



Introduction
to the

Safety Guide

**SAFE
STRONG
SUPPORTIVE**

casey family programs

Child Safety: A Guide for Judges and Attorneys: www.americanbar.org

safe children | strong families | supportive communities

Child Safety Framework

**A
Language and
Structure for
Decision-
Making
In
Dependency
Court**





Greater Breadth of Discussion at initial hearing ...

- **Increased rate of appearance of parties at subsequent hearings**
- **Higher likelihood of placement with parents or kin at immediately subsequent hearings (following six months)**
- **Increase in services ordered for both parents**
- **Earlier permanency and closure of case, and increase in reunification as case outcome**
- **Enhancing the level of discussion at the preliminary hearing can be initiated by any of the professionals.**

Alicia Summers, Sophia I. Gatowski, Melissa Gueller (2017). *The relationship between breadth of discussion and case outcomes.*

Safety Assessment

- Gathering Information
- Foundation for case analysis

Safety Plans

- Based on Safety Assessment
- In-Home
- Out-of-Home

Conditions for Return

- Based on Safety Assessment
- Foundation for Case Plan

Case Plan

- Based on Safety Assessment
- Eliminates Threats or Enhances Protective Capacity

Progress, Reunification, Dismissal

- Judged against Safety Assessment
- Reunification \neq Dismissal



Threats

**Are there sufficient
protective capacities to
protect child(ren) from
threats to which they are
vulnerable?**

Vulnerabilities

**Protective
Capacities**



Threats

- **Specific and Observable**
- **Out of Control**
- **Immediate or Liable to Happen Soon**
- **Severe Consequences**



Vulnerabilities

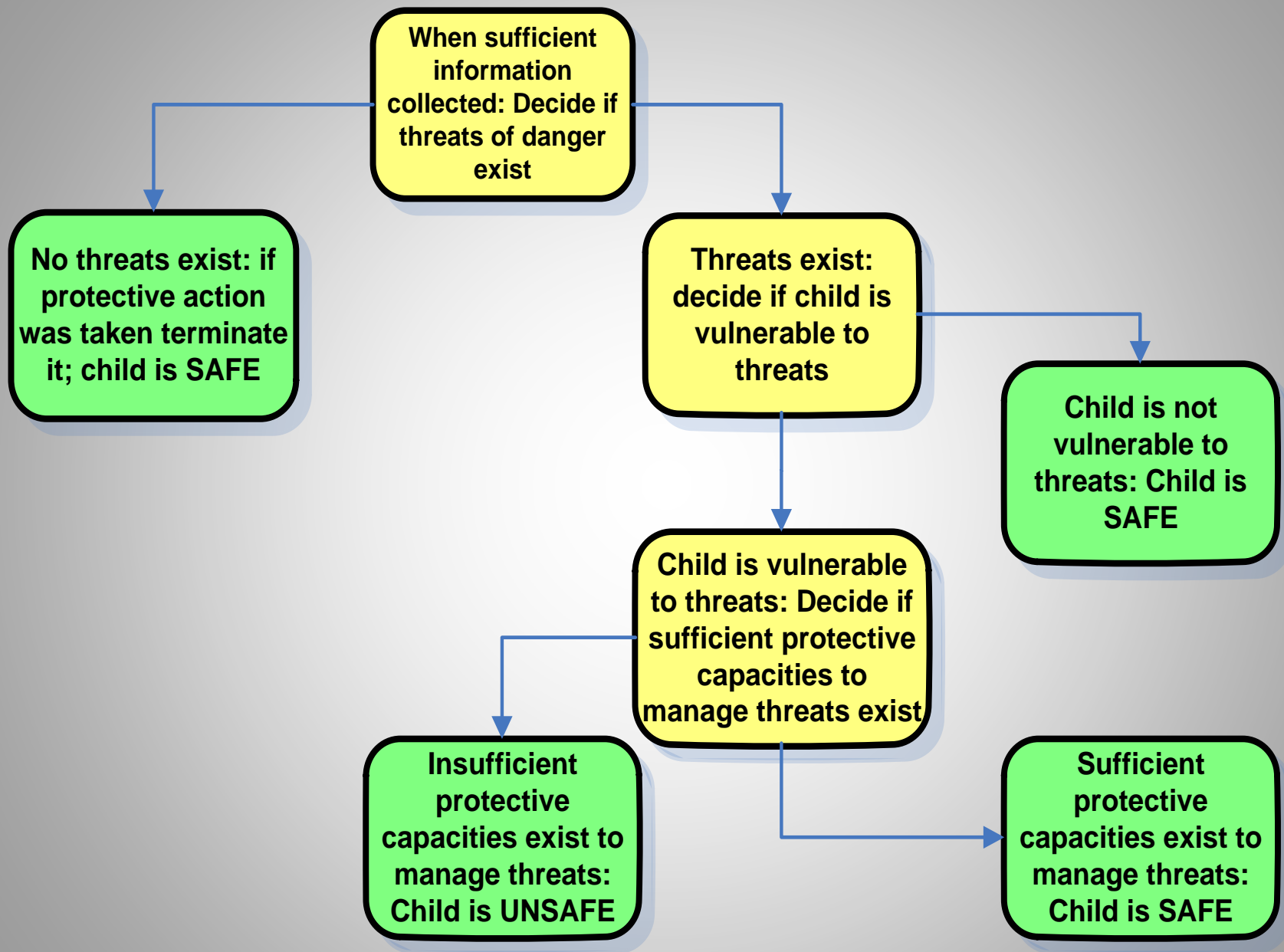
- Child Specific
- Vulnerable or Not, Not Judged in Degrees
- If Threat Exists, Presume Vulnerability



