

# Solution Based Casework (SBC)

Because *“What Happens After The Knock Matters”*

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# Learning Objectives

Participants will:

1. Gain an understanding of SBC
2. Appreciate the parallel process associated with SBC
3. Leave with the desire to learn more



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*“I want you to find a bold and innovative way to do everything just like we used to do 35 years ago.”*



# *The Heart of Solution Based Casework*

We Prioritize  
the Family  
Partnership

1

2

We Focus on  
Pragmatic  
Solutions to  
Everyday Life  
Problems

We Help Families  
Document and  
Celebrate  
Success

3



# *What is Solution-Based Casework ?*

Solution-Based Casework (SBC) is an evidence-informed practice model for Casework Management in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice. The model provides a conceptual map for a family-centered practice from assessment through case closure. Grounded in a framework of safety, and wedded to full family engagement, the SBC practice model is best thought of as the architecture that holds our practice to a consistent focus on our safety outcomes.

# *Research on SBC in Child Welfare?*

## SUMMARY of OUTCOMES

( 2005, 2007, 2009, 2012, 2014 )

- 30% reduction in removal of children
- Over a 100% increase in goal attainment
- 27% more workers contacted referral sources directly
- 64% increase in identified client strengths
- Families with chronic CPS involvement more likely to be successful
- Clients with Co-morbidity also achieved more goals.
- 35% reduction in recidivism referrals over 6 months
- Full implementation of SBC met all 23 CFSR review items and the 7 outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being (As measured by the CQI tool on 4500 cases over a 4 year period)

(Antle et al, Child Abuse and Neglect, 2012)

More information on other studies at [www.solutionbasedcasework.com](http://www.solutionbasedcasework.com)



## *Why was Solution-Based Casework Developed ?*

The following quotes are from parents who have been in the system of child welfare and are now writing and processing their experiences for an online magazine called RISE.



## *Why was Solution-Based Casework Developed ?*

“Losing my son was the hardest thing I have ever gone through. I felt so alone with no one to care for and no hope whatsoever. My first worker didn’t ask what I needed or explain what I was supposed to learn from parenting classes, or why I needed to go. I felt lost each time I went to court. I didn’t know what to say.”

(With permission from Diana H., RISE parent)



## *Why was Solution-Based Casework Developed ?*

“When you’re involved in the system, as a child or a parent, it seems like people are so ready to diagnosis you. They say you’re mentally unstable, even though sometimes you’re just in a lot of pain. When the system and the courts slap you with a diagnosis without even understanding the situation you’re in or listening to what you think you need, you feel stereotyped and discriminated against.”

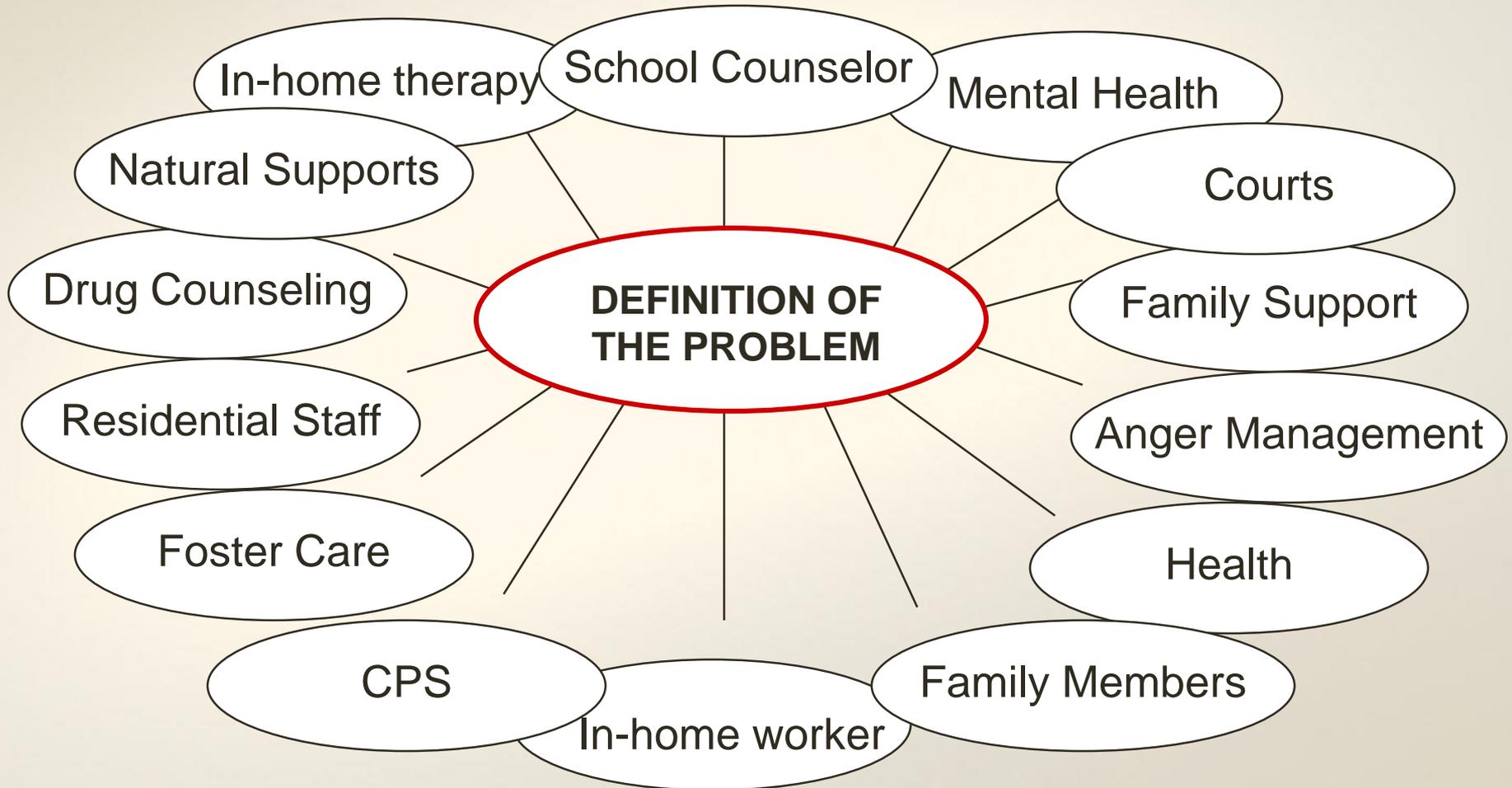
(With permission from Sienna., RISE parent)



