

Devon County Council promotes that moves for our children should be progressions towards permanence, as a well-matched stable home with caring, aspirational, encouraging caregivers focussing on longevity and stability for our children, so they can be in relationship with a primary caregiver to start to heal Developmental Trauma.

The negative impacts of unnecessary moves for our children can be far reaching (e.g. inability to make meaningful attachments) and for the caregiver, therefore positive, proactive, preventative measures to support our families who are under pressure is needed.

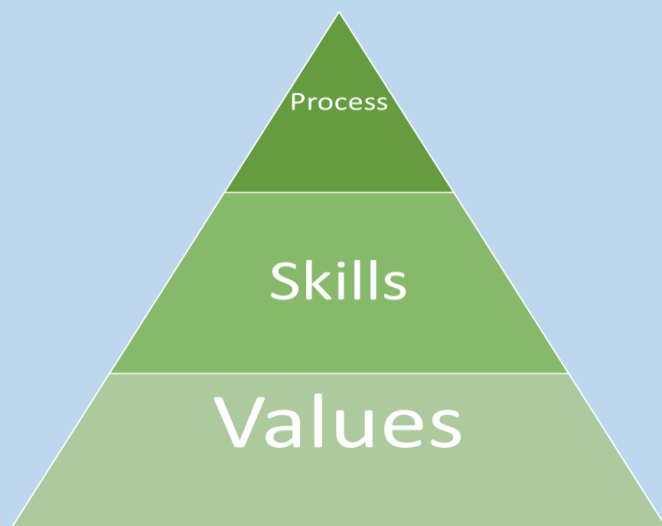
It is essential that a multi-agency collaborative approach is adopted to strengthen stability. We need to consider clear risk assessing, avoiding drift, increased choices of where our children can call home and how this could be supported by their family, improved multi-agency support and Strengthening Stability.

What is our vision?

We want to achieve a cultural shift to strengthen stability rather than reacting to crisis. Being preventative, acknowledging small struggles, planning support for families which offers ongoing maintenance as opposed to crisis support which often leads to a child needing to move.

We want our involvement with our families to be guided by our values, timely, proportionate, and impactful. Trauma – Informed Practice is at the heart of our approach ensuring physical and emotional safety, facilitating connection, a lens to reflect on our practice and minimising re-traumatisation. Being trauma-informed is accepting distress, reframing behaviour and understanding it. This increases our chances of supporting the children/young people within our care to feel safe, to develop trust and for them to invest in relationships and support available to them.

We will know when we have achieved this when our children/young people experience stable, loving homes which support the healing of Developmental Trauma.



Our Value base, how we engage as a group, offers the support and not the process.

How are we going to achieve this?

Values:

Strengthening Stability Meetings will not be prescriptive but responsive. The environment needs to feel safe; everyone has permission to speak and be listened to, the chair of the meeting is a guide who does not directly lead and who encourages the collective wisdom of the group. Consider your behaviour and your words, accepting distress, reframing behaviour and understanding it. Acknowledging and listening to distress, not rushing to rescue, sit with this feeling to encourage your understanding. The value base and the engagement of the group offers the support, and not the process.

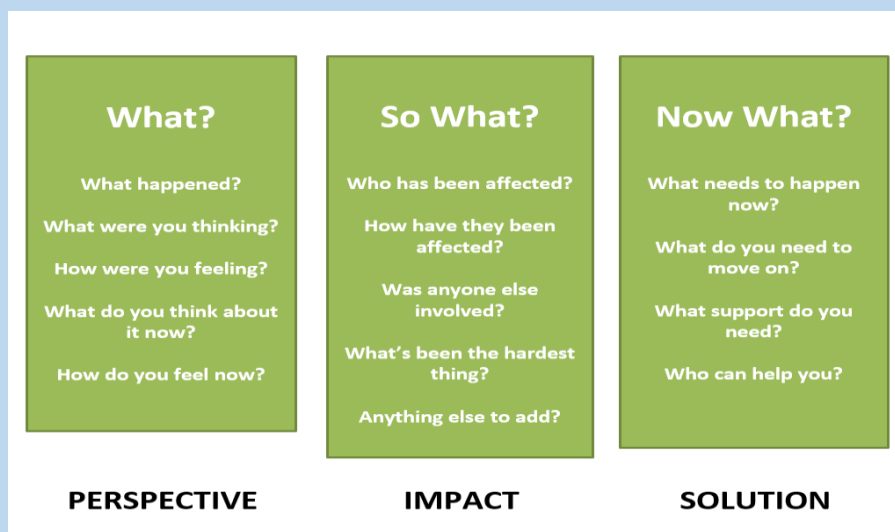
Being Trauma-informed within our practice offers empathy, kindness, honesty and respect, our focus is 'What has happened to you?' not 'What is wrong with you?'

Respect and value relationships; listen to understand; supportive and challenging; curious not judgemental; responsibility for what is yours; and a safe space.

Skills:

We need to be *preventative* when strengthening stability and *collaborative* in our support. Focussing on the perspective, impact and solution for both the child and the caregiver.

Communicating carefully; communicates care.



Process:

When: Anyone can request a meeting. The Child's SW must have oversight and the preparation for the meeting is completed by them or the Supervising Social Worker from Devon Fostering. Focus is on strengthening stability, being preventative at Planning meetings or from the beginning of any struggles such as fragility of relationships; when the child/YP is overwhelmed by feelings of distress and this can be challenging for them and those who care for them; caregiver's wellbeing/knowledge/skills; concern/allegation; education attendance.....

Sadly, the matching of the family may not be appropriate and strengthening stability can support a child/YP to move in a considered, supportive planned way.

Who: The Chair is the most appropriate professional within the support network for the child/YP, or consideration can be given to an independent Chair? The Team Manager will have oversight of the decision making. Attendance is the Core group of child/YP; caregiver; child's SW; Supervising SW; Team Manager; Promoting Stability Team, including pre-meetings, de-briefs and lessons learnt. Attendance or views of other professionals as relevant.

The Chair needs to open the meeting using the Guide to encourage the value base and structure. Introduction consists of Who are we; Why are we here; what's going to happen; how will we do this; offering an opportunity for feedback after reflection; value base.

Views of Child/YP/caregiver: The voice of the child is imperative and we need to be thoughtful and creative with who and how we gain their wishes and feelings and /or an advocate, in preparation and in understanding the next steps. There needs to be consideration to gaining a carer's views and preparation for the meeting from Supervising SWs, Chair and/or an advocate for the meeting if needed.

Reviews: Reviews will happen to identify ongoing support or the success of stability. A review/reflective learning circle will be held if a planned/unplanned move for a child/YP happens, consider the lessons learnt, reparative work and lasting relationships.

Managerial Oversight: Authorisation of plan and management oversight casenote, monitoring progress and drift of meetings and reviews. Evidence can be provided in Quality Assurance data.

Recording: The Chair completes Strengthening Stability Meeting/Plan worklist. Attach any direct work with child/YP. Also record on the carer Eclipse file. **Prompts:** **PERSPECTIVE** – Hearing the narrative, what happened, thoughts and feelings before and after. **IMPACT** Who has been affected, what do we build on, what are the strengths, what's the hardest thing for all involved. **SOLUTIONS** What do you need to feel/make it better, what support, what happens next.

Key contacts:

Promoting Stability Team: Amanda Barrett

Fostering Devon: Lance Feldman

Social Work: Anna Radden and Jo Mclear

