

My Three Houses Guide



This guidance gives an overview of the process for undertaking the My Three Houses exercise, it has been summarised from the Signs of Safety Workbook.

Before undertaking the My Three Houses exercise please ensure you have read the full guidance which is included at page 37 – 49 of your workbook.

1 Wherever possible inform parents and obtain their permission to interview the child

When you ask for permission, show the parents the My Three Houses tool and explain the process, this may help to reduce any anxiety they are likely to feel about you interviewing their child. It also creates transparency and will make it easier for you to come back to the parents with the information that the child has shared.

2 Decide who should be present for the My Three Houses exercise

Decide if it is best to work with the child with or without the parents present - where appropriate let the parent(s) and child decide.

Where there is more than one child to interview, consider whether it would be best to interview siblings together. This might be useful to help a teenager to share their thoughts, if they are present when a younger sibling draws their My Three Houses.

3 Introduce the My Three Houses to the Child

Always explain the process to the child before you start.

"In the first house, we will write or draw the things that you are worried about and we will call this the 'House of Worries'

In the second house, we will write or draw the things that you like in your life, this will be the 'House of Good Things'

Then we will have a third house, the 'House of Dreams' where we can write or draw how you would like things to be in your life if all your worries were gone."

4 The Interview

- Ask the child if they want to start with the 'House of Good Things' or the 'House of Worries'.
- Ask the child if they want to draw pictures, write things down or both. If they choose to write things down, you can ask them if they want to do the writing or if they want you to do this.
- When writing things down, always use the child's exact words and read this back to the child before finishing the interview.
- Use one piece of A4 paper for each house so that the child has enough space to draw and write things down.
- Once the My Three Houses interview is complete, explain to the child what will happen next and ask the child for their permission to share it with others, their family, extended family and other professionals.

5 Sharing the child's assessment with parents

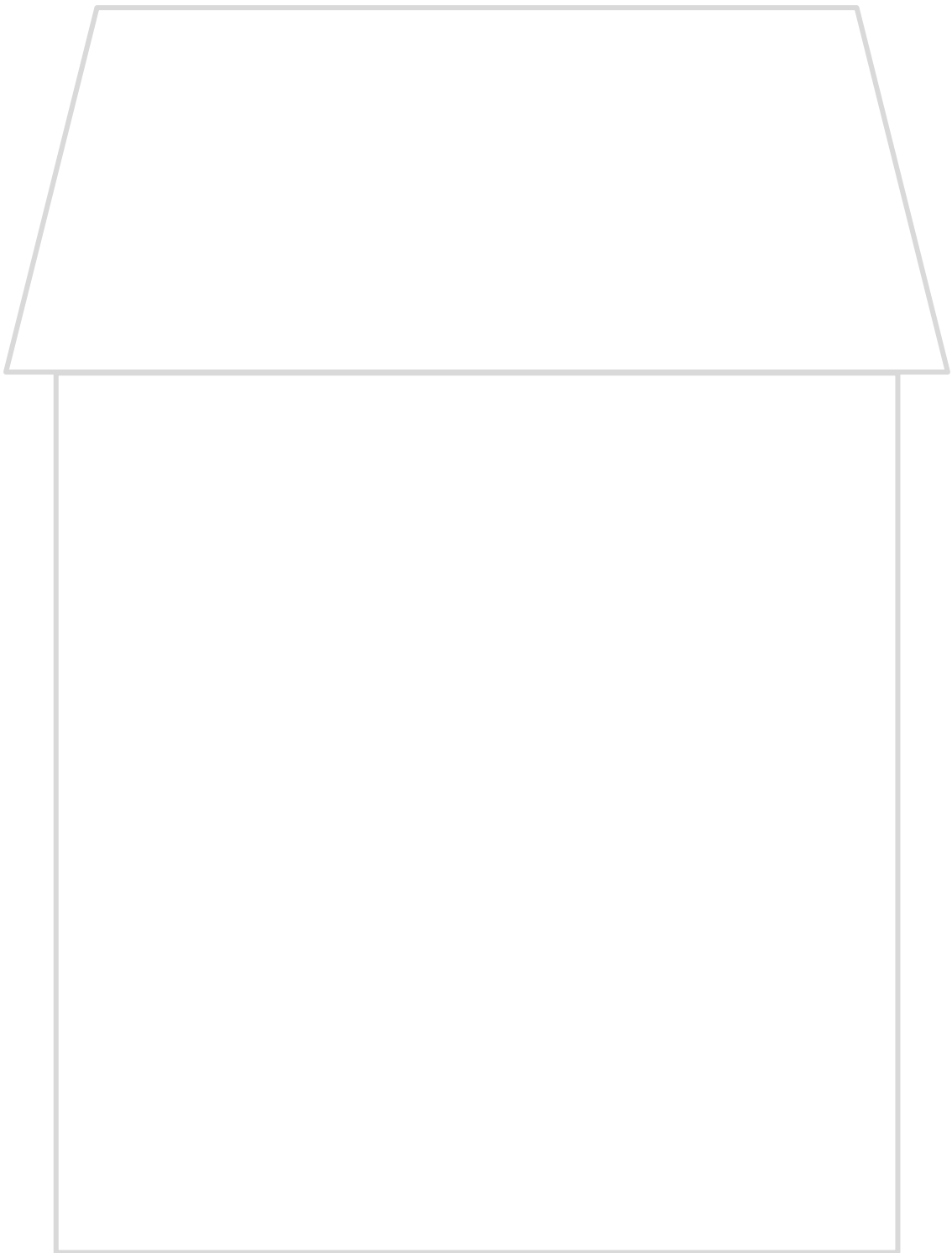
When sharing the child's My Three Houses work with the parents it is a good idea to start with 'The House of Good Things.' This will show that you see things in a balanced way and help build trust with the family.

