

EVIDENT CHANGE
Inform Systems. Transform Lives.

SOP DEEP DIVE MODULE 3: HARM, WORRY, AND GOAL STATEMENTS


THE GEMS OF CLARITY IN SAFETY-ORGANIZED PRACTICE

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Evident Change partners with systems professionals and communities to get to the root of their biggest challenges, and gives them the tools and knowledge to achieve better outcomes for everyone involved. Because when we join forces with those who work in our systems and the people they serve, we make our systems—and our society—more equitable from the inside out.

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**LAND
ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

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**WELCOME AND
INTRODUCTIONS**

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**REVIEW AND
REFLECT**

- What have you tried from the last module?
- What worked well? What were the challenges?
- How did you handle those challenges?



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SHARED AGREEMENTS

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EXERCISE: REMINDE ME AGAIN

Respond to the following questions in chat



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GETTING STARTED

Think of a family whose situation you know that has been involved with DCFS for at least six months.

- How confident are you that you can state exactly why the family is involved with DCFS?
- How confident are you that the family understands and can state exactly why they are involved with DCFS?

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GETTING STARTED

- How confident are you that you can state exactly what the family needs to do differently so that you will know the child is safe?
- How confident are you that the family understands and can state what needs to happen so that everyone knows their child is safe?



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GEMS OF CLARITY



- Harm statements
- Worry statements
- Goal statements

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WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?



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HARM STATEMENTS




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HARM STATEMENTS


Clear, specific statements about the harm/maltreatment that has happened to the child. Details, not judgment!




It was reported



What caregiver actions/inaction



Impact on the child



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PRACTICE: CREATE A HARM STATEMENT

Use the following scenario to create a harm statement.

Law enforcement found three children in an apartment alone after a neighbor called for a welfare check due to hearing consistent crying and not receiving an answer when she knocked on the door. Timmy (age 1) and Tyler (age 3) appeared extremely underweight for their ages (hospital confirmed that Timmy is "failure to thrive" [FTT] and Tyler is malnourished). Sammy (age 5) had a burn on her hand from trying to make ramen noodles for herself and her brothers. Sammy said she had not seen her mom for several days and could not remember the last time they ate. Their mom was found several apartments over and was passed out from using heroin.

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WORRY STATEMENTS

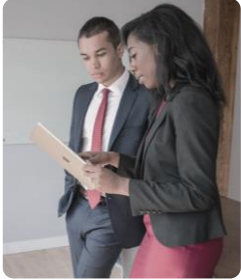
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TWO QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY THE WORRY STATEMENT

- What is the agency most worried will happen to the child if nothing changes?
- When or in what context are they most worried this could happen?

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WORRY STATEMENT USES

- Worry statements clearly identify what DCFS is worried may happen if enhanced actions of protection are not taken by the family and safety network.
- Sharing worry statements with the family (and within the agency) increases focus on key issues so that the family can make changes and demonstrate their actions of protection. This can also prevent "casework drift."

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WORRY STATEMENTS

Simple behavioral statements of the specific worry we have about this child now and for the future.



Child

may be



Impacted how?

if/when



Context



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CRAFTING THE STATEMENTS



- Use the formula
- Look for behavioral detail
- Use the family's language
- Consider the impact on the child
- Make sure all concerns are listed



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WORRY STATEMENTS

ADDRESSING OUR MANDATE



Safety/danger focus



Permanency focus



Well-being focus



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Safety/danger focus ● Created on every applicable open case.

Permanency focus ● Created whenever we bring a child into care or are considering it.

Well-being focus ● Created if well-being concerns negatively impact the child.

