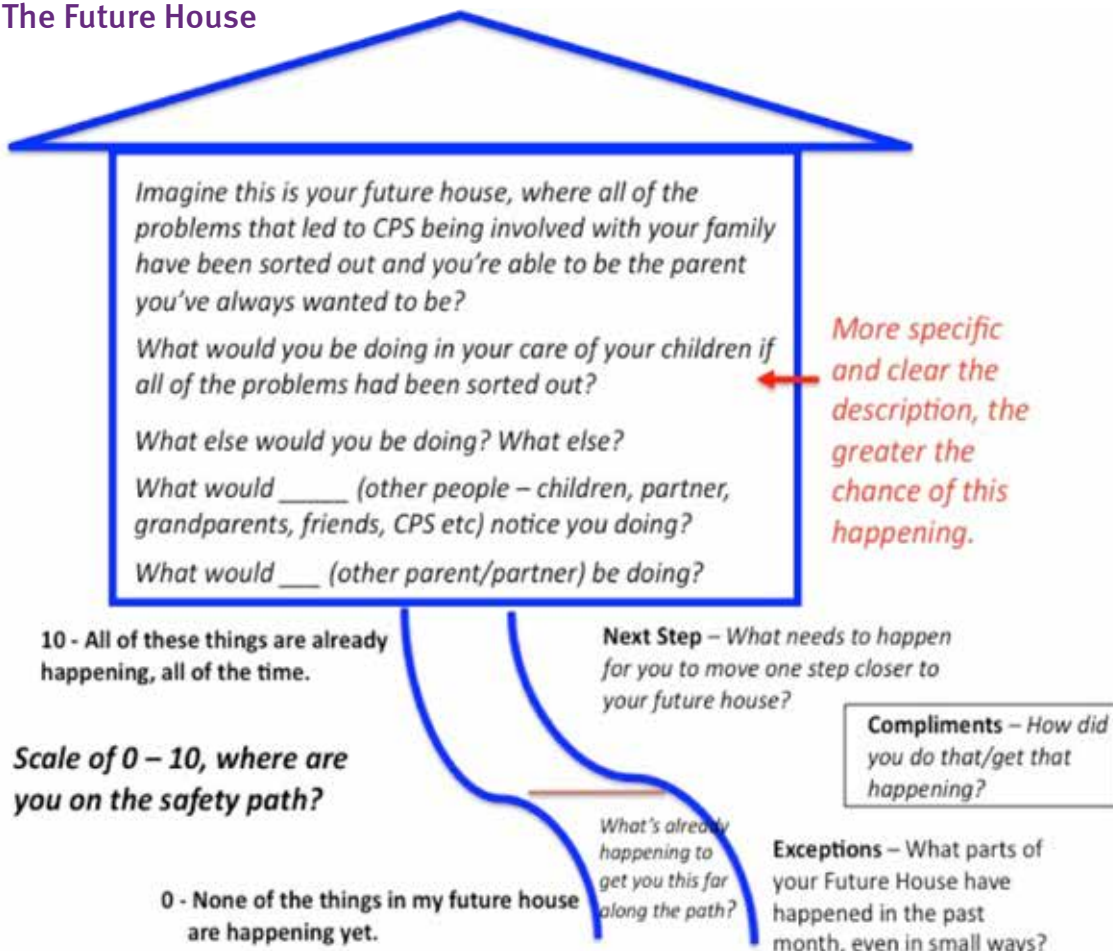## Linking SDM and the core tools and practices
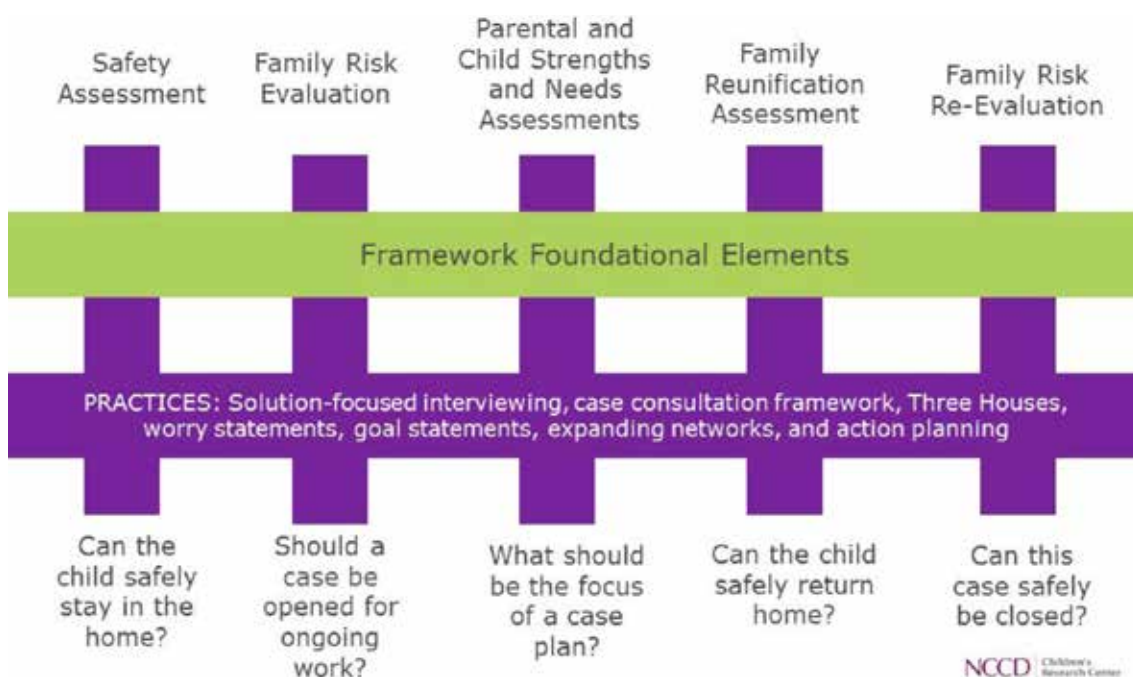
The Future House

