



Recording Skills, Assessment, analysis and management of risk

James May

Course Aims

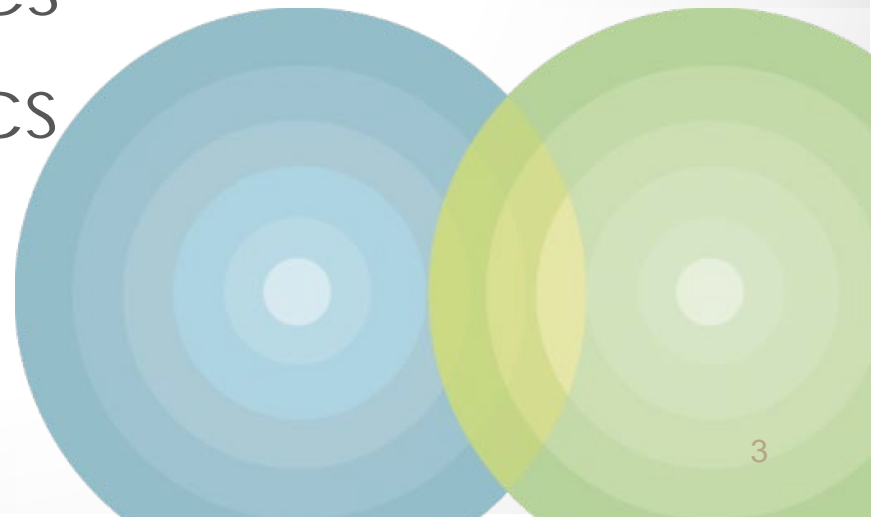
- To enable the practitioner to understand recording, confidentiality and the impact these have on the people we work with.
- To understand the different types of recording and what makes for effective recording
- Establishing the role of fact, opinion and analysis in our recording

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Course Aims

- breaking down risk
- structured approaches
- professional judgement
- hypothesising & analysis
- legal framework and threshold tool
- roles & responsibilities
- dangerous dynamics



Starting points for the course

- Time keeping
- Confidentiality
- Respect
- One person to talk at a time
- Mobiles off
- We model partnership behaviours
- Share knowledge and expertise
- Challenge jargon that stops us understanding each other



Activity

Please write a few sentences about something in your life that has happened which you think other people in the room might find interesting or amusing.

Find the person who the writing on the paper you have been given relates to.

Keep this story about yourself safe until later in the day using the envelope provided. **Please keep the envelope open.** Please include your name, date of birth and ethnicity on the envelope.

Activity

Now think of something which you would be reluctant to share with the group, an embarrassing memory for example, and write this down and put it in the envelope.





Recording and the impact of recording

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Article 8 – Right to Respect for Private and Family Life

1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his correspondence.
2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as in accordance with law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.



Recording – what's the point?
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Activity

If recording is so intrusive why is it necessary?

Break into small groups and consider your answers to this question.



Recording... What's the point?

- Focus the work of your organisation.
- Support effective partnership with clients.
- Help with continuity.
- Provide an essential tool for managers to monitor work.
- Provide evidence for investigations and inquiries.





Basics of recording

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Basics of Recording

- What is the purpose of the work?
- Where is this going to be recorded and why?
- What is relevant information?
- What is significant information?





Facts or professional judgement
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Structuring Recording

Facts

Opinions

Action



Facts

Clearly record the facts given on which you are basing your opinions and decisions.

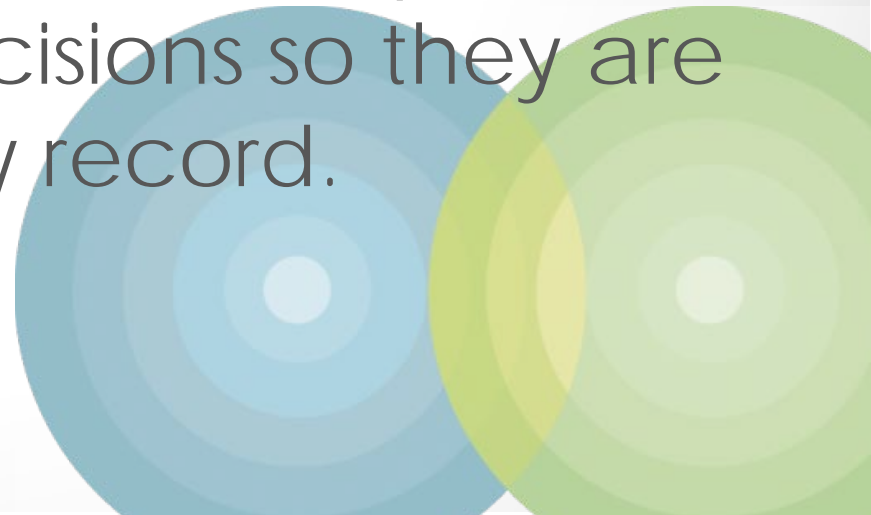
Note the source of any facts you use.



Opinions

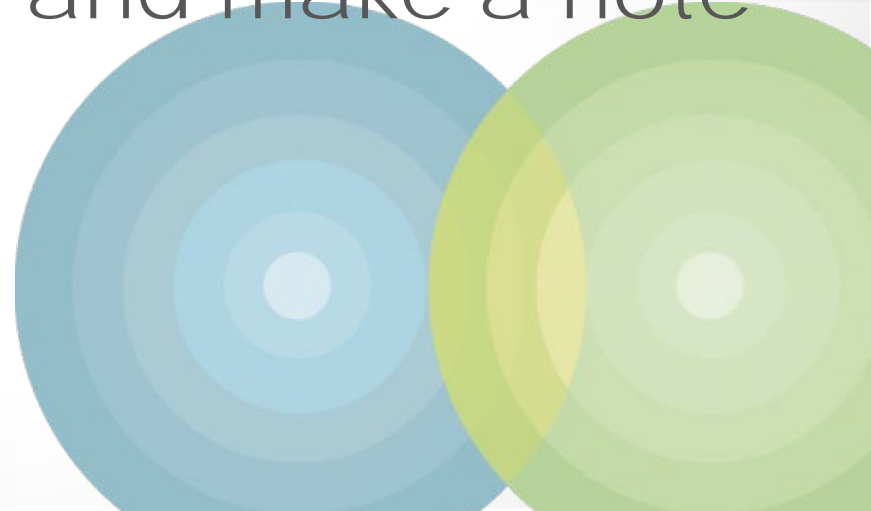
Record opinions given, whether those of the family or other professionals, clearly attributing any comments.

Record your own professional judgement. It is often these opinions that shape case decisions so they are crucial in almost any record.



Actions

Make a clear note of any actions to be undertaken. Remember the SMART acronym to ensure your record is Specific, actions are Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and make a note of any Timescale.



Activity – Fact or Professional Judgement

You are about to see a series of statements. Take a look at each one and make a decision as to whether it is a **Fact** or an **Opinion**



Activity 4 - Fact or professional judgement?

1. There are inadequate play and stimulation opportunities available
2. The bruise and swelling are consistent with hitting his head on the door
3. This is the first incident of abuse to the child
4. The flat is unsuitable for bringing up a young child
5. Mrs Green is good at keeping her flat tidy

Activity 4 - Fact or professional judgement?

