

MRS Conference Call Notes  
March 2012

Counties Participating 3/19: Buncombe, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Johnston, McDowell, Orange, Scotland, Stokes, Wilson.

Counties Participating 3/21: Buncombe, Caldwell, Catawba, Davidson, Gaston, Harnett, Hoke, Johnston, Macon, New Hanover, Swain, Tyrrell, Wilson, Yadkin.

Counties Participating 3/23: Buncombe, Burke, Catawba, Currituck, Edgecombe, Lee, Moore, Nash, Pamlico, Person, Scotland, Swain, Union, Wake

Agenda

- Letters from the Division
- Signs of Safety
- Taking and accessing notes from the MRS/SOC calls

News from Raleigh

Letters:

- Memo regarding Foster Home Licensing Authority and RIL - Form DSS-5268
- CSW 3-12 – Survey on County CPS Screening Decisions related to DWI and DUI Allegations

Signs of Safety

Buncombe and Catawba presented on Signs of Safety. (Different presenters on different calls).

From Buncombe, may contact [mick.mcguire@buncombecounty.org](mailto:mick.mcguire@buncombecounty.org)

Also may refer to the Signs of Safety website: [www.signsofsafety.net](http://www.signsofsafety.net)

**Slide #1**

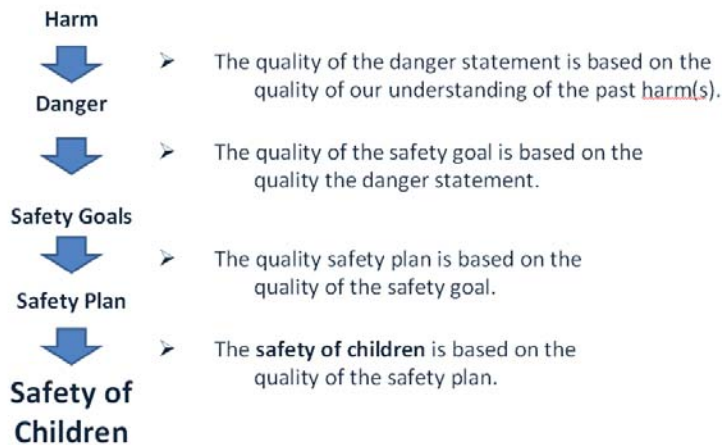


**Slide #2**

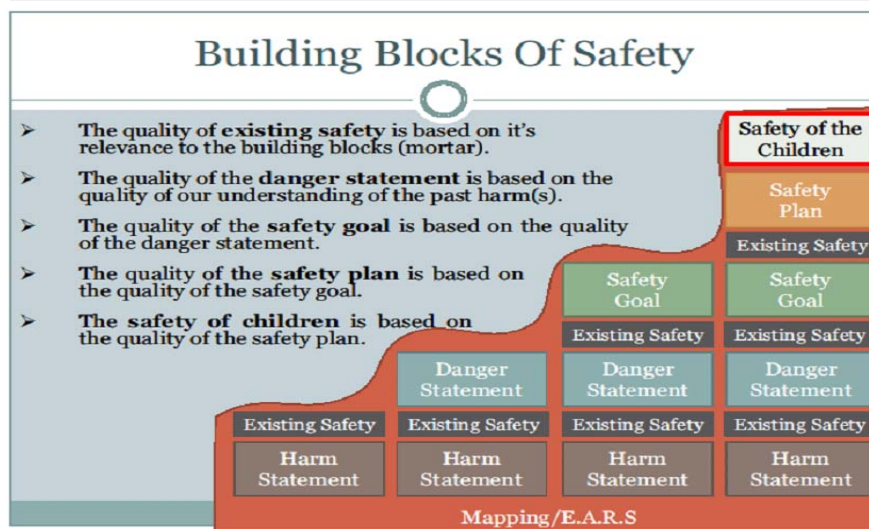
Signs of Safety/Family Centered Practice Overlap	
<b>SOS Practice Principles that Build Partnership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Respect clients as people worth doing business with</li><li>• Cooperate with person not the abuse</li><li>• Cooperation is possible even when coercion is required</li><li>• All families have signs of safety</li><li>• Maintain focus on Safety</li><li>• Learn what service recipient wants</li><li>• Always search for detail</li><li>• Create specific, small change</li><li>• Offer choices</li><li>• Don't confuse details with judgments</li><li>• Treat interview as a forum for change</li><li>• Principles are aspirations not assumptions</li></ul>	<b>Principles of Partnership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1. Everyone desires respect</li><li>• 2. Everyone needs to be heard</li><li>• 3. Everyone has strengths</li><li>• 4. Judgments can wait</li><li>• 5. Partners share power</li><li>• 6. Partnership is a process</li></ul>

### Slide #3

## Building Blocks of Safety



### Slide #4



### Slide #5

## Harm and Danger statements

- Harm is always based on the past. Danger is always based on the future.
- The quality of a Danger statement is based on the quality of our understanding of past harm(s).
- Not all cases have Harm Statements but they may still have Danger Statements. If this is the case, it may mean nothing has happened yet or that you cannot define impact to the child at this time but future concerns are present.

