

CHAPTER FOUR: Elements of Risk Management

3.1 What Is Risk Management?

Disaster/ risk management

Range of activities designed to maintain control over disaster and emergency situations and to provide a framework for helping at-risk persons avoid or recover from the impact of the disaster.

A collective term for all activities that contribute to increasing capacities and will lead to reducing immediate and long-term vulnerabilities. Covers activities before, during and after a disaster.

Objectives

- To increase capacities and resilience
- To reduce vulnerabilities
- To avoid or reduce human, physical and economic losses suffered by individuals, families, communities and the country
- To speed up recovery after a disaster
- To reduce personal suffering
- To provide protection to internal refugees or displaced persons whose lives are threatened by armed conflicts

Basic Elements /Stages

1. Before a disaster — prevention, mitigation and preparedness

Prevention - Measures taken to eliminate the hazard or to avert a disaster from occurring by impeding the hazard or putting a barrier between the community and the hazard so that it does not have harmful effects. This includes dams and embankments that eliminate flood risks, land

use regulations that do not permit settlements in high risk zones, seismic engineering designs which ensure the survival and function of a critical building in the event of an earthquake.

Mitigation - Measures taken to protect the elements at risk prior to the impact of a disaster to minimize its damaging effects. This includes engineering techniques and hazard-resistant construction, improved environmental policies, and public awareness.

Preparedness - Measures taken in anticipation of a disaster to build readiness for response and ensure that appropriate and effective actions are taken during the emergency and recovery. This includes contingency planning, stockpiling of equipment and supplies, development of coordination arrangements, public information, early warning system, training, drills and simulation exercises to develop readiness.

Other examples of prevention and mitigation measures

□ **Structural measures:** dikes, dams, drains, sea walls, raising of roads and houses, earthquake resistant construction, permanent houses

□ **Non-structural measures:**

- safety measures
- community health and sanitation (improving nutrition, keeping the community clean, immunization, herbal gardens, training of community health workers)
- strengthening livelihood and economic activities (sustainable agriculture, income generating projects, handicrafts, marketing cooperatives)
- planting coastal shelter belts like coconut trees; reforestation;
- mangroves reforestation,
- legislation supporting community-based disaster
- management and environmental protection;
- savings
- insurance
- policy study and advocacy

Other examples of preparedness measures

- Teaching individuals, family and the entire community what to do before, during and after a disaster, for like cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, drought
- Disaster preparedness training

- Community early warning system
- Public awareness activities - community meetings, house-to-house information dissemination, posters and pamphlets, poster making contests for school children, disaster consciousness day or week or month

2. During a disaster - emergency responses

Examples of emergency responses

- Evacuation and evacuation center management
- Search and rescue
- First aid and medical assistance
- Damage needs capacity assessment
- Delivering of relief goods (food and drinking water; non-food such as clothing, blankets, kitchen utensils, and so on) Psychosocial counseling (comforting, prayers, critical stress debriefing)
- Repair of critical facilities and services
- Starting an emergency operations center (for major disasters)

3. After a disaster — recovery: rehabilitation and reconstruction

Examples of recovery activities

- Cleaning up the debris
- Rebuilding and strengthening of damaged structures
- Relocating to safer places
- Starting income-generating projects

Community-Based Risk Management Approach What is the CBRM Approach?

Activities, measures, projects and programmes to reduce disaster risks are primarily designed by people living in high-risk communities, and are based on their urgent needs and capacities.

Principles of CBDM

- **Participatory process and content:** Community involvement in the risk assessment, identifying solutions to community problems and risk reduction measures; community directly shares in the benefits of disaster management and development
- **Responsive:** Based on the community's felt and urgent needs
- **Integrated:** DM activities before, during and after disaster; linkage with other communities and the various levels of the disaster management system
- **Proactive:** Stress on prevention, mitigation and preparedness
- **Comprehensive:** Structural and non-structural risk reduction measures; mix of short medium-,and long-term measures to address vulnerabilities
- **Multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary:** Considers roles of all stakeholders; combines local knowledge and resources with science and technology and support from outsiders
- **Empowering:** People's options and capacities are increased; more access to basic social services; more control over the natural and physical environment; builds confidence to participate in other development endeavors
- **Developmental:** Community development gains are protected; measures to address vulnerabilities are opportunities for development
- **Culture and gender sensitive**
- **Child rights responsive**

Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM Process)

- **Initiating the process:** Selecting the community based on priorities or based on requests from communities . This is the stage of building rapport with the people in the community.
- **Community profiling:** Initial understanding of the community situation and an orientation on CBDRM.
- **Community risk assessment:** Hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities assessment and consideration of people's different perception of risks.
- **Initial community disaster management plan:** Appropriate and do-able measures before, during and after the disaster; focus on prevention, mitigation and preparedness measures.
- **Formation and strengthening of community disaster management organization:** Ensures implementation of Community Disaster Management Plan.
- **Community managed implementation:** Implementation of risk reduction structural and non-structural measures to address vulnerability and increase capacity based on the Plan.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** Continuous monitoring of the situation and activities and improvement of CBDRM and community.



Resilience

Resilience is the ability to cope with significant adversity or risk. This capability develops and changes over time, is enhanced by protective assets, and contributes to the maintenance or enhancement of life in general (WV Leap Lexicon).

Seven Essential Elements for Building Community Resilience for Children and Families to Effectively Cope and Recover from Disaster

1. Connectedness, commitment and shared values

People feel part of the community when there is a shared history, customary beliefs and values. This is influenced by how families perceive:

- their own well-being as tied to the well-being of the over-all community
- respect for and sensitivity towards their cultural or ethnic identity

If there is a high sense of connectedness, families can increase trust in community leaders, can increase compliance to messages and directives in the event of an emergency, and decrease conflict among groups and individuals in the community.

Children need to feel connected and have a sense of belonging positive relationships with families, friends, schools and organizations.

2. Participation

Families are likely to participate when:

- community leaders encourage active involvement
- families see their contributions and ideas are valued by the community leaders
- families see the benefit of being involved for themselves, their children and the entire community

Children's resilience can be enhanced by:

- their participation in family, school, cultural or faith-based organization and extra-curricular activities
- feelings that their contributions to the group are meaningful and appreciated.

3. Structure, roles and responsibilities

A community needs an organizational structure for productive daily functioning in disasters. Roles and responsibilities may change from before, during and after a disaster. Anticipate, identify and plan for new roles that may emerge after the impact of a disaster and incorporate these new roles into disaster plans and drills. This will help improve the resilience of a community and enhance their acceptance and compliance of directives and procedures.

- Identify responsibilities of community leaders, agencies and organizations prior to a disaster
- Provide information to the general public about structure and responsibilities of the different sectors (health, organizations, business, media, schools/day-care) of the community
- Provide information about what families can do to help themselves in the event of a disaster

Families have roles and responsibilities at home. Parents need to help children learn what is expected of them within the home, at school and in the community. Families are encouraged to make their own disaster preparedness plans.

Children should know what to do in case of disasters. When their roles and responsibilities are clearly delineated, they are better prepared to manage difficult

situations. This increase sense of preparedness may help reduce worry and anxiety in a disaster.

4. Support and Nurturance

Community resilience is enhanced when families perceive support from community leaders, such as opportunities:

- to express concerns and ideas related to the community
- to provide feedback to community leaders
- to see their concerns addressed by actions

Community leaders demonstrate support to families by providing ways on which community growth can occur. Examples: improving common areas of the community;

- Creating new areas for recreations activities that children and families can enjoy;
 - Attracting new businesses that increase potential for new jobs and income for families
- Children and families resilience is enhanced when they feel supported and nurtured by others in various settings- school, organization, places of employment.

5. Critical Reflections in Skill Building

This entails self-evaluation of how prior situations were handled to allow for identification of:

- Successes or strengths (what worked?)
- Areas needing improvement (what did not go as planned?)
- Challenges or barriers in implementing planned responses
- Unanticipated problems (what was unexpected in the course of the event?)

Solutions (what can be done to improve outcomes in any future event?) Critical reflection is one avenue for growth. By studying how problems were managed, new goals and improvement may occur. Then skills can be identified that need improvement.

- This is likewise true within families. Feedback from parents and other adults can guide children to make positive changes in their behaviors and relationships.

Children learn new skills from important adults in their lives increasing their capacity to handle problems.

