

The 5 Anchor Principles - Writing an Analytical and Child Focused Assessment

Brown et al, 2012; Brown and Turney, 2014 devised the '**Five Anchor Principles**' for practitioners to use when undertaking assessments, and as a supportive tool to use in either one to one supervision or group supervision.

These principles can be used in conjunction with Dudley Children's Services assessment tools and models, including Restorative Practice and Signs of Safety. They encourage practitioners to reflect upon their practice and develop their understanding of a child's story, their lived experiences, and the impact of Children's Services intervention upon their lives.

The Five Anchor Principles are:

- ⚓ **What is the assessment for?**
- ⚓ **What is the story?**
- ⚓ **What does the story mean?**
- ⚓ **What needs to happen?**
- ⚓ **How will we know we are making progress?**

What is the assessment for?

This helps the practitioner to consider what they are assessing and what they are involved in the family's life for.

This question enables practitioners to demonstrate reflection from the beginning.

Some questions to consider are:

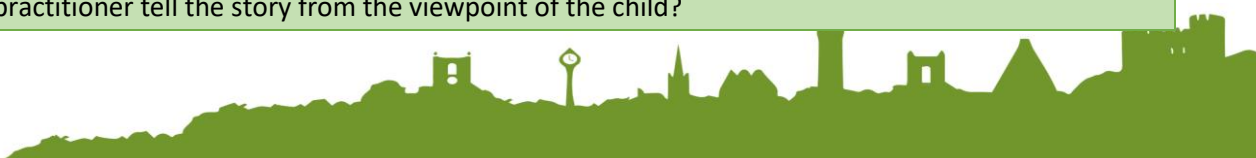
- What are we worried about?
- What might the family/child be worried about?
- What skills and support might the practitioner need to complete the assessment?

What is the story?

These are the relevant facts, circumstances and events. This question supports a practitioner to consider the journey of a family and the lived experience of the child.

Some questions to consider are:

- Can the practitioner tell the story from the viewpoint of the child?



- How has the practitioner used the story to make sense of the child's life?
- How does the story make the practitioner feel, and has the practitioner thought about how their own past experiences influences the story?

What does the story mean?

At this stage, the practitioner will begin to analyse the story using their own practise wisdom, research and expertise about the family. This is the principle whereby you will 'show your workings out'.

Some questions to consider are:

- What hypotheses have been developed and what are the alternatives?
- What is the impact of the story upon the child?
- Imagine the child is in this room – what would they say about the meaning being made of their life?

What needs to happen now?

Plans are now starting to emerge and solutions are now being suggested. Practitioners should focus on the needs of the child or family, rather than describing need, i.e. 'the child needs to be in a safe environment where there is no domestic abuse', rather than 'referral to domestic abuse service'.

Some questions to consider are:

- What would have to happen for this child for the practitioner to stop being involved with the child and family?
- What does the practitioner think will be the best outcome and why?
- How will this be helpful to the child's current situation?

How will we know we are making progress?

Practitioners are encouraged to consider what things need to look like in order to be encouraged that the child is safe and their needs are being met. We should consider what 'good' looks like in the life of a child and how we will know the family have achieved that.

Some questions to consider are:

- What did the practitioner hope would have happened by now?
- What would the child/family say?
- Does the practitioner have a plan to challenge family or other professionals involved, should there be no change for the child?
- What did the practitioner hope would have happened by now?

