

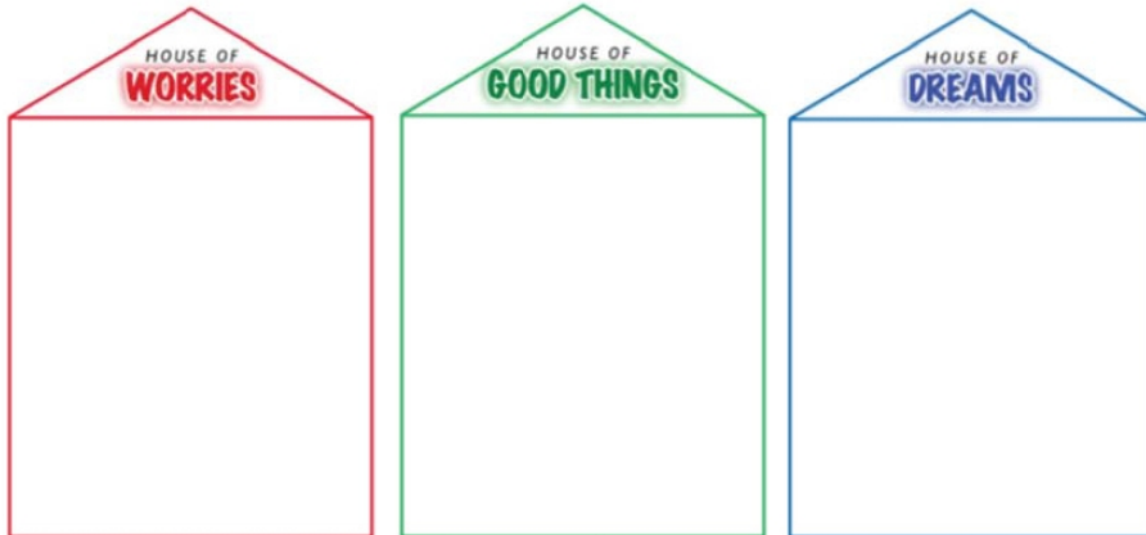
## **Core: Safety Organized Practice and SDM**

### **Workbook Materials**

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# Three Houses Tool

Created by Nicki Weld and Maggie Greening, New Zealand



A tool for involving children and young people in child protection assessment and planning.

Detailed “Three Houses” booklet and DVD available at [www.aspirationsconsultancy.com](http://www.aspirationsconsultancy.com)

## Three Houses Case Examples

Emma’s Three Houses (8-year-old girl)

HOUSE OF WORRIES	HOUSE OF GOOD THINGS	HOUSE OF DREAMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• That Mum yells at me.</li><li>• I don't like getting beaten by Mum.</li><li>• I don't like seeing my brother and sister getting hurt by my mum.</li><li>• Mum slapped Kate really hard on the leg.</li><li>• Mum kicked Jacob on the bottom.</li><li>• I don't like my mum hitting Jacob and Kate in front of my friends. Then my friends don't want to come to play with me at my house.</li><li>• I'm worried that when Grandad is gone, I keep getting hit by my mum.</li><li>• My mum drinks "Wild Turkey" with David.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I feel safe if the court decides that I can live with my dad because he doesn't have any drugs and I won't get hurt at his place.</li><li>• I can see my grandad and my uncle and his girlfriend when I go to my Nana's house.</li><li>• I like that I get fit when I'm with my dad and don't get fed junk food.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I wish I could live with both mum and dad together.</li><li>• I wish I wasn't yelled at by Mum.</li><li>• I wish that I lived in a better house (that my mum's house was a better house).</li><li>• I wish I could swim anywhere.</li><li>• I wish that Grandad would always stay with me.</li><li>• I wish that Mum would wake up in a better mood.</li><li>• I wish I could live with my dad.</li><li>• I wish that I could see my mum every second weekend so that I wouldn't get yelled at so much.</li></ul>

Kaden's Three Houses (5-year-old-boy)  
*Work of Jo Goodwin, Reunification Program, Perth*

