

Safety-Organized Practice (SOP) Practice Profiles

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE DESIGN OF THE PROFILES? (PURPOSE)

- The SOP Practice Profiles were designed to outline characteristics of various skill levels rather than the *frequency* in which tasks associated with the practice are completed.
- To account for the gradual nature of skill development, the practice level definitions have been written to showcase what practice would look like at the highest point of each level.
- Workers will generally make the most progress if they focus on a few key skill aspects at a time, and then reflect on their practice to select the next areas to improve.
- They are an attempt to describe a set of complex and dynamic skills. It is important to hold on to the fact that there is a multidimensional and cumulative relationship to these profiles.

HOW DO I BEST USE PRACTICE PROFILES IN SUPERVISION? (CONTEXT)

- We strongly encourage utilizing SOP Practice Profiles as a coaching support tool as opposed to an audit tool used for performance appraisal.
- Supervisors must set aside their 'hierarchical hat' when coaching workers on integrating a new or deeper practice into their daily activities. It is essential to create shared understanding and agreement with one another about the purpose and process of the practice profiles assessment prior to setting performance goals and timelines. Ideally, the two processes might be kept distinct from each other – coaching using the practice profiles as distinct from performance appraisal.
- It is best practice to use all of the practice profiles together and not just one in isolation; however, some workers may need to take them in linear order, e.g. learn to ask Three Questions first, then Safety Map with the family, and then form good Harm/Danger Statements.
- Using the practice profiles to guide group supervision allows the supervisor to shift the conversation from workers seeking answers solely from the supervisor to peer-to-peer case consultation structured by the practice profile content.
- Orienting new social workers to child welfare practice can be a challenge. The practice profiles remind the supervisor and the worker that learning is a developmental process. Be sure to set the stage for acceptance of gradual practice development, and avoid placing undue pressure on staff to become proficient right away.

WHICH WORKERS DO I USE THIS WITH? (STAKEHOLDERS)

- It is best to select the ‘early adopters’ of SOP in your unit who have already expressed an interest in deepening their practice skills.
- Give workers the option of ‘trying on’ the new practices for a bit, and then check in to see if they are open to formalizing the coaching process with you.
- Encourage those who are disinterested to observe or shadow other staff using safety organized practices in the field before making a commitment to coaching.

NOTE FOR ADMINISTRATORS: The practice profiles could also be used in CORE training for new workers and new supervisors.

WHERE DO I BEGIN AND WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT TO ACHIEVE? (DESIRED OUTCOMES)

1. Begin with a conversation that follows the **Dialogue Structure** (supervisors can model the use of this structure in any conversation or meeting) to identify one another’s best hopes and worst fears of using the practice profiles in supervision.
2. Make clear agreements about how often you will meet and for how long (e.g. once a month for two hours or every other week for one hour), and be explicit about how this will be used internally. Workers will be more open and vulnerable if they trust this won’t be used against them as part of a performance appraisal.
3. Lastly, follow the steps below to identify the specific goals of the caseworker seeking to assess and deepen his/her SOP skill level:

WHAT ARE THE STEPS FOR GOAL SETTING WITH EACH WORKER? (CONTENT)

- 1) Once agreements are clear, supervisors and workers should walk through the profiles together to determine the key areas of interest to the worker and supervisor (e.g. use of Three Questions with families, crafting Harm/Danger Statements, Three Houses with children).
- 2) Outline measurable skills/behaviors the worker will integrate into practice over a specified amount of time rather than seek strategy usage on every case.

Examples:

- a. Use Three Questions with caregivers on 5 cases in next 30 days.
- b. Do the Three Houses with 2 children or sibling groups in next 2 weeks.
- c. Do Safety Circles activity to expand the network with one family by next Friday.

HOW DO I MEASURE PROGRESS? (FEEDBACK & NEXT STEPS)

- It is best to begin by having the worker reflect on what s/he did well since you last met, and what s/he would like to do differently going forward (Ask the worker to do a current rating based on projected goals. For example, she wanted to reach a level 5, but may have done some work at a level 6.).
- Share what you observed that was aligned with the goals set and what, if anything, you would encourage the worker to try next time.
- Ask the worker to set goals to achieve the originally set skill level (if not yet achieved), or to set new practice goals to move skill level targets up by one like you did last time.
- Congratulate the worker on progress to date! Keep the focus on what is working well and celebrate the small successes as you go.