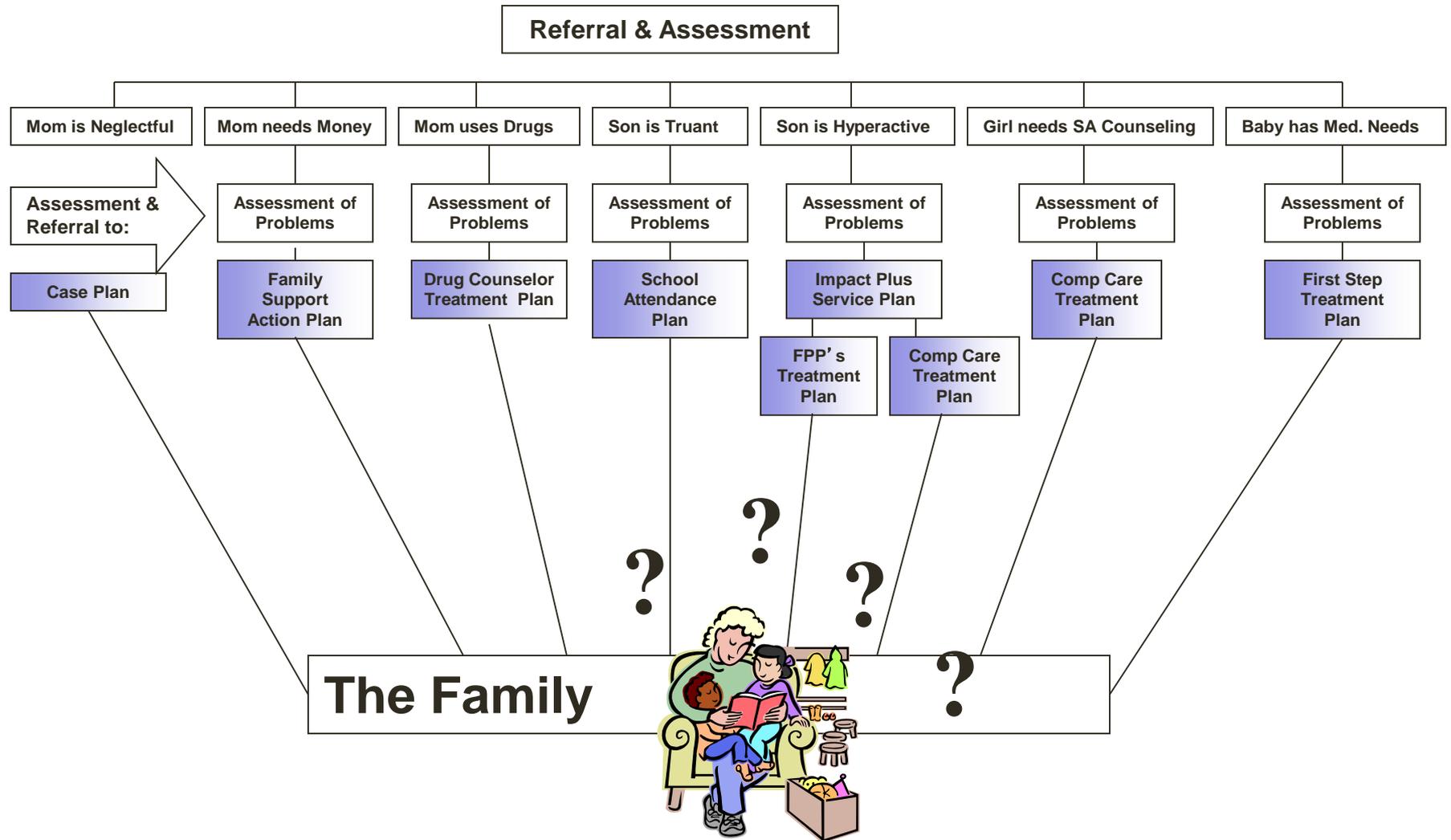
## *Why was Solution-Based Casework Developed ?*

1. Agency “Values and Principals” didn’t translate to Practice in the field
2. Investigations led to problem checklists and a reliance on mere service compliance rather than actual behavioral change to ensure safety
3. Assessments focused only on what was wrong and led to underestimation of family fears of being unfairly judged
4. Problems could be seen just as labels, and safety concerns were not fully understood in terms of how they actually occurred in everyday life
5. Lack of clarity and focus on safety priorities created too much outcome drift
6. Case planning was more worker-driven and “owned”
7. Families, Caseworkers and Providers didn’t share a common road map to help the family create safety

# *An Example of How Families Get Left Behind*



# The All-Too-Familiar Approach





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Mental Health: MH Clinic

Work Issues: Family & Child Support

Supervision: Family Members

School Attendance: School

Substance Use: AA Counselor

Home & Child Cleanliness: FPP

Protection issues:  
Courts and P & P



# A Family-Friendly Interface that Helps to Organize Complex Issues and Multiple Partners

**Action Plan**

**High Risk Situation(s)** Getting up late and rushing around, waking up with a head ache, when my son talks back.

**Warning Signal(s)** Feeling anxiety and tension in my body, then I become more upset. I start to feel sorry for myself and then I start to blame

**Task(s) to Be Accomplished**

- Get to bed each night by 10:15PM.
- Read until 10:30 and lights out
- Create a better morning routine for myself by getting up earlier so I will have 15 minutes of quiet time and get in a better framed mind
- Take a walk with the dog in the early morning to get fresh air.

