

Summary Process for using the SAFETY PLANNING FRAMEWORK

1. The *Safety Planning Framework* is used as part of the safety planning process AFTER a comprehensive assessment has been undertaken with the family and the danger statements and safety goals have been identified. The more that the family and their safety network are involved in understanding/developing the danger statements and in developing the safety goals to address these dangers, the more likely it is that the detailed family safety plan will be achievable and relevant to the family.
2. The family, safety network and professionals then work together, using the *Safety Planning Framework*, to proceed from the danger statements and safety goals toward the detailed family safety plan. This may involve one or two initial family safety planning meetings just with the parents and then a number of subsequent family safety planning meetings with the parents, the children if they are old enough and the safety network, to develop the detailed family safety plan.
3. At the first family safety planning meeting, provide everyone with a blank copy of the *Safety Planning Framework* with the danger statements and safety goals written on the first page. The facilitator can either draw each relevant page up on a whiteboard, on large sheets of paper on the wall or for small groups, use large sheets of paper on the table. It can also be helpful to provide people with a copy of a blank *Safety Planning Framework* prior to the first meeting, with the danger statements and safety goals written on the first page and each of the safety goals, non-negotiables and guiding questions on the subsequent safety goal pages, so that people can think through their ideas and prepare for the meeting.
4. The front page is used to introduce the *Safety Planning Framework* and to ensure that everyone is clear about the danger statements and safety goals. Family members and perhaps some of the safety network will have been involved in the development of these safety goals, but the facilitator may need to clarify the danger statements and safety goals for those members of the safety network who are not yet familiar with these.
5. The facilitator asks the group which safety goal they would like to start with and then uses the 'safety goals' page of the *Safety Planning Framework* to develop the detailed safety rules for each of the safety goals, working through one safety goal at a time. Write the safety goal at the top of the whiteboard/sheet of paper and then work through each section of the page.

IMPORTANT SITUATIONS/TIMES OF THE DAY/WEEK:

Within the danger statements, any dangerous situations or circumstances will have been identified. This part of the *Safety Planning Framework* is used to list the worrying situations that are relevant for each safety goal, as well as any significant times/activities during the day and during the week that it is important to think about and to make sure the family safety plan covers. Ask the parents to look at the danger statements and safety goals and to identify the situations and times of the day/week that must be covered by the family safety plan. For example: If Mum and Dad decide to use drugs; when Mum and Dad get really angry with each other; when Dad gets really angry or frustrated with the children; when Mum starts to feel overwhelmed and depressed; getting the children to and from school; times when Mum is at work; times when one parent is sick; etc. These situations and times will be different for each family and may vary or be the same for each safety goal.

NON-NEGOTIABLES FOR EACH SAFETY GOAL

For each safety goal, there may be non-negotiables that the child protection agency has decided must be included in the safety plan. These may be things such as the children never being alone with a particular person; an agreed safe adult always supervising Mum and Dad's care of the children until everyone agrees that it is safe for the children to be alone with Mum and Dad, etc. Including the non-negotiables is important both to make sure that the agency has done this critical thinking, and also to provide transparency in the process.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR EACH SAFETY GOAL

As the family and safety network are thinking through what needs to be included in the safety plan, it helps to have some guiding questions from the child protection agency. This process of developing the guiding questions also provides an opportunity for the agency to think critically about the areas that the safety plan must cover. These questions can be considered as the 'What if ...' Questions. For example:

- *"What if Dad comes home drunk?"*
- *"What if the safety person gets sick?"*
- *"What if Mum and Dad get really angry with each other and start fighting?"*
- *"Who are the safe people who can look after the children if Mum and Dad are drinking?"*

SAFETY ACTIONS ALREADY HAPPENING

- *"What are the parents/caregivers already doing or what were they doing in the past that will help to meet this safety goal?"* **Get as much specific detail as possible.**
- Ask in relation to the identified situations or times in the family's life eg. *"What have Mum and Dad done in the past when they are using drugs to make sure that the kids are safe?"*

- Ask everyone to think about what the parents and family are already doing that could help to meet the non-negotiables.
- Ask the family and safety network to think through each of the guiding questions and to identify what the parents are already doing that would cover each of these questions.
- Continue asking: *“What else are the parents and/or family already doing that helps to meet this safety goal?”* until everyone’s ideas are exhausted.
- Use the scaling question to get everyone thinking about the extent to which these actions meet the safety goal all of the time. Ask everyone to scale and record their scaling position.

