The Signs of Safety:
Mapping and Building Safety
The ‘south star’ (danger) and ‘north star’ (safety) training.

Dr Andrew Turnell
Resolutions Consultancy

© 2010 Andrew Turnell, aturnell@signsofsafety.net
For individual use only do not reproduce without permission

Artwork by Joelle Nicholson
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are we Worried About?</th>
<th>What’s Working Well?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety and Context Scale</strong></td>
<td><strong>Safety Scale</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Judgement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Context Scale</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency Goals</strong></td>
<td>What will the agency need to see occur to be willing to close this case?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Goals</strong></td>
<td>What does the family want generally and regarding safety?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immediate Progress</strong></td>
<td>What would indicate to the agency that some small progress had been made?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© 2019 Andrew Turnell and Steve Edwards
When we think about the situation facing this family:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are we Worried About?</th>
<th>What’s Working Well?</th>
<th>What Needs to Happen?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

On a scale of 0 to 10 where 10 means everyone knows the children are safe enough for the child protection authorities to close the case and zero means things are so bad for the children they can’t live at home, where do we rate this situation? (If different judgements place different people’s number on the continuum).

© 2010 Andrew Turnell, aturnell@signsofsafety.net  For individual use only do not reproduce without permission
Exercise

Think about a child/teenager in your life (NOT a young person you work with) who has a problem that you are worried about. Maybe they are having trouble reading or at school, maybe they are spending all their spare time playing computer games, maybe they are being bullied, maybe they are spending time with friends you think are a bad influence, maybe they hate their teacher. This child could be your own, your brothers, your best friends, your god child, your neighbours OR your inner child.
**Thinking about the child/teenager in your life that you feel worried about:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are you Worried About?</th>
<th>What’s Working Well?</th>
<th>What Needs to Happen?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STEP ONE: START HERE BACK AND FORWARDS</strong></td>
<td><strong>STEP TWO: JUDGEMENT</strong></td>
<td><strong>STEP THREE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What has happened, what have you seen, that makes you worried about this child/teenager?</td>
<td>What do you like about _______; what are his/her best attributes?</td>
<td>Having thought more about this problem now, what would you need to see that would make you satisfied the situation is a 10?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What words would you use to talk about this problem so that _______ would understand what you’re worried about?</td>
<td>Who are the people that care most about _______; what are the best things about how they care for _______;</td>
<td>What would _______ need to see that would make them say this problem is completely sorted out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you think about what has already happened to _______; what do you think is the worst thing that could happen to _______ because of this problem?</td>
<td>What would _______ say are the best things about his/her life?</td>
<td>What do you think is the next step that should happen to get this worry sorted out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there things happening in _______’s life or family that make this problem harder to deal with?</td>
<td>Who would _______ say are the most important people in his/her life? How do they help _______ grow up well?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has there been times when this problem has been dealt with or was even a little better? How did that happen?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**On a scale of 0 to 10 where 10 means everyone knows the children are safe enough for the child protection authorities to close the case and zero means things are so bad for the children they can’t live at home, where do we rate this situation? (If different judgements place different people’s number on the continuum).**

© 2010 Andrew Turnell, aturnell@signsofsafety.net For individual use only do not reproduce without permission
**Past Harm to Children**
and behaviour by children/young people that indicates maltreatment

**Future Danger for Children**

**Existing Strengths**

**Existing Safety/Protection** (must relate to danger)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety and Context Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety Scale: Given the danger and safety information, rate the situation on a scale of 0-10, where 0 means recurrence of similar or worse abuse/neglect is certain and 10 means that there is sufficient safety for the child to close the case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context Scale: Rate this case on a scale of 0-10, where 10 means this is not a situation where any action would be taken and 0 means this is the worst case of child abuse/neglect that the agency has seen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Agency Goals**
What will the agency need to see occur to be willing to close this case?