**How is it Measured?** Create and use a daily calendar where I record when I want to bed, when I get up, and whether I walk with the dog.

**Interruption Plan** If I do oversleep or wake up with a headache, I will remind myself, "It's ok, I have been here before. Stick to the plan and take deep breaths."

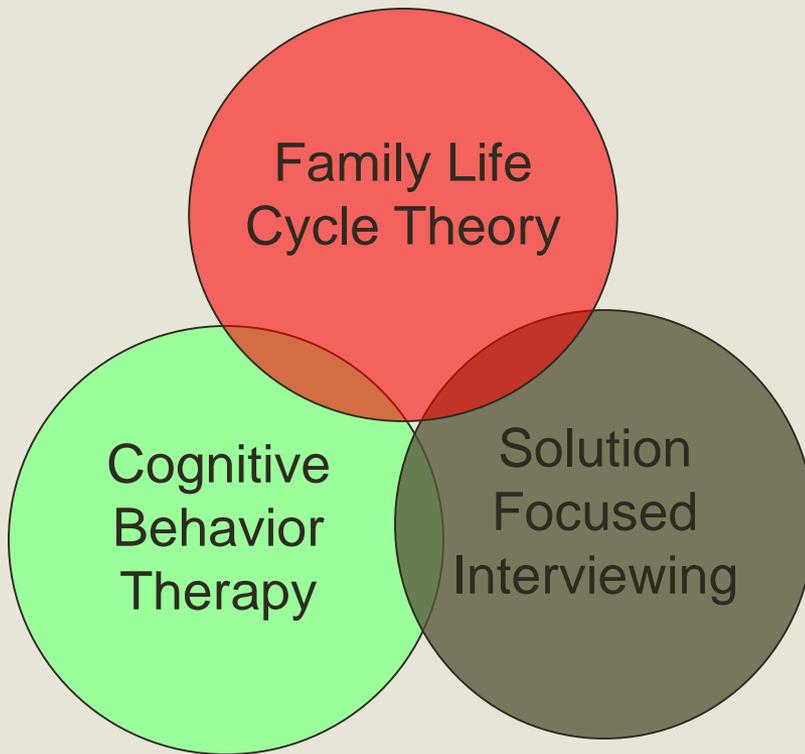
**Escape Plan** I will signal to my husband if I feel like I am going to blow up. We agreed what the signal would be. He has agreed to let me leave the room and let him take over.

**Safety (Backup) Plan** I agree not to hit or spank my son no matter what happens, or whether he behaves or not. If I need extra help and my husband is away, I will call my mom and she has agreed to come over and help out when I need it.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Witnessed By** \_\_\_\_\_

# *Integrated Framework from:*



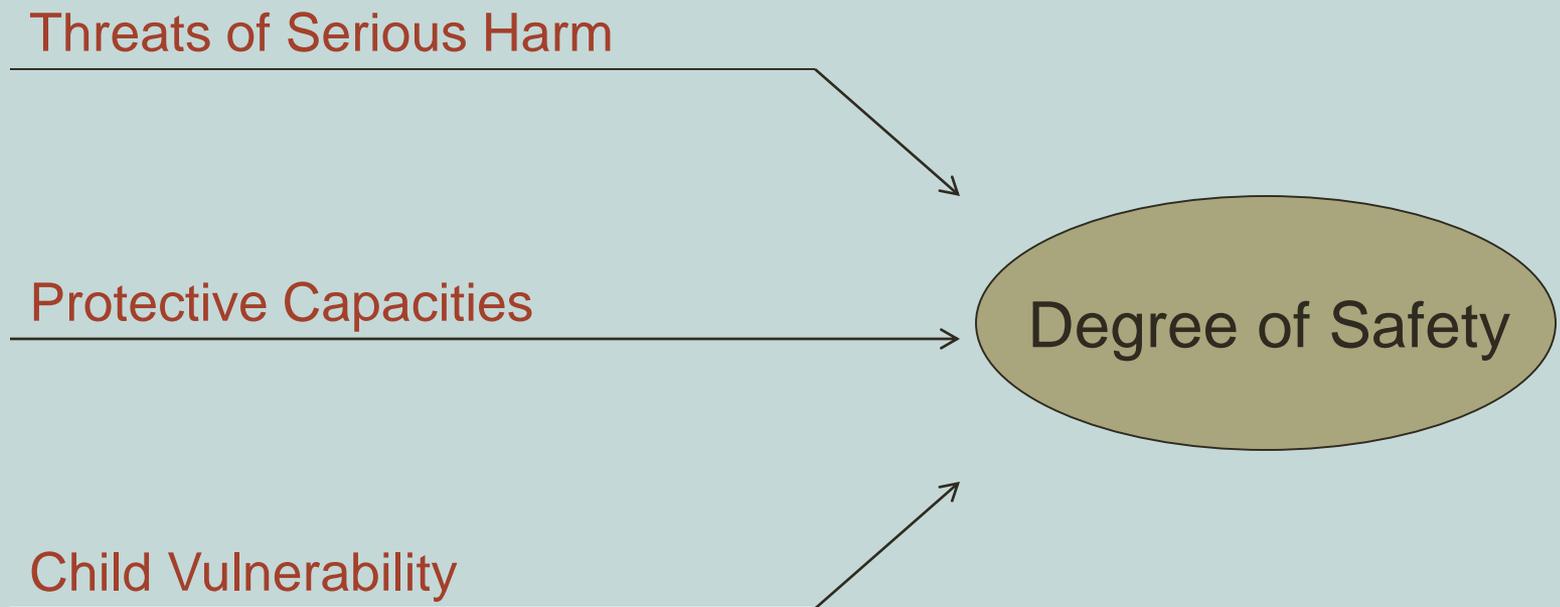
- **Family Life Cycle Theory**  
*(Carter and McGoldrick, 1999)*
- **Relapse Prevention  
(Cognitive Behavioral Theory)**  
*(Marlatt & Gordon, 1985, Pithers, 1990,  
Beck, 1993)*
- **Solution-Focused Therapy**  
*(Berg, 1994, DeShazer, 1988)*