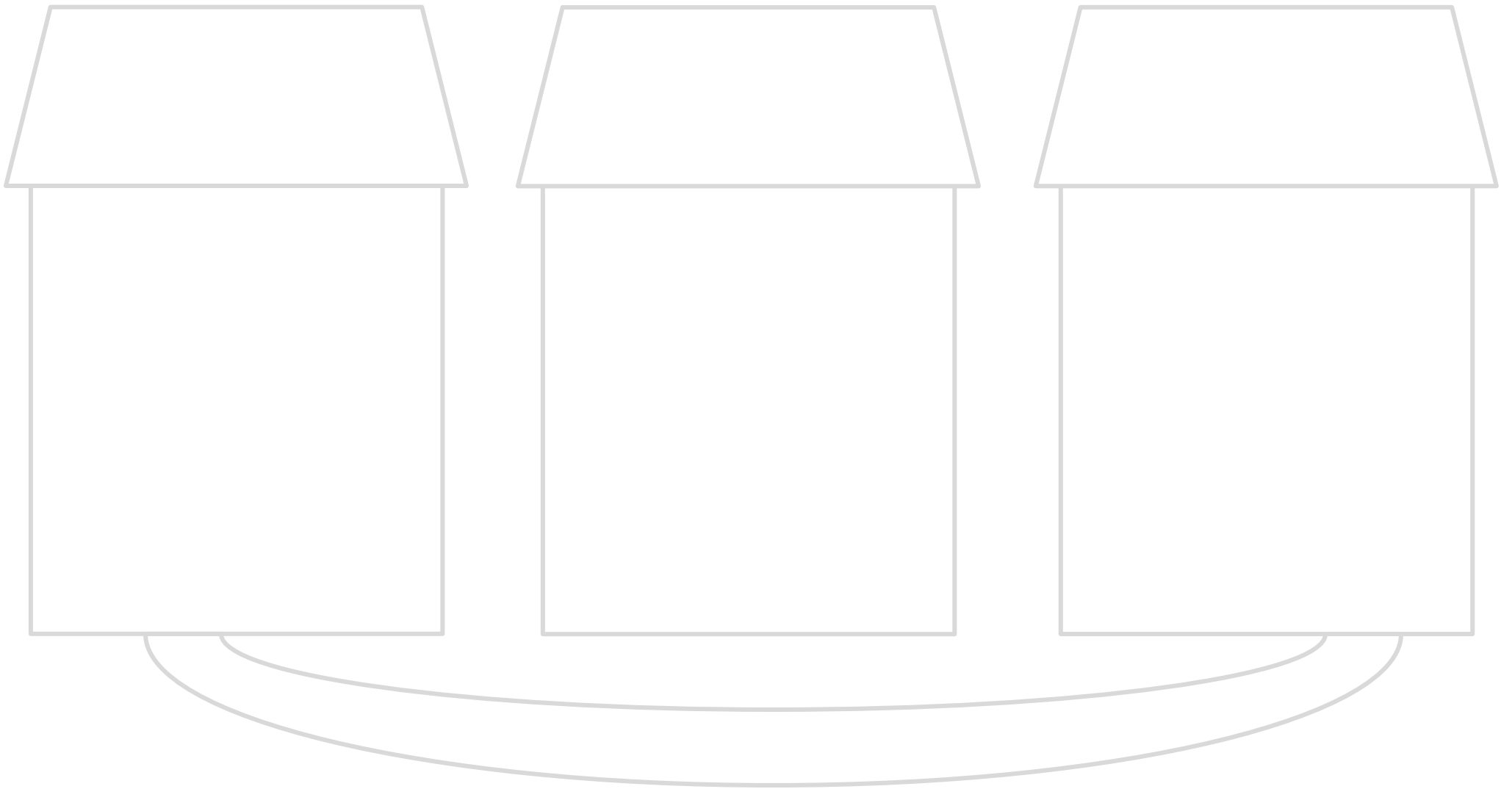
Before showing them the 'House of Worries,' 'House of Good Things' and 'House of Dreams' it might be helpful to ask them what they think their child will have written or drawn. This will help you understand the level of insight that the parents have into their child's perspective.

Tips for completing My Three Houses.

- The child doesn't need to complete one house after another, it may be better to jump backwards and forwards between the three houses.
- Before finishing the interview ask the child if there is anything else they would like to add, to any of the houses, so they have every chance to express what they want to say.
- You can give the child the choice of creating their own names for each house.
- When writing things down always use the child's exact words and read this back to the child before finishing the interview.
- You can introduce a Safety Scale Question into the process by drawing a path between the House of Worries and the House of Dreams and asking the child to locate where they are on the path.

Templates - Children might prefer to draw their own houses or use a template, templates are provided on the following pages with a faint grey outline so that children can trace the outline using different colours to help make the picture their own.





Wizards and Fairies

Wizards and Fairies is another variation of the My Three Houses exercise. Children can use the templates provided or draw their own wizard or fairy, they may also prefer to draw a different character which is of significance to them e.g. a footballer, superhero or animal. However be mindful that the worries, good things and wishes should be written on the character's clothes or objects they carry, rather than their body. Much of what the child writes will represent what needs to change – just as they can change their clothes.