A tool for eliciting parents' and family's visions for the future

The future house tool is a simplified version of the family roadmap process and focuses on eliciting and understanding parents' and family members' visions for the future safety, belonging and wellbeing of the children and their ideas about steps toward achieving this vision. Eliciting and understanding the parents' views is a necessary first step in working with families to develop a joint vision — between caregivers, children, their network and professionals — of enduring safety, belonging and wellbeing for the children.

This solution-focused and strengths-based process uses a drawing of a 'future house' to represent what would be happening in the future, if the children were safe and well in relation to the identified dangers or concerns. Solution-focused questions are used to invite family members to describe in detail what would be happening within their family and their home if the problems that led to the involvement of the child protection agency had been addressed and resolved. The person's answers to these questions are recorded in the future house using words, pictures, or a combination of both.

The Future House

Imagine this is your future house, where all of the problems that led to CPS being involved with your family have been sorted out and you're able to be the parent you've always wanted to be?

What would you be doing in your care of your children if all of the problems had been sorted out?

What else would you be doing? What else?

What would _____ (other people – children, partner, grandparents, friends, CPS etc) notice you doing?

What would ___ (other parent/partner) be doing?

More specific and clear the description, the greater the chance of this happening.

10 - All of these things are already happening, all of the time.

Scale of 0 – 10, where are you on the safety path?

0 - None of the things in my future house are happening yet.

Next Step – What needs to happen for you to move one step closer to your future house?

What's already happening to get you this far along the path?

Compliments – How did you do that/get that happening?