Protective Capacity

- Cognitive
- Behavioral
- Emotional



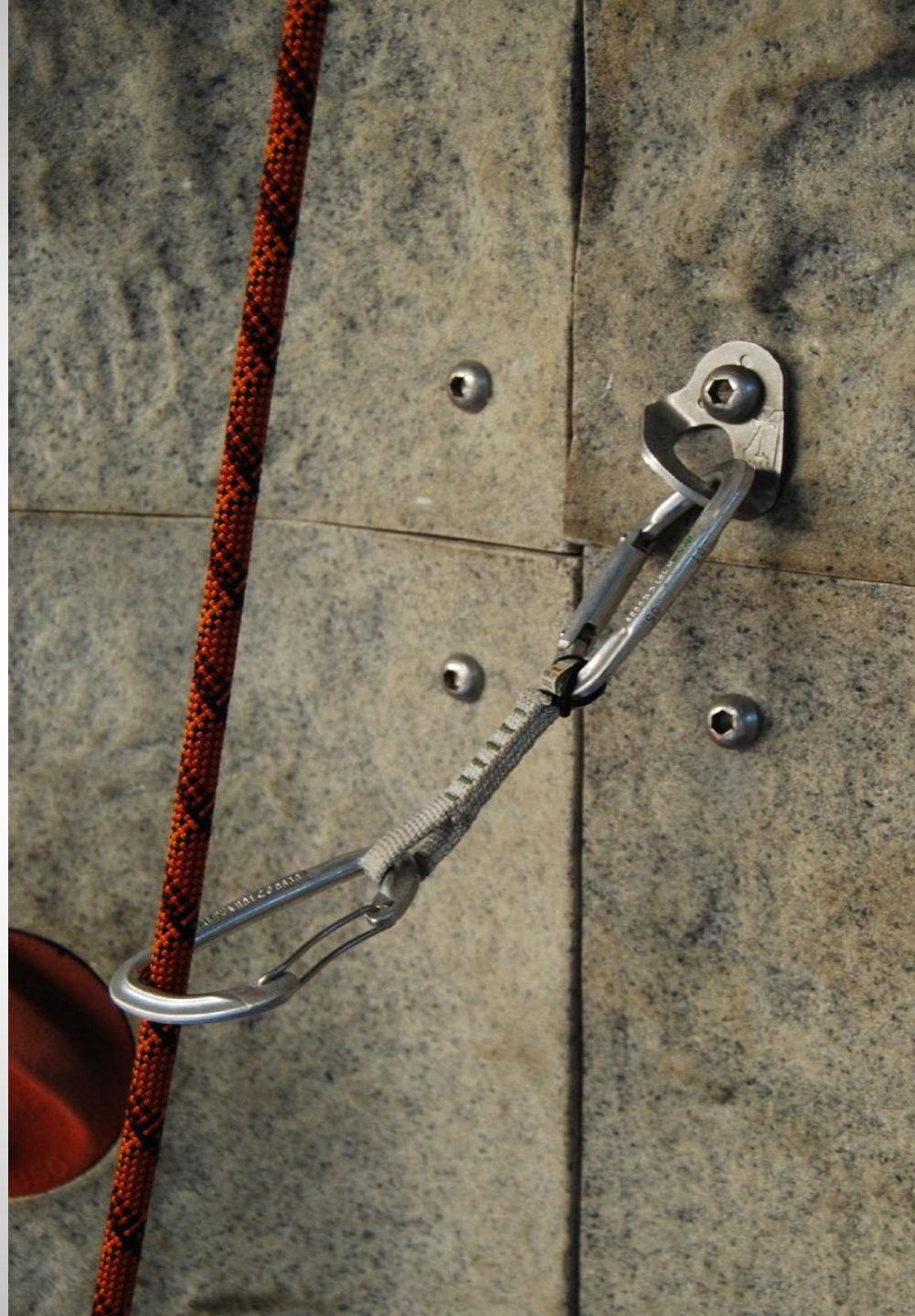


Safety Planning

- Does not require change in parents behavior or attitude
