



# Not a Single Child More: Risk and Removal

Multi- Disciplinary Child Abuse and Neglect Institute – The First 75 Days



The **LAST** thing you are willing to give up is the **FIRST** thing a child has to give up.

# At Risk vs. Unsafe

## At Risk

- Likelihood that maltreatment will occur or reoccur in the future (chance, prospect, potential)
- On a continuum (mild to severe)

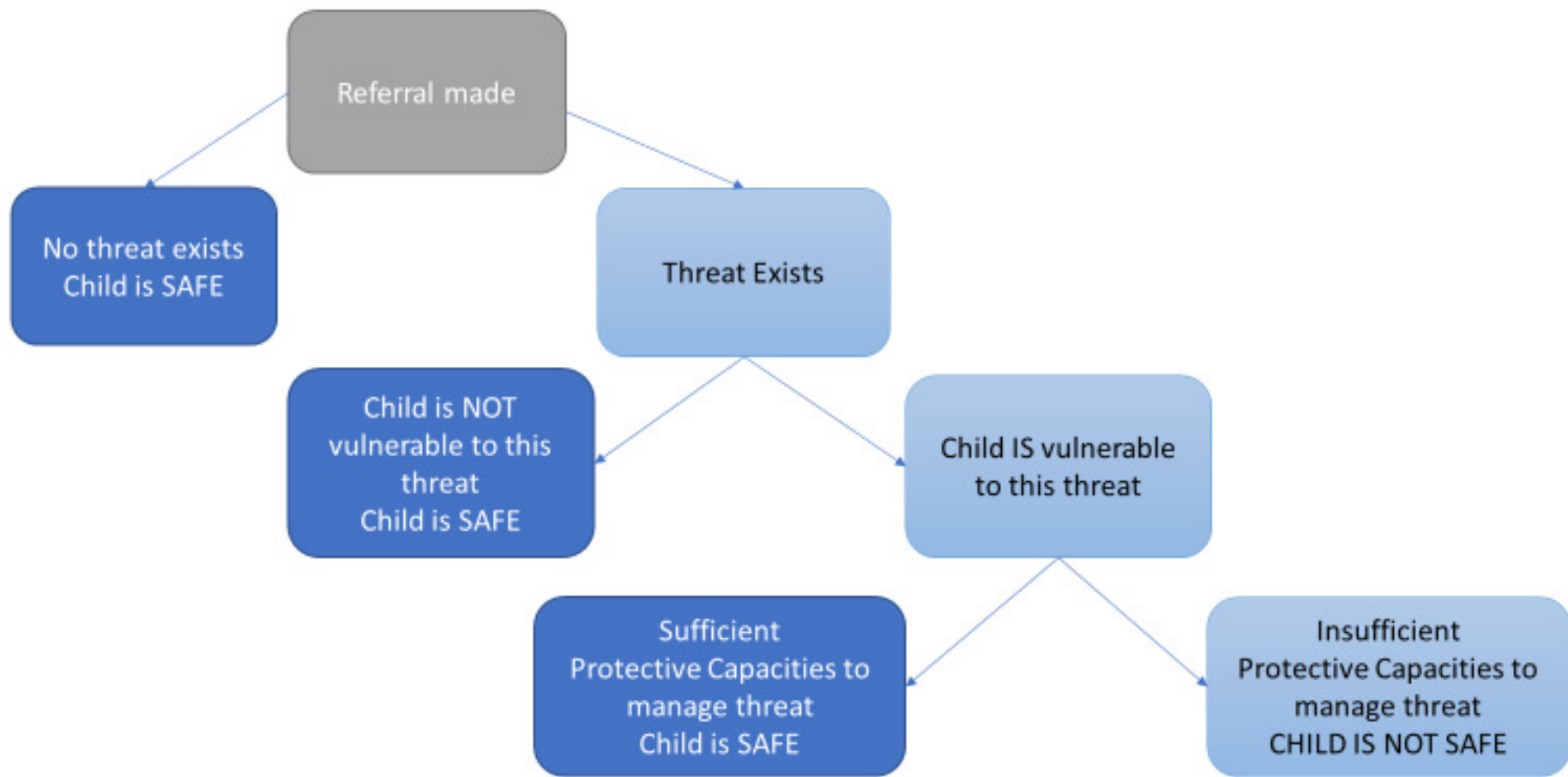
## Unsafe

- Risk has materialized
- Beyond concerning
- Requires immediate action

# Imminent Risk

- **Threats of danger** exist within the family
- Children are **vulnerable** to those threats
- Parents have **insufficient protective capacities** to manage or control the threats

Imminent risk is risk that has become a present and immediate danger.



# Vulnerability

- Young child
- Medically fragile
- Developmental delay
- Unable to communicate
- Dependent on others for care
- Perceived as provoking
- Not biologically related to caregiver



# Protective Capacity

- Personal qualities or characteristics that contribute to vigilant child protection, such as:
- Adequate energy
- Impulse control
- Recognizes and understands threats
- Places child's needs before their own
- Adequate coping skills to meet own emotional needs



