

Children's Social Care  
Family Solutions Plus  
Domestic Abuse Service – working  
together to affect sustainable change in  
families



**OXFORDSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Reducing the Risk  
of Domestic Abuse**



**Elmore  
Community  
Services**

# FSP – working to reduce child harm caused by parental domestic abuse

FSP work with children and families is informed by the principle that child harm and neglect is consequential of adult unmet needs impacting on parenting capacity – the majority of referrals to children's social care raising concern about children's safety and welfare are due to adult mental health support needs, parental domestic abuse and/or substance or alcohol misuse.

## Possible effects of domestic abuse on children are:

- Anxiety and depression
- Difficulty sleeping – nightmares/flashbacks
- Could be easily startled
- May complain of physical symptoms such as tummy aches and may bed wet
- Temper tantrums and/or problems with school
- Aggression vs. internalise of distress and withdrawal from others
- Lowered sense of self-worth
- Older children may begin to play truant, start to use alcohol or drugs, begin to self-harm by taking overdoses or cutting themselves, or have an eating disorder
- Children may also feel **angry, guilty, insecure, alone, frightened, powerless or confused.**
- Children may have ambivalent feelings towards both the abuser and the non-abusing parent.



# Family Solutions Plus remit

- ▶ FSP works with children and families in which at least one adult vulnerability is present and the threshold for statutory social care intervention is met
- ▶ Following assessment or investigation, the social worker and adult-facing practitioners work with families under a Child in Need or Child Protection plan
- ▶ For some families in which risk to children cannot be safety managed within a statutory plan, a legal framework is needed - pre-proceedings or care proceedings
- ▶ The social worker and adult-facing practitioner consider the family's progress together every month at family group supervision, where the plan is reviewed and intervention is critically evaluated.

# FSP Domestic Abuse Services

- **Support for victim/survivors of DA:**

- A needs led 121 service for non-abusive parents underpinned by the Empowerment Star
- We work alongside non-abusive parents to assist in setting goals for themselves and their children, as well as learning to recognise the harmful behaviours of their partners
- Risk management and safety planning key