6. Experienced professionals are better at dealing with child protection issues
7. Children who were abused usually become abusers
8. The child said his dad hit him
9. I saw Peter playing with his toys when I last visited
10. Mrs Green does not display appropriate parenting skills when relating to her son

8 Pitfalls for Practitioners

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from www.writeenough.org.uk

adapted by dialogue

Activity – 8 Pitfalls for Practitioners

You will have an opportunity to look at a variety of pitfalls associated with recording.

1st of all thinks about what this means in terms of how it will **impact on recording**.

When you have done that make a list of ways that you can **avoid the pitfall**

8 Pitfalls

1. Case records are out of date
2. The service user is missing from the record
3. Facts and professional judgements are not distinguished in the record
4. Size of the record makes it difficult to manage
5. There is no assessment on file
6. The record is not written for sharing
7. The record is not used as a tool for analysis
8. The record is disrespectful to the service user

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1. Case records are out of date

- The practitioner does not see recording as a high priority activity
- Recording is unplanned



1. Case records are out of date

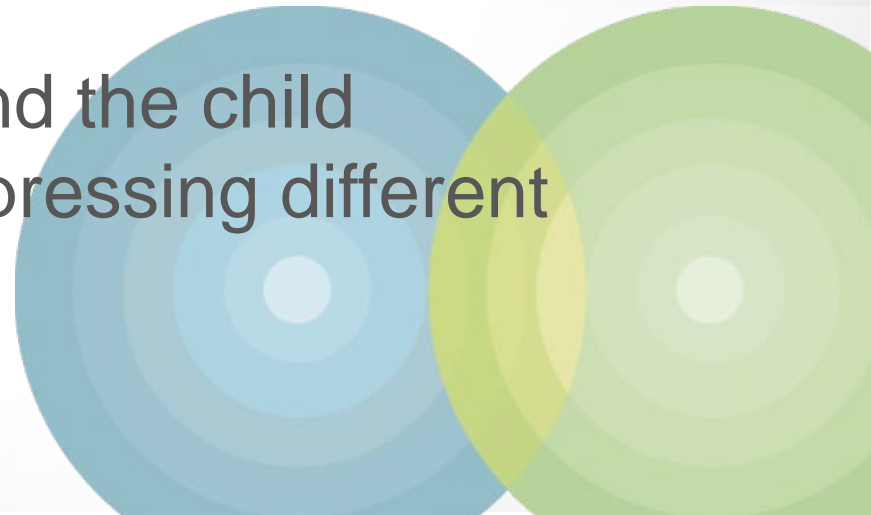
avoid the pitfall

- ✓ Recording is an important task, an integral and important part of your practice.
- ✓ Plan your recording.
- ✓ Record information as you go along.
- ✓ Include recording as part of your time allocation.

2. Child is 'missing' from record



- Parent's needs dominate at the expense of the child
- The practitioner is trying to protect the child
- The practitioner has found the child uncommunicative, or expressing different views at different times.



2. Child is 'missing' from record

avoid the pitfall

- ✓ Regularly see young people alone.
- ✓ Plan sessions to meet the needs and abilities of the individual child.
- ✓ Record in the child's own words.
- ✓ Ensure that the child's views are clearly marked in the file.
- ✓ Ensure that each child has a separate file

3. Facts and judgements are not distinguished in the record

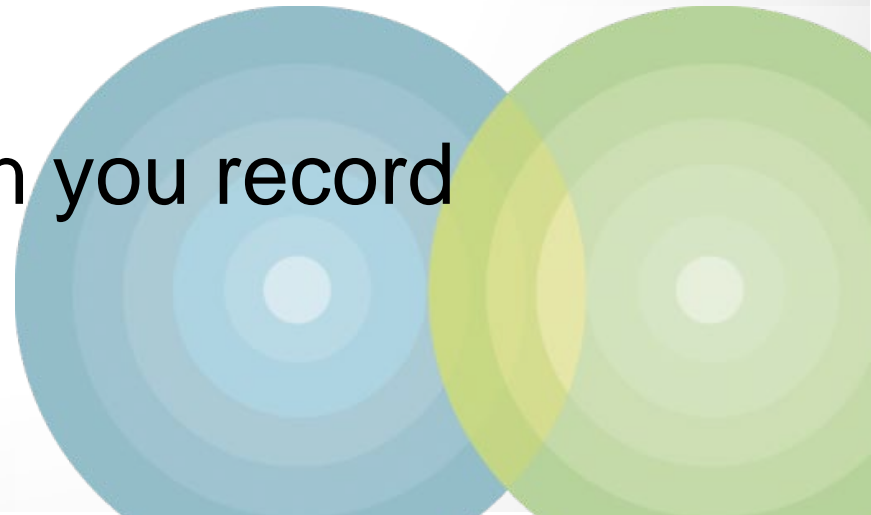
- Opinions are recorded as fact
- Opinions are not substantiated
- Facts and opinions are not differentiated
- Only facts are recorded



3. Facts and judgements are not distinguished in the record

avoid the pitfall

- ✓ Share records with families
- ✓ Separate facts and opinions in your recording.
- ✓ Identify whose opinion you record



4. The size of the record is hard to manage

- The record is unfocused
- Records are kept to protect the worker
- Minimal records are made
- Practitioners are unclear what is significant
- Records are duplicated in the file
- Records are narrative rather than focused

4. The size of the record is hard to manage

avoid the pitfall

- ✓ Maintain a clear focus in your recording.
- ✓ Record why information is significant
- ✓ Have a clear plan for each case and use this to structure your intervention and recording
- ✓ Audit your records regularly
- ✓ Cross reference rather than duplicate.

5. No assessment on file



- Information is gathered but not evaluated
- There is no plan of intervention
- There is no systematic framework for assessment



5. No assessment on file

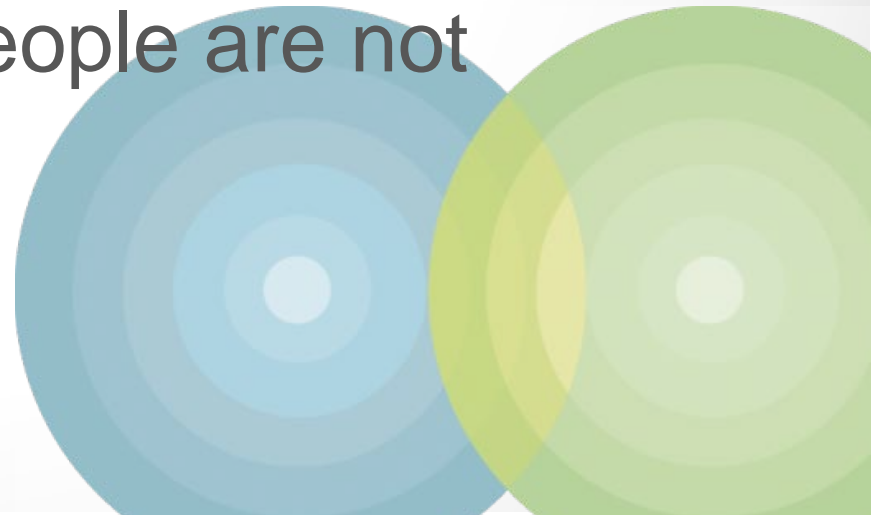
avoid the pitfall

- ✓ Ensure that each child has an up to date assessment on file.
- ✓ Closing and Transfer Summaries include evaluations of progress
- ✓ Use the assessment findings and subsequent plan to focus your recording