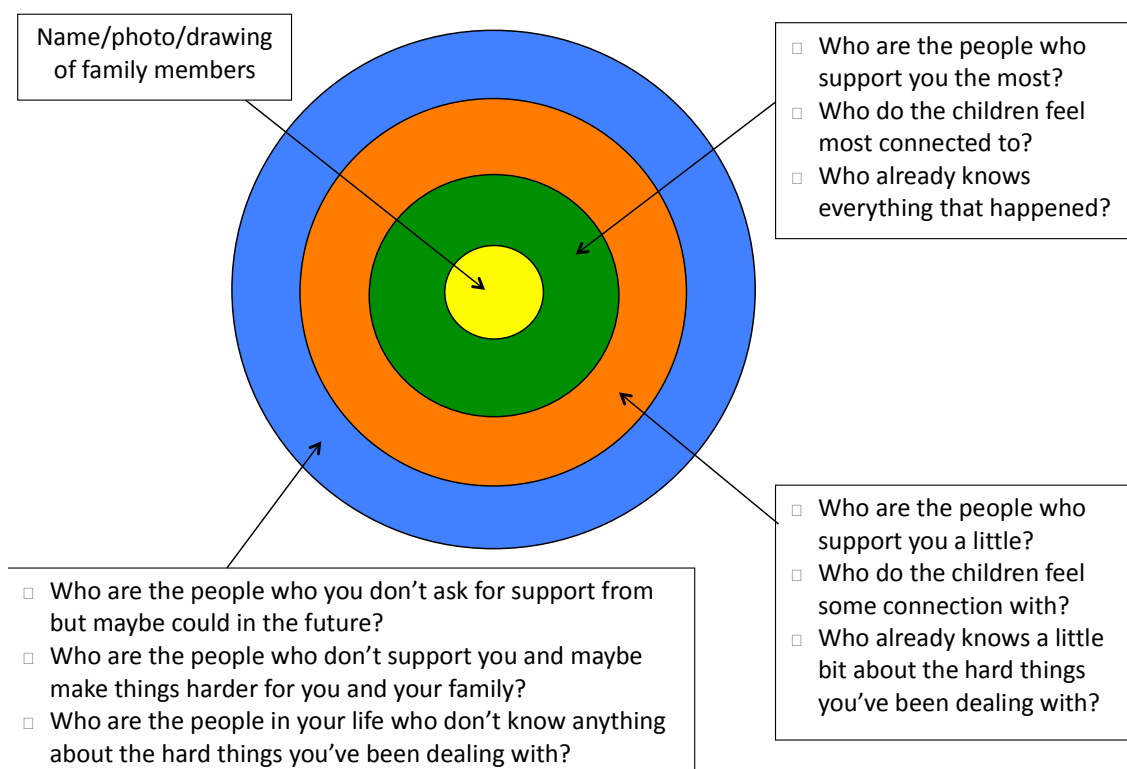Exceptions – What parts of your Future House have happened in the past month, even in small ways?

Circles of Safety and Support

Involving a safety and support network for the family

A core component of a strengths-based, safety-oriented practice approach is the development or strengthening of the family's safety and support network. The safety and support network is made up of people who will support the parents to develop and maintain a safety plan for the children, and who can continue to play this role long after professionals have stopped working with the family. The safety and support network provides *support* to the parents and *safety* for the children, and in some situations, safety for the adult whose behaviour we are worried about.

The circles of safety and support tool, inspired by the concentric circles used by Susie Essex in the Words and Pictures method and the circles concept from the Protective Behaviours approach, was designed to help family members identify people for the family's safety and support network. This tool also helps workers have conversations with family members about why a safety and support network is necessary, about the role the network can play, and the process of assessing who would be the most appropriate people to participate in this network.

Circles of safety and support tool

Name/photo/drawing of family members

- Who are the people who support you the most?
- Who do the children feel most connected to?
- Who already knows everything that happened?

- Who are the people who support you a little?
- Who do the children feel some connection with?
- Who already knows a little bit about the hard things you've been dealing with?