6. Resources

Community and family resources include:

- economic and physical assets – money, food, transportation, tools, animals, clothing, house and other properties
- human and social assets – first responders (firefighters, police, rescuers, first-aiders), professionals (teachers, health, lawyers, etc), business-people, community leaders, traditional healers, service, people's and faith-based organizations and the general work-force of the community

These are parts of the infrastructure of every family and community. Resilience is increased when resources are available in an equitable manner, distributed with input from families, used effectively in adverse conditions, expanded through accessing additional resources from other agencies/organizations outside the community.

In an impoverished or marginalized community and families, some assets are severely lacking but that same community has other assets that can be tapped in emergency situations.

Both physical and human resources complement each other to achieve goals of a community and enhance resilience. They are identified prior to disaster to allow for more effective planning, as well as, identification of potential resource needs from outside the community.

Resilience in children is enhanced when they have social resources to draw from-found in different groups and environment such as families, friends, school, organization, extra curricular activities. How children utilize these social resources can affect their ability to handle adversity.

7. Communications

Communications must be clear, effective and accurate, and easily understood by adults and children of all ages. Leaders need to develop multiple messages with consistent themes in order to address the varied families and groups.

Community leaders should provide messages that the well-being of families and over-all good of community are high priorities to increase greater faith in community leaders, increase participation and compliance in the face of disasters.

Leaders provide parents and care-givers with —talking points‖ on how best to discuss emergencies/disasters with children of all ages

Children need information about disasters that is consistent in content, whether from school or families. Caregivers should know how school personnel will address disasters.

Families should have avenues to community leaders to convey needs, concerns and viewpoints.

All elements are inter-related. For example, families feel connected to community----families gain an understanding of community structures, roles and responsibilities they have before, during and after a disaster---- they participate—they are willing to follow urgent directives (evacuation)----families increase resilience, especially if community leaders support families and children.

After a disaster, leaders can critically reflect and assess how effective was the response and make improvements.

3.2 Basic steps in Risk Management

.3.2.1 Assessing The Risks

Work with children and young people and their family needs to be both supportive in character and investigative in approach. We have to acknowledge that intrusion in people's lives is sometimes necessary to support improvement and change in their life circumstances.

Assessment of risk in child protection needs to be comprehensive but can only be so if it methodically and analytically considers both **past** and **present** in order to identify **future** risks to the child or young person. When conducting an assessment of risk, the focus is on the safety and well-being of the child and it is important that the child's "whole needs" are fully assessed. This will assist agencies and families to better understand what contributes to a family crisis. It may also help identify the strengths and resources a family has that can be drawn upon when intervention may be necessary to protect a child.

Research provides evidence that parents who abuse/neglect their children are frequently struggling with a range of problems, such as poor mental health, substance/alcohol misuse and domestic violence. Such difficulties may increase the potential for abuse when they occur in combination or are compounded by other stressors such as parental capacity, material deprivation, housing problems and unsupportive/inadequate social and familial networks. A thorough risk assessment should take into account the **strength/resilience factors, support**

networks and **resources** that a family has to draw upon to better identify the nature of intervention necessary to protect the child.

A thorough approach to risk assessment also needs to take account of the following key questions:

- ☐ What is getting in the way of this child or young person's well-being?
- ☐ Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?
- ☐ What can I do now to help this child or young person?
- ☐ What can my agency do to help this child or young person?
- ☐ What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?

In addition, any assessment of risk must also consider the following.

Source of the Risk

- ☐ Who or what presents the danger/threat to the child's well-being?
- ☐ Where does the abuse occur – at home and/or in the wider community?
- ☐ What is the level of intent – is the abuse an act of commission or omission?
- ☐ Is the harm isolated to a single event or cumulative, reflecting more than one risk factor?
- ☐ What is the actual or likely impact of any harm?

Capacity of the Parent/Carer to Effect the Necessary Changes

- ☐ Does the parent have insight into self, child and the circumstances?
- ☐ Is there a shared understanding of professional concern/s by the family?
- ☐ What is the parents/carers understanding of the need for change – is change possible?
- ☐ Do they sincerely want to change?
- ☐ Are they able and willing to work with services to effect change?
- ☐ Do we have the resources to help address needs/risk(s) and to build child and family resiliencies?
- ☐ How long is it likely to take to effect change?
- ☐ Can they maintain the change required?

