

## Questioning Examples

**Signs of Safety is a questioning (not an expert) approach.** Understanding the situation – both the risks and the strengths, is dependant on asking **good questions**. These are just examples of questions you could ask. **Always remember that we need to evaluate what the impact is on the child/ young person.**

What are we worried about?	What is working well?	What Needs to Happen
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are we worried about?</li> <li>• What have we seen/ heard that worries us? How do we know? What evidence do we have?</li> <li>• What harm has happened to any child in the care of these adults?</li> <li>• When did the problem happen?</li> <li>• Has it happened before? How often was it? How bad was it?</li> <li>• How did that incident affect the child?</li> <li>• What are the first, worst and last times this has happened?</li> <li>• What were the triggers for this?</li> <li>• Which part of this worries you the most?</li> <li>• What do you think most worried the children/ the parents/ the police/ the social worker?</li> <li>• How does the child/ young person feel about this?</li> <li>• What do you think is the worst thing that could happen because of this problem?</li> <li>• When did we start to worry about this child or young person? What has changed that has made us more concerned?</li> <li>• What are we worried will/ might happen if nothing changes? What could be the impact of this on the child/ young person?</li> <li>• Is there anything that has been making this problem harder to deal with?</li> <li>• Is there anything that makes this problem harder to deal with?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is working well?</li> <li>• What do you like about X; what are his/her best qualities?</li> <li>• Who are the people who care most about X?</li> <li>• What are the best things about how they care for the child/ young person?</li> <li>• What would the child/young person say are the best things about their life?</li> <li>• Who would the child/young person say are the most important people in his/her life? How do these people help the child/ young person grow up well?</li> <li>• Have there been times when this problem has been dealt with or was even a little bit better? How did that happen?</li> <li>• What are the best ways mum/ dad/ family have been trying to manage these problems?</li> <li>• When were things good for you as a family?</li> <li>• When were things worse/better?.....</li> <li>• How did you know things were better then?.....</li> <li>• What did that look like to you, tell me more about.....</li> <li>• When things are good what does that look like to you?</li> <li>• When things were good - what difference do you think it made to X? How could you tell?</li> <li>• What would you say you do best at as a mum/dad?</li> <li>• What is the best thing about being a mum/dad?</li> <li>• What do you feel you could have done/do better?</li> <li>• Who can you talk to when things are tough?</li> <li>• What are the best times you have with your kids?</li> <li>• What would the kids say are the best times they have with you?</li> <li>• Who do they spend time with in your extended family they enjoy and that is good for them?</li> <li>• Who helps you most with the kids?</li> <li>• What would Mum say are the biggest problems she has faced and dealt with in her life? How would she say she did</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What would the child/young person need to see that would make them say this problem is completely sorted out?</li> <li>• What do you think is the next step that should happen to get this worry sorted out?</li> <li>• What would you need this to look like for you not to have to worry?</li> <li>• Timescales - when do we need to see changes by? – and for how long will we need to see this for us not to worry about the problem anymore?</li> <li>• What will we see that will show us that this plan is working?</li> <li>• When you think about X (whatever it is that is stopping things going well) is there anything you can think of that could help in any way?</li> <li>• Can you think of one small manageable step that would improve X for you?</li> <li>• What would be happening if things were working better for you</li> </ul>

	<p>this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who or what has helped you the most so far?</li> <li>• What worries you about involving ____? (Grandma, Nan, family friend)</li> <li>• Tell me about what a good day looks like for you? What makes it a good day?</li> <li>• What are you most proud of in your life?</li> </ul> <p><b>Exception Questions</b></p> <p>Always ask for exceptions regarding the concerns, e.g. "Tell me about a time when the problem could have happened but didn't." Here are questions you could ask about exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When has mum fought off the depression and been able to focus on her child?</li> <li>• When has Mum attended to the child's needs?</li> <li>• Has there been a time when Dad has stopped himself getting angry and, instead of hitting someone, done something different?</li> <li>• So, the house is a mess. How do they manage to keep the child reasonably healthy and clean?</li> <li>• Has there ever been a time when one of the parents has acknowledged, even a little bit, that the violence affects the children?</li> <li>• If you asked the mother, would she be able to describe a time when she told the boyfriend she won't use drugs or party with him and instead focused on making sure the baby was okay?</li> </ul> <p>Build on the exceptions, find out what helped the person to behave differently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When did the exception happen?</li> <li>• How often does it happen?</li> <li>• How did they make the exception happen? What helps/ makes a difference?</li> </ul> <p><b>Relate it back to the child/ young person</b></p> <p>As you grow the list of positives, always try to relate them back to how they impact on the child/ young person's wellbeing and safety. Do this by asking something like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does this make the situation better for the child?</li> <li>• How does this help you/us/the family make the child safer in relation to the danger?</li> </ul>	
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