6. Record is not written for sharing



- Access to files is regarded with suspicion
- Parents and young people are not involved in recording



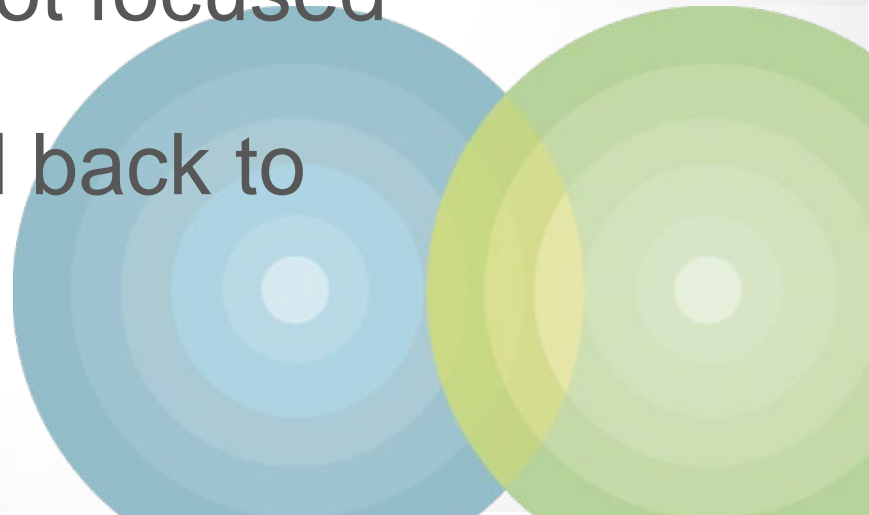
6. Record is not written for sharing

avoid the pitfall

- ✓ Use plain language not jargon
- ✓ Provide access to records policy & explain it!!
- ✓ Share early drafts of assessments to incorporate the family's views
- ✓ Provide the family with copies of the report
- ✓ Share your recording as you go along
- ✓ Encourage the family to contribute

7. The record is not used as a tool for analysis

- Record is written to impress other professionals
- Record is narrative, not focused
- Record is not referred back to



7. The record is not used as a tool for analysis

avoid the pitfall

- ✓ Don't just record **what** happens, analyse **why**
- ✓ Use genograms, ecomaps, chronologies and assessment records
- ✓ Use case summaries to review and evaluate
- ✓ Keep up to date with developments in research to inform your practice.

8. The record is disrespectful to the service user

- Failure to distinguish between fact and opinion
- Simple errors in spelling, date of birth...
- Poor presentation or loss of records

8. The record is disrespectful to the service user

avoid the pitfall

- ✓ When you record ask yourself, 'What would I think if I was the service user and read that?'
- ✓ Ensure that there is a record in the main file which lists where all other parts of the case record are kept.
- ✓ Check out basic details at an early stage.



Understanding the context

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Risk Assessment

What is assessment?

What is analysis?

Assessment means to appraise, measure, estimate or give consideration to a situation, whilst analysis means to examine, study, and break down into simpler elements

Assessment and Analysis

- It follows that in order to carry out a proper assessment of any situation, a certain amount of analysis needs to be undertaken.
- When faced with a complex situation we:
- Gather all the facts;
- Break down the information into manageable chunks under headings
- Give them consideration - separately and in relation to one another;
- We assign weighting
- Then weighing up the options
- We also hypothesise.

"Putting analysis into assessment", Ruth Dalzell and Emma Sawyer, NCB (2007)



Risk and Significant Harm – a clarification

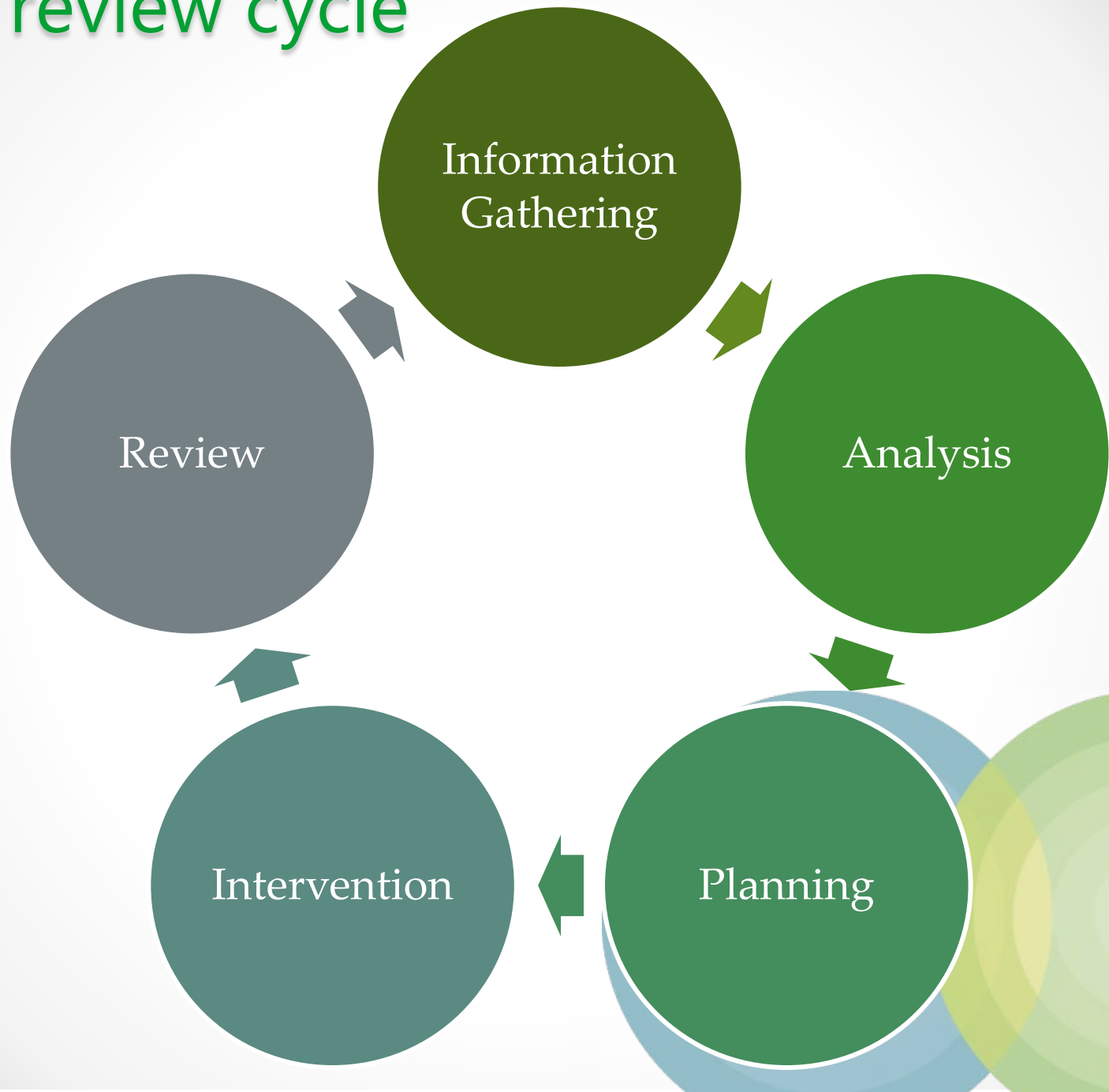
- Working Together specifically adopts the legislative terminology of ‘significant harm’ in preference to the use of the word “risk” - to avoid confusion given the different contexts and methodologies associated with “risk”
- When assessing whether a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm local authority children’s social care will of course draw on a wide variety of information including the outcomes of relevant risk assessments or judgments provided by other agencies and professionals to inform their own evidence based assessment.

