

tion Sharon was disorientated and confused. The social worker from the out-of-hours team was called to find a place the children could stay. When asked about extended family Sharon told the police and social worker that the children must not go to stay with her mother because she does not think that her mother's new partner, Ron is okay and seemed embarrassed and vague about the possibility of the children going to stay with Dennis's family. This Saturday evening was a very busy night for the out-of-hours team so the worker organised for the children to go to emergency accommodation and made a referral for the case to be re-opened for a new assessment and on-going work.

There are many challenges for a child protection system in using kinship care quickly in child protection cases, while some jurisdictions are set up to place children with kin when emergencies such as this arise, many, probably most are not. The agencies we are aware of that routinely place children with extended family from the outset have paid particular attention to putting in place a clear expectation and strategies that make this happen and a separate chapter could be written on the work involved in creating such a culture and practice shift. Strategies can be as simple as always asking the parents who they would want the children to go to, through to making sure multiple workers are available when children are to be removed from their parents so one can focus on the parents and another on the children. Agencies that habitually use kinship placements quickly have in our experience also adopted a proactive 'risk-sensible' (Munro 2011) approach to involving extended family members of whom they often have limited knowledge.

While kinship care is a crucial part of involving the naturally occurring network around the immediate family this is only part of the picture, we want to offer here and trajectory for intervening in families that provide professionals with a means of bringing extended family into the middle of the child protection throughout assessment, safety planning and reunification.

Weaving a shared vision of what's needed: skillful use of authority and utilizing every scintilla of what's working well

The culture and practice of children's services has many default settings that tend to overlook extended family and friendship networks and instead prioritising professionally driven interventions (Farmer and Moyes, 2008). Placing a naturally occurring network of extended family and friends at the centre of the assessment and planning requires:

- A clear vision of constructively involving family and friends throughout the life of the case
- The statutory professionals to place their authority behind the active participation of a naturally occurring network
- A rigorous forensic acuity to identifying and honouring every thing that is going well in the immediate and extended family and friendship network particularly in the care of the children.

Assessment in child protection is almost always a professional undertaking completed in professionalised language for a professional audience. If the immediate and extended family are to take significant responsibility for addressing the safeguarding concerns the assessment and planning process must be undertaken in ways that family can understand and participate in. The Signs of Safety risk assessment and planning process (and all of the methods and tools described in the chapter) are designed to be undertaken together with family members, including the children, based on the logic that for professionals to get out of the case the most important people to think themselves into and through the situation are the family members. The Signs of Safety assessment process (Turnell and Edwards 1999; Turnell 2012) focuses the assessment and planning on four straightforward questions:

Safety Planning Workbook

1. What are we worried about?
2. What's working well?
3. What needs to happen?
4. Where are we on a scale of 0 to 10 where 10 means there is enough safety for child protection authorities to close the case and 0 means it is certain that the child will be (re) abused (Judgment)

Signs of Safety Assessment and Planning Form

What are we Worried About?	What's Working Well?	What Needs to Happen?
<p style="text-align: center;">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).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">0 ←————→ 10</p>		

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Child protection professionals get involved in family's lives because of serious problems for children and the professionals therefore quite naturally tend to focus their attention on concerns. The engine room of all of the methods and the overall approach we are proposing in this chapter is for the professionals is to always inquire and listen with an ear for the doubleness of things; the positives present even in the face of problems. These positives are drawn upon, not in any way to minimize the seriousness of the concerns but to create energy to explore these concerns with more intelligence and depth. This is purposive, conscious work to resist the more usual 'problem-saturation' (White and Epston 1990) that characterizes child protection practice (Dale 2004; Farmer and Owen 1995; Maiter et. al. 2006). Susie calls this attitude and approach 'cross stitching', meaning the more difficult a subject is to explore, the more the professionals need to honour the family and network members to create the energy to enable them to engage with the complexity of the issues. To enact this cross-stitching process, professionals need to be proactively thinking of questions they can use to animate conversations that focus on the children and also build hope and engagement this is precisely the process that underpins Signs of Safety risk assessment. Here we present questions that balance exploring worries with what's working:

- What most worried you about tonight?
- What do you think most worried the children?
- What do you think most worried the police?
- What worries you about involving ____? (Grandma, Nan, Pop, Dennis)
- What most worries you about Sharon's care of the kids?

Sharon, what most upsets you about how your Mum talks to you about what you do with the kids?
What's the worst example of your Mum getting into you about your parenting?

- What do you most love about your kids?
- What are the best times you have with your kids?
- What would the kids say are the best times they have with you?
- Who do they spend time with in your extended family they enjoy and that is good for them?
- Who helps you most with the kids?

Of the things your Mum says to you that make you feel like she's telling you off are there any things she says that you think you should listen to?

- What do your kids like most about Grandma?
- What do ____ do that helps you most with the kids?
- What most impresses you about Sharon's care of the kids?
- What do the kids most like about their Mum?
- What will the kids miss the most being away from their Mum?

When workers can engage with and cross-stitch between concerns and positives families report they feel a sense of balance is brought to their experience (Skrypek 2012) and the more depth will be built into a shared assessment and the more likely family will take responsibility to build solutions. For example, Sharon almost inevitably will to some extent resist involving her mother because she feels ashamed that the police and social services have removed her children and she already feels blamed and criticized by her mother. Leading Sharon in a cross-stitching conversation between Sharon's frustration with her mother and what her Mum does that is helpful from Sharon and the children's perspective will create greater chance of involving Sharon's mum, together with Sharon in what happens for the children. When professionals can ground their work in an inquiring rather than expert stance, prioritising family member's thinking about the opportunities and struggles their relationships and connections pose for each other the more likely it is that they will be able to play an active role in thinking through and addressing the child protection concerns.

Parallel to this participatory assessment questioning process with the adults naturally connected to the children it is vital the professionals move quickly to involve the children in describing their experience and what they want. Nicky Weld and Maggie Greening from New Zealand have created a practical tool called the Three Houses (Weld 2007; 2008; Turnell 2011) that uses the same core domains and questioning stance as the Signs of Safety and has assisted workers all over the world to quickly involve children in child protection cases. The tool involves interviewing children by sketching with them the outline of three houses, a house of worries, good things and dreams.