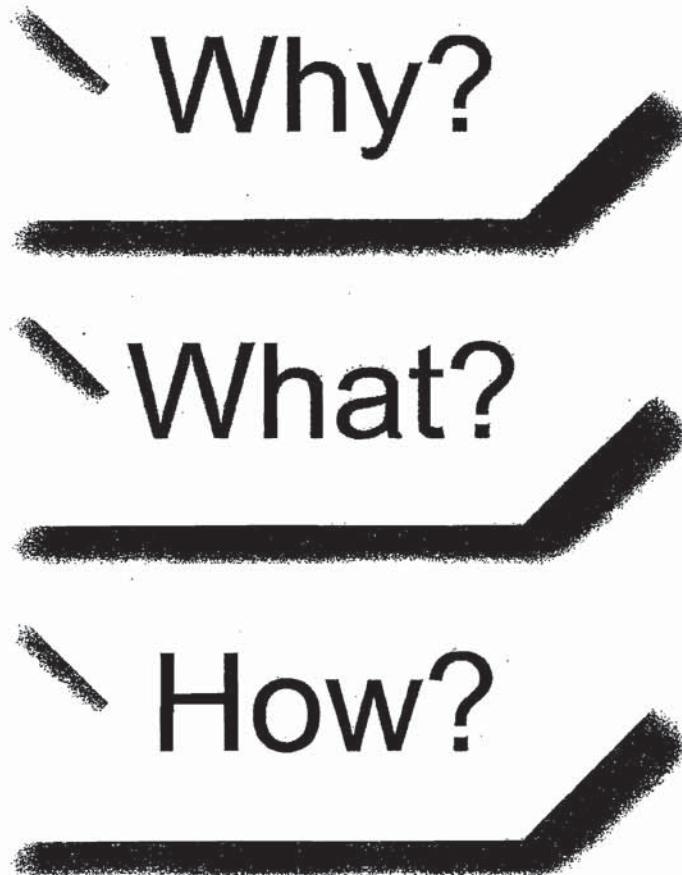


## The Three Houses Process

1. **Preparation:** In preparing to use the Three Houses tool with a child or young person, it can be helpful to find out as much background information as you can. The other important part of preparation is working out what materials you will need to take. At minimum, you will need sheets of paper (preferably one for each house, as well as some spares) and some colored pencils and markers. The other important decision is where to meet with the child. If possible, choosing a venue where the child is likely to feel most comfortable is important, particularly for your first meeting.
2. **Inform parents and obtain permission to interview child(ren).** Sometimes, child protection workers have to interview children without advising or seeking the permission of the parents or primary caregivers. Wherever possible, the parents should be advised/asked in advance. Showing the Three Houses tool to the parents can help them to understand what the worker will be doing.
3. **Make decision on whether to work with child with or without the parents present.** Sometimes child protection workers need to insist that they speak with the children without a parent or caregiver present. Wherever possible it is good to make this a matter of choice for the parents and the child, but when this isn't possible, all efforts should be made to provide an explanation to the parents as to why the worker feels it is necessary to speak to the child on their own.

4. **Explain and work through three houses with child** using one sheet of paper per house. Use words and drawings as appropriate and anything else you can think of to engage the child in the process. They can re-name houses, use toys, lego houses, picture cut outs, etc. Give the child a choice about where to start. When possible, try to start with the 'house of good things,' particularly when the child is anxious or uncertain.
5. **Explain to and involve the child or young person in what will happen next.**  
Once the Three Houses interview is finished it is important to explain to the child or young person what will happen next, and to obtain their permission to show the Three Houses to others, whether they be parents, extended family or professionals. Usually children and young people are happy for others to be shown their three Houses assessment of their situation, but for some children there will be concerns and safety issues that must be addressed before proceeding with presenting what they have described to others.
6. **When safe and appropriate, present Three Houses to parents/caregivers**  
usually beginning with the 'house of good things.' Before showing the child's Three Houses, it can be useful to ask the parents: 'What do you think the child put in their houses of good things / worries / dreams?'

## One structure for facilitating any meeting



Stage of the meeting
Purpose
Context
Group Agreements
Network/Stakeholders
Desired Outcome
Content
Next Steps
+/ $\Delta$

## One structure for facilitating any meeting

Stage of the meeting	Key question to guide the meeting
Purpose	Why are we meeting today?
Context	Are there external concerns we need to pay attention to?
Group Agreements	How do we want to work with each other?
Network/Stakeholders	Is everyone that should be here actually here?
Desired Outcome	What do we hope to accomplish?
Content	What do we want to talk about? (If purpose is a key decision point, have we looked at the appropriate SDM assessment before?)
Next Steps	What steps do we need to take from here?
+/ $\Delta$	How did we do? What should we do differently next time?



# Using facilitation to help bring in the “voice of SDM”

<b>Harm and Danger:</b>	<b>Safety:</b>
<b>Complicating Factors:</b>	<b>Strengths</b>



## SECTION 1A: SAFETY THREATS

Assess likelihood for each of the following safety threats. Indicate whether currently available information results in reason to believe safety threat is present or for an unborn child, will be present after the child is born. Mark all that apply.