**Family Goals**
What does the family want generally and regarding safety?

**Immediate Progress**
What would indicate to the agency that some small progress had been made?

**Future Safety/Protection** (must relate to danger)

**'Next Steps'** (must relate to danger)
### Signs of Safety Assessment and Planning Form

**What are we Worried About?**

- **Judgement**
  - This is a questioning approach!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety and Context Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This case on a scale of 0-10, where 10 means this is not a situation where any action is needed and means this is the worst case of child abuse/neglect that the agency has seen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Agency Goals**
  - What will the agency need to do to be willing to close the case?

- **Family Goal**
  - What do they really want generally and regarding safety?

- **Immediate Progress**
  - What would indicate to the agency that some small progress had been made?

---

**What Needs to Happen?**

Your questions are your most important tools.
| **Elicit**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>First question</strong></th>
<th><strong>WORRIES</strong></th>
<th><strong>STRENGTHS</strong></th>
<th><strong>GOALS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Amplify**  
| **Behavioural detail:** what would you see? | What are we worried about?  
What harm has happened to any child in the care of these adults?  
What is the danger to this child if left in care of this mother?  
What makes this situation more complicated? | What’s working well here?  
What are the best attributes of this mum’s/dad’s parenting?  
What would the child say are the best times she has with her dad?  
When has the mum fought off the depression and be able to focus on the child? | What needs to happen?  
What do you need to see to be satisfied the child is safe enough and we can close the case?  
What would the mum say would show everyone the child can come home?  
Where would the teenager say he wants his life to be at 18? |
| **Reflect**  
| **Meaning** | When has that harm happened?  
How often, How bad?  
How did that incident effect the child?  
What language can we use to say that so the mum and child can easily understand?  
How long has this abuse been happening?  
Give me the first, worst and most recent examples of the abuse? | When has that good thing happened?  
How often?  
How did the mum fight off the depression?  
How else?  
Who does the father turn to for help?  
How does the neighbour help?  
How is the parenting programme making things better for the child?  
What did the dad do to make those contacts visits really enjoyable for his kids? | Describe the details of the behaviour you would want to see that would tell you this child is safe?  
How many people do you think should be involved in this safety plan?  
What is the father’s willingness/capacity to do this?  
Is this plan written in a way the child understand it?  
How will the mental health services involvement help make this plan work? |
| **Start over** | Which of the danger statements do you think is most important (or easiest) to deal with first?  
Which danger would worry the parents most?  
Of all the complicating factors which do you think is most important to deal with? | Which of the strengths are most useful in terms of getting this problem dealt with?  
Which aspects of their parenting/family life would mum and dad be most proud of? | Where do you rate the child’s safety with this mother on 0 to 10 scale?  
Is this a plan that the parents believe in?  
What confidence on a 0 to 10 scale would they say they have in it keeping the child safe?  
Are there any other important things that we have missed? |
| **Are there any other worries that we have missed?** | **Are there any other good things happening in this family that we have missed?** | **Are there any other important things that we have missed in the plan?** |

© 2010 Andrew Turnell, aturnell@signsofsafety.net  
For individual use only do not reproduce without permission
Exercise: Developing Good Danger Statements
South Star

Based on the information you have mapped specifically what you know of the harm/maltreatment develop danger statements for this case.

Danger statements need to distil the harm the professionals believe is likely to happen to these children if nothing in the family’s situation changes.

Needs to be based on past harm and not on catastrophic thinking

Danger statements need to be in simple straightforward language that make sense to family without minimising the seriousness

To develop danger statements that make most sense to family think about what would mum, dad, children’s worst fears could be.
Exercise: Developing Good Danger Statements

South Star

Based on the information you have mapped specifically what you know of the harm/maltreatment develop danger statements for this case.

Danger statements need to distill the harm/maltreatment professionals believe is likely to happen to these children in the future if the family's situation changes.

Needs to be based on past harm and not catastrophic thinking.

Danger statements need to be in simple straightforward language that make sense to family without minimising the seriousness.