The assessment information can then be used to help determine, if a child is safe, what agency resources are needed to keep the child safe with their family and where the risks are such that a child may need to be removed from immediate family.

The framework supports practitioners to take a staged approach to assessment, analysis and risk management and sets out a range of tasks and activities that can be undertaken within each stage. As noted previously, risk is dynamic and as such practitioners will often move between these stages as information and circumstances change. New information may also come to light that requires practitioners to revisit the assessment and revise their interventions with a family and reshape the Child's Plan. The graphic below sets out this staged process and highlights the various tools that practitioners can use at each particular stage to support them in the process of assessing, analysing and managing needs/risks.



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significance. Information is gathered from a range of sources around the three domains of the My World Triangle, and the Risk Framework supplements and further supports this process by setting out three sets of Risk Indicators – Generic, Matrix Related and Resistance Related. This allows practitioners to comprehensively cover generic aspects of risk as well as to actively consider particular aspects of vulnerability, resilience, adversity, protection and resistance within the three dimensions of the My World Triangle.

STAGE 2: Risk Analysis

Analysis is a key activity in assessment. Making sense of children's lives and relationships is fundamental to understanding their well-being and safety. Risk analysis is the process of understanding what the information gathered is saying about the actual and potential needs of and risks to the child. Information gathering should be purposeful, systematic and organised in approach and practitioners must consistently ask themselves, **“what is this information telling me”?**

Key consideration needs to be given to the following:

- ☐ The abilities of the parent/carer to protect
- ☐ The known resilience and protective factors, particular to and around the child that may help to better protect
- ☐ The impact of the identified risk factors on the child's future safety
- ☐ The capacity of the parents to effect any necessary changes in the timeframe commensurate with the child's age and development

Analysis is a continuous process: it begins as information is gathered and organised and explores circumstances which are identified as having meaning and significance for the child's safety and well-being. Analysis draws upon practitioner reasoning to make sense of circumstances and in this respect it can be deliberate, considered, formal, explicit and logical. However, as Eileen Munro (2005) noted, it can also draw upon the intuitive reasoning of the practitioners involved. Both approaches are acknowledged as having validity as part of a continuum for analysing family circumstances and events, albeit that, where time and significance of decision making apply, the more deliberate approach is preferred. Analysis of the information gathered will then critically be used to inform professional interventions and any risk management strategy to be set out within the Child's Plan.

