

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Safety Assessment and Planning – June 2022 Updates

#### WHY ARE LANGUAGE CHANGES BEING MADE?

As part of [Putting Families First](#), the Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) convened a workgroup charged with identifying opportunities to support case management practice approaches and strategies in order to serve more children in their family homes. As a result of this workgroup, as well as input from various stakeholders, DSP identified a need to make improvements to the current safety planning and assessment process.

Additionally, language changes are a necessary first step to addressing racial disproportionality in Wisconsin's child welfare system. Racial disparities occur at nearly every major decision-making point along the child welfare continuum ([National Conference of State Legislatures](#)). Both nationally and in Wisconsin, there is an overrepresentation of certain racial and ethnic groups in the child welfare system relative to their representation in the general population ([National Center for Juvenile Justice Data](#)).

#### WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF THIS PROJECT?

The project scope is to enhance the current safety model in order to support CPS professionals in identifying and documenting danger threats and protective capacities and creating comprehensive safety plans with and informed by families. Improvements to the safety assessment and planning process will occur via a phased approach. Changes in June 2022 are focused on refining the safety assessment process and danger threat language to be culturally responsive, equitable and just.

#### WHAT WAS CHANGED?

The June 2022 eWiSACWIS release includes initial improvements to 12 danger threats. These language updates do not change the original intent of the threat. There should not be a substantive impact on current case practice or documentation.

#### HOW WILL CHANGES BE IMPLEMENTED?

Improvements to the safety assessment and planning process will occur via a phased approach. Changes in June 2022 are focused on refining the safety assessment process and danger threat language to be culturally responsive, equitable and just.

#### WHEN WILL CHANGES BE EFFECTIVE?

Documents, templates, detail flairs and other language in eWiSACWIS will be updated to reflect the language changes to the Present and Impending Danger Threats. Legal forms will be

updated to reflect the changes as well. This eWiSACWIS enhancement will occur on June 11, 2022, along with the updates to [Safety Intervention Standards](#).

## WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE JUNE 2022 LANGUAGE CHANGES?

DSP collaborated with a variety of stakeholders to gather input and feedback throughout the process. These stakeholders include: the Safety Revisions Workgroup, which included county child welfare representatives appointed by WCHSA (Adams, Douglas, Green Lake, Marathon, Waukesha); the Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA); the Intertribal Child Welfare (ICW) Committee; the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Equity and Inclusion Committee; the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS); and the Parent Leaders in Child Welfare group.

## WILL THERE BE TRAINING ABOUT THE LANGUAGE CHANGES?

DSP will be releasing a video overviewing the specific language changes ahead of the June 2022 eWiSACWIS release.

DSP is also working closely with WCWPDS to implement language changes within training curriculums. These initial updates to language are not intended to change how Wisconsin's Child Welfare Professionals are currently practicing and will likely occur in multiple phases.

## HOW SHOULD LEADERS PREPARE CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONALS FOR THESE CHANGES?

Local child welfare leaders can inform their child welfare professionals that they will be seeing changes to the language of danger threats, however, this change in language is not intended to change the meaning of the danger threat. At this point, there are not yet updates to practice. However, these changes can be used as a prompt to start conversations around how language used in the safety assessment and planning process further perpetuates biases and start thinking about how CPS professionals can consider the words they are using in their work.

## WHEN WILL THE NEXT CHANGES OCCUR?

Additional changes will be coming out in 2023 and 2024 that will also on focus on danger threat language and process enhancements. DCF is in the early stages of discussing further updates to the safety assessment and planning process. Updates will continue to be sent as changes are made.

## WHO CAN I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

For further questions about the Safety Planning Revisions workstream, please contact [DCFMBBSWBCWPP@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DCFMBBSWBCWPP@wisconsin.gov).