



ISLINGTON

Strengths Based Practice and Safeguarding

Jenefer Rees

Principal Social Worker for Adults, London Borough of Islington

Chair, London Adults Principal Social Worker Network

Vice Chair, National Adults Principal Social Worker Network

“Strengths based assessment – helps to build a unique and full picture of a person, identifying what they had achieved and enjoyed previously (what has worked in the past); what qualities and resources they have in place (what is working for them now); and what their priorities are (what they want in the future).”

Steve Morgan, Practice Based Evidence, 2012



'Making Safeguarding Personal means it should be person-led and outcome-focused. It engages the person in conversation about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety.'

Plymouth Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures



What a Strengths - Based Approach is about

Exploring all of the individual's circumstances rather than making the problem or gap the focus of the intervention

It also means:

- Acknowledging the challenges and difficulties people are facing
- Avoiding 'fixing the problem' or intervening to do what people can do for themselves
- No 'one size fits all'; a person-centred approach is crucial
- Risks identified, assessed and managed to enable positive outcomes
- Being alongside people, working together in partnership

The Care Act requires local authorities to:
'take into account the person's own capabilities, and the potential for improving their skills as well as the role of any support from family, friends or others that could help them to achieve what they wish for from daily life.'

So its important to:

- Consider the person's strengths and capabilities
- Look at support from network or within the community
- Consider co-production of services
- Focus on the individual's gifts and strengths in a community setting
- Provide appropriate training to support skills development
- Consider cultural and spiritual networks to support meeting needs and building strength

Strengths Based Practice Safeguards People

Principles

- Person Centred
- What people can do
- Social Connections
- Self determination
- Contribution and value
- Collaboration
- Relationships
- Hope and ambition
- Belief in change

Outcomes

- Person led, not system/service led
- Promotes self confidence and self-esteem
- Reduces social isolation
- Culture of equality and value of every individual
- Supporting others is everyone's business
- Happiness and optimism
- Create the life you want

Strengths Based Practice Safeguards People

Early Intervention and Prevention

- Coaching/Motivational Conversations
- Individual Strengths
- Informal Support and Networks
- Universal Support
- Learning opportunities
- Wider issues

Outcomes

- Builds capacity
- Strengthens
- Promotes independence
- Early resolution of issues

Making Safeguarding Personal; Context

A change of focus from processes to the person;

'Unless people's lives are improved, then all the safeguarding work, systems, procedures and partnerships are purposeless. Currently Directors and Safeguarding Adult Boards are faced with a plethora of input/output data but no way of telling from it if they really are making any impact. Directors must have a means of knowing what works and **how they are making a difference to people**'

Safeguarding Adults: Advice and Guidance to Directors of Adult Social Services' ADASS; LGA (March 2013)




Changing Nature of Safeguarding

- Domestic Violence
- Human Trafficking
- Modern Slavery
- Cuckooing
- Mate Hate/Crime
- Forced Marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Prevent
- County Lines

We need to be aware and alert to the changing nature of types of abuse, how they can be perpetrated and understand as much as we can about them.

Making Safeguarding Personal

A strengths based approach to Safeguarding:

- Involving the person or representative at all times
 - Focusing on the outcome the person wants
 - Empowering people so they feel in control
 - Focusing on strengths and support networks
 - Person led, rather than process led
 - Listening to the persons suggestions about risk mitigation
- 

MAKING SAFEGUARDING PERSONAL TRISH O'HARA 2016

STAFF COMPETENCIES

In assessment, management of risk and person centred safeguarding. Underpinned by a good evidence base and legal framework.

SOUND PRACTICE in applying MCA and DoLS.

PARTICIPATION

- Participation in outcome focused safeguarding meetings.
- What does the person want to happen?
 - Have you asked them?
 - Is it recorded?

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH REPRESENTATION:

- Person/representative/advocate/IMCA involved from the start
- In order to make the person safe from abuse decisions may be made in their best interests that make their outcomes impossible
- Have you explained this to the person?
 - Has their outcomes remained a focus for future decisions?
 - Is this recorded?