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SAMPLE WORRY STATEMENTS FOR WELL-BEING

Well-Being Focus <i>Education</i>	Thomas, age 12, could worry about his mother, get distracted from his schoolwork, and fail this grade if his father continues to use coercive control and violence against his mother.
Well-Being Focus <i>Hygiene Neglect</i>	Martina, age 7, could continue to be bullied at school if her mother's depression remains untreated and she cannot help meet Martina's hygiene needs (showering, clean clothes, brushing teeth).
Well-Being Focus <i>Dental Neglect</i>	Michael, age 2, could continue having dental issues that may cause serious health issues if his parents continue giving him juice and cannot brush his teeth and get him regular dental care.

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OLDER YOUTH: TRIAGING DANGERS AND ACCOMPANYING WORRY STATEMENTS

Physical Injury/Death

Pregnancy/Sexually Transmitted Infections

Academic/Employment Decline/Failure

Social and Emotional Harm

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DCFS IS WORRIED THAT . . .

John may be physically injured (taken advantage of, robbed, or beaten) or killed when he runs away from the program and lives on the street.

Annabeth may become pregnant or contract a sexually transmitted infection when she has unprotected sex.

Henry may begin to decline or fail academically when he skips school or is suspended from school.

Kira may be socially or emotionally harmed (sad, confused, or struggle to make connections) without the stability of enduring relationships in her life.

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THE VALUE OF WORRY STATEMENTS

- Enhance clarity in our own critical thinking as we consider cases.
- Greater clarity as families move from one unit to another.
- Help facilitate discussions between supervisor and worker, manager and supervisor, and perhaps even legal and clinical professionals.
- This is a process, not an event, and can be refined or added to over time.



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WORRY STATEMENT TIPS

- Be real. If you “raise the stakes,” do not get carried away.
- Write them in honest, detailed, nonjudgmental just-the-facts language that is accessible across cultures.
- If no past harm has occurred, the risk is about what is *likely* to happen based on pattern and history.
- Use the selected SDM safety assessment items to create worry statements to address each item.



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LINKING WORRY STATEMENT AND RISK LEVEL

Worry Statement
What exactly are we worried about?

Risk Level
How worried should we be?

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WHAT IF PEOPLE DO NOT AGREE?

- These are agency worries. It is okay if parents or other important people disagree. Ensure that agency worries are clear and understandable.
- If parents offer another explanation for an injury/event, you can list their worry as well. **Discrepant explanation** worry statements can help with “buy-in” and develop a better working relationship in some situations.
- The presence of discrepant explanations can be understood as a complicating factor (for the agency), and the alternate context of risk would be developed as an additional worry statement.

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WHAT IF PEOPLE DO NOT AGREE?

- Kate may be seriously physically hurt again or killed if Tom becomes so frustrated and overwhelmed that he shakes her. (**Safety—primary agency worry**)
- Kate may be seriously physically hurt again or killed if she falls in the home. (**Safety—discrepant explanation**)

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PRACTICE: CREATE A WORRY STATEMENT

Use the following scenario to create a worry statement:

Law enforcement found three children in an apartment alone after a neighbor called for a welfare check due to hearing consistent crying and not receiving an answer when she knocked on the door. Timmy (age 1) and Tyler (age 3) appeared extremely underweight for their ages (hospital confirmed that Timmy is FTT and Tyler is malnourished). Sammy (age 5) had a burn on her hand from trying to make ramen noodles for herself and her brothers. Sammy said she had not seen her mom for several days and could not remember the last time they ate. Their mom was found several apartments over and was passed out from using heroin.

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GOAL STATEMENTS

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THE "WHAT" OF ENHANCING SAFETY

- Every case needs clear, well-formed goals that allow the agency to believe safety is sufficient to either leave a child in the home while casework continues or close the case.
- Too often, we ask clients to engage in services without defining the goals. Even if clients follow through with services, workers might not believe the dangers were addressed.
- Goal statements could be part of the family service plan. Be specific with each family.

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GOAL STATEMENTS

Clear, simple statements about what the parent will do to convince everyone the child is safe now and will be in the future.



Child



What will be done differently



To address the danger?