All three models have their own well-documented evidence base.

***Assessment continues to be a balance between:***

***1) assessing the threats to safety, and ...***

***2) engaging the family in a consensus on how to resolve them....***





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*Is this really our job to provide HOPE  
to Child Welfare Clients?*





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Safety is  
our  
Common  
Goal

We anchor our work and our supervision in the:

# 4

## Milestones of Solution Based Casework

*How does SBC help us stay focused and organized in our work with challenging families and over a number of cases?*





# 1

## **Milestone 1 : Building a Consensus**

- Having honest conversations about family safety, parental capacity, and child vulnerability in a safe way that builds toward family engagement in change.

# 2

## **Milestone 2 : Getting Organized on Outcomes**

- Moving from talking about what needs to change to formalizing specific and measurable outcomes that the family (and their providers) will work on.

# 3

## **Milestone 3 : Specific ACTION Plans**

- Working with families and providers to co-develop specific Action Plans to help them realize their outcomes amidst the challenges of their everyday lives.

# 4

## **Milestone 4: Documenting and Celebrating**

- Working with families and providers to problem-solve challenges and notice their successes in ensuring family safety and individual self-management.

# *Building a partnership for Change:*

## It Changes the Meaning of Assessment Interviewing

*“From the beginning she showed me respect. When she walked into our home she didn’t turn her nose up at it. Instead she sat down on our ripped furniture seemingly without any thought. She took time to build a relationship with me. She showed me the good in myself I just couldn’t see”*

*(with permission from Jeanette V., Rise parent)*

*Research has shown:*

*Partnerships are the BEST  
way to gather complex  
Safety Information*

Milestone

1

*(Antle et al, Child Abuse and Neglect, 2012)*

*(van Zyl et al, Journal of Public Child Welfare, 2014)*

## *So, how is SBC Assessment Different ?*

- **When & Where?** We begin by defining problems as difficult situations in everyday life.
- **What Happens?** Then we try to understand how these situations “go down”, how they actually happen in everyday life, and how they’ve evolved over time.
- **Are there Exceptions?** Then we explore “exceptions”, i.e. situations when they are doing something similar but it goes better (safely)



## *How does SBC organize assessment ?*

1

1. What developmental stage are they in?
2. What everyday situations does the family struggle when it comes to caring for their children?
3. How does that situation actually happen when it works, and when it doesn't.

**Family Plan**

2

1. What personal issue(s) does one or more parent have that makes caring for the children difficult?
2. What is their Pattern of unwanted behavior?
3. What skills do they have about managing their personal behavior issue?

**Individual Plan**



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why  
both?

# *What kind of Family Plans ?*

A Better Plan to...

Supervise the Kids

Set Rules For  
Curfew

Get Medical Care

For Disciplining Kids

Keep The  
House Clean

A Home Safe from  
Violence

# *What kind of Individual Plans ?*

## A Better Plan to...

Stop their **C**riminal  
Behavior

Manage their **A**nger  
or Control Issues

Manage their  
**S**ubstance Abuse

Stay **E**motionally Stable

Manage their **S**exual  
Behavior Problems

# Family Plan

# Action Plan

Name Our Long-Term Plan to be a FAMILY!  Family  Individual

**Difficult Situation(s)**  
Whenever we argue, whenever we are under stress from staying up w/ Sadie, when Shaun's been with his buddies and using, when bills are due, problems at work

**Warning Signs:**  
Raspy voice, heart rate ↑, one of us starts to shake  
Facial Expressions, Tara gets scared, too much worry

**Task(s) to Be Accomplished**  
(Prevention, Interruption, Escape)

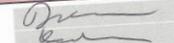
*No (E):* The following plan is our long-range plan to begin once good progress has been made on our Individual Action Plans:  
 1) Tara and Shaun to work w/ a Financial Counselor to reduce financial stress  
 2) Tara + Shaun to keep seeking stable, long-term housing to reduce stress + be stable  
 3) Tara + Shaun to get familiar with iron + each other's warning signs about anger  
 4) Tara + Shaun to consider getting some communication/relationship skills to increase their abilities to work thru stress.  
 5) On our visits, if frustration arises, Tara and Shaun will have a 10-minute break

**How Is Change Noticed/Measured?**  
Caseworker  
They will keep a record.  
Keep track of the times that breaks are used/needed

**Interruption:**  
5) On our visits, if frustration arises, Tara and Shaun will have a 10-minute break

**Escape:**  
4) If any situation, now or later, builds up, either one or both agree to walk away + talk when both are calm

**Safety (Backup) Plan**  
Short term, not be together or live together until progress on individual outcomes. Only supervised visitation for now, once it is approved.