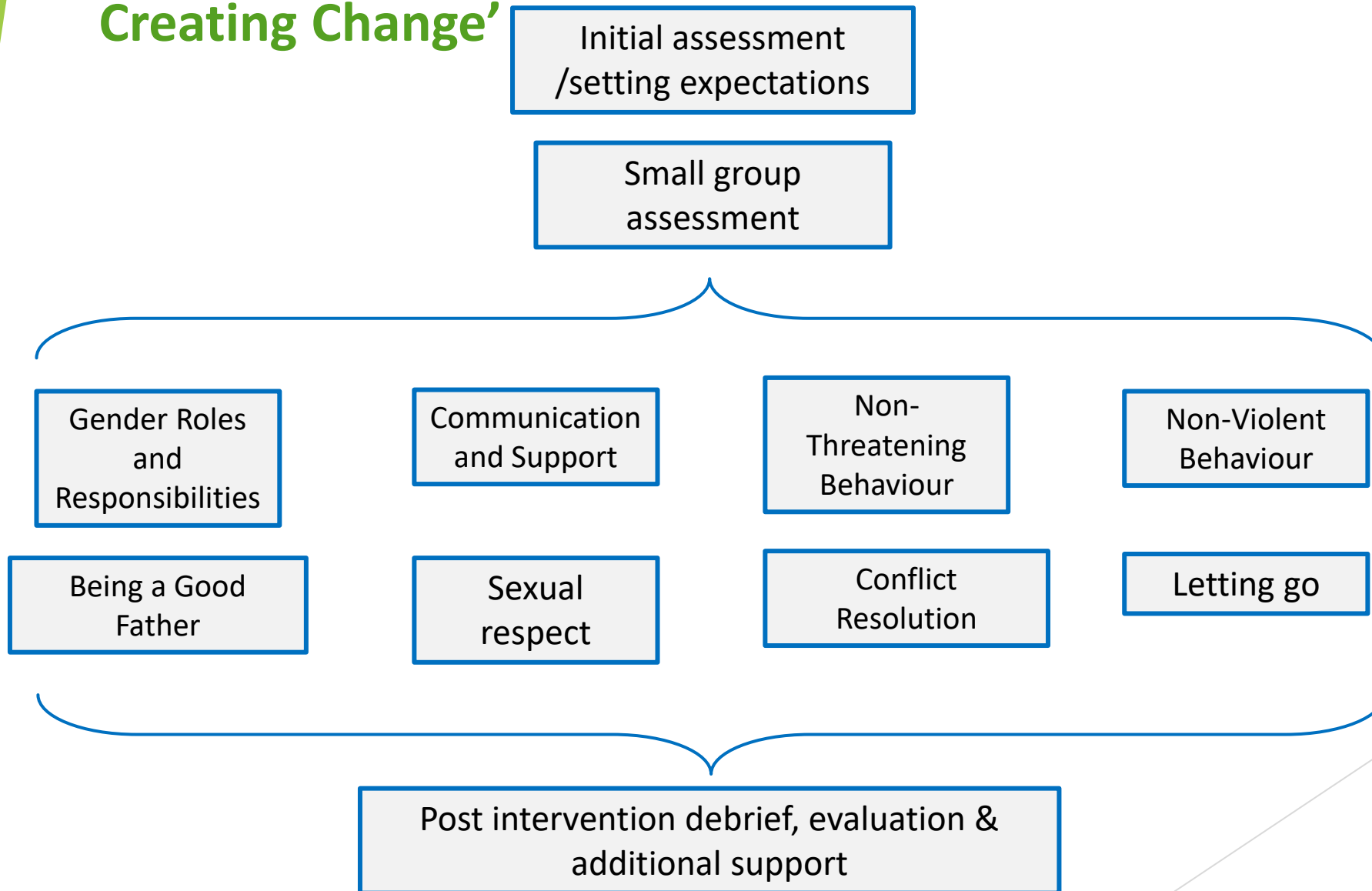
- **Support for perpetrators of DA:**

- We aim to challenge and address attitudes and beliefs that support and underpin abusive behaviours.
- Working alongside perpetrators we will identify and support non-abusive, respectful behaviours to increase the safety of the family
- 16 week structured rolling group programme underpinned by group work and peer-to-peer learning (*121 interventions available in exceptional circumstances*)
- Groups currently available in Banbury, Bicester, City, Abingdon, (*Didcot starting soon*)

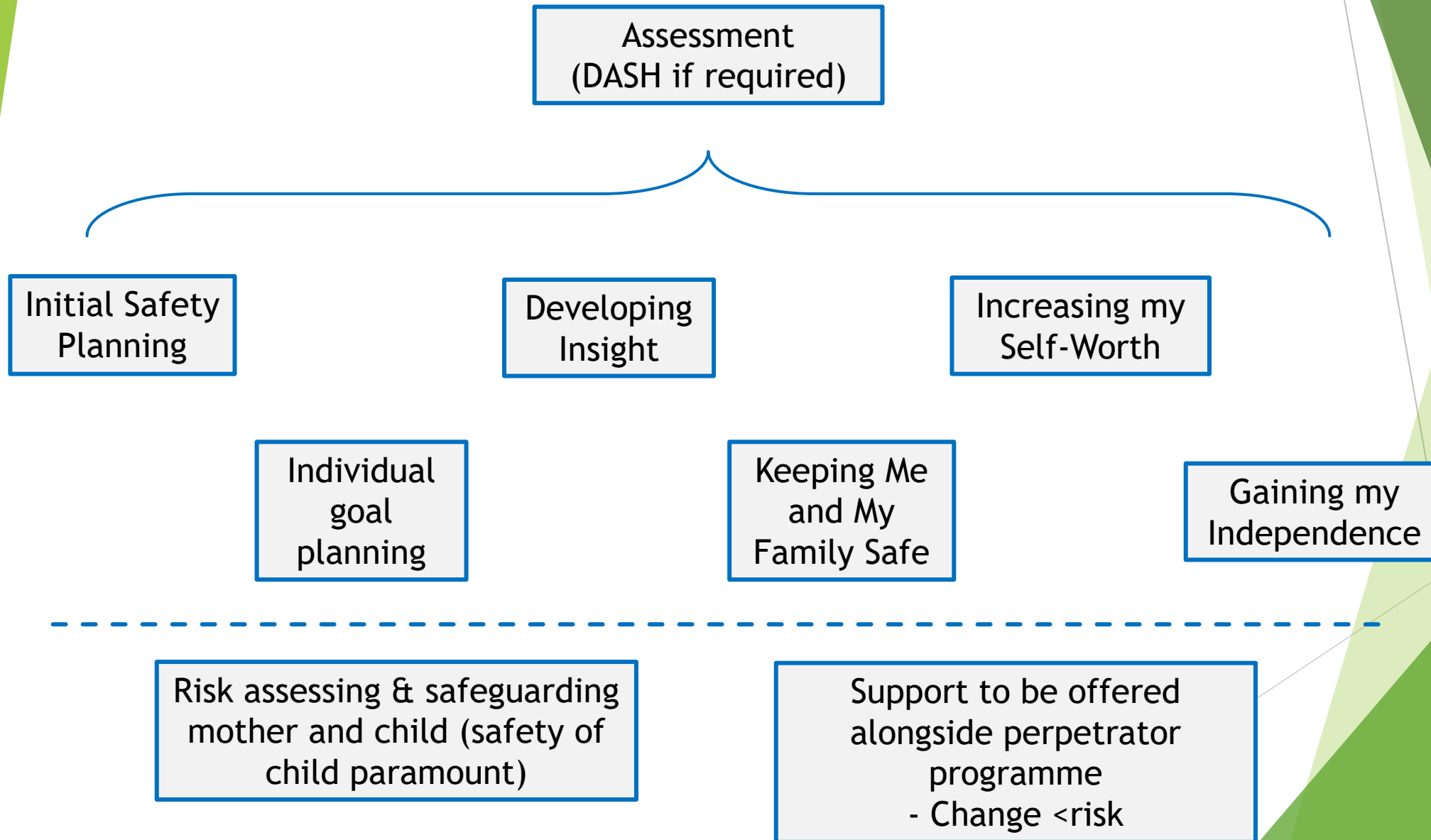
**Support can be provided for either the victim/survivor or perpetrator, or both simultaneously**