To develop danger statements that make most sense to family think about what would mum, dad, children’s worst fears could be.

Not, we DID the signs of safety, but:

We are going on a journey to figure this problem out together with the family using the S of S as our map.
Developing Danger Statements

BJZD is worried that when Aaban and Aamir will go to prison if they continue threatening and humiliating other children and adults.

BJZD is worried that father is hitting Aaban and Aamir so hard that they are getting seriously hurt or even killed.

Miriam from BJZD is worried that because the father punched Aaban in the face and knocked him to the ground in front of the police and told them that he will kill Aaban, if he is stealing and arrested again, that Father doesn’t know any other ways to control Aaban except hitting or threatening him, that things could easily get out of control between father and Aaban where either of them could get very badly injured.

Miriam from BJZD is worried that Aaban and Aamir will keep fighting and bullying other kids, threatening and insulting teachers and they will not be able to go to school, get a good education, won’t get on with other kids and end up making a mess of their own lives and what they want.
Developing Danger Statements

The kindergarten teachers are worried that Karim and Fadila are behind in their language and social development.

The kindergarten teachers Mette and Matilda are worried that three year-old twins Karim and Fadila aren’t speaking Danish like all the other boys and girls their age and that if they don’t learn to speak better they won’t be able to learn properly and because they don’t talk much they won’t be able to be friends with the other kids and the other kids might treat them like they are stupid.
Developing Danger Statements

Harm Statement Factitious Illness Case

During a 24-hour period starting on August 23, video surveillance from the hospital found Marg withholding, replacing formula with water, or providing Bart with limited amounts of formula during 5 consecutive feedings. During these feedings, Marg reported to hospital staff that Bart had ate all formula given to her to feed Bart. At that time, Bart was developmentally delayed, had periods of weight gain and weight loss, and had gone through medical procedures that were not needed. After ruling out all other medical conditions, reviewing medical records, reviewing video surveillance and after observing Bart with no medical concerns, doctors concluded that his symptoms were caused unnecessarily.

© 2010 Andrew Turnell, aturnell@signsofsafety.net  For individual use only do not reproduce without permission
Developing Danger Statements

Originals (FII):

CPS is worried that Marg will cause Bart, Lisa or other children to become sick, be subjected to unnecessary medical procedures or die by withholding food, or by giving something to the children to make them sick.

CPS is worried that Homer will not recognize or intervene to protect the children from situations where Marg could harm the children which could cause the children to become sick, be subjected to unnecessary medical procedures or die.

Modified versions:

CPS, Doctors X and Y and Guardian are worried that Bart, Lisa or future children will become seriously sick and/or not develop properly because Marg doesn’t give them food or medicines they need or gives something to the children that makes them ill.

CPS, Doctors X and Y and Guardian are worried that Homer will not recognize or intervene to protect the children from situations where Marg’s actions are making the children sick or hurting them.
Developing Danger Statements

Sexual Abuse Granpa DV Dad in prison and new worse boyfriend

DCP are worried that Grandpa will be alone with the kids and sexually abuse them.

DCP is worried that Sharon and Bart will get into big fights where they hit each other again and the children will see this and be terrified or caught in the middle and hurt.

DCP is worried that when Miguel (who Grandpa has said broke another woman’s legs) comes out of prison her will attack Sharon like the king hit early last year and the children will see this and be terrified or caught in the middle and hurt.

DCP is worried that when family members fight with each other or other people fight with them the children will see this and be terrified or caught in the middle and hurt.

DCP is worried that Sharon may not be able to cope with or control all of the children all together.
Three Houses’ Child Protection Risk Assessment Process to use with Children and Young People

Created by Nicki Weld, Wellington NZ

On 3 separate pieces of paper draw with the children their experience and vision of each house. Use these drawings with the adults in deepening the assessment and planning process.

