

MAPPING WITH FAMILIES¹

Questions You Can Use



SAFETY is:
ACTIONS OF PROTECTION TAKEN BY THE CAREGIVER THAT
MITIGATE THE DANGER, DEMONSTRATED OVER TIME.²

1. This handout is based on work by Steve DeShazer, Insoo Kim Berk, Andrew Turnell, Sonja Parker, The Massachusetts Child Welfare Institute and Interactive Associates.

2. Adapted from Boffa, J., and Podesta, H.(2004) Partnership and Risk assessment in the child protection practice, Protecting Children, 19(2): 36-48. Turnell, Andrew and Susie Essex Working with Denied Child Abuse, Open University Press, 2006

Step 1 – EXPLORE PAST HARM WHAT ARE WE WORRIED ABOUT³

Opening

- There has been a report of concerns about your child that said...
- What do you think led to CPS getting involved with your family?
- What have you heard about why your child was removed?

Behavioral details

- When did that(harmful event) happen?
- Can you tell what happened that day?
- How did you respond when it happened?
- How long has this been going on?
- What was the first, worst and most recent time this happened?

Impact on the child

- Where were the children when this was happening?
- DO you think X(harmful event) is affecting your child in any way?
- Do you every worry about X? When do you most worry? What is happening when you are worried?

Step 1 – EXPLORE PAST HARM WHAT ARE WE WORRIED ABOUT³

Impact on the child(cont.)

- If your child was here right now, what would he/she say X does to him/her?
- Do you think X might be affecting him/her at school?
- Do you think X might be affection how he/she makes friends?
- Does X ever come between you and your child?
- Does (collateral) think X is affecting your child in any way?
- Does(family member) think X is affecting your child in any way?
- On a school of 0-10 with 10 being your child was totally safe when X happened and 0 being your child was in a lot of danger and could have been really hurt, where would you say things were when that (harmful event) happened?
- What would your child say if he/she was here?

3. The answers to these questions can be used to score SDM Safety Assessment and Probability Assessment Tools.

Step 2 – EXPLORE WHAT IS WORKING WELL? SEARCHING FOR SAFETY AND STRENGTHS⁴

Opening

- What do you think is working well in your family?
- What are you most proud of in your family?
- What do you see in your children that makes you most proud?
- What is your family like at your best?
- If the kids were here right now, what would they say is going well in your family?
- What would they say they are most proud of in you? In themselves?
- Who else knows you or your family really well? What would they say is going really well?
- What do you think I see working well?
- Can I tell you what I see working well?

Searching for Exceptions/Past Example of Safety

- Has there ever been a time when (the problem) could have happened – almost did happen – but somehow you were able to do something different?

Step 2 – EXPLORE WHAT IS WORKING WELL? SEARCHING FOR SAFETY AND STRENGTHS⁴

Searching for Exceptions/Past Example of Safety (cont.)

- Can you tell me about a time you were able to manage (the problem) in a way that you felt good about it?
- What are you already doing to help keep your children safe and respond to the concerns?
- Tell me about a time you were able to look after your kids even though you were dealing with other more difficult things?
- Can you tell me about a time when you were really angry with the kids but rather than hitting them you were able to find a way to calm yourself down?
- Can you tell me about a time you both were really pissed off with each other but rather than yelling or hitting each other in front of the kids you were able to do something to keep it away from the kids or sort it out so it didn't blow up?

4. The answers to these questions can be used to complete the Protective Capacities portion of the Safety Assessment and the FSNA.

Step 2 – EXPLORE WHAT IS WORKING WELL? SEARCHING FOR SAFETY AND STRENGTHS⁴

Searching for Exceptions/Past Example of Safety (cont.)

- Can you think of a time you were going to use drugs but either did something to make sure the kids were looked after first or made another decision about using altogether?

Behavioral Details of Exceptions

- When did that (exception) happen?
- How did you do that? (Specific details of exception).
- Can you tell me about what happened that day?
- When was it? Where were you? Who else was around?
- Suppose I was a fly on the wall when this was happening – what would I have seen you do?
- What was the first, worst and most recent time this happened? Impact of exceptions on the children

Step 2 – EXPLORE WHAT IS WORKING WELL? SEARCHING FOR SAFETY AND STRENGTHS⁴

Impact of the exceptions on the children

- What do you think your children would say they like best about the fact that you took this step?
- Do any (family members/friends) know you took this step? What kind of difference would they say it made to the children?
- On a scale of 0-10 with 10 being your child was totally safe when X happened and 0 being your child was in a lot of danger and could have been really hurt, where would you say things were when that (exception) happened?
- What is helping you keep that number was high as you have been able to?

Identifying Network

- Who/what else may have helped you do that?
- Who else knows you were able to take this step?
- Who from your life would be least surprised at your ability to take these steps?
- What would your best friend say about how you are doing this?

4. The answers to these questions can be used to complete the Protective Capacities portion of the Safety Assessment and the FSNA.

Step 2 – EXPLORE WHAT IS WORKING WELL? SEARCHING FOR SAFETY AND STRENGTHS⁴

Coping

- What have you been going through is not easy. How do you think you have survived as long as you have? What is keeping you going?
- Given everything we have talked about, how do you think you have managed to keep things from getting worse?