Legislative context

- Significant harm – see Guidance Document
- Section 17/Child in Need – see Guidance Document.
- Emergency Protection Orders - see later slide re immediate action

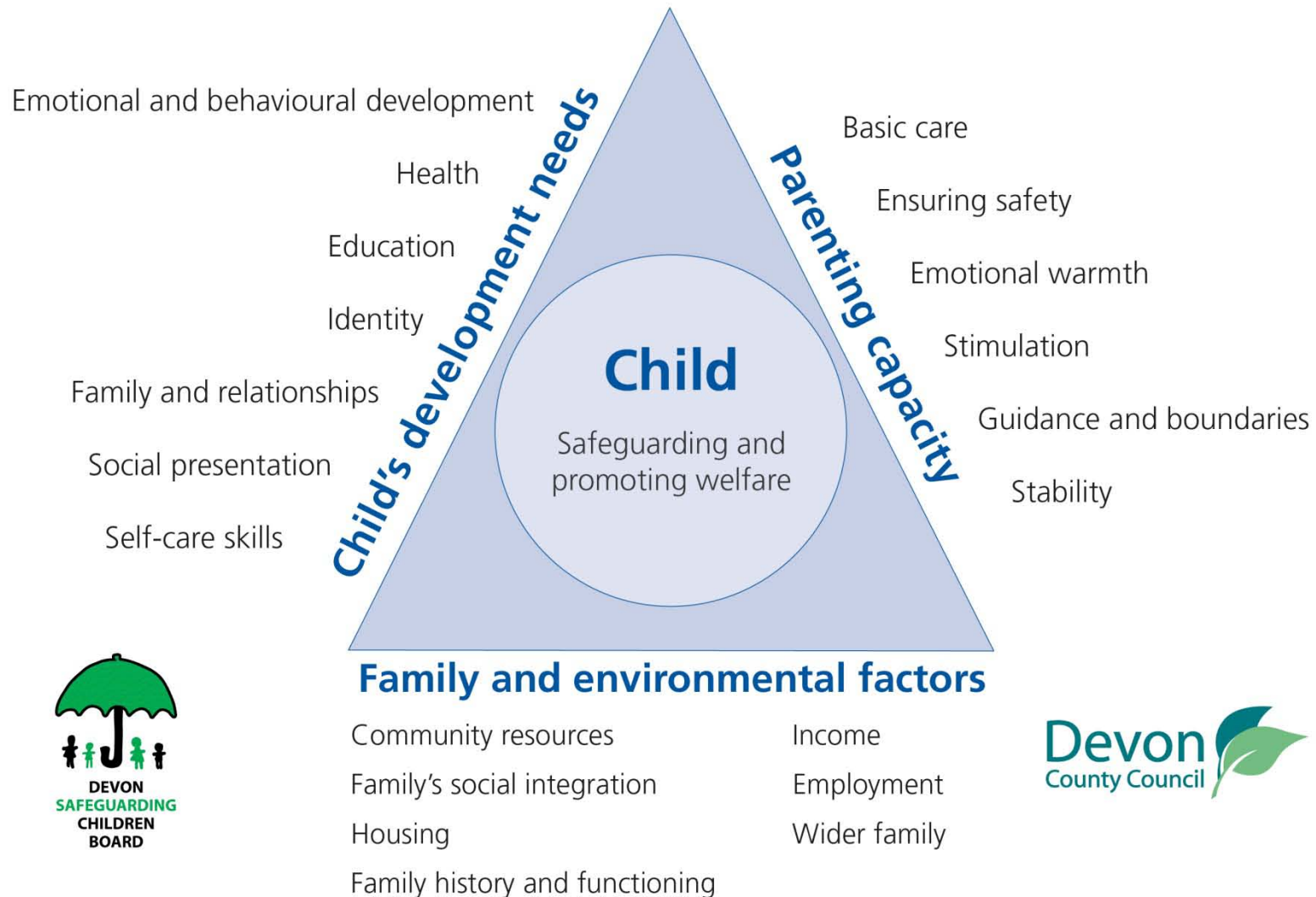


The review cycle



Information gathering

Assessment framework



Analysing Met and Unmet Needs

- What needs of the child are being met and **how**?
- What needs of the child are not being met and **why**?



Risk assessment - Amy

- What is the level of risk?
- What factors affected your judgement?



Risk assessment - Amy

- How it was framed
- Level of information
- You're on a risk assessment course
- OFSTED judgement
- Your own history/experience/expertise
- Your values/preconceptions/beliefs
- Confirmation bias