Signed   
 Witnessed By   
 Date 3-3-14

# Individual Plan

# Action Plan

(Milestone 4 example)

Name Stay Calm and Clean Plan  
(Shaun)  Family  Individual

**Difficult Situation(s)**  
When things don't go my way. If I'm high when Tara is upset with me, or yelling at me. When I feel blamed, like I'm a failure

**Warning Signs:**  
I start thinking/dwelling on the negative, get the shakes  
Heart rate goes up, blood rushes to my head

**Task(s) to Be Accomplished**  
(Prevention, Interruption, Escape)

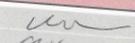
**How Is Change Noticed/Measured?**

**Prevention:**  
 1) Continue to walk each night with Bob - Calendar checks (✓)  
 2) Keep the trailer picked up and in repair - Caseworker notes  
 3) Attend 2 aa meetings (of my choice) each week - Calendar initiated by AA  
 4) Ask CW to do a random drug check on me - Caseworker notes  
 5) Find and engage an individual counselor for my anger (have an appt. within 2 weeks!) - Counselor records  
 6) Keep a nightly journal of my thoughts about my progress and hopes for the future - Personal journal (Shaun w/ Counselor)

**Interrupt:**  
 1) Use my "don't think, just do it" card when I start to notice my early warning signs  
 2) If I start to feel blamed on a visit, I'll say "I'm sorry, I need to take a short break"  
 3) I need to catch myself dwelling on the past with negative thoughts, and find something else to think about that is positive

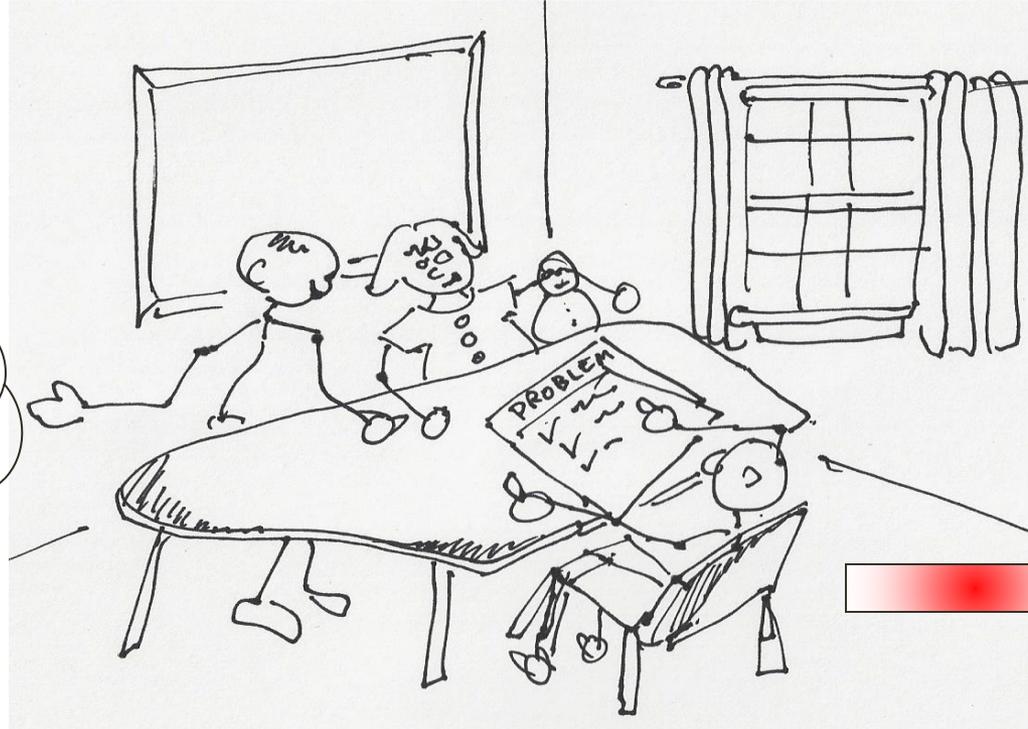
**Escape:**  
 1) If I ever feel like using or feel explosive I'll call for support (and not try to solve it myself!)  
 Record a number (1-10) in personal journal each day  
 Tara will notice if I do this on a visit  
 Talks to counselor & record in my journal  
 Call CW, counselor  
 Bob J, uncle

**Safety (Backup) Plan**  
Continue to honor the I.O. and stay away from Tara until given permission to do a supervised visit. Not stay off drugs!!

Signed   
 Witnessed By   
 Date 5-12-14

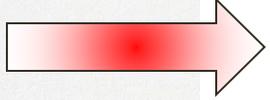
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# Assessment Interview



Safety & Risk

Consensus  
Summary



Let's sort  
this out...

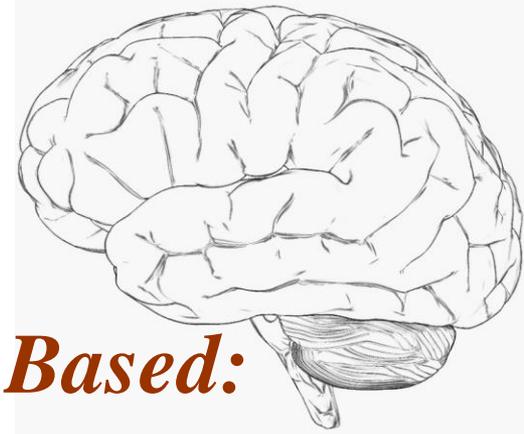


*So How do we GET There?*



# Consensus Building Interviewing Techniques

1. Normalizing Developmental Challenges
2. Tracking the Sequence/History
3. Searching for Exceptions to the Problem
4. Separating Intentions from Actions