Close

- Of all the things you are doing to take care of the children, what do you think you are doing that is most protecting the kids?
- What would your children say pleases them most about what you are doing?
- What do you think I or my supervisor are going to be pleased with?

4. The answers to these questions can be used to complete the Protective Capacities portion of the Safety Assessment and the FSNA.

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STEP 3 – WHAT ARE WE WORRIED ABOUT? EXPLORING FUTURE DANGER

Opening

- Of all the things we have talked about today, which are you most worried about happening in the future?
- Of all the things we have talked about today, which do you think the children are most worried about happening in the future?
- Of all the things we have talked about today, which do you think I am most worried about going forward?
- What do you think the report might be most worried about happening in the future?
- On a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 being “my child is totally safe now” and 10 being “my child is in a lot of danger now” where do you think things are?
- What do you think is getting in the way of the number being even higher? What do you think the potential of future impact on your child may be?

Potential Future Impact on the Children

- What do you think will happen in your family if nothing else changes?

STEP 3 – WHAT ARE WE WORRIED ABOUT? EXPLORING FUTURE DANGER

Identifying Network

- Does anyone else in your family worry about what might happen to your family or to the kids in the future if nothing changes?
- Do any of your friends worry about this?
- Do any collaterals worry about this?
- What do you think they worry will happen to the kids if more of X occurs?

Close

- Can I take a minute and tell you how we at CPS are trying to think these days?(explain harm, danger, and complicating factors)
- We have a way of summing up these kinds of things called a “danger statement.” Can I share it with you and see what you think
- On a scale of 0 to 10 where 10 means that the danger statement really describes something that worries you too, and 0 is you think I am really off base, how do you scale this?

STEP 4 – WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NEXT? DEVELOPING GOALS⁵

Family Goals

- Ten years from now, what would you like your child's story to be about this time? What do you think need to happen in order for your child to be able to tell that story?
- It's clear from what you have said that you are not happy with how things are going. How would you like things to be instead?
- Given all we have talked about, what is your biggest hope for what could be different in your life? What is the least that could happen that would still leave you feeling like you had accomplished something important?

Agency Goals

- Given all we have talked about, what do you think are the next steps we need to take in order to ensure your child is safe?
- Which of the danger statements do you think is most important for us to deal with first?

STEP 4 – WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NEXT? DEVELOPING GOALS⁵

Agency Goals (cont.)

- We have a format for talking about goals that our agency feels is important called a “safety goal.” It’s also going to move us into a conversation about who else needs to be a part of our work together. Can I show you what this goal format looks like and can we do some thinking about who else needs to be involved?
- What do you think you will need to see in yourself in order to take these steps?
- What will you need from others?
- Who would be good to talk to about this?
- When you start making these changes, who will see them? First? Second?

5. The answers to these questions can be used when you complete the FSNA and begin formulating the case plan

STEP 4 – WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NEXT? DEVELOPING GOALS⁵

On Networks

- Moving toward these kinds of goals is hard work, and often requires help. You know the phrase “It takes a village?” Who from your community would be important for us to invite to these meetings to help you move in the direction we have been talking about?

On Services

- Do you think going to Y(service) might do anything to address the danger statement? What do you think it might do?
- If I were to suggest you go to Y(service) what do you think I might be hoping would be different as a result?
- By going to Y(service), what are you hoping will change about safety for your child?

STEP 4 – WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NEXT? DEVELOPING GOALS⁵

On Small Steps

- Suppose we meet for a coffee a few years from now and all the problems we have talked about, specifically the danger statement, have been taken care of
 - What do you think you would have done to achieve this? Who or what will have helped you make that possible? How will I have contributed?

On First Steps

- What will have been the first step you took?
- What difference will it make in your life?
- How will it affect your children if you take that step?
- Will that be enough to keep your children safe/address the danger statement?
- Will I think it is enough?

5. The answers to these questions can be used when you complete the FSNA and begin formulating the case plan

STEP 4 – WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NEXT? DEVELOPING GOALS⁵

On First Steps (cont.)

- Now that you have made up your mind to stop doing X, how long do you think it will be before you take action on it?
- On a scale of 0 to 10 with 10 being “my child is totally safe now,” and 0 being “my child is in a lot of danger now,” where do you think things are?
- If we keep working at this and a month from now that danger/safety scale number has improved by one number, what do you think will concretely be different in your family?
- If I were a fly on the wall and saw you taking that step, what would I see? What actions will you or others be taking differently?
- What services will be in place?
- What will you be doing differently as a result?

STEP 4 – WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NEXT? DEVELOPING GOALS⁵

Confirming Direction/Monitoring

- What would tell you that you were on the right track?
- How would you know you have reached this goal and your child is safe?
- What would tell me that you were on the right track? How will I or my supervisor know you have reached this goal and your child is safe?
- Who will be the first people to notice a change?
- What will they see?
- What will you see?
- What would your kids notice?
- What would I notice?

5. The answers to these questions can be used when you complete the FSNA and begin formulating the case plan