More Info: www.signsofsafety.net/Around_the_World.html - New Zealand: Child Youth and Family

© 2010 Andrew Turnell, aturnell@signsofsafety.net For individual use only do not reproduce without permission
House of Worries

- Mum's health. (She has been sick. She sometimes goes to hospital).
- She talks to herself and the walls and looks at herself in the mirror.
- She sometimes yells at night.
- She wakes us up and Michael starts crying – I get scared.
- Michael – he is sometimes alone with mum.
- Sometimes mum wakes us up and drives us at night – she goes to all sorts of places.
- Sometimes people break into the house and steal our clothes, like on her birthday night.
- One man got drunk and came to the house when we were there and smashed the window.
- Sometimes I worry that the windows are going to get smashed again.
- Sometimes mum gets really mad and hits Michael and me on the arms and legs and bottom.
- Sometimes when mum drives us late at night and she doesn’t get up and I have to do my hair and make my uniform look okay and get breakfast.
- Sometimes other people come around and our things get stolen like my PSP and then I get a smack.
- Sometimes when my mum comes to my Nana’s house and she demands that I go with her and I feel scared – I’m sometimes scared to go with her.
- One night Mum held some tablets to her mouth and she told Michael and I that she was going to take them.
- I want to lie to my Nana when my Mum is around.
- Sometimes Mum and her friends hit each other. Once Melissa punched Mum on the nose and Mum had a blood nose.
- Sometimes Mum goes out and leaves me and Michael alone at night. Our phone is broken.
- Sometimes I have to lie to my Nana when my Mum is around.
- Sometimes my Mum swears and spits in my uncle’s face at my Nana’s house. I have to lock myself in my room.
- Sometimes Mum and her friends hit each other. Once Melissa punched Mum on the nose and Mum had a blood nose.
- Sometimes Mum goes out and leaves me and Michael alone at night. Our phone is broken.
- Sometimes Mum and her friends hit each other. Once Melissa punched Mum on the nose and Mum had a blood nose.

House of Dreams

- Mum used to cook me food and she sometimes still does now.
- She takes us to the park sometimes or out to Fremantle or to AQUA (last term).
- She sometimes goes to my Nana’s and stays with her.
- Sometimes she used to go into town with my Nana & us.
- Staying with my Nana and having fun there with my Auntie and Uncle. Michael likes going to my Uncle’s.
- We get to do lots of good fun with my Uncle and Auntie at Hilary’s beach.
- When we go to dinners like tonight, I get excited.
- School is good.
- I like being with my Nana, Pa, my Auntie and my Uncle and with my mum when she’s good.
- I want to go live with my Nana, Auntie, Uncle, me and my brother.
- I want a happy family.
- For Michael and me to be happy.
- For my mum to be better and well.
- For my mum to have fun with us.
- To be with my mum more when she’s better.
- For Mum to not get sick anymore.
- For Mum not to drive us around late at night.
- For us to move out of that house because it’s scary now with all the windows being smashed.
- For people not to come in and out and steal our things.
- Me & Michael to be happy.
- For my Mum to stop hating my Nana, my Auntie and my Pa.
- For my dad not to go to jail anymore.
- To go and visit my dad sometimes.
- Mum used to cook me food and she sometimes still does now.
- She takes us to the park sometimes or out to Fremantle or to AQUA (last term).
- She sometimes goes to my Nana’s and stays with her.
- Sometimes she used to go into town with my Nana & us.
- Staying with my Nana and having fun there with my Auntie and Uncle. Michael likes going to my Uncle’s.
- We get to do lots of good fun with my Uncle and Auntie at Hilary’s beach.
- When we go to dinners like tonight, I get excited.
- School is good.
- I like being with my Nana, Pa, my Auntie and my Uncle and with my mum when she’s good.
- I want to go live with my Nana, Auntie, Uncle, me and my brother.
- I want a happy family.
- For Michael and me to be happy.
- For my mum to be better and well.
- For my mum to have fun with us.
- To be with my mum more when she’s better.
- For Mum to not get sick anymore.
- For Mum not to drive us around late at night.
- For us to move out of that house because it’s scary now with all the windows being smashed.
- For people not to come in and out and steal our things.
- Me & Michael to be happy.
- For my Mum to stop hating my Nana, my Auntie and my Pa.
- For my dad not to go to jail anymore.
- To go and visit my dad sometimes.