## *Training Your Mind to Think Solution Based:*

- *I'm not here to diagnose, but to "sort out"*
- *I can listen for safety, **and** build a partnership*
- *Most parent's intentions are better than their actions*
- *I wonder what they have tried?*
- *What are their everyday life struggles?*
- *I'll bet they're discouraged and probably scared*
- *It's always difficult at first....but we'll get it done*

# 4 Milestones to Solution-Based Casework

Assessment	Case Planning (General) (Specific)		Casework
<p>Sorting Out Situations of Concern</p> <p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Consensus Summary</b></p> <p>What is not working &amp; how we can be helpful.</p>	<p>Getting Organized On how to proceed</p> <p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Case Plan Outcomes</b></p> <p>Family Level Outcomes (FLO's) &amp; Individual Level Outcome (ILO's)</p>	<p>Getting Specific Behavioral Tasks</p> <p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Specific Action Plans</b></p> <p><b>ACTION PLANS</b> to meet those Outcomes</p>	<p>Documenting &amp; Celebrating</p> <p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Documented Competence</b></p> <p>Documenting specific tasks of the <b>ACTION PLAN</b></p>



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Milestone

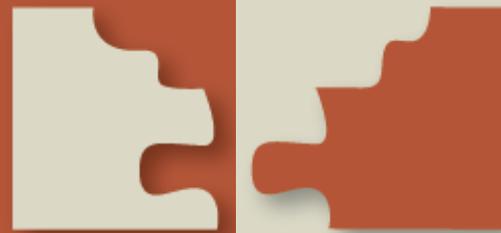
2

Planning is:

Getting Organized.

First Generally, then Specifically.

Partnership



*Co-Constructing a Case Plan*



# *Why Safety Outcomes versus compliance with services?*

## **From the voice of our clients:**

*“When my daughter was 4, the system sent me to a parenting class where I was taught to burp and swaddle a baby. In anger management class I was taught to count to ten, but what I really needed was meds for my mood swings.....If parents are going to succeed, they need to feel like someone really knows them. Not just cookie cutouts but as real people.”*

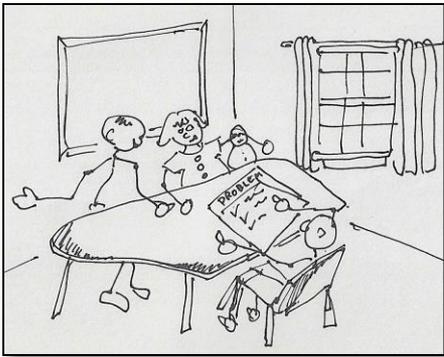
*(with permission from Piazadora, Rise parent)*

*“During treatment I worked diligently to get my life in order. I finished all my services on the case plan: parenting, substance abuse treatment, a domestic violence program. But the story kept changing.....even when I had succeeded in finding employment and housing, they still didn't return my kids to me.”*

*(with permission from Ashley B., Rise parent)*

# SBC Case FLOW

## Assessment



- Normalizing
- Tracking family life
- Exceptions
- Separating Intentions



Let's sort this out...

How might we help?



## Family Agreement (Case Plan)

**FAMILY AGREEMENT (preventive)**

Family Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: "Initial Agreement" Date Updated: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROBLEMS / CONCERNS**  
 Describe what you have learned from tracking the sequence of events with the client, record the behavior or presentation that caused your concern and refer to the attached "Time and Content" in the outline of meeting. You may also include the client's perspective on the problem, the context, and any other relevant information that you have gathered.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
 4. \_\_\_\_\_

**FAMILY STRENGTHS**  
 Describe what you have learned from working for exceptions with the family, record what they have done to keep the child's rights, needs, and interests in the best of interest as they were used.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
 4. \_\_\_\_\_

**OUTCOMES**  
 Describe what the family has agreed to do to address or prevent the child's need to address what will help the child's rights, needs, and interests.

**Desired Family Level Outcomes (FLO)**

UO 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
 UO 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
 UO 3: \_\_\_\_\_

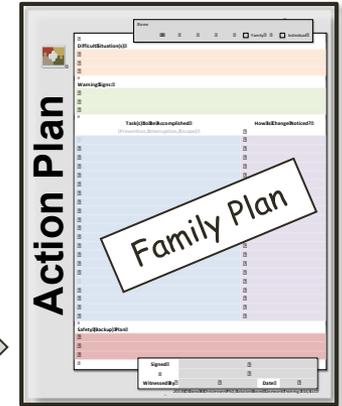
**Desired Individual Level Outcomes (ILO)**

UO 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
 UO 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
 UO 3: \_\_\_\_\_



Let's get Organized!

## Action Plans



Let's Get Specific!



## *Overview of Family Agreement /Case Plan in SBC*

FAMILY AGREEMENT		
Family Members	Date of Initial Agreement	Date Updated
<b>FAMILY CHALLENGES</b> Describe what the family has done to keep the child(ren) safe, healthy, and in school in the past and what resources were used.		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
<b>PROBLEMS / CONCERNS</b> Describe the family's behavior or circumstances that create safety concerns and/or risk to the child(ren). Think of the concerns in the context of caregiver events (e.g. getting kids ready for school, dealing with job-related stress, keeping the house clean).		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
<b>OUTCOMES</b> Describe what the family (as a whole) and the parents or caregivers (as individuals) need to achieve that will keep the child(ren) safe, healthy, and in school.		
<b>Overall Family Level Outcomes (FLO)</b>		
FLO 1.		
FLO 2.		
FLO 3.		
<b>Overall Individual Level Outcomes (ILO)</b>		
ILO 1.		
ILO 2.		
ILO 3.		