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## Harm Statements

- **Harm Statements have 2 parts:**

1. What has happened / allegedly happened to the child
2. The impact it has on the child

“Mom left Sally home alone overnight on Friday and Sally cried and called Grandma because she was scared.”

“Dad hit Matt in the face causing a bruise; Matt is afraid of dad and will not visit at dad’s house”

“It was reported that mom and dad drink beer, take pain pills, and pass out while Joey is left in the floor to crawl around and he has a burn on his hand from touching the kerosene heater.”

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## Danger Statements

- **Danger Statements have 3 key parts:**

1. Who is worried (Family, SW, GAL, etc)
2. Behavior of caretaker (what they might do)
3. Possible Impact on child (what may happen)

“DSS and Grandma are worried that mom could leave Sally home alone again and Sally will be scared again and could get hurt without an adult at home.

“DSS, Mom, and Dr. Smith are worried that dad might hit Matt like he did 2 weeks ago and leave him with another bruise or a more serious injury”

“DSS and Uncle Carl are worried that mom and dad could pass out again after drinking beer and taking pain pills and Joey could get burned or hurt himself another way”

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## Safety Goals

- Directly relate to the danger statements
- Be specific and describe what we are expecting the parents to do differently, rather than what we are expecting to see stop, to address the concerns (avoid the “dead-man” goals)
- Be written in straightforward language
- Both are critical: Agency Safety Goals and Family Safety Goals
- Agency and Family Safety Goals are combined (trying to use family’s language, add family goals. Don’t diminish safety!

## Questions/Discussion

Why these counties chose Signs of Safety and got involved....

- A lot of times folks go to trainings and get a little piece of this and try to use it when they return, but it is a challenge.
- Really focusing a lot of attention to shifting to using the tools (mapping, scaling questions, exception questions) in all work. Not just with families but internally in conversations with internal staff and with outside partners.
- Truly practice what they are preaching!
- As with all true organizational change it is a challenge as everyone changes and adapts at a different pace, but it can be done.
- Catawba and Buncombe were in a Casey Breakthrough series on Risk – met with some folks from Minnesota that were several years farther along with this who were a valuable resource.
- Want this to be a top-down, bottom-up process that is continuous.
- Gave them some ways to help workers focus because there are so many issues going on with families. Helps to determine which issues are truly affecting child safety and which ones are drama or other issues that are less than ideal, but not affecting child welfare. Provides clarity
- Boils down to wanting to a better job of wanting to partner with our families and not be the DSS who takes children away!
- One worker said it was easier for her to integrate the tools with her families because her supervisor had incorporated in them into supervision with her. It helped her see how they worked and how effective they could be so she could incorporate them in her work with families.
- What benefits do workers feel they get from using the strategies?
- Getting the child's voice into the case.
- A lot of tools that this uses – the 3 houses really helps to get the children's voices in the case and it is powerful when you can share with a parent what their child feels. (3 Houses is a tool that asks child to fill their 1 house of worries, 2 house of dreams; 3 house of good things)
- Workers go out to families with a more open idea and questioning what is going on and seeking to discover the real situation instead of saying "oh yeah, seen this before" when reading the intake information. Get better buy in from families from the moment you walk in the door.
- Barriers – as they tried to model it internally, it is easy to slip back into the old and familiar. Must be cognizant of that and slow down.
- Families are sort of taken aback at the beginning because when we initially enter their home we tend to represent bad experiences they have had, either with DSS or other government.

How we can best make the notes from these calls available as references?

- Previously Heather has taken these notes and put them on the web, but her new position will not always allow that.
- Holly can take them during a presentation but if she is not able to take notes when she is facilitating a discussion.
- Options or previous suggestions:
  - Have someone take notes in a discussion pod into Connect Pro.
  - Someone suggested it be recorded – the conference call does do that but it costs money so we will probably not be able to do this.
  - Can also record via connect pro but then have to use voice over internet, rather than the calls like we do now (which presents a host of problems as you have to have a microphone to speak.)

- Currently on the web, but the suggestion was made to email the notes out over the list serve.

#### April Calls

- Human Trafficking – signs to look for
- Potential Dates: 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>

#### Future call topics:

- Mental Health – what will they look like since Value Options is going away
- Protective Factors
- Medical Homes
- NCFAST
- Email Holly with any other suggestions!