House of Good Things

- Mum used to cook me food and she sometimes still does now.
- She takes us to the park sometimes or out to Fremantle or to AQUA (last term).
- She sometimes goes to my Nana’s and stays with her.
- Sometimes she used to go into town with my Nana & us.
- Staying with my Nana and having fun there with my Auntie and Uncle. Michael likes going to my Uncle’s.
- We get to do lots of good fun with my Uncle and Auntie at Hilary’s beach.
- When we go to dinners like tonight, I get excited.
- School is good.
- I like being with my Nana, Pa, my Auntie and my Uncle and with my mum when she’s good.
- I want to go live with my Nana, Auntie, Uncle, me and my brother.
- I want a happy family.
- For Michael and me to be happy.
- For my mum to be better and well.
- For my mum to have fun with us.
- To be with my mum more when she’s better.
- For Mum to not get sick anymore.
- For Mum not to drive us around late at night.
- For us to move out of that house because it’s scary now with all the windows being smashed.
- For people not to come in and out and steal our things.
- Me & Michael to be happy.
- For my Mum to stop hating my Nana, my Auntie and my Pa.
- For my dad not to go to jail anymore.
- To go and visit my dad sometimes.
Ramon has to sleep in dirty attic with broken window. Stephanie has bed in hallway.

Mummy crying in distress on roof. Step Dad yelling at R and S for not eating and stabbed them with fork as punishment.

Stables: where Step Dad locks them overnight with big black dog as punishment mice.

Ramon kicking and yelling at Step Dad (imagined).

Work of Margreet Timmer, Emmen, Netherlands

© 2010 Andrew Turnell, aturnell@signsofsafety.net For individual use only do not reproduce without permission
STEPHANIE AND RAMONS’ HOUSE OF GOOD THINGS

R playing football with Dad, S is referee

Nice shared attic bedroom and they have discos in attic

Nice food on table

© 2010 Andrew Turnell, aturnell@signsofsafety.net For individual use only do not reproduce without permission
R and S both have own room with nice toys, decorations and food.

Big fence needed to separate two aggressive watch dogs.

Only mum and 2 kids in both R and S's dream houses.
The house has big strong fences and doors

Two Dogs and a cat for S and for mum

R and S both have own room

Lots of games, toys, play equip. Mum happy, nice clothes

© 2010 Andrew Turnell, aturnell@signsofsafety.net For individual use only do not reproduce without permission
Safety Planning DVD and Workbook will be available by early September 2010.

Working with Denied Child Abuse: The Resolutions Approach


© 2010 Andrew Turnell, aturnell@signsofsafety.net For individual use only do not reproduce without permission
When we think about the situation facing this family:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are we Worried About?</th>
<th>What’s Working Well?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“It’s a long day on the golf course if you don’t know where the hole is.” Michael Hoyt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You need to know what you want to find before you start searching for it.” Winnie the Pooh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?” asked Alice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t exactly know” said Alice timidly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then it really makes no difference which road you take” replied the Cat. Lewis Carroll</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a scale of 0 to 10 where 10 means everyone knows the children are safe enough for the child protection authorities to close the case and zero means things are so bad for the children they can’t live at home, where do we rate this situation? (If different judgements place different people’s number on the continuum).

What Needs to Happen?

Answering the question:

‘What do we need to see to be satisfied the child is safe?’

‘What do we need to see to be satisfied the critical worries about the teenager are solved?’

Are the most critical questions to get addressed in CPS work.
Imagine you have a 9 year-old daughter...