INFORMATION GUIDES

Simplified information guides made accessible for supported decision making.

INVOLVEMENT

FROM START TO FINISH - AT THE END OF THE SAFEGUARDING PROCESS.

- Have the outcomes been explained to the person with clear explanations for decisions made?
- Have their outcomes been achieved & recorded?
 - If their outcomes have not been achieved, has this been explained & recorded?
 - Has the person been asked if they have understood the process?

HAS THE SAFEGUARDING PROCESS IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE PERSON?

Rights Based

- Safe and secure
- Equality of treatment
- Take risks
- No discrimination
- Protection from the Law
- Confidentiality

Empowerment

- Informed choice
- Participation
- Assertiveness
- Self-respect and esteem
- In control

Informed choices

• **Collaboration**

- The individual
- Informal network/supporters
- Professional network/supporters
- Housing, Local Community
- Clear roles and responsibilities

Person-Centred

- Step into their shoes
- Full participation
- The person's
 - understanding/view of the risks
 - Ideas for managing/mitigating risk
 - Wishes and priorities

Outcomes people want (in spite of risks)

- Choice and control
- New/existing relationships
- Access to justice
- Support to recover
- Happy and safer
- Apology

MSP is not

- Disregarding happiness and quality of life
- A reason to do nothing
- Disregarding risks to others
- A tick box process
- Someone else's business

- **Cause is unclear** - illness, lack of motivation, lifestyle choice, social/economic
- **Intentional** – conscious choice e.g. refusing to go to the doctor when unwell
- **Non-intentional/passive** – health-related conditions contribute to self-neglect e.g. lapses in concentration may make people forget to eat or attend to personal hygiene

The Care Act includes Self-Neglect as a Safeguarding issue so local authorities must make enquiries or cause others to do so to establish whether action needs to be taken to prevent or stop abuse or neglect.

Self Neglect polarises value positions (Suzy Braye 2011)



Case Example

- Woman in 80's, living without heating/basic facilities
- Wants to live in unsafe situation (hoarding, being attacked, vermin)
- Apparently no friends and family
- Going out into the community inappropriately dressed
- Eating out of date food
- Not using equipment that has been issued from health or social care professionals.
- Refusing support
- Not addressing medical needs
- **What would you do; individual professional/organisation**

What would you as a professional do?

- Build relationship / develop rapport
- Gain understanding of her perspective/motivations
- Talk to other professionals
- Alternative parking for the van
- Explore alternative housing options
- Support with hoarding
- Taking things at her pace
- Addressing practical issues (food, bathing, toileting, GP)
- Tap into networks / community support
- Consider capacity

How do you as a Manager/Organisation support positive outcomes

- Individual and collective responsibility
- Joint working
- Staff support – training, supervision
- Reflection and continual learning
- Complaints and reporting arrangements for Abuse and suspected criminal offences work well
- Information sharing arrangements work well
- Multi-agency arrangements are in place and staff know how to access them

Self Neglect, Unwise Decisions, Lifestyle Choices

- Are they one and the same thing?
- What is the difference?
- What is the role of professionals and statutory organisations?
- What tools and approaches can help us work positively?

Effective Approaches

- Sensitive and comprehensive assessment
- Capacity and risk assessment
- Support by consent – monitoring and negotiation
- Relationship building – building trust, understanding, confidence over time
- Collaboration and partnership working – sharing risk, decision making

MSP + SBP = Excellent, Transformational Social Work Practice

AND

Relationships + Values + Purpose = Golden Thread

BUT

Time + Resources + Culture = The Challenge

References

- Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Making Safeguarding Personal Guide LGA 2014,
- Myths and Realities about MSP, Oct 2019
- Plymouth Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy & Procedures, 2019
- Strengths Based Practice Framework Feb 2019
- SCIE Strengths Based Leadership Handbook
- Ann Craft Trust - What is Self-Neglect, July 2019
- Jill Manthorpe – Learning about Self Neglect from SCR's, 2015
- Suzy Braye – Exploring Good Practice in Managing Self-Neglect, 2011

THANK YOU

Any thoughts, comments, questions?