## **SAFER**

The five practice activities for the phases of initial investigation, protective intervention, protective order and closure<sup>1</sup>

Extract from SAFER children framework guide: The five practice activities of risk assessment in child protection. Available at <a href="https://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/">https://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/</a>



	SAFER: the five practice act	ivities of risk assessment for initial investigation, protective intervention	, protective order and closure	
	Professional Judgement:		Knowledge Reasoning	
Family violence informed: MARAM responsibilities are aligned and assessments incorporated into practice activities				
Seek, share, sort and store information and evidence	Analyse information and evidence to determine the risk assessment	Formulate a case plan	Enact the case plan	Review the risk assessment
Evidence-informed essential information categories provide the lens to seek, share, sort and store information and evidence, focused on each child and their family within the legislative framework of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005.  Seeking, sharing, sorting and storing information and evidence femains as an activity that is active across all phases of an intervention.  Seeking, sharing and sorting information and evidence provides a solid foundation for the complex task of analysis.	Within a guided professional judgement model, Analysis provides the structure to make sense of information and make a determination about the overall consequence and probability of harm. Once a determination is made, decisions then follow.  This practice activity has three elements:  1. Analysis  2. Judgement  3. Decisions  *MARAM risk ratings are identified under probability and contribute to decisions.	Case plans must be developed in collaboration with children, families and the networks necessary to provide the widest possible assistance.  The interventions, goals and measurable outcomes must align directly with the risk assessment.  Case plans must consider the needs of individual children and parents or caregivers with goals and the interventions aligned with those individual needs.	'The need to give the widest possible assistance' to the parent and child as the fundamental societal unit to ensure intervention into that relationship is limited to that necessary to secure safety and wellbeing of the child' (s.10(3)(a) CYFA).  The work of child protection should be proactive and purposeful. Remain focussed on enacting the goals of the case plan and other plans in place.	Reviewing the risk assessment incorporates information from all practice activities:  S – Seek, share, sort and store information and evidence  A – Analyse information and evidence to determine the risk assessment  F – Formulate a case plan  E – Enact the case plan.
Seek, share, sort and store information within these essential information categories Individual child Parent or caregiver Family, community and environment Strengths Protection and safety Harm	Analysis Within analysis, four dimensions come together as logical steps helping to make sense of information and evidence.  Vulnerability of the child Individual child characteristics and needs Opportunity for harm Child within the context of family and community Parental capacity to meet needs and address harm.  Severity of harm	Needs of the individual child/ren  Stability, safety, development  Physical, social, emotional, education, culture, health Rights Identity Culture, community, connection.  Needs of parent or caregiver  Support Treatment Housing, health, social, economical Culture, community, connection.	Case plan integration and actions table  The actions table accompanying the case plan is critical to enacting, monitoring and measuring progress towards addressing protective concerns and permanency objectives.  • Care teams play a vital role in working collaboratively to put the best interests of children first, supporting their care and safety  • Care teams must be in place for children in out of home care but can also be established when working voluntarily with a family  • The Looking After Children framework considers children's needs and outcomes in seven life areas which are critical as identified in outcomes research:  - Health  - Emotional and behavioural development  - Education  - Family and social relationships  - Identity	Continuous review  Reviewing the risk assessment involves considering whether provid the widest possible assistance has created sufficient change to the extent that a child is no longer at risk of harm.
Share  Share information in a way that is consistent with legislative and	Types of harm (s.162 of the CYFA) Pattern, history and cumulative Individual child experience and impact of the harm.  Likelihood of harm  Factors that increase the likelihood that harm has occurred or is likely to occur again			Reviewing the risk assessment Reviewing the risk assessment involves re-visiting the two component of judgement. As a result of reviewing the relationship between consequence and probability of harm, new decisions may also be
about how the information will be used Share information gathered with parents, children and young people to gain their perspective.	Prior pattern and behaviour towards the child     Attitudes and beliefs of the parents     Contributing factors.  Safety	Case plan and actions table  Combined with the risk assessment, the case and actions table plan must:  • Clearly articulate the protective concerns	Social presentation     Self-care skills.  Case plan practice principles	necessary.
<b>Sort</b> Sorting information and evidence is the first step to understand and make sense of what is known about a child and family's situation.	dimensions of analysis to make overall judgements, or determination.  Consequence of harm  Vulnerability of the child and severity of harm come together to make a judgement about impact on the child:	Identify the realistic permanency objective (s.167 CYFA)  Articulate what needs to change Consider the consequence and probability of harm judgement, progression of tasks and any new information and evidence Include the voice of the child Create opportunity for the widest possible assistance to be provided Identify realistic supports and services Identify measurable outcomes Align where relevant to the court order and disposition.	Child-centred  The child or young person is at the centre of all casework, actions and decisions  Client-centred work is grounded in the importance of rights, dignity, individual choice, empowerment and self-determination.  Relationship-focused  The quality of the relationship between the worker, children and families is key  Relationships must be built and maintained with children, young people, parents, caregivers, community and agency partners.  Strengths based	New information  As case plans are proactively implemented, new information and evidence may trigger a review of the risk assessment, using the components of judgement.  Consequence of harm  Consider the previous consequence of harm judgement, case plan progression and any new information and evidence to review impron the child.  Probability of harm  Reviewing the probability component involves weighing up increa
Store Practitioners, leaders and managers have a responsibility to meet equirements under the: Public Records Act 1973 which sets out requirements for storing	Severe Gignificant Concerning Insufficient evidence of harm.		A strengths-based, solution-focused approach maximises collaboration to enact a plan Finding, calling out and building on strengths within a family, creates hope and provides for the greatest chance of achieving safety.	(likelihood) and decrease (safety) to make an overall judgement about the probability of harm occurring or recurring.
public records  • Freedom of Information Act 1982 which provides the public with a right to apply for access to information held by the department about them or members of their family, including child protection files.  Effective seeking, sharing, sorting and storing information is important because the essential information categories are not the only repository of information. Case notes provide the chronology of casework with a child and family and build part of the life story of children known to child protection.	Probability of harm  Likelihood of harm and safety come together to make a judgement about probability of harm occurring or reoccurring:  • Very Likely  • Likely  • Unlikely.  Decisions are made as a result of the relationship between the consequence and probability of harm.  Risk assessment decisions are made at key points such as intake,	All the plans that exist for a child must align with the case plan, such as:  Cultural plans Reunification plans Looking After Children plans Behaviour support plans Safety plans Care and placement plans.	Continuous review Critical considerations for continuous review:  • Keep the child at the centre of decision making  • Actively use, monitor and measure outcomes using the actions table during home visits, care teams, family and professionals meetings  • Seek and share information and evidence about the child within the context of their family and environment  • New information and evidence should always prompt practitioners to	Continuous review  Review progress against measurable outcomes in the case plan a actions table  If sufficient change is yet to be achieved, further action occurs wit other practice activities and the risk assessment continues to be reviewed at key decision-making points.



