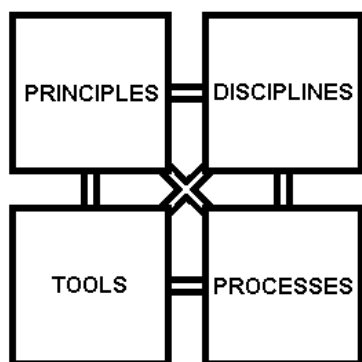


Introduction

Signs of Safety was developed in the 1990's by Steve Edwards and Andrew Turnell from solution focused therapy and practical child protection practice. It's an approach continually being evolved by practitioners and is now implemented in over 100 Agencies in 17 countries. It has had a major role in transforming work with children and families. Signs of Safety forms the basis for the English Innovation's Project involving Leicestershire and 10 other Local Authorities.

An Integrated Framework

Signs of Safety works best as an integrated framework made up of:



Adopting one or more of these will improve practice; adopting the whole framework will transform practice.

The Principles

1. Developing working relationships
2. Having a stance of critical inquiry
3. Keeping Signs of Safety grounded in everyday practice

The principles underpinning Signs of Safety are about developing and sustaining working relationships with children, families and professionals; having a questioning approach, remaining opened minded, and always being prepared to admit you were wrong; and keeping the work grounded in everyday practice.

The Disciplines

The disciplines are what guides workers behaviour in the use of Signs of Safety.

1. Fully involving families in assessments and planning
2. Fully involving children
3. Developing family networks
4. Being clear about harm, complicating factors, strengths and safety
5. Use of plain language
6. Transparency
7. Statements based on what is seen
8. Skilful use of authority

Fundamental to Signs of Safety is the full involvement of adults and children, working with them rather than imposing things upon them, and the use of family networks to build safety and make plans work. It's important to have an understanding of the distinction between Harm (something that has happened) and Complicating factors (factors that may complicate making changes) and risks of possible harm.

Equally there needs to be a clear distinction between Existing Strengths (positive aspects of the family in relation to the children) and Existing Safety (actual proven protection).

Fundamental to everyone having an understanding of why we are involved and what needs to happen is the use of plain language, transparency, and in making use of statements based on specific observable behaviours rather than opinion or speculation.

Signs of Safety needs the skilful use of authority in giving choices and finding ways that work for families alongside often having a statutory authority and responsibility.

In addition Assessments need to be seen as always work in progress rather than a completed unchanging view.

The Tools

1. Mapping tools for assessments and planning- using the 3 Columns and Scaling
2. Three Houses and the Safety House for work with children
3. Words and Pictures explanations

Assessments and plans are informed by mapping using the 3 columns – what we worried about, what's working well and what needs to happen, and by scaling questions to make judgements about safety. These are used to put together concise, focused Danger Statements (where we currently are and what we worry might happen if nothing changes) and Safety Goals (where we want to be), and to build Safety Plans to address the identified worries and achieve goals.

The 3 houses (good things, bad things and dreams), safety houses and words and pictures are used to engage children in assessments and plans.

The Processes

The core processes of Signs of Safety involve following these elements in a logical order when possible.

1. Mapping the assessment and plan
2. Identifying strengths as well as worries
3. Making a judgment about Safety
4. Writing clear and succinct Danger Statements and Safety Goals
5. Building a Safety Plan to address Danger Statements

Mapping informs the assessment and plan with the family, and in time with their networks.

This is used to put together concise, focused Danger Statements (where we currently are) and Safety Goals (where we want to be to close the case), and to build Safety Plans to address the identified worries and achieve goals.

Safety Plans involve Safety Networks of extended family and friends to be part of the Safety Plan.

Throughout children Voices are brought into assessments and plans.

Based on the Resolutions Signs of Safety Summary. For more details see the Signs of Safety Comprehensive Briefing Paper by Andrew Turnell and Terry Murphy

THE SIGNS OF SAFETY MAPPING TOOL

What are we worried about?	What's working well?	What needs to happen?
1 Harm Actual hurt, injury or abuse (likely) caused by adults in the past or present Risk taking behaviour by child or young person	1 Existing Strengths People, situations or actions that contribute to a child's wellbeing and plans about how they could be made safe when danger present	4 SAFETY GOALS <i>Behaviours</i> and actions the child protection agency needs to see to be satisfied that the child is safe enough to close the case
1 Complicating Factors Risks present that <i>could</i> present a danger to the child? Factors that <i>may</i> make it more difficult to change the danger or risk of harm?	1 Existing Safety Actions taken to make sure child is safe when danger is present Ask 'how does this keep the child safe?'	5 Next Steps Immediate next actions to take to build future safety
2 DANGER STATEMENTS Harm or hurt likely to happen if nothing changes <input type="checkbox"/> Who is worried? <input type="checkbox"/> Why is there a worry? <input type="checkbox"/> What is likely to be the impact on the child if nothing changes?		
<p style="margin: 0;">3</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Safety Scale</p> <p style="margin: 0;">0 _____ 10</p> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: small;">On a scale where 10 means everyone is confident that the children are safe enough for child protection services to close the case and 0 means that there is not enough safety for the children to live at home where do we rate the situation?</p>		

THE SIGNS OF SAFETY PROCESS

MAPPING					SAFETY PLANS	REVIEW
What are we worried about? What's going well?	Scaling	What needs to happen?				
Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7
Use 3 column from to record the assessment	Write Danger Statements	Scale Safety and Danger	Write Safety Goals	Agree Next Steps	Put together a Safety Plan	Review and Revise
Think about ... What are we worried about? Harm – any past or current actual harm to the child Complicating Factors – Risks to the child and things that may make change more difficult	For each harm or risk identified, if nothing changes: 1. Who's worried? 2. Why is there a worry? 3. What are they worried about? The golden rule is that all worries have to relate to the child	On a scale of 0 to 10 where 10 is Safety and 0 is Danger what is the current risk?	What does the Agency need to see happen for the child to be safe enough to close the case?	What are the immediate next steps to be taken to build safety?	Be clear about specific, achievable plans to reduce risk and increase safety Use family ideas Identify and use family Safety People and Safety Networks Ask Is the plan robust? Does it leave the child safe? Does it meet Agency requirements?	Review and revise the plan with the family regularly
What's working well? Existing Strengths Existing Safety						

Based on 2013 Resolutions Consultancy, Signs of Safety, Viv Hogg Consultancy