



Overview of Signs of Safety

April 2018

Please note: these slides are available to read as an introductory overview of Signs of Safety, and have been agreed by Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council & Rutland County Council.



What is Signs of Safety?



Signs of Safety.....

- Is a strengths based approach which is used **alongside** exploring danger and risks to the child.
- Is grounded in the principles of **participation, partnership and collaboration.**
- Was developed in Australia by Andrew Turnell & Steve Edwards in 1990's
- Is an internationally and nationally recognised credible model for working **with** families.
- Offers improved outcomes, and increased engagement with children and families.
- Has been adopted by Leicester City, Leicestershire & Rutland Local Authorities



Core principles.....

- **Working relationships are critical:** with children, families, **safety networks** and professionals.
- **Critical thinking is key:** ongoing curiosity, questioning, reflection and analysis.
- **Staying grounded in day to day work** – realistic and achievable goals.

Signs of Safety.....

- **Supports engagement:** Working together **with** children, families and their '**safety network**' to focus on **building safety**, rather than **only** trying to eliminate danger.
- **Uses questioning techniques:** to help **understand** the family experiences and the impact on children.
- **Is evidenced based:** focussed on **behaviour and actions**.
- Provides a format to help **understand and think** through situations. (analysis)

Its about the child's lived experience being recognised and represented, ensuring that they are central to all actions – and considering the impact on the child throughout.

Signs of Safety.....

- It's doing '**with**', not doing '**to**'.
- **Protection and safety** is not down to one person or just the parents: *It's about how the **network** can keep the child safe/or reduce harm to the child, whether the parent changes their behaviour or not.*
- **Working together** with children, families & their network in a 'signs of safety' way is about how staff use their skills, techniques and tools to support the 'network' around the family in creating a '**safety plan**' that *keeps the child safe even when times are difficult.*
- **Family strength v safety:** a strength is only considered a safety factor, if it has actually demonstrated the provision of safety for the child consistently over an agreed period of time.

Signs of 'Something'

This approach for working with families can be applied to different circumstances.....

Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland use/will use....

- Signs of **Safety** (used in child protection & safeguarding situations)
- Signs of **Wellbeing** (Early Help – where a child needs support)
- Signs of **Success** (when children are looked after or in education settings etc.)

The principles, techniques and approach can be applied to a range of different situations.



Who will use the Signs of Safety approach?

- Children, families and community networks.
- Leicester City, Leicestershire and Rutland County Council workforce.
- Partners in the children's, adult's and wider workforce.

Any individual that is involved in supporting a child can use Signs of Safety. (The approach allows **all** involved to contribute in discussion, questions, identifying risks/worries and strengths and planning for the child).



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How are the Local Authorities using Signs of Safety approach?



- The 3 Local authorities have adopted Signs of Safety and are using the licenced approach to support a change in practice. *The local authorities have access to licensed trainers, consultants, tools and materials to support them in this work.*
- Implementation of this approach is large scale and gradual and will take a number of years to embed fully into day to day practice.
- All of this work is underpinned by research and best practice.
- The Local Authorities have agreed to work collaboratively where possible to support common aims and goals across Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland.

Leicestershire: Currently implementing and using the approach

Rutland: Continuing to embed the approach

Leicester City: Planning and implementing the approach



Signs of Safety is underpinned by the use of....



- Straightforward **understanding** and **description** of the worries.
- **Clear Goals:** what do we need to see to be assured that the worry is addressed?
- **Observable behaviour:** actions and behaviour of people in the network around the child that provides the necessary safety.

What might you notice that is different in practice.....



- **In the referral/assessment process:** you may be asked more specific questions about **what** you see and **how** you know there is an impact on the child. You may also be asked about times **when it has not been so worrying** and **what might have made the difference** at that point...
- More questions around **what professionals need to see** in future behaviours and actions, to know that the child is safer.
- **Scaling Questions:** You will notice an increased use of scaling techniques to help evaluate progress.