- Who are the people who you don't ask for support from but maybe could in the future?
- Who are the people who don't support you and maybe make things harder for you and your family?
- Who are the people in your life who don't know anything about the hard things you've been dealing with?

The Safety House

A tool for involving children and young people in safety planning

The safety house is a practical, visual tool designed to help workers have conversations with children and young people about long-term planning for safety, belonging and wellbeing. It helps elicit the views of children and young people about what needs to happen to ensure they are safe and well, in situations where they may have previously been harmed or were at risk of being harmed.

Case example for nine-year-old child
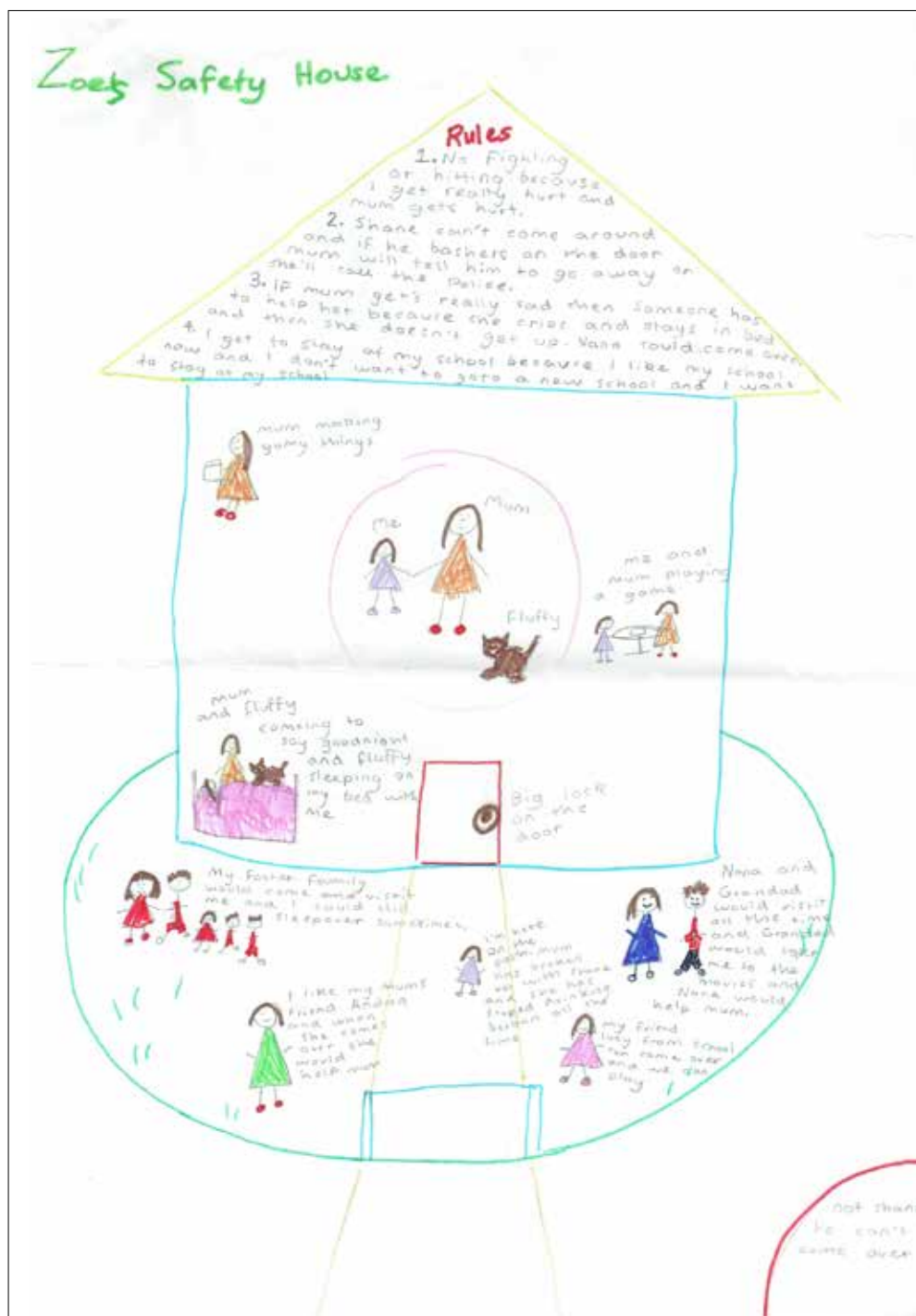
The Immediate Story

