**Tips and examples of Danger statements and safety goals.**

Elements of an effective Danger Statement

•       Clearly describes what the agency is worried will happen to the child in the care of the parents/carers if nothing changes

•       Describes the adult behaviour that is causing the harm and where past harm has occurred, the danger should be grounded in this behaviour

•       Describes the likely future negative impact on the child, both immediately and in the longer term

•       Captures the seriousness the professionals see in the situation

•       Written in behaviourally specific, jargon free language that is understandable for the parents, even if they don’t agree.

 Elements of an effective Safety Goal

•       Clearly describes **what** the agency needs to see to know the child is safe enough to close the case (Parents consistently say they want to know what they need to do to get children’s services out of their lives)

•       Except for a minimal set of bottom line requirements, avoids saying **how** safety will be created leaving this detail to parents and their support network

•       Written in behaviourally specific, jargon free language that is understandable for the parents.

 Elements of an effective Safety Scale

•       Matched with a danger statement and safety goal pair

•       Clearly defines both ends of the scale (the 0 and the 10) specific to the particular case. The safety scale should distill the detail of the danger statement and safety goal it is paired with, while adding more depth and detail to engage the parents in thinking about the issue more carefully

•       The 10 should be used to describe the desired behaviour and the 0 the concerning behaviour, since the most common way of understanding a rating scale is that the higher rating is a better rating

•       Written in behaviourally specific, jargon free language that is understandable for the parents.

Examples

Danger Statement

Social workers Cecilia and Nova know that Julia has developed well over the last five months during the stay at the assessment home and that mum Louise and dad Jakob have done everything they can to show NCT they can care for her in the best possible way. Social workers are still worried that Julia might get hurt again in the same way, or worse, like when she got the fractures on each side of her head when she was 5 months old and mum Louise and dad Jakob went to the hospital and couldn ́t explain how Julia got hurt. The doctor concluded that Julia could not have caused these injuries on her own and that there was no other medical explanation for the injuries. This makes the doctor and the social workers very worried because someone must have caused Julia’s injuries, or put her at risk of falling and hurting her head without hearing or noticing that she hurt herself. Social workers will never be able to know exactly what happened or who caused the injuries but because Julia has mostly been in her parents’ care when these injuries happened and because Julia is so little and can ́t tell us what happened, NCT must consider that it could have been mum Louise and dad Jakob who caused the injuries. Social workers are worried that if nothing has changed in how mum Louise and dad Jakob care for Julia, she might get hurt or injured again, having lasting consequences or might even die.

Safety Goal

Social workers Cecilia and Nova’s goal is that Julia will live with her mum and dad and that the NCT can close the case. Cecilia and Nova want to work towards this goal because they see how much mum Louise and dad Jakob love Julia and how happy and well cared for Julia is with her mum and dad. But because the worries about how Julia got her head fractures are so very serious and Julia still is a very small child who can ́t tell anyone if she were to get hurt or dropped, Cecilia and Nova need to be sure that Julia will never get hurt again. For social workers to be sure of this and close the case mum Louise and dad Jakob need to involve a network of safety people that will help them care for Julia, making sure that she is always well cared for, and never seriously hurt. As a part of showing social workers mum Louise and dad Jakob understand and can talk openly about the worries and protect Julia they need to create an explanation (Words & Pictures) for themselves, Julia and the network that clearly explains who was worried, why they were worried, what happened because of the worries and what the grown-ups are doing about the worries now. Mum Louise and dad Jakob together with their network and social workers need to create and use a clearly set out safety plan with clear rules that everyone understands and follows and that shows how Julia is always cared for and safe and will never get hurt again even in stressful situations, for example if mum Louise and dad Jakob are stressed, haven ́t slept well or are feeling bad.

Safety Scale On a scale of 0 to 10...