What would you want in place to be confident your daughter was safe?
Developing Questions to Build Safety to Danger Statements - Exercise

Using the danger statements we developed yesterday develop a series of purposive questions that explore with the family and professionals what they need to see to satisfy them that the danger is dealt with. (Tip focus on behaviour not meaning)

A safety plan is a journey not a product!

© 2010 Andrew Turnell, aturnell@signsofsafety.net For individual use only do not reproduce without permission
Elements of Effective Child Protection Safety Plans

1. Built from straightforward statements about the harm and danger that is understandable by everyone including children.

2. Involve an extensive, informed friend and family network (it takes a village to raise a child).

3. Together create a specific, in-the-home, in-the-car, at-the-school, at-the-mosque, at-the-park, at-christmas, at-anniversaries, facing-stressful-times, everyday plan with straightforward rules that demonstrates the child is safe and the alleged perpetrator is protected from further allegations.


5. The rules of safety plan must be endorsed by the key professionals.

6. A safety plan is a journey, created in relationship and demonstrated over time usually through a process of increasing contact between parents and children in an incremental reunification. Difficulties and challenges are welcomed!
From what Billy says Kylie doesn't seem to have friends or family to help her and doesn't seem to get on with parents.

Dr Smith is worried that Kylie is not taking prescribed anti-depression medications and has refused therapy for depression.

It seems Kylie's depression has got worse in the last month, perhaps this has something to do with neighbour Helen moving away.

Child care report to CPS that in past 4 weeks Kylie is often coming late or forgets to get Billy. Billy (4) has told childcare 'Mummy is sick and he needs to look after her.' He says he has to get food for himself and often is in same clothes for days at a time.

Kylie attempted suicide in front of Billy on Dec 12 by slashing her wrists. K was hospitalised. Billy was terrified. Kylie has made 2 previous less serious attempts by overdosing.

CPS are worried that because Kylie seems to be very depressed that she won't be able to pay attention and look after and Billy properly.

CPS are worried that Kylie may attempt suicide again (and even succeed) and cause Billy to be more scared and anxious.

Dr Smith is worried that Kylie is not taking prescribed anti-depression medications and has refused therapy for depression.

From what Billy says Kylie doesn't seem to have friends or family to help her and doesn't seem to get on with parents.

It seems Kylie’s depression has got worse in the last month, perhaps this has something to do with neighbour Helen moving away.

Kylie attempted suicide in front of Billy on Dec 12 by slashing her wrists. K was hospitalised. Billy was terrified. Kylie has made 2 previous less serious attempts by overdosing.

CPS are worried that because Kylie seems to be very depressed that she won't be able to pay attention and look after and Billy properly.

CPS are worried that Kylie may attempt suicide again (and even succeed) and cause Billy to be more scared and anxious.

Return Billy to Kylie’s care based on Kylie being able to cope with ‘depression’ and be able to provide good care for Billy even when depressed/sad consistently over 6 months.

Find Susan and ex-next door neighbour Helen and seek to get them involved with Billy.

Help settle Billy in foster placement.

Helen (CP Worker) has begun to build a good relationship with Billy.

Billy was able to ring 000 after suicide attempt.

Kylie’s sister Susan visits Billy and Kylie, she may be someone who Billy can live with.

Billy has told Helen about lots of good times with Kylie, they read together, play games, go for walks to park etc.

Billy’s immediate safety is assured through placement in foster care.

Kylie had a next door neighbour Helen who up till 5/6 weeks ago helped her a lot. Helen’s daughter Mary was Billy’s best friend.

Billy is an intelligent boy and is making good progress for his age. He is proud of his drawings.
Danger Statements:

• CPS are worried that Kylie may attempt in suicide again (and even succeed) and cause Billy to be more scared and anxious.
• CPS are worried that because Kylie seems to be very depressed that she won’t be able to pay attention and look after and Billy properly.
Safety Plan to show everyone that it's safe for Billy to live with Mummy again.