 - Controls threats – immediately
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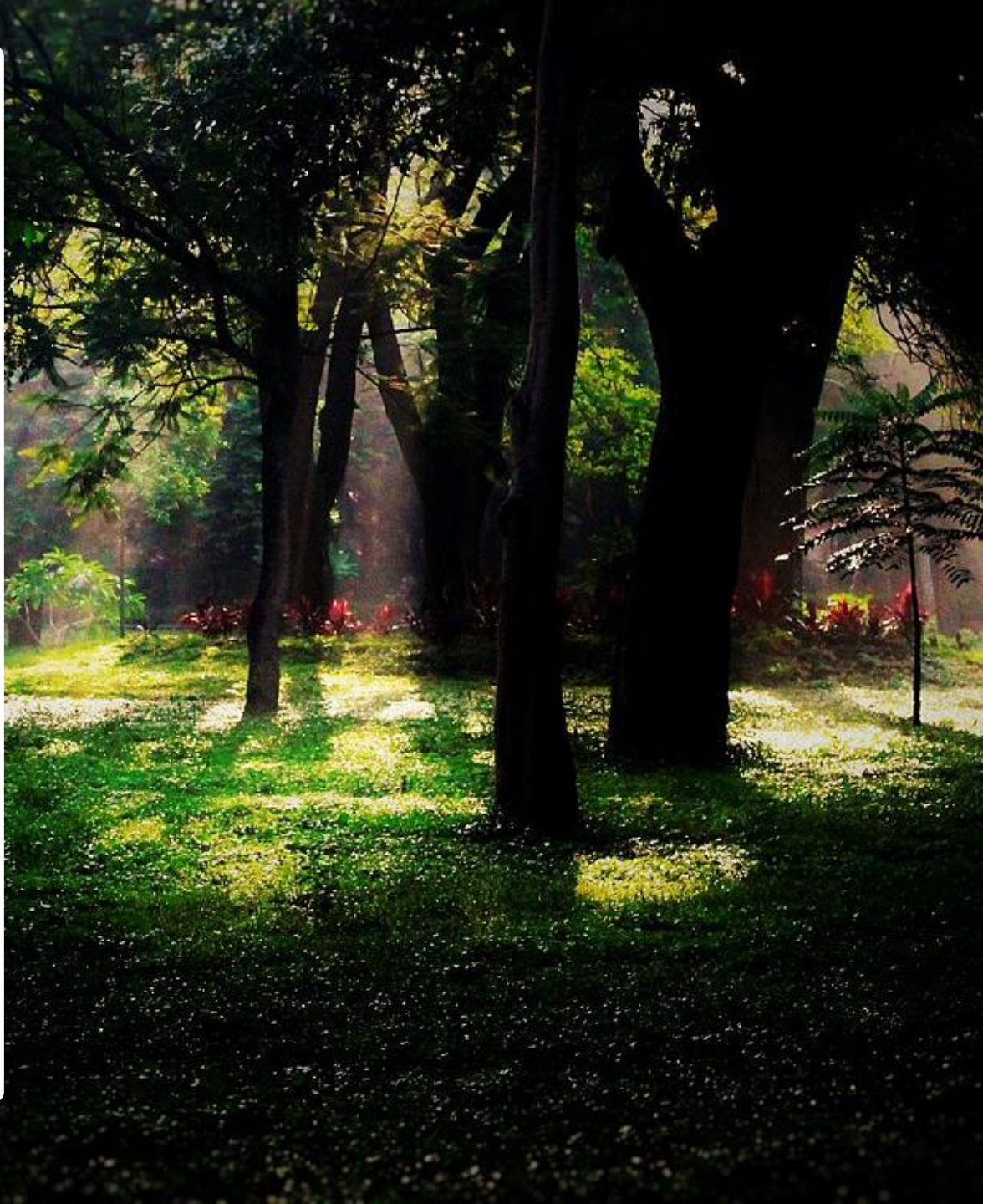
- Sufficient
 - Feasible
 - Sustainable
-