Where 10 is that I am completely sure Julia will not get hurt again and get new skull fractures like the ones she got when she was 5 months old that no one could explain, and I know exactly who does what and what rules and safety are in place for me to be sure that it could never happen again, And 0 is that I hope Julia won’t get hurt again, but really, if I’m being honest I have no guarantee of that not happening again, where do you scale yourself?

Draft Danger Statement

Esther, Social Worker from NCT knows that Liam is nearly 18 years old and wants to be treated like an adult without the police and Social Workers telling him what to do or how to live his life. Esther, Paul from the police, Emma from Housing, and mum Sarah are worried that Liam was seriously injured when he was stabbed by 2 young men outside his house and had to spend 2 weeks in hospital. A few months before that, he was nearly hit by a car that was deliberately driven at Liam and his friend, Kyle. Kyle was so badly injured that he nearly died. Esther, Paul, Emma and Sarah are worried that Liam may be being deliberately targeted by people who want to hurt him. They are worried that if nothing changes, the people who attacked Liam, or other people, could try to hurt him again. Liam could be injured perhaps more seriously than before and could even be killed. This would mean he may not have the opportunity to live a full and interesting life or to be able to do everyday things like other young people of his age.

Draft Safety Goal

Esther, Paul and Emma want Liam and his family to be safe and for Liam to be able to live a full, interesting and exciting life, to be able to go to college next year as planned, to go out with his friends, to have fun and spend time with family and the other important people in his life who love and care for him, even though there may be people who could want to hurt him or other people around him. For Esther, Paul and Emma to no longer have a worry, we would like to see Liam and the important people in his life like Daryl, Sarah, Tony and other family and friends, to come together with them, and to build a safety network around Liam and his family. We would like this network group to come up with an everyday plan that will show everyone how Liam and his family will always be safe and who will do what to support Liam both at home and when he is goes out, whether he is with friends, family or on his own.

Esther, Paul and Emma would like Liam and his family to think about who he and they trust the most and who are the best people who can help them to develop this safety plan.

Draft Safety Scale

On a scale of 0-10 where 10 is whatever else may be happening around him, there is a tried and tested safety plan in place so that everyone knows who will do what, every day, to keep Liam and his family safe whilst also enabling him to live his life and maintain the relationships that are most important to him, and 0 is no-one knows what to do or how to help Liam in this situation and it’s only a matter of time before he will be hurt again or even killed.

HEIDI’S DRAFT DANGER STATEMENTS:

Mental Health/Depression:

Tony and his supervisor from NCT are really worried for Jed, Phoenix and Tyler because even though they know Lizzie and Dave have lots of really good things going on that tell workers that they do love their children, there have also been times when they seem so overwhelmed with everything that they fall apart like when mom left the house and would not respond to Dave’s texts so he called workers saying that he couldn’t care for his children anymore because he was having a hard time with his depression and he needed help “getting himself back together.” We worry that if nothing changes Lizzie and Dave won’t get the help they need and will be overwhelmed again and Jed, Phoenix and Tyler will be left without proper adult supervision and will not get the care, love and attention they need to grow up healthy and could even get hurt when no one is watching over them.

Injury/threat of injury to children:

Tony and his supervisor from NCT are also worried because dad has told workers that Lizzie had attempted to smother Jed with a pillow and that it happened more than once. Lizzie told Dave that she smothered Jed to the point of him hyperventilating and that she had to turn the television on loud so that the neighbours couldn’t hear his screams, and another time when Lizzie had smacked Jed on the face causing a welt, Dave says that sometimes she will throw objects at Jed too, and that she has said things like “fuck off you push me to the point of seriously wanting to kill all my kids cause I’m driven so fucking insane by your fucking selfish games you don’t even realize or fucking care you dumb piece of shit I keep thinking of when I do kill them all and I’m in jail you probably be too much of a pussy to kill yourself and it will all be for nothing.” Even though Lizzie says none of this happened, Tony is worried that having three babies can be really overwhelming for any mom and if Lizzie doesn’t have a support network to help out with the kids and other things, maybe she would get so frustrated that she could hurt Jed, Phoenix and Tyler just like Dave has said she did in the past, and if this happens they could be scared, injured or even die.

