

Signs of Safety

Briefing note 6 for partner organisations and practitioners

April, 2021



Welcome

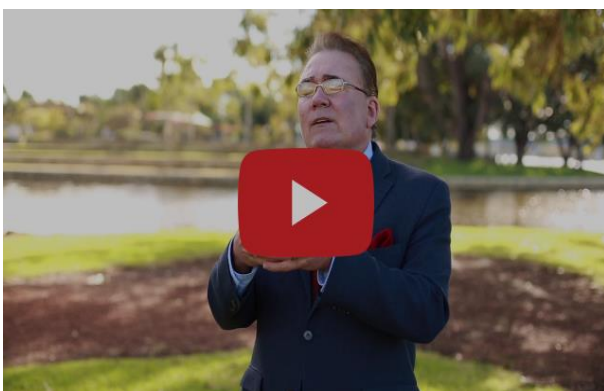
Welcome to the Signs of Safety briefing note for partner organisations and practitioners. It is designed to update all practitioners working with children and their families on what's happened so far to implement the Signs of Safety approach in South Gloucestershire and the next steps.

So what are we focussing on at the moment with Signs of Safety in South Gloucestershire?

Family finding training- We delivered family finding training using an online platform, and here is some information to help our partner colleagues understand what this is. Family finding became a sister approach to Signs of Safety in 2017, as it helps us with including and using children's family and natural support networks, which is crucial to the Signs of Safety approach.

What is Family Finding?

The Family Finding model, developed by Kevin Campbell, offers methods and strategies to locate and engage relatives of children to add to their support network.



If you press the Ctrl button and the picture you can watch this introduction from Kevin Campbell (Author of Family Finding model)

The goal of Family Finding is to connect each child with a family, so that every child may benefit from the lifelong connections that only a family provides. This approach is for all children, whether they are living with their birth parents or are a child looked after.

Core beliefs inherent in this approach are:

- 1) Every child has a family, and they can be found if we try
- 2) Loneliness can be devastating, even dangerous, and is experienced by most children looked after
- 3) A meaningful connection to family helps a child develop a sense of belonging, and
- 4) The single factor most closely associated with positive outcomes for children is meaningful, lifelong connections to family.

At the heart of the model is the belief that every child has a family and we can find them if we try and so there's never a time that we should be practicing child protection without a family/community/network at the table.

Kevin says Signs of Safety is the only model in the world that closely aligns with Family Finding because, by design, it puts children and families at the centre of the work of constructing safety in their lives. As with Family Finding, this becomes the priority – not the delivery of services – and when we construct robust networks, they do the majority of the work of healing and providing for safety for the children.

"Our purpose in Family Finding is to restore the opportunity to be unconditionally loved, to be accepted, and to be safe in a community and a family."

- Kevin Campbell



Learning

New Signs of Safety bitesize sessions

Launch of skills bitesize workshops to support staff and colleagues in partner agencies to focus on the individual tools and skills of the Signs of Safety approach. Starting from April 2021, we will be delivering Bitesize sessions (1 hour 30 minutes) on the topics listed below which can be booked onto via the learning and development site.

- Creating Safety/wellbeing plans with families
- Using words and pictures
- Building on families strengths (Using Appreciative Inquiry with families)
- Finding families networks

Signs of Safety training for partners

To help our partner agencies understand the way we work with children, young people and families in South Gloucestershire, we have been offering Signs of Safety awareness for partners (3 hours) and Signs of Safety in practice for partners (3 hours) courses.



We have been delivering these sessions since January 2016 and here is some more information about the courses

Signs of Safety Awareness for partner's session (AM)

This session is designed for workers who need to know about the use of the Signs of Safety framework in the council and partner agencies, and understand the basic concepts of Signs of Safety to assist them in their job role. This 3-hour session is relevant to employees who: - will not be using the Signs of Safety approach directly with families, but will see it in practice and need to understand its simplest form - need an introduction to the approach before they go on to do more specific role-relevant training. These half-day workshops are provided at no charge to South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership partner agencies. There are 24 spaces on each course.

The dates this course is running in South Gloucestershire are:

19th March 2021, 18th May 2021, 6th July 2021, 20th September 2021, 25th November 2021, 25th January 2022, 24th March 2022.

If an employee needs to learn more about using the Signs of Safety model in their job role, they will also want to book themselves onto a 'Signs of Safety in Practice for partners' session. These run regularly during afternoons on the same days as the morning 'awareness' session. Delegates need to book on those afternoon sessions separately.

Signs of Safety in practice for partner's session (PM)

Delegates must have already attended the Signs of Safety Awareness session before booking on this workshop. They can either have done that on an earlier date or by attending the morning of this course date.

This 'SoS in practice for partners' session offers the opportunity to explore and practice the model. It is aimed at the Safeguarding Lead within a single setting, team or organisation: employees actively involved in assessments, CP Conferences, Children in Need meetings, such as Designated CP Leads in Schools, relevant operational managers or practitioners in Early Years settings, Health and the voluntary sector. Following the course those practitioners will want to think about how they then ensure others in their work-setting get a basic awareness of Signs of Safety, for example via a short internal cascade meeting for key staff etc. These half-day workshops are provided at no charge to South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership partner agencies.

The dates this course is running in South Gloucestershire are:

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Recent feedback summary from January 2021 course:

Great reflective piece of work. Mapping exercise - encouraging critical thinking
Structuring interactions with a focus on positive outcomes; asking the right questions
Taking time and looking at a situation through the lens of the child
Different ways to elicit pupil voice. To use the tools provided.
Reinforcement of skills and sharing of new (to me) resources.
Signs of safety mapping was an insightful exercise and good way to focus work with children. Useful tools to use with children.
Focus on the strengths/positives, think more objectively, the effectiveness of the tools used. Very interesting, storyboards.
The questions to ask to help fill in the SoS form - helps family 'zero in' on what's important rather than just asking broad 'what are you worried about' etc. Makes the conversation flow better
Use of questioning, very good examples of a variety of tools to capture the child's voice
A great introduction into the Signs of Safety framework. A good awareness of the types of questions that will help me identify ways to support individual families.

Please see South Gloucestershire Learning and Development site to read about the courses and book onto future courses. [Please click here to look at Signs of Safety courses](#)

Next steps

- By April 2021 - Launch of skills bitesize workshops to support staff and colleagues in partner agencies to focus on the individual tools and skills of the Signs of Safety approach
- By May 2021 - include Signs of safety courses in the training bulletin and share information about courses with Managers of our partner agencies.
- By November 2021 - provide more 5 day training for our staff as Practice Leaders of Signs of Safety.
- By December 2021 - Create a survey to find out how many of our partner agencies staff have attended Signs of Safety and what are the barriers that are getting in the way of more staff attending.

Contact

For more information, feedback, comments or to share your experience of Signs of Safety so far please contact:

Jo Hillier - Signs of Safety Practice Lead

Phone: 01454 868942

Email: joanne.hillier@southglos.gov.uk

