

Copenhagen Implementation of Signs of Safety

Between 2005 and 2008 the Borough of Copenhagen Child and Family Services undertook a three-year training and implementation project of Signs of Safety approach and Solution-focused Brief Therapy skills through all social services offices. This project involved training and supporting 380 workers in three successive, one-year programmes. The training and ongoing practitioner support was led by Henrik Vesterhauge-Petersen, Mette Vesterhauge-Petersen from the consultancy organisation Solution (www.solutionfocus.dk) and Lester Johannessen-Henry from Appreciate (www.appreciate.dk). Solution brought Andrew Turnell to Copenhagen each year to assist in the training. The project was independently evaluated by Tove Holmgård Sørensen interviewing 171 practitioners, which found the following data.

78 % of child protection practitioners involved in the project reported the training had changed their work with families with children at risk in the following ways:

- The approach provided more useful tools and skill set than previously available to the practitioner (75%)
- Increased their focus on the family's resources (72%)
- Increased their inclusion of family's strategies and solutions (55%)
- Practitioners gave families more responsibility (49%)
- Regular use of Signs of Safety at team meetings (79%)
- Used Signs of Safety framework together with families (69%)
- Used Signs of Safety framework at network meetings with other professionals (66%)

The practitioners reported that the training and use of the Signs of Safety and the solution-focused skills increased their sense of the professionalism and quality of their work in the following ways:

- More reflection on choice of strategies and methods for working together with families and other professionals
- Increased constructive communication with families
- Increased sharing of responsibility with families and colleagues
- Increased work in pairs
- Decreased sense of practitioner isolation in undertaking their work
- More engagement in their work
- Decreased feelings and sense of burn out

Full Reference is:

Holmgård Sørensen, T. (2009), *Familien I Centrum, Socialcentrenes Implementering af Løsningsfokuserede Metoder*, Mål og Rammekontoret for Børn og Familier, Socialforvaltningen, Københavns Kommune