Providing a simple, clear explanation to the child and others about the reason for child protection intervention

Even with the best of intentions, our child protection processes, particularly when they involve the removal of a child, can be potentially traumatising for children and parents. A clear and simple explanation is essential to help mitigate any unintended harm or trauma from our interventions. The immediate story is a clear, simply-worded story that is developed by the worker and provided to the child at the point when the child is removed from the parents' care (or as soon as possible afterwards), or when work is undertaken with the family to create an immediate safety plan that involves significant changes for the family.

The immediate story provides a simple explanation to the child and family members about the reason for the child protection intervention, about what is happening now or has just happened (for example, the child is being removed from their parents' care and going to stay with other family members or foster carers, or Dad is going to stay somewhere else and Grandma is going to move in), and what is going to happen next in the collaborative planning process. The immediate story also provides an immediate explanation to parents, carers and family members so they are able to reinforce this explanation and provide informed comfort and support to the child.

## Case example (for a five-year-old child who is being taken into care)

Immediate Story for Max
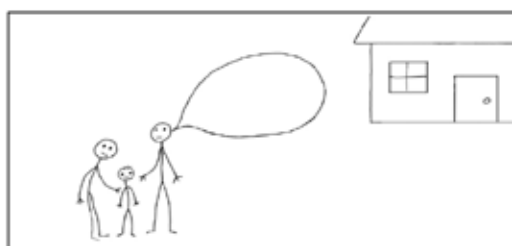
My name is Sonja and I work for the Department for Child Protection. Our job is to help parents and families look after their children and keep them safe. Mum and Dad have got some big problems at the moment and my boss and I are worried that you might get hurt if you keep living with Mum and Dad. So we have decided that you will need to stay with someone else until Mum and Dad get some help to fix up those problems.

We have special people who look after children when they can't stay with their Mum and Dad or someone else in their family, and they are called foster carers. I am taking you to stay with two of our foster carers, who are called David and Tracy. We know that this might be scary for you, so can I show you some pictures of Tracy and David and of their home where you will be staying?
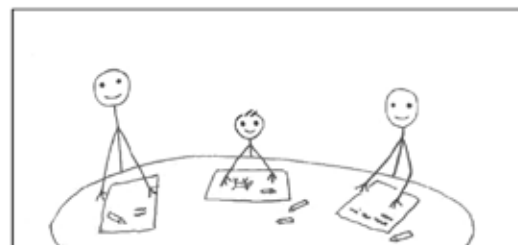
I will come back and see you tomorrow and then we can talk about what is going to happen next. We will make some plans about when you are going to see your Mum and Dad and how we can make sure that everything goes well during your visits with Mum and Dad.

My job is to try to help Mum and Dad fix up the problems so that you can go back home to live with them. I will ask Mum and Dad to invite other people (like family and friends) to come and work with us and help us to make a special plan, called a safety plan, so that the problems can be fixed up and you are able to go back home.

Foster carer profiles[3]

Building relationships between foster carers and parents

When children and young people are placed in out-of-home care, they can become scared, confused and distressed — even when the removal from their parents was necessary and in their best interest. Developing a good working relationship between the child's family and the foster carers can positively impact children's sense of safety, belonging and wellbeing during their time in care; can help ensure both the quantity and the quality of contact visits; can facilitate collaborative planning and help to ensure that everyone is working toward shared goals; and, ultimately, can assist with successful reunification efforts.

