

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



## NOVEMBER 2024 LOCATING SUFFICIENT RESOURCES & VETTING SAFETY RESPONSE PROVIDERS

### Methods to Locate Resources

Always start the assessment by using the family's definition of "family". Who does the family identify as supports?

An Ecomap provides an in-depth view of the complex interaction and influences in a family's life.

Creating an Ecomap:

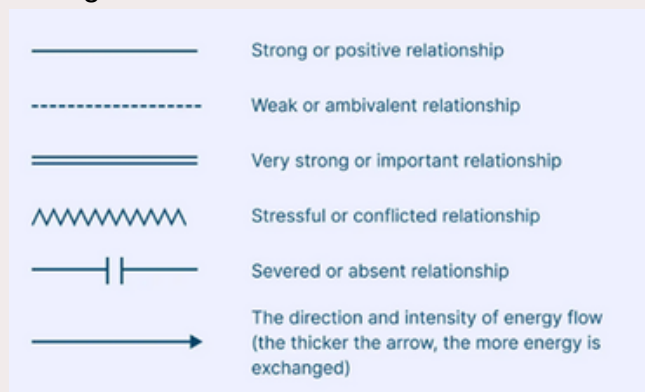
**1. Central Circle:** this can be done with an individual or family.

**2. Identify Key Elements:** Have the person list various aspects of their life.

- **Family members.** Immediate and extended including parents, siblings, grandparents or other relatives and like kin.
- **Friends and peers.** Close friends, acquaintances and peers who play a role in the family's life.
- **Educational or work connections.** Teachers, classmates, colleagues.
- **Healthcare providers.** Doctors, therapists or other medical professionals.
- **Community resources.** Local community services, support groups, clubs or organizations.
- **Spiritual and cultural connections.** Religious leaders, places of worship and cultural groups.
- **Recreational activities.** Clubs, sports teams, hobbies
- **Support services.** Social workers, counselors, legal advisors, parenting assistance or other professionals providing support.
- **Neighbors and local community.** People in the neighborhood.
- **Online and digital connections.**

**3. Map out Relationship:** Surround the central figure with smaller circles for each person or service identified representing connection.

**4. Depict Relationship Quality:** Use varied lines to show the nature of the relationship. This aids in assessing who may be immediately available versus who may need extra time to engage and potentially heal the relationship.



**5. Indicate flow of Resources with Arrows:** An additional step can show the direction of energy in the relationship to indicate connection.

- Double-ended arrows show relationship where people help and support each other equally.
- Single-ended arrows point from one person to another showing that one person gives more support or has more influence in the relationship.



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## Vetting Safety Response Providers

### 1. Understand their View of the Family

People need to feel heard before they can listen. Start your process with a potential provider by asking and listening, not telling. The need for CW intervention in a family they care about is an emotional event for any potential provider. Give them an opportunity to process that event. They may need their questions answered before they can fully comprehend what is needed from them. This conversation will enrich your understanding of the family, as well.

- Have you had concerns or worries for the family (children)? Tell me about them.
- When did you first become worried? How have things changed across time?
- What have you done in response to these worries? What would you like to be able to do?
- What supports can be put into place to help the family?
- If these supports cannot be put in place, how do you think things might turn out for the family?
- Are there other people you think can assist the family?
- Describe your relationship with the parents. How do you think they see you?
- Are there any cultural considerations that we need to be aware of?

### 2. Explain the Safety Plans' Critical Functions – Release of Information

Identification of potential providers with the parent must include clear permission to share information to support the provider's activity in the home. In general terms and language appropriate to the provider, share:

- General description of identified danger in the home.
- Safety plan goal of keeping children with their family.
- Outcomes for the children and parents if a Safety Plan cannot be implemented.
- Critical Functions of the Safety Plan – What must it ensure? What must it prevent?
- Critical Times and Circumstances – When does the family need a provider in the home?
- Possible Safety Control Responses -Behavioral descriptions of activities that could maintain child safety.



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## LOCATING SUFFICIENT RESOURCES & VETTING SAFETY RESPONSE PROVIDERS

### Vetting Safety Response Providers (Continued)

#### 3. Assess Critical Qualities of a safety response providers

##### **Is it safe to have this person in the home as part of a Safety Plan?**

Best practice includes a background check, eWiSACWIS and sex offender registry check for any potential provider. You are taking action that results in them being in the family home. Often, information learned from background checks requires exploration.

##### **Is this provider available when needed?**

The schedule of services in the Safety Plan is driven by identified Critical Times and Circumstances, not provider preferences. The worker and parent must, together, identify potential providers that can meet that identified need. The need is rarely met by a single provider. More often, a combination of informal and formal providers covers the schedule over a given week. It's also important to assess the provider's ability to maintain the schedule in conjunction with living their own life. If changes to the plan are needed, the potential provider should have the ability to fulfill their role while modifications are made.

##### **When you feel you're on the right track with a provider and ready to move forward, it's important to make sure you have a person who is committed to the Safety Plan?**

Providers must understand the child's need for protection and see that as the priority. Provider commitment to the safety plan is grounded in acknowledgement, understanding of the danger, and seeing themselves as important in shielding the child from that danger. A potential provider doesn't need to agree with the worker on every nuance but there must be general agreement about the presence of danger in the home. In the absence of this, it is difficult to be confident about trustworthiness or reliability to fulfill their role. Through the engaging and vetting process, you can help potential providers to see that the safety plan is in the parent's best interest, too. An effective safety plan keeps the parent from harming the child and provides an alternative to placement.



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## Reflection on Content

**How have you been able to be creative about locating sufficient resources? Are you consistently asking questions to gather information throughout the CPS process? What steps have you (or will you take) to prevent biases from negatively impacting your assessment of information regarding providers?**

## Action Item

**Use a tool (ecomap, genogram, or other) to have a discussion with a family about their support network. Ask questions about the depth of the relationship and flow of support to assess the relationship.**