but **ALWAYS** seek advice from MASH for bruising in pre-mobile baby

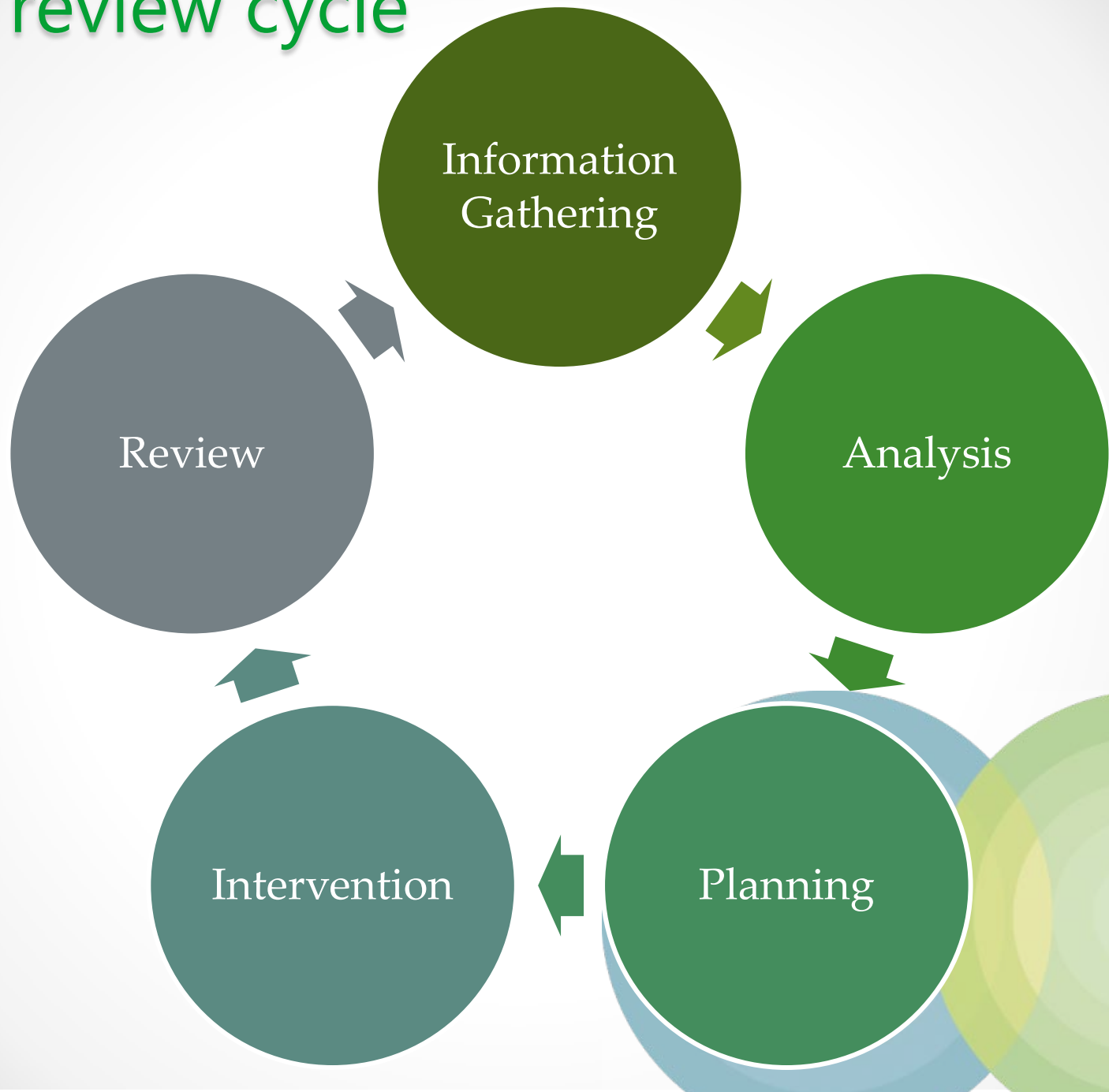
Threshold

Thresholds for assessment depend on:

- the nature & quality of the information available about the individual child/ren and family who are the subject of a referral;
- the reasoning strategies employed by practitioners to analyse that information and manage referrals; and
- systems and organisational factors

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The review cycle

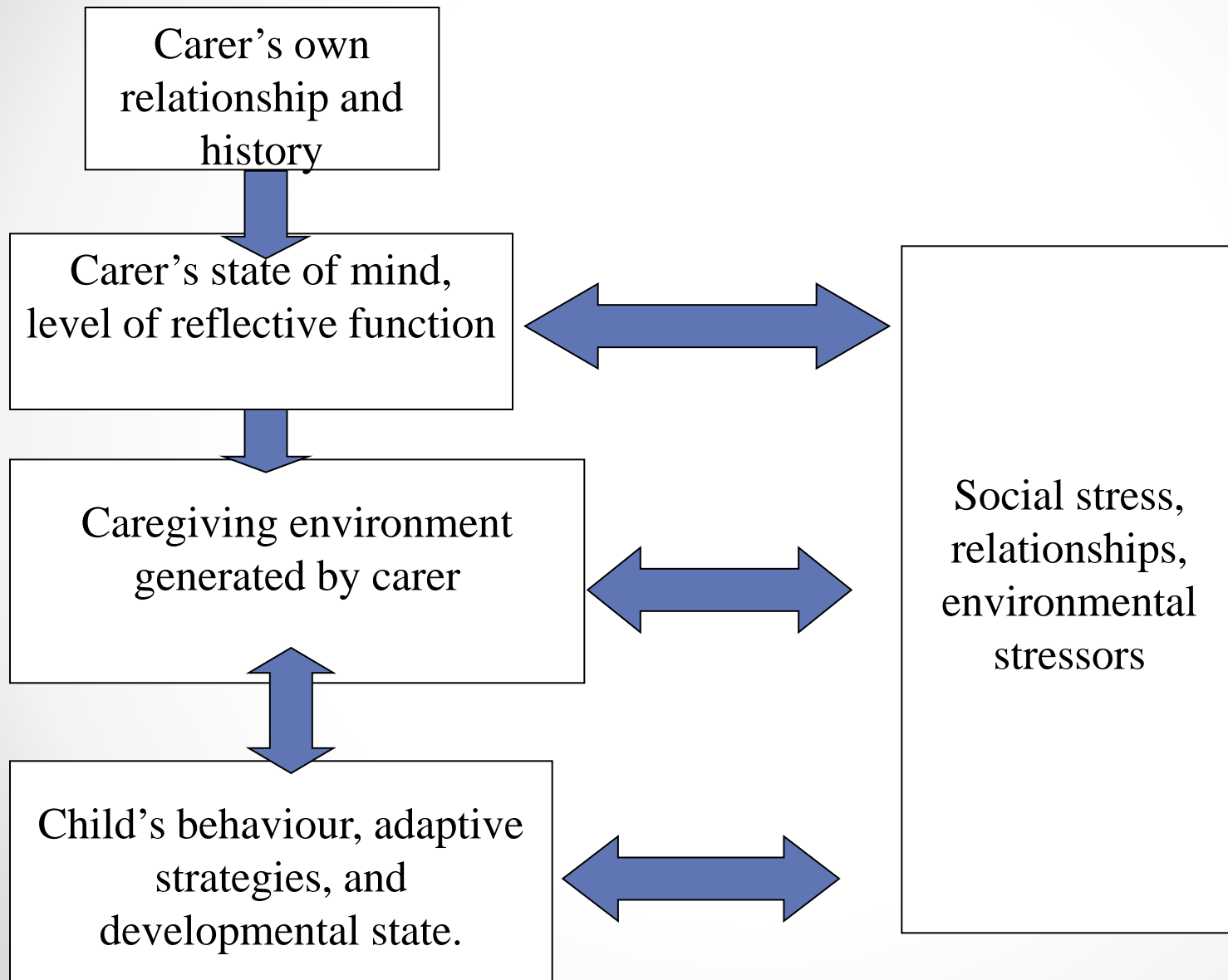


Hypotheses

- A provisional idea or explanation which has to be evaluated or tested
- Needs to be confirmed or disproved
- Should be falsifiable
- At point of referral . Workers do begin to consciously or unconsciously build a hypothesis of what is happening in the family
- Risk is people become blinkered and discount new information in light of that hypothesis

An Ecological Transactional Perspective

(*Brandon et al 2002. 2008; Cicchetti and Valentino 2006)



Principles underlying risk analysis

We need to distinguish

- What has brought things about in the past
- What keeps things going in the present
- What is likely to happen in the future

*Adapted from The Family Assessment, : Assessment of Family Competencies, Strengths, and Difficulties, Bentovim and Bingley Miller 2011