- Assessing Reasonable Efforts
 - Actions or Services to Control or Manage Threats



Case Planning

- **Use Safety Framework to design case plan.**
- **Looking toward the Court and Dept exiting Family.**
- **Usually requires changing in parental behavior**



Visitation Plans

- **Assess - Learn - Practice - Demonstrate**
-

- **Quick to Start**
- **Include Siblings**
- **Alternative Contact**
- **Written Plan – Court Order**
- **Right of Family – Not Carrot-and-Stick**
- **Explain Supervision**
 - **How will it progress?**



Evaluating Success

What would need to happen for children to go home today?

- Safety Plan question – needs safety plan answer.
- Reduction of Threats? Emergence of New Threats?
- Status of Protective Capacity?
- Current Information for Answers?
- Why Disputes? Challenge Parties to Resolve.



Reunification

- Have conditions changed enough to support an In-Home Safety Plan?
Sustainable:
 - Can the plan be put into place?
and can it work until it is no longer needed?
- Observe visits
 - Can unsupervised visits be happening now?
 - Are any of the visits structured to provide information about the child-parent relationship
- Parent Attitudes re: Threats and Protective Factors
- Info from Treatment Providers



Reunification

- Are We Preparing the Care Provider to Support Reunification?
- Is the Recommendation of Social Worker Independent and Supported .
- Reunification is a Plan, not an event.