Fighting:

Workers have also seen holes in the wall, and patch work from other holes and it makes Tony worry that if no one steps in to help Dave and Lizzie make a safety plan, they could get into a big fight one day and Jed, Phoenix and Tyler could get caught in the middle and be seriously injured whether on purpose or by accident, and if none of this changes we worry that Jed, Phoenix and Tyler will never get to go home to mom and dad, and will grow up confused about everything that happened and they might even think it was all their fault and this might make them angry and untrusting of adults or other people in their life and they won’t be able to have healthy relationships with others.

HEIDI’S DRAFT SAFETY GOALS:

Mental Health/Depression:

Tony and his supervisor at NCT know how important it is for Jed, Phoenix and Tyler to grow up healthy with mom (Lizzie) and dad (Dave) because they all love each other very much and want to be together. To be confident that NCT could close the file Tony would need to know that there is a safety plan in place that would show everyone who will do what to help Lizzie and Dave when they are feeling overwhelmed or depressed so that there is always someone safe watching over Jed, Phoenix and Tyler to make sure they always get the care, love and attention they need.

Injury/threat of injury to children:

Tony and his supervisor know that Lizzie says she didn’t hurt or threaten to hurt Jed but they still want to be sure that whatever Dave said happened could never happen in the future. To be confident enough to close the file we would need there to be a safety network of people who understand the worries and who can help create a safety plan that would show everyone that Jed, Phoenix and Tyler will be cared for safely even when Lizzie is overwhelmed or frustrated. The plan would need to show everyone who will do what to help out if mom is unwell and who will be caring for the kids to make sure they are always safe.

Fighting:

Tony and his supervisor at NCT would need to know that Lizzie and Dave are able to work through any frustrations or disagreements without yelling, hitting, throwing things or hurting each other or the kids. To be confident we could close the file we would need mom (Lizzie) and dad (Dave) to work with Tony to create a words and pictures explanation so that Jed, Phoenix and Tyler understand why they haven’t been living at home with mom and dad.

HEIDI’S DRAFT SAFETY SCALES:

Mental Health/Depression:

On a scale of 0 – 10 how confident are we that Jed, Phoenix and Tyler are being cared for safely even when mom and dad are unwell, if 10 = everyone is following the rules of the safety plan so that we are all confident Jed, Phoenix and Tyler are getting the love, care and attention they need to grow up healthy even when mom and dad are unwell; and, 0 = no one seems to be following the rules of the plan and we are worried that Jed, Phoenix and Tyler are not getting the care they need but no one seems to want to talk openly about it.

Injury/threat of injury to children:

On a scale of 0 – 10 how confident are we that Jed, Phoenix and Tyler are always safe even when mom is feeling really frustrated or overwhelmed, if 10 = there is a safety network of people who understand the worries and have worked really hard with Lizzie and Dave to show everyone that Jed, Phoenix and Tyler are always safe and that mom could never hurt them even when she is feeling overwhelmed or frustrated; and 0 = there is no network and no plan in place to give us confidence that Jed, Phoenix and Tyler are being cared for safely when mom is frustrated or overwhelmed so we are very worried that Jed, Phoenix and Tyler could get hurt when mom is frustrated or overwhelmed, where would we rate it?

Fighting:

On a scale of 0 – 10 how confident are we that Lizzie and Dave are able to solve their disagreements without yelling, hitting, throwing things or hurting each other, if 10 = the network is all reporting that mom and dad have been following the rules of the safety plan so that there is no yelling, hitting, throwing things or hurting each other they have worked with Tony to make a words and pictures explanation for Jed, Phoenix and Tyler so they understand why they haven’t been living at home with mom and dad; and 0 = No one seems to be following the rules and Lizzie and Dave have been putting off the words and pictures because they don’t think it is necessary, where would we rate it?