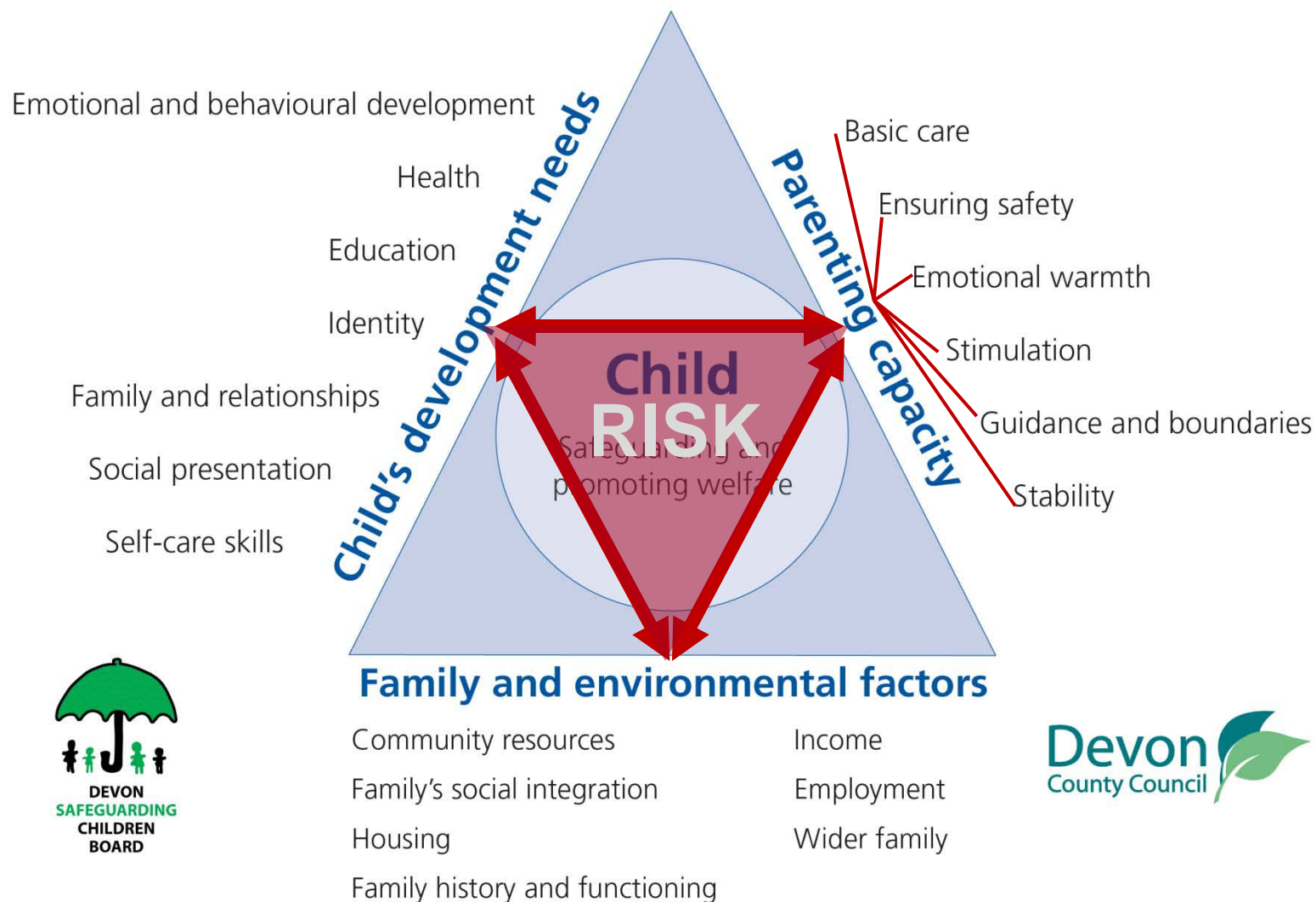
How worried should we be?

