

SAFETY ASSESSMENT WITHIN FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



Families Can Help

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DRAWING CONCLUSIONS . . .



Do we sometimes jump to conclusions based on assumptions? What if we knew the rest of the story



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BRAIN MATTER(S) . . .



- *How* we think is just as important as what we decide to *do* after thinking through a decision we want to make . . .
- Try this: at your table, work on the problem you've been given. Decide *as a team* what the correct answer is. Take the time to be sure everyone understands your final answer before sharing with the large group.

REAL SAFETY ASSESSMENT



- **Safety = Strengths demonstrated as protection over time**
- This specific definition is why assessing for the family's strengths, protective capacities and solutions used in the past is so important to build safety into the future
- CPS *and* the family must have an understanding of each child's experience and perception of her/his family to craft ongoing safety
- We need an organized network that surrounds the child with a common understanding of safety needs and each protector's specific role to maintain protection for the child
- Begins with a joint assessment *by the family and CPS*

CAN SAFETY BE ENSURED? BY WHOM?



- Promises do not ensure safety
- Sobriety *in this moment* does not equal safety
- Orders for protection and no-contact orders do not ensure safety
- Court petitions alone do not ensure safety
- Services do not equate with safety unless they are targeted to control for safety in a way that is known to all involved
- Acknowledgement is neither sufficient nor necessary to ensure safety

ENGAGED PARTNERSHIP



1. Everyone desires respect
2. Everyone needs to be heard (and understood)
3. Everyone has strengths
4. Judgments can wait
5. Partners share power
6. Partnership is a process



Source: Smith, C., White, P., & Comer, D. (2006). *Cornerstone III: Self study guide for family assessment*. Morganton, NC: Appalachian Family Innovations.

SOLUTION-BUILDING WITH FAMILIES



- All families can change and have the internal strengths and resources to do so.
- Families are the experts on their own lives.
- Families' define their problems/concerns & the words they use to define them should be used.
- Respect and follow the direction and solutions the family wants to take (*while still assessing for and addressing safety, risk and needs*).
- The family achieves success when the focus is on solutions and exceptions to the problem, rather than the problem itself.



Adapted from: DeJong, P., & Kim Berg, I. (1998). *Interviewing for solutions*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole

SAFETY CONSULTATION



1. Identify a specific purpose/focus for the consultation (e.g., what specifically the presenting worker needs help with).
2. Discuss who lives in the house and who the family describes as “family.”
3. Describe the concerns and the information in the report.
4. Review the family’s strengths, as they identify them and as the worker identifies them.
5. Review risk and protective factors, as known from history or current data.
6. Review prior interventions (if any) or solutions the family used, formal or informal supports, and their apparent usefulness to the family.
7. Discuss possible solutions for how to address the family-identified needs to reduce future risk, create permanence or permit case closure.

PIECING IT TOGETHER . . .



- Find the other participants who have the same color puzzle pieces
- Put together your puzzle
- Answer the question on the puzzle



THANK YOU.



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