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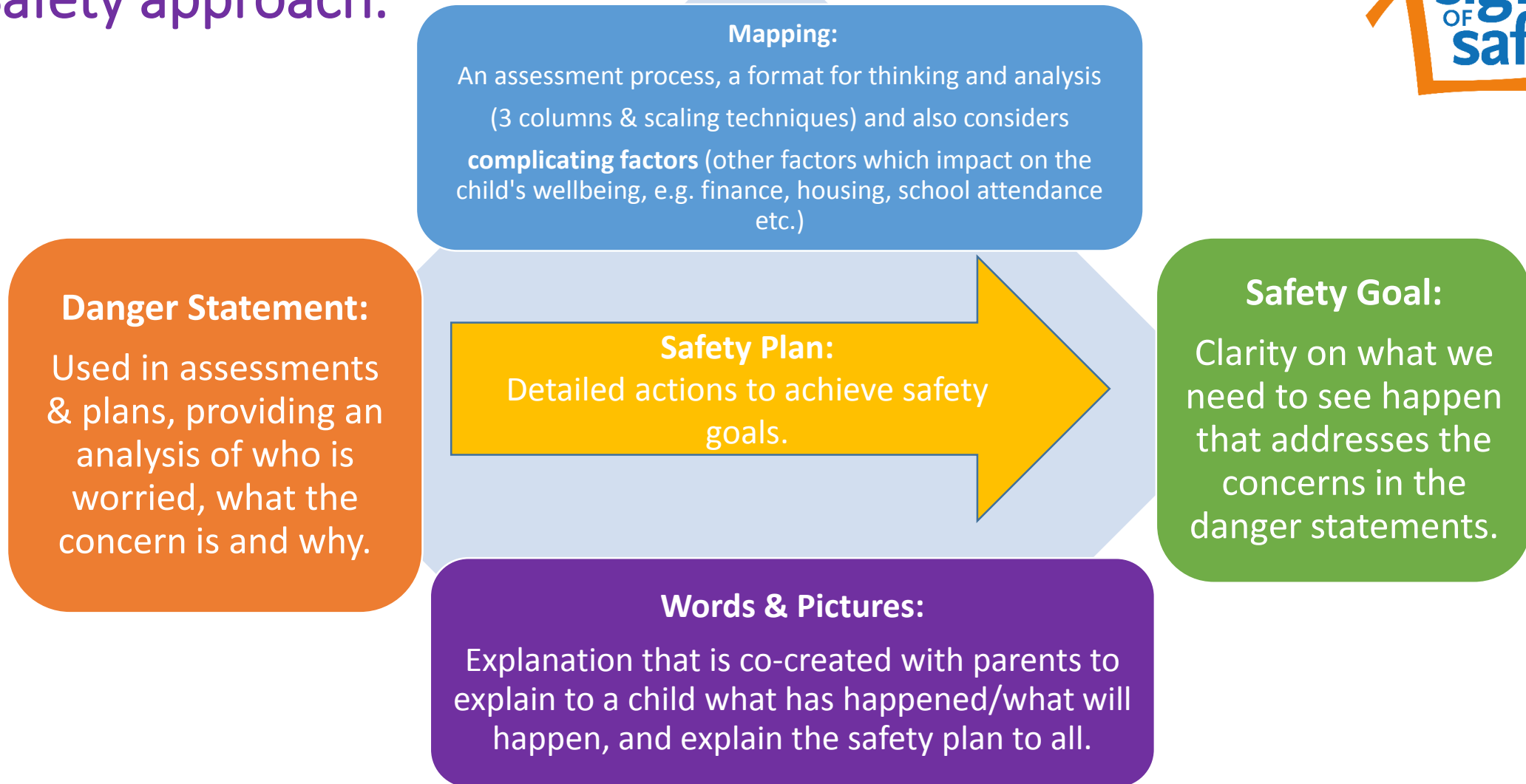
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What might you notice that is different in practice....



