



Module ES-M2

Goal setting

Content

- Children's, parents' and professionals' views about goals
- Potential collaborative goals that have arisen from the assessment, child protection or care plan (if in place) and from previous discussions
- Child and family agreement
- Family safety plan in place for the period of intervention
- Making an agreement
- Special cases: A solution-focused approach to establishing goals.

Materials

- h** Handout
- n** Practitioner notes
- r** Record
- w** Worksheet

- Providing an overview of areas to be addressed by the practitioner [ES-3] **n**
- Management plan: Practitioners and parents [ES-4] **n**
- Developing a family safety plan: Example outline [ES-5] **n**

Main steps

Set an agenda to indicate what the purpose of this particular module is.

Establish further discussion about issues discussed in the previous meeting.



Discuss the children's, parents' and professionals' views about goals

See 'Providing an overview of areas to be addressed by the practitioner' [ES-3].



- We met recently with you and the person who referred you to our service, and we discussed what they thought needed to be achieved. You expressed your views and feelings about the situation. We need to decide what our joint goals should be.
- We acknowledge that parents in your situation often feel unclear about what is expected, and similarly the children. On the one hand, you are the expert on your child but there may be another view from professionals – for example, from children's social care, health, school or youth justice services – which has a different sort of goal, so our task is to try to decide together what makes sense.
- Could we discuss what you have learnt from the meeting that we had previously about what is expected and let's see whether we can agree on achievable goals.
- If the person who made the referral or the judge were here and we were to say to them, 'What do you expect to see which would make you feel that the situation really is hopeful?' what do you think they would say? What about the partners or family members or other people who are close to you? What would you agree with and what would you disagree with in terms of what needs to happen in the future?

Discuss potential collaborative goals



- Thinking about our discussion, what we have learnt from the referrer [and the court, where relevant], from you as parents and from the children, it seems to me there are a number of possible goals that we could work with. We have done some thinking about this following the assessment and we have listed goals in general terms, the sorts of goals that most parents and practitioners and the courts would think sensible to aim for.
- We also need to know we've achieved those goals, and think how best to measure progress so we can feed back to the referrer [and the court] just how far we've got along the road to achieving those goals [see 'Management plan: Practitioners and parents' [ES-4].

n Providing an overview of areas to be addressed by the practitioner

What follows provides ways for the practitioner to communicate a series of ideas that can be addressed and help the parent to see a process as well as a goal. It is presented as a list of areas that need to be addressed. The approach is to be taken with the parent to see a process of trying to get parents and family members to see the areas that need to be addressed. The approach is to be taken with the parent to see a process of trying to get parents and family members to see the areas that need to be addressed. The approach is to be taken with the parent to see a process of trying to get parents and family members to see the areas that need to be addressed.

An overview of areas to be addressed

We will help you as a family know how to recognise and minimise stress. It's more difficult to be effective and supportive when parents and children are feeling tense and stressed. We will try to help you find better ways to deal with stress, anger-producing situations.

We will try to help parents and children understand the way in which harmful interactions can occur, what leads parents to get angry with children, what leads other people to behave in a sexual way with children, what leads parents not to be able to meet their children's needs, to find themselves behaving in a neglectful fashion. We will try to understand the ways of difficulties that occur.

We will help children and young people process and deal with unhappy experiences and issues, such as anxiety, depression, and traumatic or challenging behaviour.

We will work with parents around child development so that you will have an appropriate understanding of what children can do at their age, and not to feel by having expectations beyond their ability because of their age, which can lead to irritation, anger, criticism or total ignoring.

You as parents may need to be aware of how you think, how thoughts affect how you feel and want to modify negative thoughts and feelings. Emotions can be intense and hard to control – we find ourselves blaming others, feeling people are out to spite us. We will try to help you find ways to calm, to think, and challenge the ways of how you have had to feel and react to find like going on your children.

We will try to help parents where they are having difficulties providing good enough care for their children, where people are concerned that children are not thriving, are not being cared for adequately, are not being supported with their schooling, their emotional needs are not being met, they are living in a context which is unsafe or unhelpful.

n Management plan: Practitioners and parents*

* This management plan is for use during the period of intervention.

1. List the agreed longer-term intervention goals for the child and family and for the practitioner.
2. What are the agreed priorities for children and parents, and the practitioner?
3. What is the timetable agreed by children, parents, child protection team and practitioners (if not members of the child protection team)? Given the children's circumstances, when do goals need to be achieved by?
4. How is progress to be assessed? What evidence of progress do the child, family, child protection team and practitioners need?
5. What are the modules that are likely to be needed, and what is the priority?
6. When will the plan be reviewed?
7. What are the options if goals cannot be achieved within the child's timeframe?

- Let's go through the various ways we try to help modify parenting that has impaired your child's health and development/been harmful and caused adverse outcomes for the children or young people so we can see which make sense for you. Then we can put together a programme that addresses those areas which you and we have decided are going to be important.

The child and family agreement



One of our principles in working with children and families, particularly when harm has occurred, is to try to create as peaceful a situation as possible to achieve our goals. It is very hard to try something new when we are stressed and angry.

- Whilst we are working with you to find out whether we can help you as parents to prevent impairments/harm/the recurrence of harm to your children and for them to recover, the children need to be as safe as possible, whether they are living with you, or you see them at contact.
- We will be trying to help you find alternative ways of solving problems, other than the sorts of patterns that have been harmful. We need to find non-physical ways of solving problems, and to give new strategies as much of a chance as possible.
- We ask all families to agree to a very important goal: to try their best not to use the sort of physical force or emotional tone – criticising, humiliating or rejecting – which can have such a negative effect on the children. Everyone has to cooperate with the agreement. We ask all families to do so. New techniques of parenting take time and children's negative responses take time to change. We want to give other approaches a chance to become stronger.
- There will be times when you get angry with one of the children, their behaviour is out of line, and you feel they need to be criticised or smacked. You may feel like turning your back on your children or ignoring them. We need to have the opportunity to talk about those times because we may be able to come up with some different solutions.
- Does this make sense to you? What will be difficult or straightforward? All family members should be aware of this. Children need to know that as a family you are all going to work to try to create a different environment. We will check with you all how you feel you are doing in terms of achieving that.

