

# STRENGTHENING FAMILIES: EXPLORATION OF ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL IN-HOME SAFETY PLANNING LEARNING COLLABORATIVE



## DECEMBER 2024 PLANNING AND COMMUNICATING FOR SAFETY PLAN SUCCESS

What can be done to ensure the **Sufficient, Realistic** and **Least Intrusive** plan continues to work effectively for as long as needed? Clear and consistent communication.

### **Manage the Safety Plan implementation**

Once the safety plan is negotiated and documented, the Child Welfare Professional is responsible for ensuring it is implemented as intended. Safety plan management is an active function. The CW Professional must maintain communication at a level that is responsive to circumstances in the home. At a minimum, it must meet the requirements of Standards. The Wisconsin Safety Intervention Standards requires a minimum of twice monthly face to face contact with the parents and children in the home and monthly contact with all providers on Safety Plans. For Protective Plans the policy is a weekly review for adequacy. The tribe is a partner through out the safety planning process and needs to be consulted about what their needs may be regarding what gets communicated to them and when during the safety plan implementation.

### **Exercise constant vigilance that the Safety Plan is both Sufficient and Least Intrusive**

A safety plan is a complex contract among multiple players. Dynamics within a family change across time. The CW Professional must focus on maintaining a current understanding of those dynamics and changes in family needs and attitudes towards services and providers. The safety plan must shield the child from danger with the least impact possible on the day-to-day functioning of the family. This will require adjustment across time. The CW Professional must increase or decrease the level of service provision in response to the family's changing need.



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## **Communicate information gathering and decision making to the supervisor to support their oversight function**

The CW Professional does not hold the accountability for the safety plan alone. When a supervisor approves of this plan, they give agency sanction to the strategies it describes. To do this, the supervisor needs to understand how the safety plan addresses the dynamics of danger in the family, the process for negotiating the plan and how the plan demonstrates the critical qualities: Sufficient, Realistic, and Least Intrusive.

## **Respond to changing circumstances**

When family circumstances change (either positively or negatively) and may impact the identified danger, a new Safety Assessment is required. In addition to this larger pause for formal reassessment, safety plans may require mid-course corrections. An intervention isn't working as intended. A provider has a change in schedule. The relationship between the parent and provider has become tumultuous. Having open and transparent communication can be the difference between plan adaptation and plan failure.





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## The Four Ps of Accountability

(Sylvia Melena, author of *Supportive Accountability, How to Inspire People and Improve Performance*, adapted for CW purposes)

**People** People matter and people drive success. When we're holding ourselves, the family and providers on the plan accountable, we need to make people feel safe. Each person on the plan matters. We never compromise safety of the children, the safety of the adults/caregivers, the safety of the providers, or their wellbeing for the sake of the plan's continuation. And ourselves, we're people too, so we're not to compromise our integrity.

**Purpose** The purpose of accountability is not to force people into meeting expectations. The purpose is really to support them and to set them up for success. It's to achieve the goal of the plan – maintaining safety from identified danger while protective capacities are enhanced. It's a different conversation to ask the team “How do we feel about the plan? Is the plan successful”, to “How do you feel your role is meeting the goal? What can be done to support you in maintaining your role?”.

**Performance** Accountability is really a way of driving results. When you look at the word accountability, it starts with the word account. So, in accountability, we render an account of what we've delivered in terms of the performance benchmarks. A check of performance can mean reviewing the negotiable and non-negotiables to ensure continued commitment, allow time for questions or concerns.

**Progression** Progression is all about taking what is currently happening to the next level. Progression is about moving the family towards independence without Child Welfare oversight. Celebrating successes and reviewing progress that may decrease the level of intrusiveness in a family's life is critical to keeping momentum. Even if/when there's a setback, outlining what progress looks like will hopefully support the family from major setbacks.



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## Reflection on Content

Think about the differences between safety plans that have gone smoothly and others that did not. Identify if there were elements in the implementation and/or communication that would have increased the likelihood of success.

## Action Item

Have a conversation with a team on an active safety plan about what they would like to see in the communication plan. How much contact and what specific agenda items would keep the family and providers motivated to make progress?