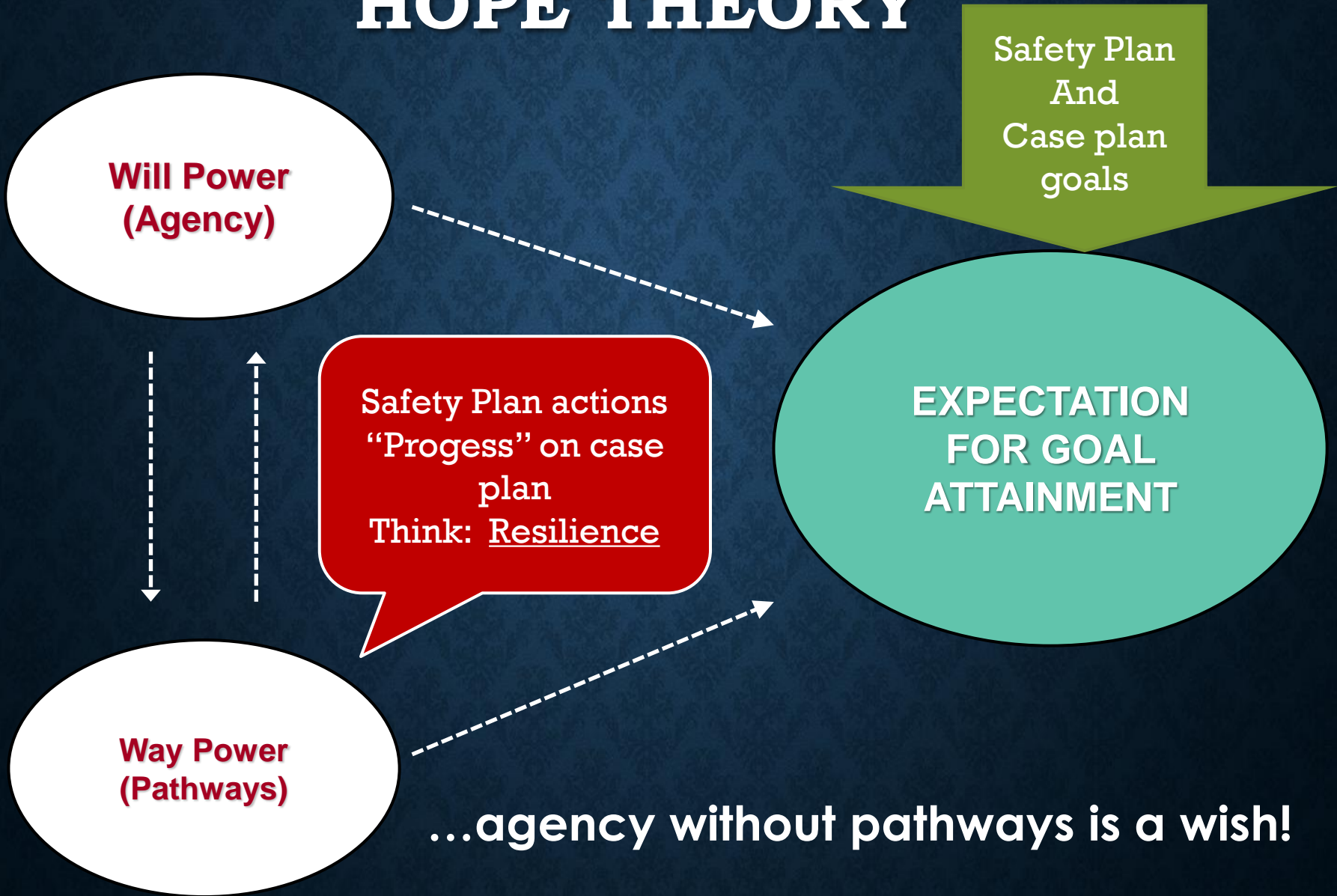


Terminating Jurisdiction

- Threats Eliminated
- Protective Capacity Enhanced to Control Threats
- Combination of Both



HOPE THEORY



Working Toward Condition of Return

Part 1: Assessing Safety

1. On your own, take 5 minutes and read the fact pattern beginning on page 3 of the worksheets, and think about how you would assess safety – see the three blank sections “threats”, “vulnerabilities”, “protective capacity” ...
2. Then in groups of four, take 10 minutes...
 - Elect someone to record group’s answers, to share with rest of us after safety planning section.
 - Seek agreement on assessment of safety.

Safety Plan – In Home:

- a) In order to address the threat of _____ (Threat Language) _____,
- b) circumstances in the home need to change as follows:
_____ (“Not Threat”) _____,
- c) and the specific action that will control the threat will be:
_____ (Behavior by someone, usually not parent, eliminates threat) _____.

Safety Plan – In Home:

a) In order to address the threat of:

(A parent's violent behavior is dangerous to children in the home),

b) circumstances in the home need to change as follows:

(No adult in the home will behave violently),

c) and the specific action that will control the threat will be:

(Behavior by someone, usually not parent, eliminates threat)

- Person leaves home by agreement or mandate
 - Other parent is supported to maintain that rule.
- Other supports check in or move in to prevent violence
- Non-violent parent and child(ren) find home/shelter elsewhere
- NOT: Simple promise not to be violent anymore.
- NOT: Violent parent will engage DV assessment and treatment
(this is case plan feature)

Working Toward Condition of Return

Part 2: Safety Planning

- 1. Take 5 minutes on your own to create one or two components of Safety Plan**
- 2. In groups of four:**
 - 10 minutes: Try to create whole safety plan, describing the components separately in the work sheet.**
 - Be prepared when we come out of breakout groups to describe Assessment of Safety and Safety Plan to overall group. Briefly.**

Additional Facts Related to Accomplishing Safety Plan

- Mother's sister is not able to come over to help with the family until she "works some things out with her boss" about her work schedule.
- The Father's family (his brother and his mother) do not believe he is abusive and should not need help with the kids. They don't understand why the department is involved, and so the social worker was not successful talking to them about participating in a safety plan.
- Jasmine's daycare unregistered her after too many absences and has a general rule that a family waits until the following quarter to re-enroll.

Working Toward Condition of Return

Part 3: Conditions of Return

1. In groups of four:

- 5 minutes: Clarify the Conditions of Return from your group's Safety Plan**
- Be prepared when we come out of breakout groups to say your group's Conditions of Return.**



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