- **Change in approach: the format, recording and processes for multi agency work may 'look' and 'feel' different:** Conferences, reviews, meetings, referrals etc. have started to/will use different styles and questioning approaches, which promotes increased participation for all involved. This may include a mapping process (see next 2 slides).
- **Child Protection Conferences:** in Leicestershire & Rutland you will notice information is written on a board in front of the group – the approach allows greater participation of the parents/family/child. (Leicester City are at the planning stage)
- **Signs of Safety terminology/wording:** in plans, assessments, referrals. You might see 'danger/worries statements'/safety/wellbeing goals.
- A range of tools to support engagement and direct work with children and families.
- An increased focus on **family and community networks** to support children.

Overview of the Signs of Safety approach.



Mapping (3 Columns) & Scaling: 'a format for thinking and analysis'



1. LIST ALL THE THINGS YOU AND OTHERS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT AND EVERYTHING THAT IS POSITIVE

3. DECIDE AND LIST EVERYTHING THAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN

WHAT ARE WE WORRIED ABOUT?	WHAT'S WORKING WELL?	WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PAST HARM ▪ FUTURE DANGER ▪ COMPLICATING FACTORS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EXISTING STRENGTHS ▪ EXISTING SAFETY FACTORS ▪ EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DESIRED OUTCOMES ▪ WHAT DO YOU NEED TO SEE TO BE SATISFIED THAT THIS CHILD IS SAFE ENOUGH THAT WE WILL END OUR INVOLVEMENT?
<p>LOOK AT SPECIFIC, OBSERVABLE BEHAVIOUR USE PLAIN LANGUAGE</p>	<p>LOOK AT SPECIFIC, OBSERVABLE BEHAVIOUR USE PLAIN LANGUAGE</p>	<p>USE PLAIN LANGUAGE</p>

2. SCALE THE CURRENT RISK TO THE CHILD WHERE 0 MEANS CERTAIN ABUSE AND 10 MEANS THE CHILD IS TOTALLY SAFE



Mapping & Scaling:

Signs of Safety approach uses the mapping process using the 3 columns and scaling questions.

It is being used/will be used in a range of meetings and settings (e.g. conferences, core groups, Family Group Meetings, group supervisions etc.)

- **What are we worried about?** (Past, current and future harm/danger) *used to explore risk/harm.*
- **What's working well?** (Strengths and safety) *to establish strengths and support engagement.*
- **What needs to happen?** (Safety/wellbeing goals) *to support planning.*
- **How worried are we?** (Scaling techniques) *to establish different views*

These processes allows **all** involved to contribute to the assessment process to support families.

Locally.....



- The 3 local authorities are working closely with LSCB's to support partner agencies in being able to contribute to multi agency assessment processes.
- The LSCB will review policies, procedures and forms – to reflect a Signs of Safety approach.
- The **LSCB Trainers Network** offers support for local trainers which will include information about the Signs of Safety approach.
- Partner agencies have successfully been involved in using the Signs of Safety approach to support multi agency assessments.

The approach and the questions are applied in a way that allows all to be able to contribute to assessments, with or without formal awareness raising training or awareness.





Find out more about Signs of Safety

Introduction to Signs of Safety including a You Tube clip.....

<https://www.signsofsafety.net/signs-of-safety/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6WYm4F9mik>

Useful Research & Reports:

<https://www.signsofsafety.net/research/>

‘You can’t grow roses in concrete’ 2017 <http://munroturnellmurphy.com/eip-report/>

DFE evaluation of Signs of Safety in 10 pilots July 2017

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/625376/Evaluation_of_Signs_of_Safety_in_10_pilots.pdf



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Local Authority Contacts....

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Intranet page for Leicester City Council Staff Only
<http://interface.lcc.local/our-organisation/education-and-childrens-services/signs-of-safety/>

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