A foster carer profile, such as the example below, can be used to support parents and carers to start to build a relationship[4]. The profile is first developed with the carers and is then shared with parents in order to help parents understand a little about the people who are caring for their child.

After the foster carer profile is shared with the family, it creates the possibility for family members to then share some information about themselves and their child with the foster carers. This might take the form of a profile, a letter, photographs, a phone call or a video — whatever the parents are most comfortable with. It might include detailed information about the child's likes or dislikes — or more global information about the family and their hopes for the future.

Example: Foster carer profile

When carers and family members can make this connection right from the start it can become easier for families and foster carers to work together. This might take a variety of forms: Carers and parents might share information about the child via the worker or agency; foster carers might supervise contact visits, either in their home, within the family home or a neutral venue; foster carers and parents may participate together in family meetings; and foster carers can act as mentors to the parents and become part of the family's ongoing support network.

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3   Based on the Te Whanau Nei process, developed by Jill Devlin from Open Home Foundation, New Zealand.
4   As well as helping children to understand who they will be staying with, as discussed in the 'Immediate Story'.

The Safe Contact Tool

Developing collaborative and transparent contact plans

When a child is removed from the care of their parents and placed in kinship care or out-of-home care, establishing safe and meaningful contact between the children and their parents is one of the most critical and immediate issues that the child protection agency must deal with. It is also usually one of the first issues that children and parents want to focus on. The safe contact tool has been designed to engage all of the significant people in the children's lives, including the children if they are old enough, in decision making and planning to ensure that contact between the children and their family is safe, and is regular and frequent enough that it enables children to maintain their connections with their family, community and culture. The first version of the safe contact tool focuses on establishing contact and the second version focuses on increasing contact.

The safe contact tool is designed to be used with children, families, their networks and carers over the entire period of working with a family to ensure that decision making about contact continues to be collaborative, transparent and centred on safety, belonging and wellbeing.

ESTABLISHING SAFE CONTACT

This contact map is to help everyone talk together about what needs to happen for there to be safe contact between _____ and _____

Safe Contact Scale: On a scale of 0 – 10, where 10 is you are 100% confident that the children will be safe during contact and 0 is you think is it very likely that the children will be harmed during contact, where are you on this scale?

Worries about contact? (What are you worried might happen to the children during contact that has you scaling this low on the safe contact scale?)

Existing Safety for contact? (What safety is already in place for contact and what protection is provided by the parents/others that has you scaling this high on the safe contact scale?)

What needs to happen for the contact to be safe? (What else would you need to see in place or the parents/others doing during contact and in preparing for contact for you to scale at a '10' on the safe contact scale?)

Incorporating four domains of inquiry from "Signs of Safety" approach, Turnell & Edwards, 1999.

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Strengthening families | Protecting children | **Framework for practice**

Child- and family-centred safety plans

Detailed action plans to support children's long term safety, belonging and wellbeing.

A critical component of a strengths-based, safety-oriented practice approach is the collaborative development of child- and family-centred safety plans[5]. These plans can be created as immediate safety plans as part of the initial assessment process, or following changed circumstances in a family that may be a threat to the child, and are supported by the SDM Safety Assessment. The plans can also be long-term action plans that are developed with families and networks to build enough safety, belonging and wellbeing to return a child home and/or close a case. At whatever point the plan is being developed, the process of creating child- and family-centred safety plans involves all the significant people in a child or young person's life — the parents, extended family, carers, friends and professionals — working together to create a detailed plan that addresses the concerns and achieves the agreed upon goals for the children's future safety, belonging and wellbeing.