- Family Agreements (Case Plans) build on Consensus Summary
- Always at least one Family and one Individual Outcome (FLO & ILO)
- Family Outcomes call for a NEW Plan to manage situations that are safety or serious risk concerns
- Individual Outcomes call for NEW Plan to manage personal issues that threaten the Family Outcome's success
- Outcomes are “what will be happening” to create safety
- Plans are Co-constructed and Family Ownership a Priority.

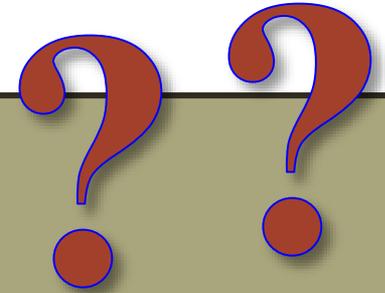
## *Phrasing an Outcome in SBC*

### 3 PARTS to Each Outcome

<b>WHO</b> will Use	<b>WHAT</b> Plan	<b>WHY</b> ( <i>Safety Purpose</i> )
The family will use..	...their plan to safely discipline their children or ....their “Family Chores Plan” to safely discipline their children	....so that the kids learn to do their chores and everyone is safe from physical harm
Dad will use .....	....his “Keep Cool Plan” to manage his temper	particularly when disciplining his children so that they are safe from physical harm.

## *What do you do with Lower Priority Concerns*

Where do you put items that are important to the family, represent good social work, but are not true safety or high risk issues and therefore won't keep a case open?



Simply work those into tasks where they fit:

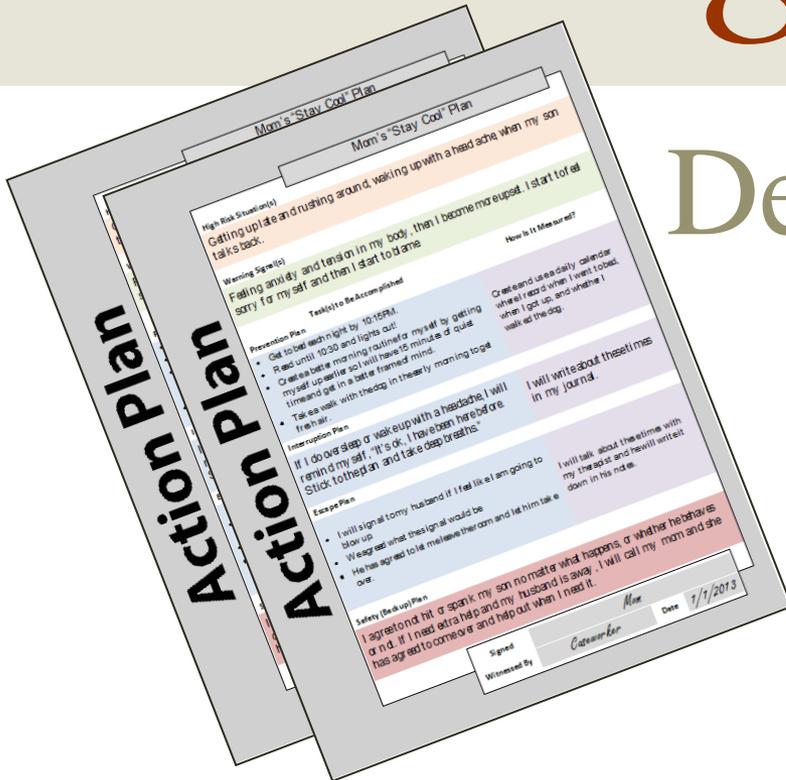
- Family or Individual Outcomes  
(or in Foster Care cases, Child Well-Being Needs)  
or
- Just take care of them and place in case notes.

# 4 Milestones to Solution Based Casework

Assessment	Case Planning (General) (Specific)		Casework
<p>Sorting Out Situations of Concern</p> <p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Consensus Summary</b></p> <p>What is not working &amp; how we can be helpful.</p>	<p>Getting Organized On how to proceed</p> <p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Case Plan Outcomes</b></p> <p>Family Level Outcomes (FLO's) &amp; Individual Level Outcome (ILO's)</p>	<p>Getting Specific Behavioral Tasks</p> <p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Specific Action Plans</b></p> <p><b>ACTION PLANS</b> to meet those Outcomes</p>	<p>Documenting &amp; Celebrating</p> <p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Documented Competence</b></p> <p>Documenting specific tasks of the <b>ACTION PLAN</b></p>



# Getting Specific:



## Developing Specific ACTION Plans

*“Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don't quit.”*

— Conrad Hilton

# Action Plan

## Mom's "Stay Cool" Plan

### High Risk Situation(s)

Getting up late and rushing around, waking up with a head ache, when my son talks back.

### Warning Signal(s)

Feeling anxiety and tension in my body, then I become more upset. I start to feel sorry for myself and then I start to blame

### Task(s) to Be Accomplished

### How Is It Measured?

#### Prevention Plan

- Get to bed each night by 10:15PM.
- Read until 10:30 and lights out!
- Create a better morning routine for myself by getting myself up earlier so I will have 15 minutes of quiet time and get in a better frame of mind.
- Take a walk with the dog in the early morning to get fresh air.

Create and use a daily calendar where I record when I went to bed, when I got up, and whether I walked the dog.

#### Interruption Plan

If I do oversleep or wake up with a headache, I will remind myself, "It's ok, I have been here before. Stick to the plan and take deep breaths."

I will write about these times in my journal.

#### Escape Plan

- I will signal to my husband if I feel like I am going to blow up.
- We agreed what the signal would be.
- He has agreed to let me leave the room and let him take over.

I will talk about these times with my therapist and he will write it down in his notes.