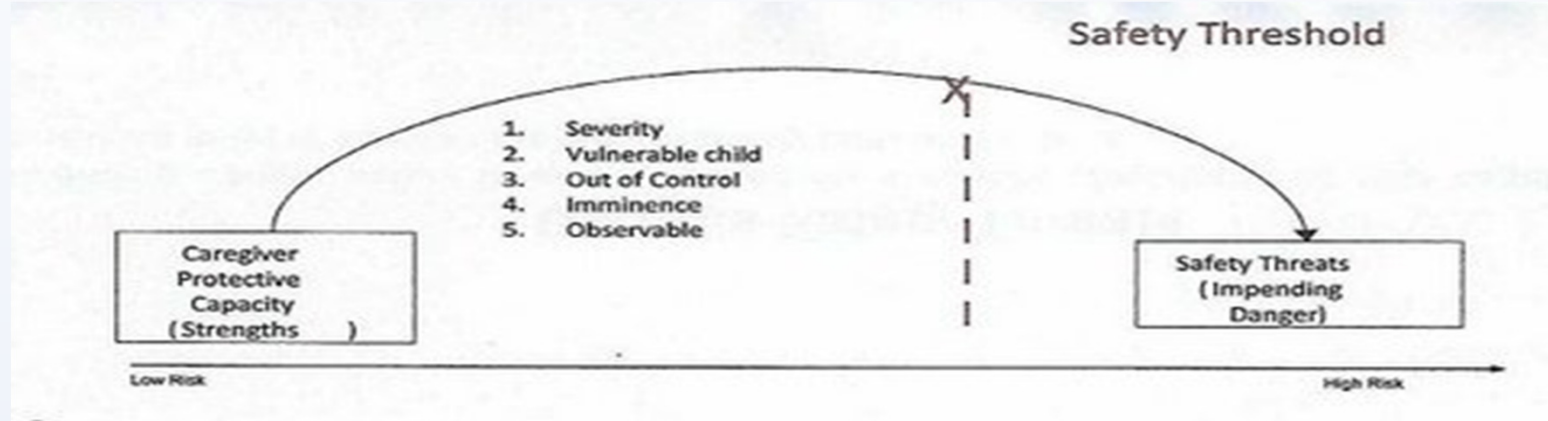
# Safety Threat



An act or condition that has the capacity to seriously harm any child.



# Does the Concern Cross the Safety Threshold?



**Safety Threshold - the point at which a negative family condition goes beyond being concerning (risk) and actually becomes dangerous to a child.**

# Crossing the Safety Threshold

## Present

- Immediate
- Significant
- Clearly Observable



## Impending

- Vulnerable Child
- Observable
- Out of control
- Imminent
- Severe

# Imminent/Present Danger

- Injuries to the face or head
- Unexplained injuries
- Multiple victims
- Parent's viewpoint of the child is bizarre
- Child fearful/anxious
- Child needs medical attention
- Caregiver intoxicated
- Family hides child

## **Impending Risk/Danger**

- Caregiver intended to hurt child and no remorse
- Caregiver is violent and no adult is protective
- Caregiver can not control their behavior
- Caregiver fears they will maltreat child or request placement
- Caregiver lack parenting knowledge, skills, motivation that affects child safety

## Other Factors

- Young child
- Chronicity or history of reports
- Family is isolated

# **Safety Assessment Discussion: Understand the Safety Threat**

- Who is in the family?
- What is the developmental challenge with which the family is struggling and what is the pattern around this issue?
- What does it look like when things go well?
- What personal issue(s) does the caregiver have that makes it difficult to keep the kids safe?
- What is the pattern around this issue?
- What skills does the caregiver already have?

*(adapted from Solution Based Casework, Dr. Dana Christensen)*

# Controlling Interventions: The Safety Plan

1. The alleged maltreater cannot be the one expected to provide protection.
2. Must contain strategies that will keep child safe NOW.

## Reasonable Efforts

- Use family resources, neighbors or individuals in the community
- Use community agencies or services
- Alleged maltreater leaves the home
- Non-maltreating caregiver moves to a safe environment with the children
- Caregivers voluntarily place the child outside the home (Voluntary Kinship)
- Legal action to place child outside the home (TAFC/DFCS custody)



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**IN-HOME  
SAFETY  
STRATEGIES**



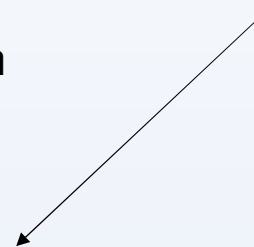
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OUT OF  
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## Voluntary Kinship

- Caregivers VOULUNTARILY place the child outside the home
- Can the child return home within 90 days?
- Does the Kin Caregiver have protective capacity?
- DFCS must file petition for Dependency if minimal progress meeting conditions for return
- Not to be used when there are chronic or severe issues or a history of non-compliance with case plan goals

## **Legal Action to Place Child Outside of Home (TAFC/FC)**

- No consensus with the family
- Chronic or severe issues
- History of non-compliance with case plan goals
- “Contrary to the Welfare”

# Assessing Need for Out-of-Home Placement: PRE

- Using what you have learned from developing the genogram so far, what have you learned about who lives in or frequents the home? (Include ages, relationships)
- Describe how the family condition is unsafe (apply safety threshold criteria.) What is the effect on the children?
- What is the pattern around this issue? Is this a one-time event?
- Describe the caregiver's personal issue and pattern around that issue that makes it difficult to keep the child(ren) safe.
- Describe the family's support system. (Relative, neighbor, church, etc)
- What has been attempted so far to try to manage the safety threat?
- Discuss how other options on the Reasonable Efforts Checklist have been explored.

## **Is it contrary to the welfare of the child to remain in the home?**

- If the children remained in the home, how would they be harmed specifically?
- Have we balanced the trauma the children would endure by being removed against the physical or long-term emotional harm by staying in the home?
- Is there anything that can be done, even on a short-term basis, to protect the children?

## **After Removal (and Before the PPH)**

- Continue assessment
- Search for relatives, kin & absent parents
- Review safety plan – it is not a “one and done” document

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