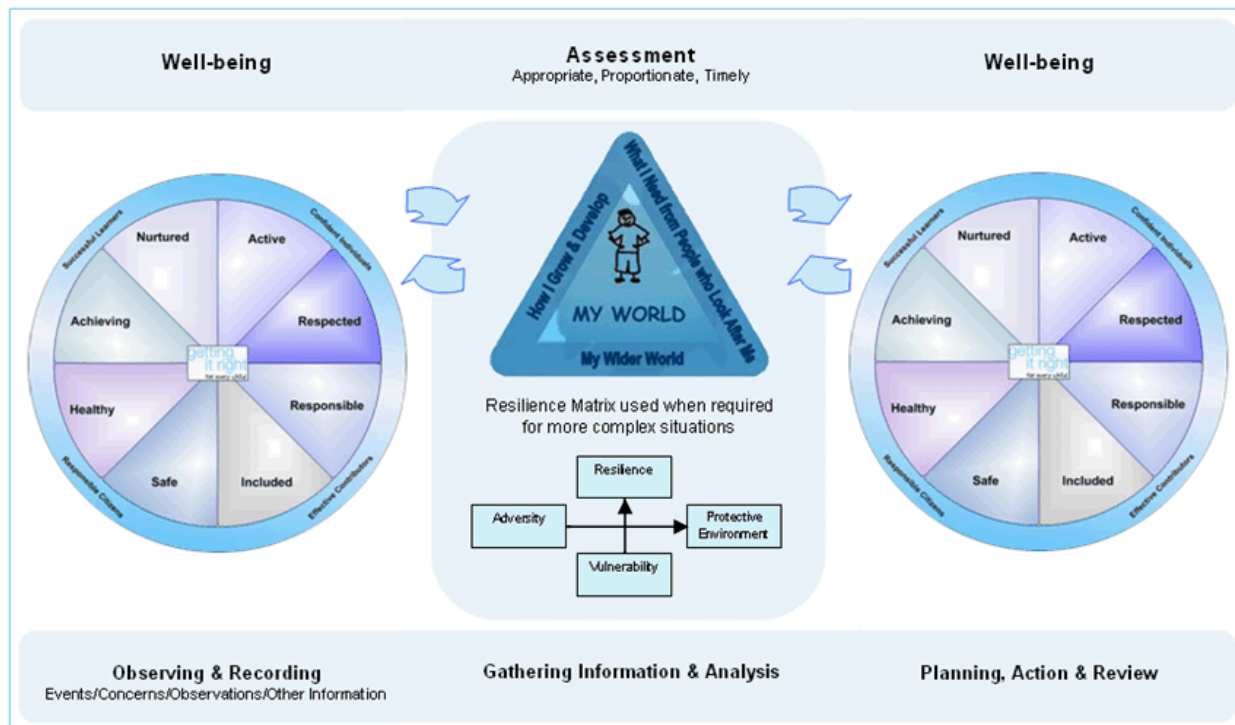
STAGE 3: Risk Management

Clear assessment through focused, systematic information gathering and analysis will better inform the risk management strategy framed within the single Child's Plan.

The development of the Child's Plan is key in defining the actions necessary to be undertaken by services and parent/carers, to satisfactorily address need and reduce risk. This should clearly state who is doing what, when, within what timescale, to achieve what outcome and for what purpose.

The steps in assessing risk and addressing those risks within the *child* has 6 steps:

- ❖ Using the *Wellbeing Indicators* to identify, record and share concerns, and take action as appropriate
- ❖ Using the *My World Triangle* and specialist assessments to gather information about children's needs
- ❖ Using the *Resilience Matrix* to help organize and analyze information
- ❖ Summarizing risks and needs against the *Wellbeing Indicators*
- ❖ Constructing a plan and taking appropriate action
- ❖ Reviewing the plan



Community Risk Assessment

A participatory process to identify and assess the hazards (which threaten the community) and the community's vulnerabilities and capacities. It involves an understanding of how people in the community perceive and measure disaster risk.

Purpose of Community Risk Assessment

- Unites the community in a common understanding of their disaster risk – hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities
- Basis for identifying appropriate and adequate risk reduction measures
- Contributes to raising community awareness about potential risk they had not previously known of
- Baseline data on the community situation – its vulnerabilities and capacities – when compared with data at a later period, can be used to evaluate the results of community disaster preparedness activities
- Data generated can be used in situational analysis and needs for project proposals for mitigation and community development projects

Components of Community Risk Assessment

People's perception of risk - Understanding the perception of risk of different groups and sectors in the community

Hazard Assessment involves the identification of the hazards or threats which may occur in the area or community. The nature, location, intensity and likelihood (probability or frequency) and behavior of the threat are studied and specified.

Vulnerability Assessment is a participatory process to identify what —elements are at risk per hazard type, and to analyze the causes and root causes why these can be damaged or why these elements are at risk

Elements at risk are the people, households, houses, property, crops, livelihood, community facilities, even the environment which may be damaged by the hazard. During vulnerability assessment, the elements at risk are detailed and why these can suffer damage and loss are studied. Basically, vulnerability assessment answers the questions:

- Who are at risk or can incur damage and loss?
- What are other elements at risk?
- What damage or loss can these people or elements at risk suffer/incur? (physical damage, deaths, injuries, disruption to economy, social disruption, environmental impact, need for emergency responses)
- Why will these people and elements suffer or incur damage and loss?

Vulnerability Assessment

Vulnerability is a set of prevailing or consequent conditions which adversely affect the ability to prevent, mitigate, prepare for or respond to hazard events.

- Physical, social, economic, cultural and environmental factors and conditions which increase the community's susceptibility to disaster.
- Adversely affects the ability of individuals, households and the community to prepare for and respond to hazards.
- Weaknesses, constraints or problems present in the community which hinder it from preparing for and protecting itself from incurring damage and loss.

- Examples of vulnerability:

1. Poor locations
2. Houses made of light materials
3. Conflict in the community
4. Lack of knowledge and skills on preparedness and protective measures
5. Attitude of helplessness and dependence

Capacity Assessment is a participatory study to understand how people cope with and survive in times of crisis and to identify resources which can be used to prepare for, prevent and/or reduce damaging effects of hazards. Basically capacity assessment answers the questions:

- What are existing coping strategies and mechanisms during times of crisis? How have individuals, households and the community survived and responded to disasters in the past?
- What are resources, strengths, local knowledge and practices can be used for disaster preparedness, mitigation and prevention or to quickly recover from a disaster ?