Rule 1: The most important thing Mummy wants Billy to know is that she will never try and hurt herself like she did last year. The most important rule for Mummy is if she gets very sad or things are too much for her she will talk to Aunty Susan or to Helen and they will help her with her problems. Mummy is going to find two other people to help like this too.
Rule 2: Mummy will ring either Aunty Susan or Helen every day and talk to them about how she is feeling and ask for help if she needs too. Mummy will put a tick for each phone call each day on the calendar on the fridge to show Billy and everyone that she is keeping in touch with Aunty Susan and Helen. If Aunty Susan or Helen haven’t had a phone call from Mummy on their day, one of them will come over and check to see Mummy and Billy are okay.
Rule 3: Mummy has joined a parents group in Emmen so she can talk to others mummies and daddies. Mummy will go to the parent’s group every week on Thursday afternoon. Mummy will ask one of these people to help her like Aunty Susan and Helen do.
Rule 4: Mummy has told everyone that there are signs that everybody should watch out for. If these things happen everyone should know that mummy is starting to get very sad and she needs help. The signs are:

- If Mummy is not getting out of bed in the morning and getting Billy ready for preschool or she is late getting Billy from preschool and doesn’t phone Ms de Vries to explain why. If this happens Ms de Vries will phone Petra or Margreet.

- If Mummy doesn’t return Aunty Susan and Helen’s phone calls. If this happens Aunty Susan or Helen will come over to check if Mummy needs help.
Rule 5: Billy has chosen the little crazy monkey to be his ‘safety object’. Crazy monkey will live on the bookshelves by the front door where everyone can see him when they come into the home. Crazy monkey will always be sitting facing the front door and the only person who can shift crazy monkey is Billy. If crazy monkey is ever in any other position than sitting, facing the front door Mummy and Helen and Aunty Susan have to ask Billy is he worried about something. Billy might sometimes shift the crazy monkey to make sure everyone is paying attention.
Rule 6: Billy has a second safety object, a little smooth stone from his stone collection. If Billy is ever worried about Mummy he can take the stone and leave it on Ms de Vries's desk at pre school. Ms de Vries knows to phone Margreet or Petra at Bureau Jeugdzorg Drenthe if this happens. Billy might sometimes put the stone on Ms de Vries desk to make sure she will phone Margreet or Petra.
Rule 7: Aunty Susan and Helen and Ms de Vries have all said they will be Billy’s special safety people. Aunty Susan and Helen will each come to Billy and Mummy’s home twice a week to check that everything is okay. There is a roster about who will visit on what days.
Rule 8: Billy can use his special mobile phone to call Aunty Susan and Helen any time day or night if he is worried about Mummy. They will come to the home straight away and make sure Billy’s worry gets sorted out. Billy will check to see if they really do come.
Rule 9: Granny Wilma and Mummy have talked and both agree Granny and Billy should have special times together. Granny will take Billy on outings, like to the zoo, or concerts, or to the movies every second Saturday afternoon. Sometimes Granpa Fred might come too.
Danger Statements:

CPS and Nana Biddy are worried it won’t be safe for Sammy to live with Mummy and Daddy again, because Mummy and Daddy might get into fights like the one last year that put Mummy in hospital with broken ribs and a fractured cheek. If this happens again CPS and Nana are worried Sammy will become so terrified he won’t eat or sleep and won’t be able to go to school and will be crying all the time like he was when he went to stay with Nana Biddy after that big fight last year.

Safety and Context Scale

Safety Scale: Given the danger and safety information, rate the situation on a scale of 0-10, where 0 means recurrence of similar or worse abuse/neglect is certain and 10 means that there is sufficient safety for the child to close the case.

Context Scale: Rate this case on a scale of 0-10, where 10 means this is not a situation where any action would be taken and 0 means this is the worst case of child abuse/neglect that the agency has seen.

Agency Goals

What will the agency need to see occur to be willing to close this case?