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GOAL STATEMENTS FOR OLDER YOUTH

John will work with his network to build up his coping skills so that he will be able to stay at the program even when he becomes overwhelmed.

Annabeth will always use protection when engaging in sexual activity.

Henry and his network will create a plan that allows him to apply the coping skills that work best for him so he can remain in school.

Kira will build and maintain long-term relationships so she always has someone to rely on for emotional support.

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WHAT HAPPENS WITHOUT A WELL-FORMED GOAL STATEMENT?

- Services are mistaken for safety
- Intervention drift
- Lack of motivation to make hard changes
- Hard to measure progress



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GOAL STATEMENT TIPS

-  Ensure they directly relate to the worry statement
-  Be specific and describe what we expect the parents to do differently rather than what we expect to stop
-  Craft goal statements collaboratively whenever possible
-  Write them in straightforward, measurable language



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GOAL STATEMENT TIP: AVOID "MANNEQUIN" GOALS

Mannequin Goals

- Billy will not be left home alone by Mr. Smith.
- Billy will not be hit by Mr. Smith again.

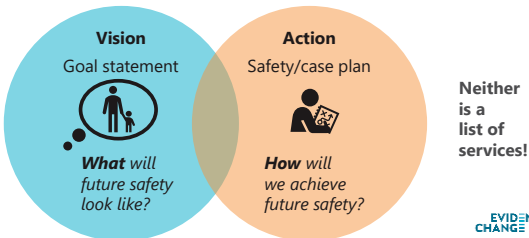
Well-Formed Goals

- Billy will always be looked after by a supportive and safe adult when Mr. Smith is not able to be home with him.
- Billy will always be disciplined by caring adults in safe and respectful ways that teach him and do not injure him or involve punching, hitting, or kicking.



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CONNECTING GOAL STATEMENTS AND PLANS



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HOW DO YOU KNOW "HOW LONG"?

Let the SDM risk assessment help!

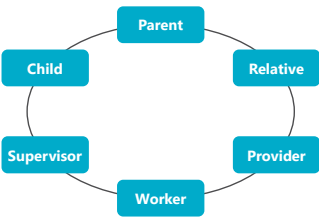


- Risk level is high or very high
- Smaller safety network
- Less history of past protection
- More evidence of change efforts that did not last
- More vulnerable child

- Risk level is low or moderate
- Strong safety network
- Long history of past protection
- History of past successful change efforts
- Less vulnerable child

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HOW DO YOU DETERMINE HOW LONG?



Ask the people who know and care about the child!

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PRACTICE: CREATE A GOAL STATEMENT

Use the following scenario to create a goal statement:


Law enforcement found three children—Timmy (age 1), Tyler (age 3), and Sammy (age 5)—in an apartment alone after a neighbor called for a welfare check due to hearing consistent crying and not receiving an answer when she knocked on the door. Timmy and Tyler appeared extremely underweight for their ages (hospital confirmed that Timmy is FTT and Tyler is malnourished). Sammy had a burn on her hand from trying to make ramen noodles for herself and her brothers. Sammy said she had not seen her mom for several days and could not remember the last time they ate. Their mom was found several apartments over and was passed out from using heroin.

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LINKING GOAL STATEMENTS TO WORRY STATEMENTS




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PRACTICE: PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

In your breakout rooms, create a harm statement, worry statement, and goal statement using the information in the scenario in your participant guide.




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EXERCISE PART 1: WHAT IS IN THIS FOR ME?



In the large group, brainstorm any **potential downside** (or risks) of creating clear, straightforward statements about:

- What already happened—Harm Statement
- What we are worried will happen next—Worry Statement
- What we hope happens instead —Goal Statement



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EXERCISE PART 2: WHAT IS IN THIS FOR ME?

In the large group, brainstorm the **benefits** of creating clear, straightforward statements about:

- What already happened—Harm Statement
- What we are worried will happen next—Worry Statement
- What we hope happens instead—Goal Statement



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USING HARM, WORRY, AND GOAL STATEMENTS WITH FAMILIES

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MOVING TO BEST PRACTICE

While creating harm statements, worry statements, and goal statements in the office is a great place to start, EXTRA VALUE comes when we can create these with families!