These child- and family-centred safety plans contain a set of rules or guidelines that describe in detail the practical, day-to-day arrangements (either for the immediate, short-term or long term) that the family and their safety and support network will put in place to make sure that the children are safe in relation to identified worries. These rules or guidelines are written in clear, simple language that the children can understand, and the children then draw pictures to the rules to help them understand the plan and demonstrate their understanding. This collaborative planning process also involves the plan being put into action and monitored, reviewed and revised over time so that everyone is satisfied it is working and will continue to work to provide ongoing safety, belonging and wellbeing for the children.

Case example for nine-year-old child

Rule 1:   The most important rule — No Shane!

The most important rule is that Mum will make sure that Shane will not visit or spend time with Zoe. If Shane comes to the house, Mum will tell him to go away or she will call the police.

To help Mum remember what to do, Mum and Zoe have made a sign and have stuck it on the wall near the front and back door. The sign says: "If Shane bashes on the door, Mum will say 'Go away or I'll call the police'. If Shane doesn't go away, Mum will call the police – 000".

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5   This work builds on the rigorous and innovative safety planning work of Susie Essex, Colin Luger and John Gumbleton in the Resolutions Model from the UK and the development of these ideas within the Signs of Safety approach.

Collaborative action planning tool

Creating detailed plans to support enduring safety, belonging and wellbeing.

Collaborative action planning is a complex process that involves all the significant people in a child's life working together to develop a detailed action plan, as provided in the example below. The action plan describes the day-to-day arrangements that a family and their safety and support network have agreed to put into place to ensure that the child will be safe in the future in relation to the identified worries. The action plan also describes how the plan will be demonstrated and reviewed over time, so that everyone is satisfied that the plan is working and will continue to work once the child protection agency withdraws. The action plan supports and informs the child's overall case plan.

Developing these kinds of collaborative action plans involves the family (including the children if they are old enough), the safety and support network, and workers meeting together over a series of meetings to work through each of the goal statements and to develop the detailed plan to achieve these goals. The collaborative action planning tool was developed to provide structure and focus for these planning meetings and to help everyone work together effectively to create these detailed plans.

Collaborative action planning tool

GOAL STATEMENT NO. 1

(photocopy as many of these pages as you need for each of the goal statements)

GOAL STATEMENT: *(Write the goal statement below. Use one page for each goal statement)*

IMPORTANT SITUATIONS/ TIMES OF THE DAY/WEEK: What are the particular worrying circumstances or situations (identified in the worry statements) and the important times during the day and the week that the action plan needs to cover for this goal statement?

NON-NEGOTIABLES: Here are the non-negotiables for this goal statement that the child protection agency has said have to be included in the action plan.

GUIDING QUESTIONS: These questions have been provided by the child protection agency to help us think about all the areas that need to be covered for this goal.

1. SAFETY AND PROTECTION ALREADY HAPPENING: What are the parents/caregivers **already doing** or what were they **doing in the past** that will help to meet this goal statement? *(Get everyone's views)*.

0 ◄─────────────────────────────────────► 10

Scale: *On a scale of 0 - 10, where 10 is what the parents are already doing is enough to meet this goal statement all of the time and 0 is that they have not yet been able to put anything in to place that will help to meet the goal statement, where are you on the scale?*

2. FUTURE SAFETY AND PROTECTION: What else could the parents/caregivers do that will help to meet this goal statement? *(Brainstorm everyone's ideas)*. Continue until everyone is at a 10 (enough to meet goal statement).

0 ◄─────────────────────────────────────► 10

Scale: *On a scale of 0 - 10, where 10 is these safety ideas are enough to meet the goal statement all of the time and 0 is these ideas don't meet the goal statement at all, where are you on the scale? What else would you need to see the parents doing to move to a 10?*

PUTTING THE PLAN INTO ACTION

A. CHECKING WHETHER THE ACTION PLAN IS WORKING

How will the parents/family show everyone that they are following the action plan and that it is working?

Who will check in with the children and the parents to make sure that the plan is working? How often will this need to happen? In the beginning? Over the long term?

How often will everyone meet to talk together about how the action plan is working? In the beginning? Over the long term?