#### Safety (Backup) Plan

I agree not to hit or spank my son no matter what happens, or whether he behaves or not. If I need extra help and my husband is away, I will call my mom and she has agreed to come over and help out when I need it.

Signed

*Mom*

Witnessed By

*Caseworker*

Date

*1/1/2013*



## *What Skills are We Talking About ?*

Able to:

- Identify high risk or difficult situations
- Identify early warning signals
- Prevent high risk situations
- Interrupt risk situations not avoided
- Escape situations not interrupted

# 4 Milestones to Solution-Based Casework

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# *Documenting and Celebrating:*

Noticing and Anchoring  
Real Change



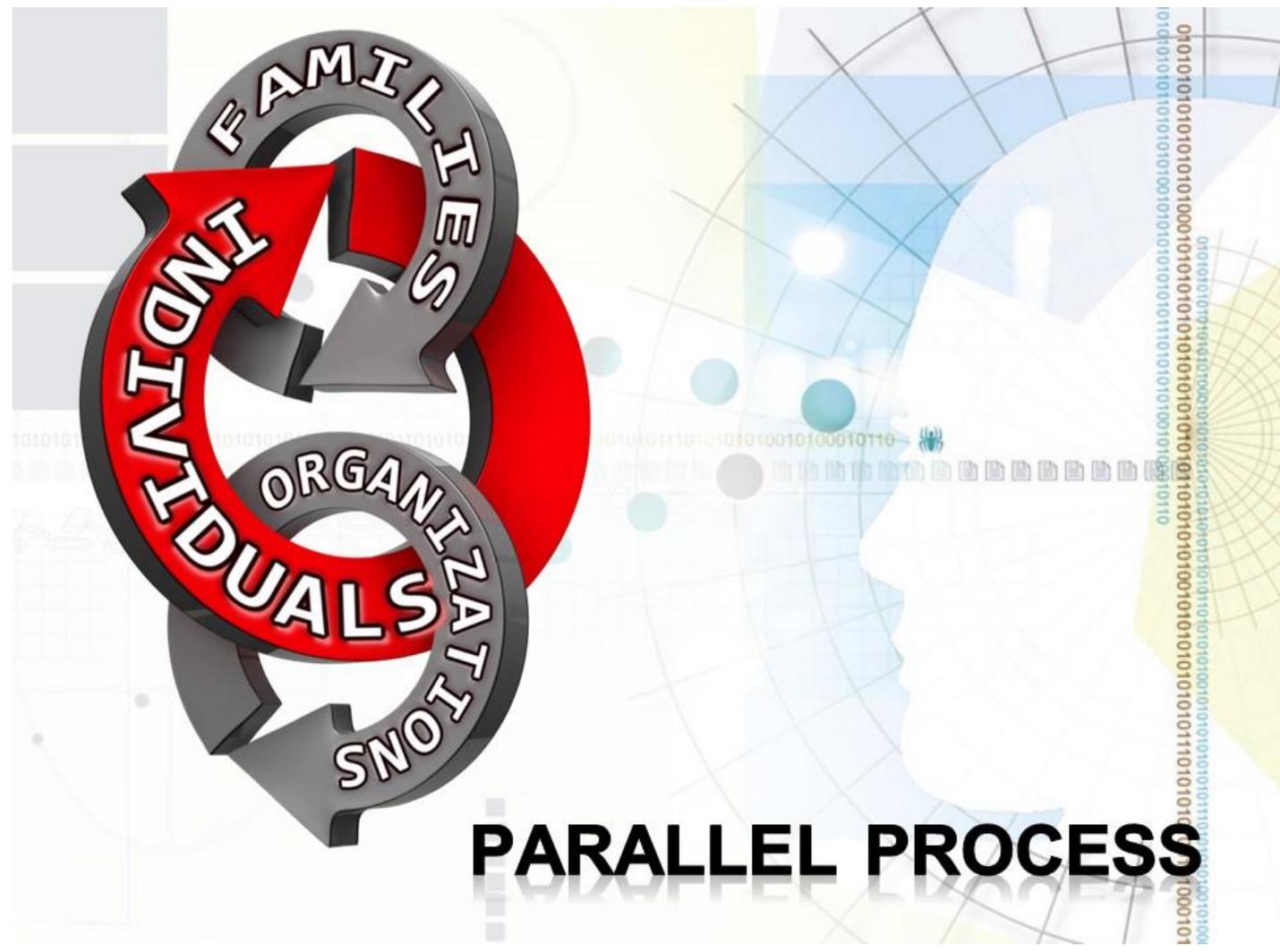
## *Suggestions for Celebration of Change*

1. Anticipate change
2. Verbal acknowledgment
3. T-charts
4. Collect stories and examples
5. Call an FTM (or an FSTM)
6. Have a celebration party
7. Provide a certificate
8. Memory book of change
9. Write and mail a card
10. Share good news with support team

*(Click next for video on Anchoring Change with Celebration)*



# PARALLEL PROCESS



# 4 Milestones to Solution-Based Casework

Assessment	Case Planning (General) (Specific)		Casework
<p>Sorting Out Situations of Concern</p> <p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Consensus Summary</b></p> <p>What is not working &amp; how we can be helpful.</p>	<p>Getting Organized On how to proceed</p> <p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Case Plan Outcomes</b></p> <p>Family Level Outcomes (FLO's) &amp; Individual Level Outcome (ILO's)</p>	<p>Getting Specific Behavioral Tasks</p> <p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Specific Action Plans</b></p> <p><b>ACTION PLANS</b> to meet those Outcomes</p>	<p>Documenting &amp; Celebrating</p> <p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Documented Competence</b></p> <p>Documenting specific tasks of the <b>ACTION PLAN</b></p>

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