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Risk Analysis

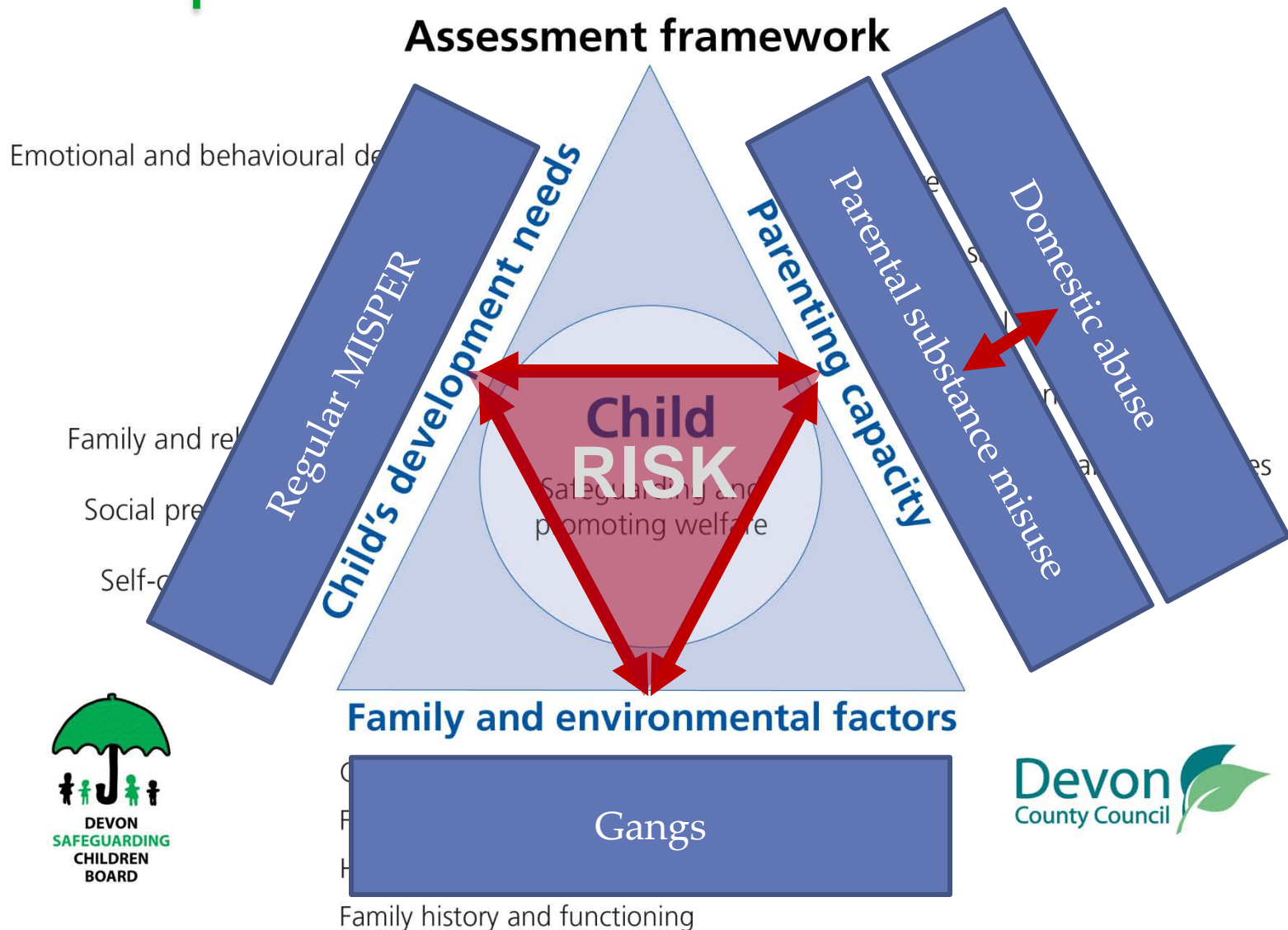
Drawing risk from need

Assessment framework



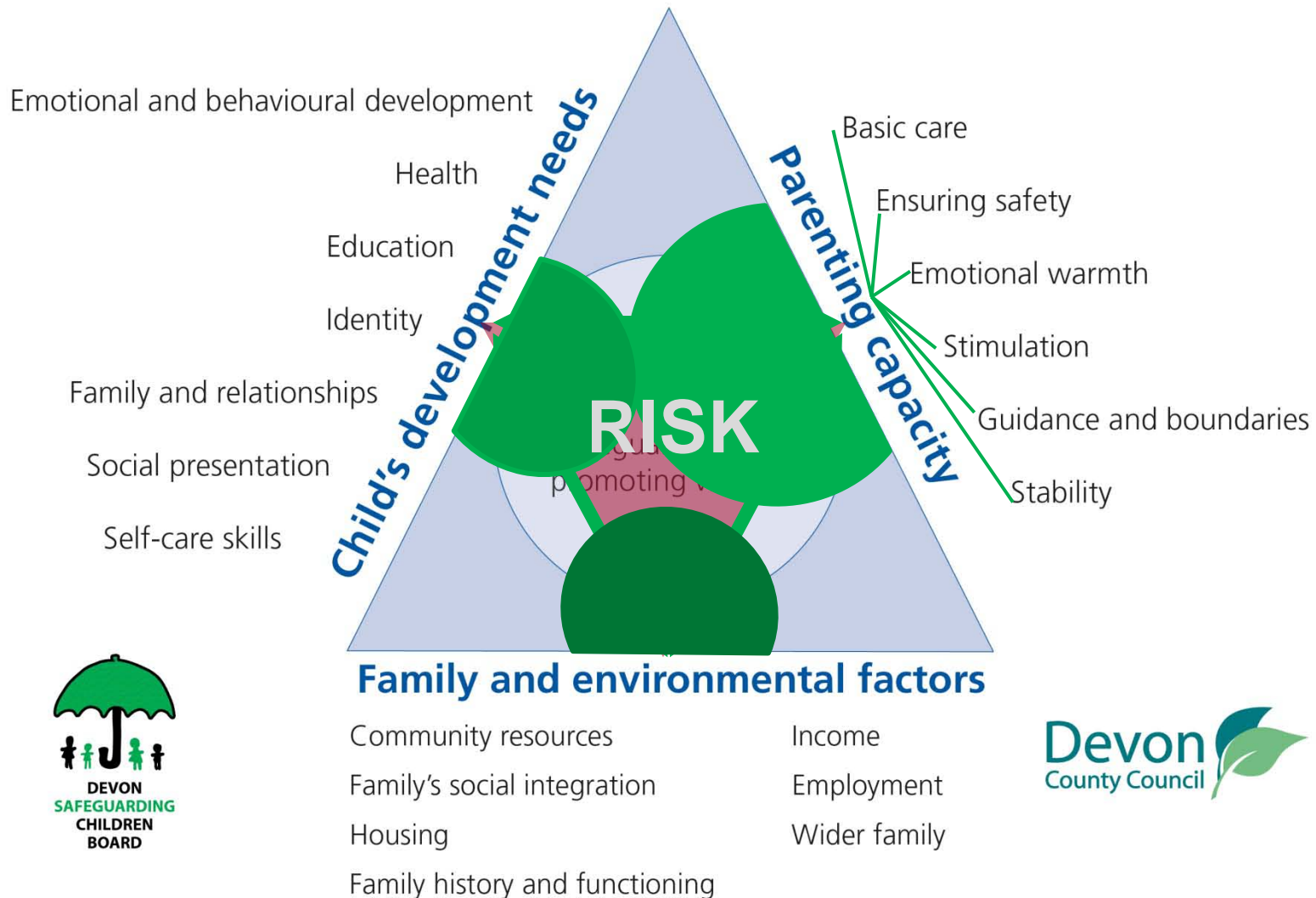
Specific risks

Assessment framework



Strengths

Assessment framework




Risk of abuse

- Research indicates that disabled children are significantly more likely to experience abuse than their non-disabled peers
- Evidence suggests increased vulnerability for children with communication impairments, behavioural disorders, learning disabilities and sensory impairments (compared to disabled children as a whole)

Stalker and McArthur (2012)



Reasons for increased risk: Attitudes and assumptions

- Devaluing of deaf children, their experiences and their needs
 - Lack of awareness about cultural issues or deaf development issues
 - Reluctance to believe that deaf children are abused
 - Lack of recognition of the possible impact of abuse
 - Low commitment to overcoming communication barriers
 - Attributing indicators of possible abuse to child's deafness eg child's mood, behaviour
 - Reluctance to challenge parents/carers
 -
- 

Highlight...

- What am I worried about?
 - Why?
 - How likely is each issue?
- What strengths are there that affect this?
 - How?
- What needs to change
 - How will you know if it has, or hasn't?

Risk in child protection

In child protection we are considering ‘the value and likelihood of the possible benefits of a particular decision against the seriousness and likelihood of the possible harms’

(Risk Principle 3 from The Munro Review of Child Protection, Final Report , A Child Centred System, Department of Education , May 2011.



Analysing the risks

- Linear processes – how the child got here and where the child might be going
- Circular processes – what's going on that sustains/maintains satisfactory or unsatisfactory parenting – look for opportunities to break/forged the cycle

Impact

Weigh up the risk against the protective factors. In assigning weight consider:

- Intrusiveness (the more it intrudes the greater the concern or benefit)
- Pervasiveness - does it impact across many child development dimensions, children/adults or situations – increasing concerns/benefit

Impact (continued)

- Parental/carer incapacity to change?
- Frequency of abuse/ harm – the more frequent the greater the harm.
- Duration – the longer the abuse/harm has gone on the greater the weight.
- The more unusual the abuse/harm the greater the impact.
- The greater the above the more severe is the impact on the child/young person and the more difficulty in recovery.

Factors to consider

- Opportunity for harm
- Source of harm
- Networks
- Vulnerability
- Safety
- Severity
- Likelihood



Factors to consider continued...

