

Signs of Safety



Briefing note 5 for partner organisations and practitioners
October, 2020

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?

Group supervision- to keep us connected to our colleagues and share practice when we can't physically be together

Signs of safety uses the 70% (practicing), 20% (reflection), 10% (training) learning model. Which means that our Signs of Safety training is a small proportion of getting the practice right, the rest of the support to develop the approach and use of tools in teams comes through practicing group supervision.

Aims of Signs of Safety group supervision:

- build a shared, structured, collective team and agency culture, and process for thinking through cases using the Signs of Safety approach;
- enable our practitioners to explore each other's cases, bringing their best thinking, including alternative perspectives, and to do this without getting caught in one or two people dominating or the group, telling the practitioner whose case it is what they must do;
- develop a shared practice of bringing a questioning approach to casework, rather than trying to arrive at answers.

So in times where being together physically has been so difficult due to Covid 19 restrictions, we have started to focus on how we can make sure our teams have the opportunity to meet virtually for group supervision. By January 2021 all teams across South Gloucestershire's Children's services will be offered group supervision at least once a month.

Mapping : Using questions to explore worries and strengths

In Signs of Safety training learners will be introduced to the Signs of Safety assessment and planning process or 'mapping'. Mapping is using questions to explore any situation across the 7 analysis categories. Here are the analysis categories explained:

What are we worried about?	What's working well?	What needs to happen?
<p>1) Past harm/worries Worries or harm that has happened to the child <i>Be behaviourally specific: who did what to whom?</i></p> <p>2) Danger/ Worry statement What are you worried will happen to the child if nothing in this family/situation changes? <i>Be specific, don't use broad terms and don't use jargon or professional language. Use the words of the child/family if you can</i></p> <p>3) Complicating factors What are the things that make this more difficult for this family to make the changes needed? <i>You may not have anything in here; don't fill it in un-necessarily.</i></p>	<p>4) Existing strengths What are the good things, people and plans in and around the family? <i>Amplify...a lot! "They love the children or they attend school" is not enough make this meaningful and connected to the danger/worry</i></p> <p>5) Existing safety/wellbeing What things, people, plans do we know have kept the children safe (from the danger/worry) in the past? This needs to be proven and tested over time <i>Get detail, use exception questions, make sure the child is in the questions you ask</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">This is the starting point for Safety Planning. Spend lots of time in this column!</p>	<p>6) Safety/ Wellbeing goal What do we need to see to know the child is safe/doing well enough and we can end work with this family? <i>This is the 'what', not the 'how'</i> <i>This is not a list of services</i> <i>This (wherever it can be) uses 'presence of', not 'absence of' E.g. "one parent to leave the home if things are escalating to an argument" rather than "parents must not argue in front of the children."</i></p> <p>7) Next steps What are the things we/they need to do now/ next to move up on the safety scale? And what else? And what else?</p>

0



10

On a scale of 0–10 where 0 is the concerns in the danger statement are happening constantly and badly and 10 is even if the danger is present, people are making sure the children are always safe, where would you rate the safety for this child today?

How is mapping used in South Gloucestershire:

Mapping is used to help our teams work with families to understand what life is like for the child and the strengths and safety/wellbeing in the family. They encourage families to find their network of family and friends around them and work to explore what those connected people can do to support the family about everyone's worries.

[Here are some examples of mapping questions we use to explore referrals that come into South Gloucestershire Children's services.](#) These are useful to keep in mind when writing referrals – these are the sort of questions and answers we need.

Learning

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 training (3 hours) and Signs of Safety in practice training (3 hours) courses. There is no charge for this training. We have been able to continue running the Signs of Safety Awareness course since lockdown as a virtual course starting June 2020. The Signs of Safety in practice training is more difficult to run in the virtual way, so we are waiting for Covid 19 restrictions to ease to allow this to be delivered in smaller numbers in person again, to make sure we are keeping everyone safe.



We have been delivering these sessions since January 2016 and by October 2020 we have trained **821 staff** from our partner agencies.

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

- Starting October, 2020 - Focussing on making sure all of our staff have access to group supervision sessions at least once a month.
- In February, 2021 - We are training staff from across the teams in "Finding family networks", this is to support our staff to help families find and include their friends and family in making, and being a part of plans to support the best outcomes for their children.
- 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

Contact

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

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