**Practice Note for all SCT Practitioners,** Managers **and Staff:**

**The ‘3 Basics of Practice’**

Before starting to plan our work with the child/young person/young adult and their family, we need to ensure we are familiar with the basics. The ‘3 Basics of Practice’ include our Process Maps, Practice Standards and Practice Guidance (Elements 1-3) and are part of our Practice Framework and Model. Each of them plays an important part and when used together, they provide a consistent framework for our work enabling us to think about what we need to do, when and how well. These are used when working with children, young people, young adults and their families when completing assessments, plans, updating and reviewing them.

Over the last few years, several reports have identified the need to refocus our work in organisations to achieve a better balance between the processes and the procedures we need to follow and the help and support we provide to our families (Munroe 2011). Using our Practice Framework and Model enables us to achieve this balance by ensuring that we think about the basics that are needed before we begin our work. With this in place, it enables practitioners to provide creative person-centred interventions with our families based upon good quality engagement.

This practice note illustrates what the ‘3 Basics’ are and why they are important part of our Practice Framework ad Model. Next, how we use the 3 Basics of Practice in relation to the case study of Asha and Jagvir Kapoor who has just been made subject to a Child Protection (CP) plan and within reflective spaces such as supervision. Finally, how these can be evidenced on the child’s file, good practice points and further reading is identified.

**What are the ‘3 Basics of Practice’?**

The ‘3 Basics of Practice’ include Process Maps, Practice Standards and Guidance (or notes) and are the first 3 elements of our Practice Model. They sit underneath our Practice Framework and alongside our 3 x Heart of Practice and 3 x Intervention Aides and are designed to work together to support our practice.

**Element 1: Process Maps - who does what and when:** Sandwell Children’s Trust has developed Process Maps for each part of the Child’s Journey. These detailed process maps help practitioners, managers and staff to understand what needs to be completed, by who and when.

The Process Maps act as a framework that assists with the timeliness of our work with children/young people/young adults. The Process Maps mean that we all have a consistent approach to our work and a common understanding about each other’s roles. The Process Maps also help us to understand how these fit into the child and families’ journey whilst we are working with them and ensures that children/young people/young adults always know what is happening and what to expect. Process maps are available on our Procedures/Policies System Tri-x and offer clear and consistent guides to all.

**Element 2: Practice Guidance - how we complete the work and why:** Practice Guidance help all staff to understand how we complete our work with children and families and explains why. The Practice Guidance includes and references relevant national legislation and government guidance in addition to Sandwell Children’s Trust (SCT) policies and procedures. SCT have completed Practice Guidance that sits alongside and should be read in conjunction with the Process Maps.

Practice Guidance also includes ‘Practice Notes’ that are a quick guide to best practice for practitioners and managers as well as ‘Best Practice Examples’. These are anonymised exemplars where particular elements of work completed with families have been recognised to have been completed to a high standard and represent best practice. It is essential that as a learning organisation we are learning from good practice. Practice Guidance is available on Tri-x and Practice Notes are located on the Learning and Development Hub.

**Element 3: Practice Standards - how well and to what standard we complete our work.** These help us think about how well we need to complete our work with families. Practice Standards recognise the importance of clear and comprehensive standards to ensure that children and young people, and their families, access consistent, high quality, professional support, regardless of their entry point into the Service or the stage of the Child’s Journey. They are the rules that describe the (minimum) service or practice that can be expected by the children and families we support. Our Practice Standards have been written with children, young people and practitioners. The Standards also offer practitioners and managers guidance on roles and responsibilities and make the expectations of the Service explicit.

**Why are ‘the 3 Basics of Practice’ important?**

Understanding the ‘3 Basics of practice’ before beginning our work, where these can be accessed, and how these can be used in practice will ensure that our assessments, plans, updating plans, reviews, decision making and interventions with families are more robust and evidence best practice. It means that we understand and provide the right help and support at whatever point of the ‘Child’s Journey through our service’ such as Targeted Support and Child Protection. Other reasons the ‘3 Basics’ are important include:

* Thinking about the ‘3 basics’ provide practitioners with simple rules and steps to follow to support us to work through complex tasks and situations. Referencing them helps to refresh your understanding and can also be helpful if it is the first time that you are learning a task.
* Providing creative interventions without following the ‘3 Basics’ or focusing on processes and guidance, without thinking about the right help and support is less likely to achieve the balance required to make a difference to children and their families.
* Good partnership working is required to achieve the best outcomes possible for children and young people. This involves us working together with people within or outside or organisation. Using the basics enables us to predict what each of us will so due to basic rules about roles and tasks and ensuring that these are followed. This is particularly important when working together with professionals that are not an established team but a group who come together for a purpose, as is often the case when carrying out a child protection enquiry into an allegation of child abuse or neglect.
* Feedback from our children, young people, young adults and their families has highlighted that they want more consistency when we provide help and support. Using the ‘3 basics of practice’ reduces the variation in the quality and type of service received by families.
* When working with families to secure permanence for children and young people, parallel planning means that we need to ensure that we understand the connected Process Maps, Practice Guidance and standards at the same time. By doing this, we prevent drift and delay.
* In Sandwell, our vision is to consistently provide good and outstanding services for our families which is based on best practice. Ensuring that we get the ‘3 basics’ in addition to providing quality interventions helps us to do this.

**How does using ‘the 3 Basics of Practice’ support our work children and families?**

Using Asha’s Case Study, we will briefly illustrate how some of ‘the 3 Basics of Practice’ can be applied when we are working with the family at the updating the plan stage of our involvement.

 **Asha’s Case Study**

Asha Kapoor is an 11-year-old Punjabi Sikh British girl and lives in Oldbury with her parents Balbir Singh Kapoor and Ashpreet Khalari. She also has a younger sibling called Jagvir Kapoor who is 9.

Sandwell Children’s Trust recent involvement began on the 26.06.21 following a high-risk domestic abuse notification by the Police. Ms Khalari sustained bruising to her face and body and was in hospital for a few days. Mr Kapoor was under the influence of alcohol, assaulted the Police Officer and put on remand. Child Protection enquiries identified other elements of the domestic abuse including controlling and coercive behaviour since Asha was born.

Asha and Jagvir have just been made subject to a CP plan category emotional harm and the core group needs to be held to update it. Ms Khalari will also be heard at a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and as the Social Worker for the children, you have been asked to progress the core group and the documentation for the MARAC.

ha and Jagvir have become subject to a CP plan and as their Social Worker, you will be chairing the core group and you have also been informed that Ms Khalari will be heard at the next MARAC and ned to complete the rlvnt documentation. .

**Applying the ‘3 Basics of Practice’ when updating Asha and Jagvir’s plan?**

At this stage of our work with Asha, Jagvir and the Kapoor family, using the ‘3 basics of Practice:

**1. Process Maps: Using the CP Process map** will help us think **who does what and when** as part of the core group taking place 10 days after the ICPC and for subsequent core groups. Preparing Asha, Jagvir and their parents ensures that they are aware and can meaningfully participate as appropriate. Referencing this with partner agencies ensures that there is a common understanding of each other’s roles as part of the CP process and how these fit in with Asha and Jagvir’s journey. It also helps us plan for the next core groups, the discussion with the CP Chair (2-4 weeks prior to the RCPC) and completing the report 5 days before the Conference.

**The MARAC process map** helps to think what needs to be completed. This includes the initial proforma by the SW, Management oversight of the form, preparatory work, attendance and what needs to be updated on Asha and Jagvir’s file.

**2. Practice Guidance:** Referring to national legislation and government guidance in relation to Working Together 2018 and 2020 referring to Child Protection procedures includes thinking about **how we complete the work and why when updating the plan** with Asha and her family**.** The Practice Guidance references relevant national legislation and government guidance as well as Regional Child Protection Procedures for the West Midlands. Developments in relation to legislation such asthe Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and reference to coercive and controlling behaviour is important and available on Tri-X. Also refer to research and other resources such as Research in Practice (RIP) and Community Care inform.

At the same time, **Practice Notes** relating to the Practice Framework and Model ‘Updating Plans’ and the different parts of the Practice Framework and Model help us to think about why and how we will be undertaking our work with Asha, Jagvir and the rest of the Kapoor Family. There is also a Practice Note relating to MARAC on Tri-X.

**3. Practice Standards: Working with Asha, relating to** Practice Standards at this stage help us think about **how well we need** to complete our work with families. Frequency of the visits, how we prepare the family for the core group and reviews and how well we need to undertake our work with the Kapoor family. Practice standards are an essential part of ensuring Asha, Jagvir and their family receive consistent quality support and care.

By thinking about how we apply ‘the 3 basics of practice’ when updating Asha and Jagvir’s plan, it means that we have a consistent framework that enables us to think about what we need to do, when and how well. Professional judgment also needs to be applied to determine how ‘the 3 Basics of Practice’ need to be applied based the child and family’s circumstances.