- Harm consequences
- Harm probability
- Risk
- Professional dangerousness



Analysis Section of Threshold Document

Devon Threshold Matrix											
Threshold Matrix	Name of child:										Date
		Level 1	Level 2		Level 3			Level 4			
Development (1: Health)	General Health										
	Physical & Sensory Development										
	Speech, Language and Communication										
Development (2: Wellbeing)	Emotional and Social										
	Behaviour										
	Identity, Self-esteem, Image										
	Family and Social Relationships										
Development (Learning)	Self Care Skills and Independence										
	Understanding, Reasoning & Problem Solving										
	Participation in Education or Work										
	Progress and Achievement in Learning										
Parents and Carers	Aspirations										
	Basic Care / Ensuring Safety and Protection										
	Emotional Warmth and Stability										
Family & Environmental Factors	Guidance, Boundaries and Stimulation										
	Family History, Functioning and Well-being										
	Wider family										
	Housing, Employment and Finances										
Vulnerability Assessment	Social and Community Elements										
		Universal	Low	Med	High	L	M	H	L	M	H
Level 1: Universal Services		<p>Plot these descriptors on this matrix with a check mark or an x to give a visual representation of the child or young person's level of need. The matrix reflects your professional judgement and informs decision making.</p> <p>You should then follow your agency's procedures for escalating your concerns, for example for Levels 2 and 3 you might refer this to your line manager for further action, whilst Level 4 will go to MASH, either via your line manager or directly.</p>									
Level 2: Children with additional needs											
Level 3: Children with complex additional needs											
Level 4: Children in need of protection											
Any other comments/remarks/issues, for example cultural											

ERADE Risk Assessment Tool

Risk Assessment

Practice guidance for improving outcomes for children and young people through the early identification of need and vulnerability
www.donorsafeguardingchildren.org

		Impact			
		Low	Concern	Harmful	Significant harm
Likelihood	Very unlikely				
	Possible				
	Suspected				
	Likely				
	Almost certain				
		LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4



Risk assessment questions

1. What are the risk and protective factors in this child's situation? - List these by domain, where need is met /not met, severity of harm, parental capacity/incapacity to change – what are you worried about, what are the strengths
2. Which of these factors are likely to be most significant for the child in terms of reducing / increasing the probability of future harm?
Think about this from an ecological transaction perspective.
3. Estimate the level of risk which therefore appears to be present for the child, and the probability of future harm (consequences and probability).
4. What are the likely outcomes of this for the child?
5. What needs to change if this level of risk is to be reduced?

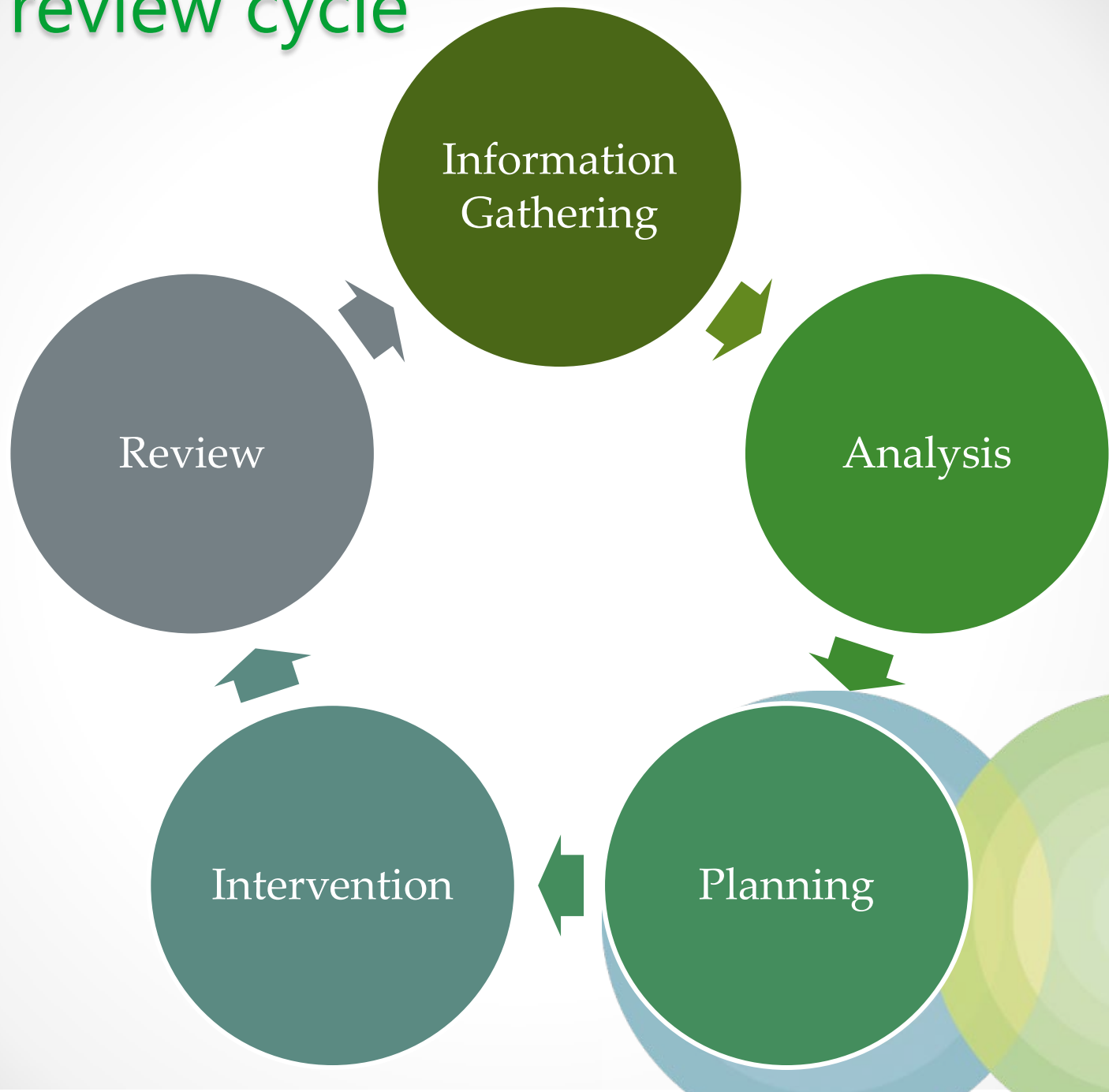


Keeping children safe

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Risk Management

The review cycle



Risk Management

“Uncertainty and risk are features of child protection work...Risk management cannot eradicate risk: it can only try to reduce the probability of harm.... Those involved in child protection must be “risk sensible”. There is no option of being risk averse since there is no absolutely safe option”

The Munro Review of Child Protection: A Child Centred System, May 2011

Outcomes

- How could you tell the child is safe?
- What does 'good' look like?
- How will you check?

What needs to be done to get from here to there?



Immediate Protection

- Where there is a risk to the life of a child or a likelihood of serious immediate harm an agency with statutory child protection powers **should act quickly to secure the immediate safety of the child.**
- Planned emergency action will normally take place following an immediate strategy discussion between the police, local authority children's social care and other agencies as appropriate
- If it is necessary to remove a child from their home, a local authority must, wherever possible and unless a child's safety is otherwise at immediate risk, apply for an **Emergency Protection Order (EPO)**. Police powers to remove a child in an emergency should be used only in exceptional circumstances where there is insufficient time to seek an EPO or for reasons relating to the immediate safety of the child. (WT 2013:28)