- Yes No
- ☐ ☐ 1. Parent/caregiver caused serious physical harm to the child/young person or made a plausible threat to cause serious physical harm in the current investigation, as indicated by:
    - ☐ Serious injury or abuse to the child/young person other than accidental.
    - ☐ Parent/caregiver threats to harm the child/young person.
    - ☐ Threat to cause harm or retaliate against the child/young person.
    - ☐ Excessive discipline or physical force.
    - ☐ Drug-exposed infant.
  - ☐ ☐ 2. Sexual abuse is suspected, and circumstances suggest that the child/young person's safety may be of immediate concern.
  - ☐ ☐ 3. Parent/caregiver does not protect the child/young person from serious harm or threatened harm by others. This may include physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect.
  - ☐ ☐ 4. Parent/caregiver's explanation for the injury to the child/young person is questionable or inconsistent with the type of injury, and the nature of the injury suggests that the child/young person's safety may be of immediate concern.
  - ☐ ☐ 5. The family does not provide access to the child/young person, or there is reason to believe that the family is about to flee.
  - ☐ ☐ 6. Parent/caregiver does not meet the child/young person's immediate needs to the extent that it results in serious harm or the threat of serious harm to the child/young person.
  - ☐ ☐ 7. The physical living conditions are hazardous and immediately threatening to the health and/or safety of the child/young person/unborn child upon birth.
  - ☐ ☐ 8. Parent/caregiver's current substance abuse seriously impairs his/her ability to supervise, protect, or care for the child/young person/unborn child upon birth.
  - ☐ ☐ 9. Domestic violence exists in the home and poses an imminent danger of serious physical and/or emotional harm to the child/young person/unborn child upon birth.

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## It could look like this for a in-office consultation

Stage of the meeting	Key question to guide the meeting
Purpose	We are meeting today to do some more learning about mapping + the SDM tools and to practice our skills together
Context	We have a tough case with a baby with a teen mom who is depressed and we all think we could benefit from thinking it through together
Group Agreements	All voices heard from/OK to make a mistake/one person talks at a time/let the person facilitating work
Network/Stakeholders	Is everyone from our unit here? Would we like to invite an one of the practice leaders to this?
Desired Outcome	We get better at these skills and maybe get some ideas
Content	1) What is the key questions we want to get out of this? 2) What is the SDM tool that might help? 3) Let's look at the definition and see what we will need? 4) What are we worried about? What would the parent say? 5) What's working well? What would parent say?
Next Steps	What do we need to do next?
+/-Δ	How was this conversation today? What did we do well? What do we want to do different next time?



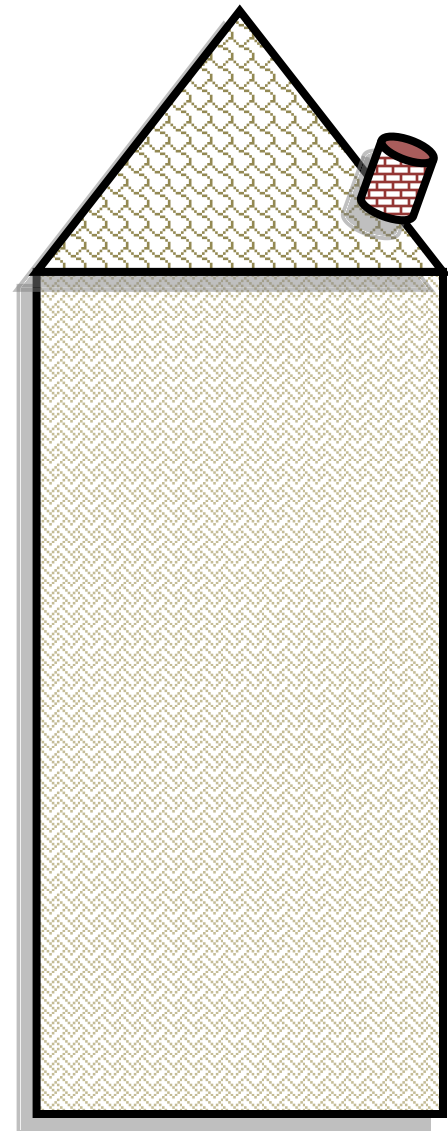
## The Three Houses: Nikki Weld & Sonja Parker



House of Good Things



House of Worries



House of Wishes/Dreams