FUTURE SAFETY ACTIONS

- *“What else could the parents/caregivers do that will help to meet this safety goal or what else would you like to see them doing?”* **Again, get as much specific detail as possible.**
 - Continue asking: *“What else would you like to see them doing?”* and *“What else do you think they could do to meet this safety goal?”* to elicit everyone’s ideas.
 - Ask in relation to specific times or circumstances in the family’s life eg. *“Even though Mum and Dad are trying really hard not to use drugs, what about if they slip up and do use drugs, what do you want them to do at those times to make sure that the kids are safe?”*.
 - Ask everyone to think about what else the parents and family could do to meet the non-negotiables.
 - Ask the family and safety network to think through each of the guiding questions.
 - Ask circular questions such as *“What else do you think child protection services would need to see them doing to be confident that the kids will be safe?”* and *“If the children (or another significant person) was here, what would they say they would like Mum and Dad to be doing?”* until everyone’s ideas are exhausted.
 - Ask for the family’s and safety network’s ideas before you offer CPS’s ideas of what mum and Dad could do or what they have seen other families put into place.
 - Then use the scaling question to ask everyone to assess whether this is enough to meet the safety goal all of the time? Scale everyone’s views and continue asking *“What else could they be doing?”* and canvassing/offering ideas until everyone is at a 10.
6. Continue working in this way through each of the safety goals. It is common to cover about one safety goal per meeting. If while you are working on one safety goal, ideas arise for a different safety goal, record these ideas on the page for that safety goal and then return to the first safety goal. After each meeting, have someone make copies or type up what was developed during the meeting so that everyone has a record of the work as it progresses.

7. When all of the safety goals have been covered and detailed safety rules developed to each safety goal, use the 'Putting the Safety Plan into Action' page of the *Safety Planning Framework* to explore how the family will show everyone that the family safety plan is working, what everyone will do if there are problems, how the family safety plan will be presented to the children, and how the family safety plan might need to be changed as the children get older or the family's circumstances change. Once everyone has thought this through and their ideas have been recorded in boxes A – D, the ideas are then written as safety rules in language that the children can understand. Working through this part of the process will usually take one and possibly two family safety planning meetings. Again if ideas about these aspects of the family safety plan arise while exploring each of the safety goals, record this on the final page so that the ideas are not lost and then return to this later.
8. All of the safety rules, from each of the safety goal pages and the final page, are then combined to form the detailed safety plan. This can either be done in the meeting with the whole group or some people can do this work in between meetings. Everyone is then given a copy of the draft safety plan and the whole group goes through this together to ensure that:
 - The safety rules are enough to meet all of the safety goals, all of the time.
 - The areas (A-D) on the final page have all been covered and included in the safety plan.
 - The safety rules are clear and written in language the children can understand.
9. The final safety plan is then presented to the children (as agreed within the safety planning meetings) and the children do drawings to the safety plan rules. Copies of the family safety plan with the children's drawings are then provided to all of the relevant people.
10. The use of the *Safety Planning Framework* to develop the detailed family safety plan is now complete and the critical process of monitoring and reviewing the safety plan begins. The family, safety network and professionals continue to meet together on a regular basis (as detailed in the safety plan) to review how the safety plan is working. The Monitoring/Reviewing tool can be used to elicit everyone's views on how the safety plan is working. Everyone works together to refine and strengthen the safety plan to address any concerns. In between meetings, child protection services may also check in with the children, the parents and the safety network to explore how the safety plan is working.
11. When everyone (parents, children, professionals and safety network) are confident that the safety plan is working and that it is safe for child protection services to withdraw, the monitoring of the safety plan is then handed over to the child's safety network.