This means that the processes need to consistently focus on Asha and Jagvir and providing quality services informed by our Process Maps, Guidance and Practice Standards. This includes: undertaking visits, direct work and intervention, their family’s culture, identity and community, management oversight and partners and partnership working will be robust (see Practice Notes Introduction to the Practice Framework and Model ‘doing wheel’ and Updating the Plan).

**How we use the other parts of the Practice Framework and Model to update Asha and Jagvir’s plan**

Ensuring that the work we do with Asha and Jagvir is robust process, planning using ‘**the 3 Basics of Practice’** has taken place we can use the other parts of our Practice Framework and Model to help us to think about our intervention. By understanding Asha’s and Jagvir’s journey through our service it will have helped us to think with the family about previous involvement, her timescales for change with the family and how we will work together to secure permanence. Following on from their assessment and plan where Asha and Jagvir’s participation was evidenced applying the 4x I’s (Invest, Inform, Involve and Influence) this will continue as part of updating their plans).

Using our hearts of practice, helps us continue to work with the Kapoor family in a strength based creative way focusing on their solutions to address identified needs and reduce risks. At this stage of maintaining and sustaining stage of our relationship with the Kapoor family, we have begun to plan the work with them to address the dangers and increase safety. Spending time with the family at the beginning of our involvement to understand their experience means that although this work might be difficult and sometimes challenging by using a trauma informed and relational approach this is more likely to result in an enabling relationship which maintains engagement. Using the intervention aides to reflect ourselves as practitioners, with the Kapoor family and professionals about the quality and impact of our work and the difference being made to Asha and Jagvir’s lives helps to focus at this stage and what this means when the plan is reviewed.

**Using ‘the 3 Basics of Practice’ in Supervision and other reflective spaces**

Procedures, guidance and process maps help us to achieve the balance between addressing the variety of need and risks within families, understand the underlying principles of good practice when used with other parts of the Practice Framework and Model. Frequent use of them helps to develop the skills to apply them.

Within the Practice Framework and Model Booklet, there are 21 reflective questions linked to ‘the 3 Basics of Practice’ (pages 46-47) that can be used to support your self-reflection as a practitioner and enable you to undertake an appreciative enquiry to help and support our use of the Practice Framework and Model and apply critical thinking and analysis to our intervention with a child/young person/young adult and family. Before you have Supervision with your Manager these can be used to think about your understanding of ‘the 3 Basics of Practice’ supporting your work. During supervision, the reflective questions can be used to enable you to speak confidently about this aspect of the work and identify those areas that might need to be strengthened.

Revisiting the ‘3 basics of practice’ when undertaking work with families and keeping updated about any revisions is important. It ensures that the framework that supports the creative work we undertake with families is based on their circumstances is always underpinned with best practice Guidance, Process Maps and Standards to be able to achieve the best outcomes possible for our children and young people

**How can the ‘3 Basics of Practice’ be evidenced on the child’s file?**

* Refer to which of ‘the 3 basics of practice’ is being used at different points of your involvement with families.
* Link the steps and timescales with the interventions that need to be completed which will provide a framework of what needs to be completed prior to reviewing the plan.

**Good practice points:**

* Spending some time to learn and refresh your understanding of ‘the 3 Basics of Practice’ such as linked process maps supports the development of best practice.
* Being explicit about the basics that are being applied in discussions with practitioners and agencies evidences to them that this best practice framework underpins your practice.
* Where good practice examples of work are identified discuss them with your manager and Service Manager to see whether it can be used as a ‘good practice exemplar’.

**Further information and reading**

* Process Maps and Practice Guidance are located on Tri-x. Access Tri.X from the Windows symbol (bottom left of screen) by selecting All Programs/Children’s Tri.X or go to: <http://www.proceduresonline.com/sandwell/cs/index.html>**.**
* The Practice Framework and Model Booklet reflective questions linked to ‘the 3 Basics of Practice’ are located in pages 46-47, Practice Standards and Practice Notes are located on the Learning and Development Page.
* Practice notes relating to the Practice Framework and Model, Strengths based Practice Relationship Based Practice, Trauma Informed Practice and The Child’s Journey, Cultural Competence and many more are available on the Learning and Development page.
* Go onto Tri-X and sign up for the information circular for children's social care and safeguarding to be provided regular updates regarding changes to legislation, practice guidance.
* Regional Child Protection Procedures are located: <https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/>
* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/624949/TheMunroReview-Part\_one.pdf .
* <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175391/Munro-Review.pdf>.
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