Capacities are the resources, means and strengths possessed by persons, communities, societies or countries which enable them to prevent, mitigate, prepare for, withstand, or quickly recover from a disaster. Skills, knowledge, practice, organizations, institutions, attitudes and values are important capacities when material resources are limited.

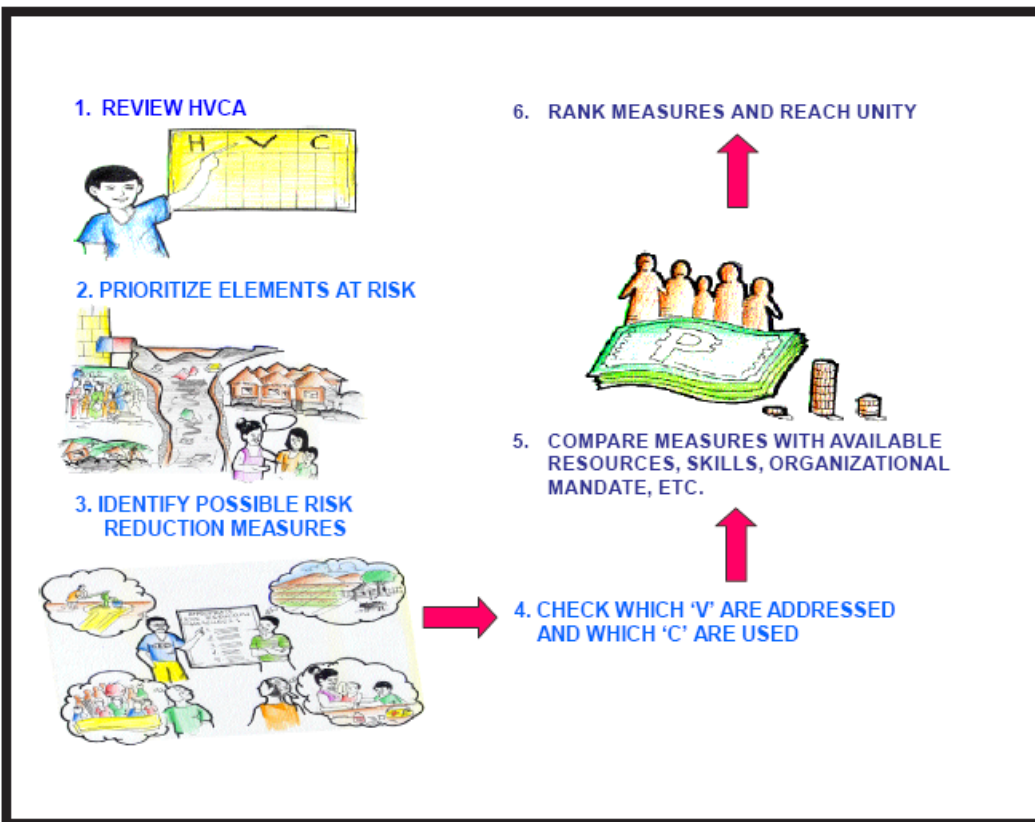
- Knowledge, skills, resources and abilities present in individuals, households and communities that enable them to prevent, prepare for, withstand, survive and recover from a disaster.
- Some examples of capacity:

1. Permanent housing
2. Ownership of land
3. Adequate food and income sources
4. Family and community support in times of crises
5. Local knowledge
6. Responsive local government
7. Strong community organizations

3.2.3 Ranking The Risks

Basic steps:

- a. Identify the hazard
- b. Determine the elements at risk and possible damages
- c. Determine conditions and factors of vulnerability. Why can the elements at risk be damaged?
- d. Identify existing coping strategies and capacities/resources
- e. Identify measures to reduce the vulnerability of the elements at risk
- f. Prioritize risk reduction measures to undertake: immediate, short-term, medium-term, long-term



3.2.4. Responding To Risks

- Measures, interventions, solutions, strategies, activities to reduce people's vulnerability and strengthen capacities.

