

## What is a Safety Scale?

Safety scaling is used at multi-agency meetings and throughout the assessment process; it is a tool to gather a judgement from everyone involved in the case, so that everyone has the opportunity to rate how safe they think the child is on a scale of 0 to 10.

Family members are asked to use the safety scale, as well as the social worker and the other professionals.

The Safety Scale question is written to reflect the specific circumstances of the case; it will look something like this:

**Safety Scale:** On a Scale of 0 – 10, **where 10 means** that you are confident that the child is safe enough to close the case and **0 means** that you are certain the child will be harmed - or harmed again – where would you rate the situation right now?

0 ←————→ 10

(See page 4 for a more specific example).

## Benefits of Safety Scaling

By using the safety scale, it makes it easier for the family to understand what each professional is thinking and the extent of their worries.

It also provides a measurement process that everyone can understand and, when used overtime, will show how much progress is being made.

## The Safety Scale Process

1	Go round the room and ask each person to rate the situation against the safety scale question.
2	Ask them to explain the reason for their rating.
3	Ask follow up questions to further unpick the reason for their rating and to understand what the person needs to see in order to get this higher.

# Safety Scale Rules

- The Safety Scale is always 0 – 10 where 0 is negative and 10 is positive.
- Explain what 10 looks like first (when you explain the Safety Scale always present the most positive scenario first).
- All professionals and family members should be asked to complete the Safety Scale.
- The Safety Scale should reflect the Safety Goal at 10 and the Danger Statement at 0
- There should be a Safety Scale Question for every Danger Statement/ Safety Goal.

## Remember!

- People will differ on their assessment of the situation, it's not necessary for everyone to agree on a number but it is important that everyone understands the reasons why people's views differ. This will inform the safety planning for the case (what needs to happen).
- There is no right or wrong answer, however, each contributor needs to say what has happened to get them to their current rating and what needs to happen for them to increase this number. Give your rating last so your answer doesn't influence others in the room.
- The fundamental purpose of the Safety Scale is to establish how safe the child is, not the parent's capacity to care for the child.
- If new worries are identified through the safety scale process, you will need to consider amending the danger statement and safety goal to reflect this.

## Examples of Safety Scale Follow Up Questions

Follow up questions will generate conversations to help everyone at the meeting consider each other's point of view. Responses will inform decision making about 'what needs to happen' to be included within the safety plan and help shape the safety goals. In line with the Signs of Safety approach, questions should be solution focused where possible:

**What are the parents doing now that brings your rating of them up to a four?**

**What would a ten look like for you?**

**At the last meeting you rated the situation as a two and you have now rated it at a four, what's better now?**

**For me, your rating of a two is lower than I expected, given what we've written in the danger statement, are there any worries that you think we have missed?**

**Okay, so you have rated the situation at a four, what would need to happen for you to increase this to a five?**

## Other uses for Safety Scales

Safety scales are primarily used as a tool to start conversations at multi-agency meetings but they can also be used during your individual conversations with children and families to establish how they feel about a particular issue and as a reflective tool within supervision.

**Discussion with child example:**

**Safety Scale:** on a scale of 0 -10, **where 10 means** that you really enjoy going to school and **0 means** that things are so bad that you don't want to go to school at all. How would you rate how you feel about school?



**Supervision example:**

**Safety Scale:** On a scale of 0 to 10, where would you rate your relationship with this father (mother, child etc.), **where 10 means** you can talk openly with them about the problems and what is good in their life and are talking together about what can be done about the problems, **and 0 means** you have no working relationship with that person at all and they won't even engage with you:

Where would you rate your relationship with them?

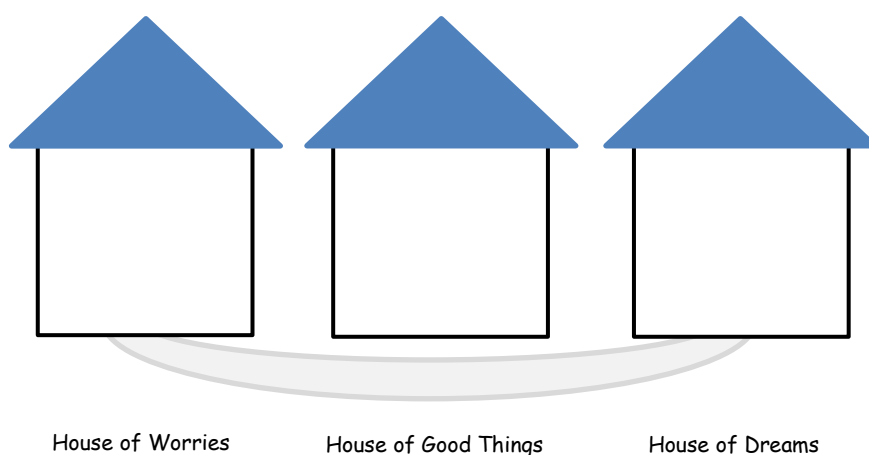


Where would they rate their working relationship with you?



# My Three Houses

As part of the My Three Houses work with children, you can introduce a Safety Scale question by drawing a path leading from the 'House of Worries' to the 'House of Dreams' and asking the child where they would put themselves on the path based on the way that things are at the moment.



# Safety Scale

On a Scale of 0 to 10, where would you rate things today?



**0 means that:**

If the children returned home tomorrow to live with Lee or Fred:

Nothing has really changed at all and there is no plan for how things could be different, and even though Mum and Dad really love and miss the children, things would probably be the way they were when the children went into foster care and it wouldn't be long before they were scared, sick or in danger of getting hurt again.

When you present the Safety Scale always explain what 10 looks like first.

**10 means that:**

If the children returned home tomorrow to live with Lee or Fred:

It would be to a home that is warm and clean, where there are people to help, with a clear plan in place that shows how the girls will have clean clothes and good meals, will be able to attend all their doctor appointments and are cared for by a safe and sober adult.