When CPS withdraws, who will organise these meetings? How often will these meetings be held?

Write this information in language that the children can understand and include this in the action plan.

B. WHAT WILL EVERYONE DO IF THERE ARE PROBLEMS WITH THE ACTION PLAN?

If the children are feeling worried or scared, how can they let people know?

What will family members and network members do if the children tell them that they are worried or if they see a problem with the action plan and/or are concerned about the children's safety?

What will CPS do if they are worried about the children or they see a problem with the action plan?

What will the family and the network do if someone leaves the network?

Write this information in language that the children can understand and include this in the action plan.

C. PRESENTING THE ACTION PLAN TO THE CHILDREN

Who will read the action plan to the children and help them do pictures for each rule? When will this happen and who needs to be there when this happens?

Who will make copies of the action plan (with children's drawings) and make sure everyone gets a copy?

Where will the family copy of the action plan be kept (so that it is visible to everyone who needs to see it)?

How often in the future will the action plan be read to the children? Who will make sure this happens?

Write this information in language that the children can understand and include this in the action plan.

D. MAKING CHANGES TO THE ACTION PLAN OVER TIME

As the children get older, what changes might be necessary to the action plan?

How will this happen? Who will be part of changing the action plan?

Who will get a copy of the new action plan?

What if other circumstances change in the family?

Write this information in language that the children can understand and include this in the action plan.

Processes to support the practice

The Framework for Practice will ultimately touch all of our work and will be embedded within almost all of our daily processes. While many of these shifts will take place over time and additional ones are likely to be added, some organisational changes will begin almost immediately. Some of the key organisational processes that are likely to be enhanced and implemented include:

- **Appreciative inquiry:** An inquiry-based process to guide reflection and search for details about what has happened that led to positive outcomes. The approach can be used with families in searching for strengths, exceptions and strategies to build on. Appreciative inquiry can also be used in organisational settings to guide leadership, management and supervision approaches.

- **Enhanced intake:** A common and strengthened format for talking with reporters that helps to clarify information about the allegation of abuse or neglect and to obtain information about family supports and strengths from the reporter's perspective.

- **Regular group supervision and case consultation:** A critical aspect of the change that will take place within the department will be the development of a robust group supervision and case consultation process. In these meetings, workers and supervisors meet regularly to discuss intervention plans and the work they are doing with families, using the collaborative assessment and planning framework to help organise and analyse information. This process serves to refine our critical thinking and is a method for deepening worker skills and professional development by having supervisors and workers 'model the model' of collaborative assessment and planning they are using with families.

- **Strengthened family engagement and participation in, and flexible facilitation of, family group meetings:** Family group meetings have been used around the world to help implement and support the values of partnership and participation. These meetings bring age-appropriate children, caregivers, extended family networks, and workers together to participate in planning and decision making. Alignment of family group meeting processes with this Framework for Practice and its core concepts will be a critical part of departmental practice and infrastructure going forward, enhancing families' experience of partnership and increasing coherence of core concepts across the organisation.

- **Enhanced partnerships between the department, NGOs, partner agencies and the courts:**
  The relationship between statutory child protection agencies, their government and non-government partners and the courts is critical to the successful implementation of the Framework for Practice. Relationships between statutory and non-government agencies should be characterised by mutual trust and open communication, shared responsibilities for completing important tasks, and efforts to reach consensus when disagreements or stalemates arise. This framework sees these enhanced partnerships as a core component of the department's future infrastructure.

- **Continuous quality improvement efforts:** Continuous quality improvement (CQI) refers to the process the organisation uses to analyse strengths and weaknesses of their practice, and then to build on those strengths while developing and implementing solutions. It relies on the rigorous use of data to inform self-assessment; the use of workers to help create solutions; and an organisational culture of reflection, appreciation and learning to implement change. A CQI approach will be used throughout implementation of the Framework for Practice.