- Can be categorized as measures to limit the impact of hazards, to reduce vulnerability and to build capacity (including reinforcing people's existing coping strategies).
- Appropriate and doable disaster management activities to undertake before, during and after the disaster.

Structural and non-structural prevention and mitigation measures: dams, dikes, sea walls, coastal wind breaks or **shelter belts** (planting of coconut trees along the beach), mangroves reforestation, permanent houses, safe building design, safety measures at home and in the community, strengthening livelihood and community health, food security, nutrition improvement, literacy programme, relocation to safer location, advocacy for environmental protection and development issues.

Preparedness: public awareness, early warning, evacuation drill, strengthening coordination and institutional arrangements, stockpile of supplies and logistics. Preparedness for responses to undertake during the disaster and recovery period: search and rescue, first aid, evacuation centre management, damage needs capacity assessment, immediate repair of community facilities and services, relief delivery, clearing the debris, psychosocial counseling and stress debriefing, medical services, and recovery after the disaster, such as rehabilitation and reconstruction activities.

3.2.5 Insuring Against The Risks

Life insurance protects against death or disability for the child (person) insured, while general insurance provides cover for property damage, loss or theft, public liability, workers' compensation and so on.

3.2.6 Implementing Your Risk Management Plan

Risk assessment must be **balanced** and separate facts (observed evidence of risk) from opinions to arrive at an informed professional judgement. Practitioners require to approach the risk management task with a degree of both optimism and scepticism.

Assessment of risk is not a stand-alone exercise it has to have the purpose of leading to the management and eventual reduction of risk. Indeed it is not purposeful unless it results in identified actions to keep the child safe.

By identifying **risks, vulnerabilities** and **protective factors** practitioners ought to arrive at a comprehensive and informed assessment that provides agencies with:

- ☐ An evidence base on which to proceed and make defensible decisions and actions
- ☐ A platform for future planning and interventions
- ☐ A clear idea of what needs to be done to protect the child/young person
- ☐ A framework for managing and reducing risk
- ☐ A framework against which progress (or deterioration) can be measured

Practitioners within multi-agency forums such as looked-after children reviews, case conferences or core groups need to be specific about the various risks that a child/young person is facing and identify both the potential for those risks occurring and the impact they will have on the child/young person if not managed or addressed. Multi-agency decision making wherever possible should be arrived at in conjunction with parents/carers, be informed by the views of the child/young person and an understanding of the circumstances of the child.

Risk management also has to be adaptive and flexible and be modified in light of changing events and circumstances.

The Child's Plan

The Child's Plan/Multi-Agency Child Protection Plan is fundamentally informed by the assessment and should identify how the following will be addressed:

- ☐ The identified needs of the child or young person – including their need to be protected from future harm
- ☐ Factors that impact on parents/carers capacity to respond to the needs of the child or young person, drawing on their strengths and areas of competence whilst recognising difficulties
- ☐ Wider family and environmental factors which may have an impact on the child or young person and family, drawing on strengths in the wider family and community as well as identifying difficulties

Risk management plans should be **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-limited) and specific about the actions to be taken and:

- Identify who is at risk: from whom and what and, if possible, in which circumstances
- Set out the range of needs and risks to be addressed and outcomes to achieve
- Identify who is responsible for each action
- Identify any services or resources that will be required to ensure that the planned outcomes can be achieved within the agreed timescales
- Agree how agencies can measure reduction in risk
- State the timescales within which changes/improvements are to be made
- Note what the contingency plans are

The plan should clearly set out the key outcomes that are required for the child and all actions must be separately identified and linked to individual needs/risks. The plan should be set out in a systematic way that is achievable, accountable and accessible for all parties involved, including the child/family. Risk management planning must also be subject to regular review, which, where statutory involvement is present, will reflect statutory review requirements and timeframes where these exist.

Any intervention to better protect a child/young person must be **proportionate** to the presenting **evidence/information available** and formally set out within the Child's Plan or the multi-agency child protection plan.

3.2.7 Ongoing Risk Management

Risk Management is the third stage of the risk consideration process. It is where the work undertaken in Stages 1 and 2 is brought together to shape and plan the agencies interventions aimed at keeping the child safe. Once risks have been identified and assessed it is critical that clear and specific actions are set out to successfully address and reduce that risk. These actions have to be formally written and recorded within the Child's Plan.