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THE VALUE OF COLLABORATIVELY MADE HARM, WORRY, GOAL STATEMENTS



- Increase family *clarity and understanding* of agency worries and goals.
- Involvement and inclusion of family builds *ownership* and more “buy-in” and commitment to change.
- It is important even in this attempt to engage the family and not to give up agency *bottom lines*.



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TIPS FOR FAMILY WORK

- Explain to the family that you want to be clear about the agency’s worries and goals.
- Be curious about family worries and goals—look for overlap.
- Be clear about agency “stakes in the ground,” or bottom lines.
- Be open to negotiating the wording—this is *their* family, and these statements are designed to galvanize *them* to create more safety—but *stick to the agency bottom lines*.



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BEST PRACTICE IN CREATING HARM, WORRY, AND GOAL STATEMENTS



1. Make sure the harm, worry, and risk goal statements represent the agency’s view.



2. Try sharing them and refining them with the family (while still holding to the bottom line).



3. Best practice is using your solution-focused questions to develop statements that both abide by agency bottom lines AND have family buy-in.



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QUESTIONS FOR FAMILIES THAT HELP FORM WORRY STATEMENTS

- What do you think I am worried about?
- What do you think your child is worried about?
- What do you think your partner or family might be worried about?
- What do you think my supervisor (or the judge) is worried about?



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QUESTIONS FOR FAMILIES THAT HELP FORM GOAL STATEMENTS

- Imagine that a year from now, the reasons we got involved with your family have been resolved.
 - » How would you describe your family? What would you be *doing* differently?
- Consider your child's wildest dreams, in which your family is thriving and happy.
 - » How would they describe your family? What would you all be doing differently?



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ELICITING THE CHILD'S VOICE FOR WORRY STATEMENTS AND GOAL STATEMENTS



- Three Houses
- Safety House

- What happened?
- What was the **impact**?
- What needs to happen for the child to feel safe?
- In the child's own words!



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AFTER DEVELOPING THESE STATEMENTS, RATE FAMILY AGREEMENT

On a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 is "This really matters" or "I really agree (with the worry/goal)," and 0 is "You are completely off base/wrong," where would you place yourself?

Follow up with, "Why? Is there anything we could do to go up by one?"



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PRACTICE




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DOCUMENTATION

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DOCUMENTATION


- CHRIS
- Court reports
- Affidavits
- Case plans
- Preparing to testify
- Submitting referrals
- Communicating with providers



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IDEAS FOR USING DANGER STATEMENTS AND SAFETY GOALS

- Write them on the first page of the case plan.
- Write them in court reports as an opening statement.



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A. CAREPLAN IDENTIFIED NEED OR STRENGTH

1. SUBJECT

ISSUES:

PLANS TO ADDRESS THE IDENTIFIED NEED/STRENGTH:


B. CAREPLAN IDENTIFIED NEED OR STRENGTH

1. DISRUPTION IN CAREGIVER

ISSUES:


PLANS TO ADDRESS THE IDENTIFIED NEED/STRENGTH:

Notes	Responsibility	Due Date	Status	Notes Date
Parent/Therapist	Therapist/Parent	12-15-2021		



VENUES FOR CRAFTING OR SHARING

- At a parent's house or in the office
- In a TDM meeting
- In an internal case review meeting
- Or on a case plan



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TRY IT ON!

- Choose ONE family you work with and complete harm, worry, and goal statements
- To go even further, share the harm, worry, and goal statements with the family



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CHECK OUT THE THINGS TO TRY!



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WHAT'S NEXT . . .


- Upcoming trainings
- Coaching
- Other resources



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 What was most helpful?

 What could be upgraded for next time?

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THANK YOU & QUESTIONS

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