# Perpetrator Interventions – ‘Programme for Creating Change’



# Victim/Survivor Interventions Pathway



# Victim/Survivor Case Study

Linda and Brian have had 5 children removed due to longstanding concerns around abuse (emotional/physical), coercive control and neglect. Adoption was being sought for their youngest, Libby.

Linda was offered support to separate from Brian after further abuse was raised, but declined. An exclusion order was applied for, but Brian instead chose to temporarily leave the home.

## Service Intervention:

- Goal planning to meet Linda & families' basic needs
- Safety and support plan - identified issues and provided support and risk management
- Developed insight into harmful behaviours – past and current
- Explored impact of domestic abuse on her and her children
- Increased self-esteem and provided tools to build resilience.
- Helped prepare for upcoming court date

Linda moved from pre-contemplation on the cycle of change to preparation and action stages through interventions. With consistent support provided to meet her own needs, Linda was able to understand the positive impact that change could have on her family, and was motivated to make these changes as a result.

Linda recognised the improvements in her own self-esteem and feels confident that she can use her new tools to support herself. She has a plan in place to access support for herself and family if she faces domestic abuse again. Support had a huge impact on Linda and her family. In recognition of the progress that she has made, and the very supportive relationship she had with Libby, the adoption case was dropped, and the family are now being supported to reunify in the family home together.

*“Thank you so much for your support, you helped me more than you will ever know. Thank you for making me feel strong again and making me feel I can be me again”*



# Perpetrator Case Study

Louis has a history of drug and alcohol abuse, which led to domestic abuse with his partner including physical abuse and coercive control.

## Service Intervention:

- Completed our 16-week 'Programme for Creating Change' group.
- Took part in a range of group work involving discussion topics, visual aids and media sources.
- As part of the group he has completed modules focusing on gender roles and responsibilities, communication and support, and non-threatening behaviour, amongst others.



Louis engaged well and was supported to reflect how his behaviours have impacted on current and previous relationships. Louis was really open in group and expressed that he could see how his drinking was the source of his actions and by stopping drinking just after his son was born, he was able to reflect and learn from these behaviours.

Louis also reflected on how support improved his relationship with his partner, as he shared his learning with her openly, and she said he always returned home from group positive.

Louis had a pivotal role in the group, as he became an informal peer leader, and the voice that others listen to, always offering advice and support to those that needed it. Louis responded well to topics and exercises and always offered examples of behaviours/past incidents to link discussions. Other attendees looked to Louis as a role model as they recognised that he had worked with Social Services, got his son back, and was moved on.



## Working Together

- Team able to provide support during assessment process where DA/identification of perpetrator/victim/survivor is unclear
- Joint initial visits crucial to showcasing partnership working
- Clear communication & information sharing key
- AFPs focus is on needs of the adult, in order to improve outcomes for the child
- 1 AFP assigned to each hub - will signpost referrals for victim/perp to team internally





Any  
questions?