This risk management planning also has to clearly outline the various steps to be taken that actively consider and address risk, both in the immediate and in the longerterm. A robust risk management plan helps to ensure shared accountability, clarity of professional roles and responsibilities and supports the interventions of the various staff involved.

While social work services will have lead responsibility for convening and chairing child protection meetings; risk management approaches overall need to reflect the primary GIRFEC principles of agencies working closely together to both promote children's welfare and ensure

their safety. To do this effectively key professionals from other agencies have to prioritise attendance at, and commitment to, these meetings. **Care planning and risk management, thus, has to be equally owned across all the services.**

Practitioners from across a number of agencies, therefore, contribute to multi-agency care planning and risk management for the child. The team require to consider the information collected; organise and weight it in terms of its significance and examine the relationships between the different domains of the My World Triangle. This builds further upon the early analysis undertaken from the initial assessment to move towards the development of a clear risk management/care plan.

THE CYCLE OF CHANGE

the **Cycle of Change** is a helpful tool in understanding and plotting a parent/carers potential for engagement with the risk identification, assessment and management processes. It also actively encourages consideration of particular aspects of resistance in parents/carers and assists understandings of issues such as those reflected where there is

- Denial that a problem exists
 - Resistance to change
 - A lack of commitment to making the agreed changes happen
 - The parent/carers slip-back into their old behaviours when changes have previously been implemented
- Used primarily in addictions services, the Cycle of Change can be applied to assist understanding of any change process.

The Cycle proposes **two key principles**:

- **There are several stages a person must go through before they successfully action and maintain lasting change** (a stage cannot be missed)
 - **Change is cyclical**, people will have a range of feelings at different times about their risk behaviour/s and it can involve several attempts before they achieve any lasting change
- The model is drawn up in various ways but is normally seen as having six stages set out as follows.
- Pre-contemplation
 - Contemplation
 - Preparation (sometimes called Decision or Determination)
 - Action

- Maintenance (with an exit to termination or lasting change), and
- (Re)Lapse

The techniques to help move people from one stage to another are different depending on the current stage they are in. For example, offering solutions or seeking engagement in change processes when a person is in Pre-contemplation will not help whereas if they are in Determination this could be very productive. It is, therefore, very important to identify what stage a person is in when they are confronted with the need to change aspects of their behaviour, circumstances, lifestyles etc.

In **Pre-Contemplation**, the parent/carer has not thought about the need to change or does not acknowledge a problem exists. They are ‘uninformed’ in the sense that no personally convincing reason for change has been presented as yet.

In **Contemplation**, the parent/carer is ambivalent – they are in two minds about what they want to do. Sometimes they feel the need to change but not always.

In **Action**, the parent/carer is preparing and planning for change. When they are ready the decision to change is made and it becomes all consuming.

In **Maintenance**, the change has been integrated into the parents’/carers’ life. Some support may still be needed through this stage. In Maintenance, lasting change is learned, practised and becomes possible. When we are able to maintain what we have achieved we exit the cycle entirely.

Lapse is a temporary return to ‘old’ unhelpful thoughts, feelings or behaviour.

Relapse is a full return to the old behaviour.

Lapse and Relapse are intrinsic to the Cycle Of Change and do not necessarily infer failure. It does not mean that lapse or relapse is desirable or even invariably expected. It simply means that change is difficult, not often a linear process and it is unreasonable to expect anyone to be able to modify behaviour perfectly without any slips. When Relapse occurs, several trips through the stages may be necessary to make lasting changes. Each time the person is encouraged to review, reflect and learn from their slips.

In child welfare there may be greater time and opportunity for working with parents/carers through the cycle of change. In a child protection scenario this will obviously be more

boundaried by the character and severity of the risk (actual and potential) and time limited by the mandate to keep the child safe and protected.

Whilst the model is used widely to help with a range of behaviours, it is acknowledged questions about it remain. If simply viewed as an illustration of processes involved in change rather than as a defined pattern that fits everyone, it can though, help staff make better sense of the potentials for change, how to best shape practice interventions as well as the parent/carer's experiences of negotiating change.

3.2.8 Keeping Children Safe – The Role of Managers

- 1: Keeping Children Safe in Management
- 2: The role of managers in responding to child protection concerns
3. Management roles and responsibilities