CPS will return Sammy when parents have a safety plan that shows everyone that they will not get into fights like the one in September 2006 when mum was in hospital with a broken jaw and then will close when this plan has been working for six months.
Rule 1: The most important rule is that Daddy will not hit or threaten Mummy or anyone else. Daddy also will not break things in the home.
Rule 2: Daddy and Mummy will want to reassure Sammy lots if they disagree about something, argue or use loud voices.
Rule 3: Daddy and Mummy will sort out things they disagree about by talking and making a plan they both think works. Daddy will write the times they do this in the ‘safety journal’ so Mummy and Daddy remember their good work and can tell others.
Rule 4: If Mummy and Daddy get angry and start to yell Daddy will go to the games room and shoot some darts. The fights most often happen in the kitchen or lounge so Mummy will stay there and Sammy will usually be with her. Daddy will write the times they stop fights this way in the ‘safety journal’.

© 2010 Andrew Turnell, aturnell@signsofsafety.net For individual use only do not reproduce without permission
Rule 5: Sometimes Mummy and Daddy will need more space and time to think and Daddy will go for a walk to the river or the football ground and Mummy and Sammy will stay in the house. There is a door key hidden outside the house so Daddy won’t be locked out if Mummy feels she needs to lock the door when he leaves. Daddy will write the times they stop fights like this in the ‘safety journal’.
Rule 6: Because Mummy and Daddy often have their biggest fights about money at the end of the day they have agreed they will only talk about money and what they spend when they go to the Café Capuccino on a Saturday morning. Mummy and Daddy have a regular once a month schedule for going to the café. Daddy will write the times they do this in the ‘safety journal’.
Rule 7: Daddy has said he will not drink any more than two middies of beer at home, at the pub, or when he goes out with Mummy. The only time Daddy will drink more than this is when he goes away for weekends with his mates every six weeks. Mike has said he will make sure Daddy doesn't come back home until he is completely sober. There is a schedule for these trips on the fridge calendar.
Rule 8: Sammy has chosen a big black crow as his ‘safety object’. The crow will live on the coffee table by the front door where everyone can see it when they come into the home. Crow will always face the front door and the only person who can shift crow is Sammy. If crow is ever in any other position than facing the front door Mummy and the other safety people have to ask Sammy is he okay. Sammy might sometimes shift the crow to make sure everyone is paying attention.
Rule 9: Mike, Nana Biddy, Granny Hazel and Granpa Bob and Sammy’s kindy teacher Mrs Smith have all said they will be Sammy’s special safety people. Mike, Nana Biddy, Granny Hazel and Granpa Bob will come to the home every day and check everything is okay. There is a roster about who will come when.
Rule 10: Sammy will tell his special safety people if he is worried. They will make sure Sammy’s worry gets sorted out. Sammy can ring Grandpa Bob or Mike on his phone. If Sammy rings and tells them he’s worried because Mummy and Daddy are fighting they will come to the house and take Sammy away. Sammy will check to see if they really do come.
Rule 10: Everyone is working very hard to make sure Sammy is happy and safe in the future.
Welcome to the Signs of Safety and Resolutions Consultancy Website

This website is the home of the Signs of Safety and describes strengths-based, solution-focused, safety-organised child protection practice.

The child protection field around the world tends to be overwhelmed by anxiety and failure and often falls into the trap of believing procedures and protocols will save the day. The Signs of Safety approach is grounded in actual, on-the-ground human practice that makes a difference for professionals and families and that creates meaningful safety for children in high-risk cases. This approach recreates a prescriptive, positive focus for child protection work that is both energising and affirming for practitioners who take on this difficult work.

The Signs of Safety was first created in West Australia by Andrew Turnell and Steve Edwards working together with over 150 frontline practitioners during the 1990s. The Signs of Safety continues to evolve as the approach is used and further developed by increasing numbers of child protection professionals in countries across Australia, North America, and Europe.

© 2010 Andrew Turnell, aturnell@signsofsafety.net For individual use only do not reproduce without permission