

Appendix 1: Return Home Conversations

Guidance after a young person returns from a period of missing

1. Aims

- To build a relationship with the young person
- To provide an opportunity for them to talk
- For us to show care and concern for the young person's well being
- To prevent further harm
- Hold in mind that this will not be a one off discussion and the child can talk to you about their experience anytime.
- It is also an opportunity to seek other information from important carers, family members and the network around the child.

2. Planning

- Take time to prepare and plan for your meeting
- If not you, who is the best person to talk to the young person?
- Think about where to meet the young person? At home? At school? In a café? With whom? When's a good time?
- Think about what questions to ask? What would you want to be asked if you'd gone missing? Considering your language; remaining non-judgemental, neutral and curious.
- Think about a possible activity to aid the conversations e.g. play a computer game; go for a hot drink or a walk? What does the young person like doing and could this be combined with the conversation?

3. Showing Care and Concern

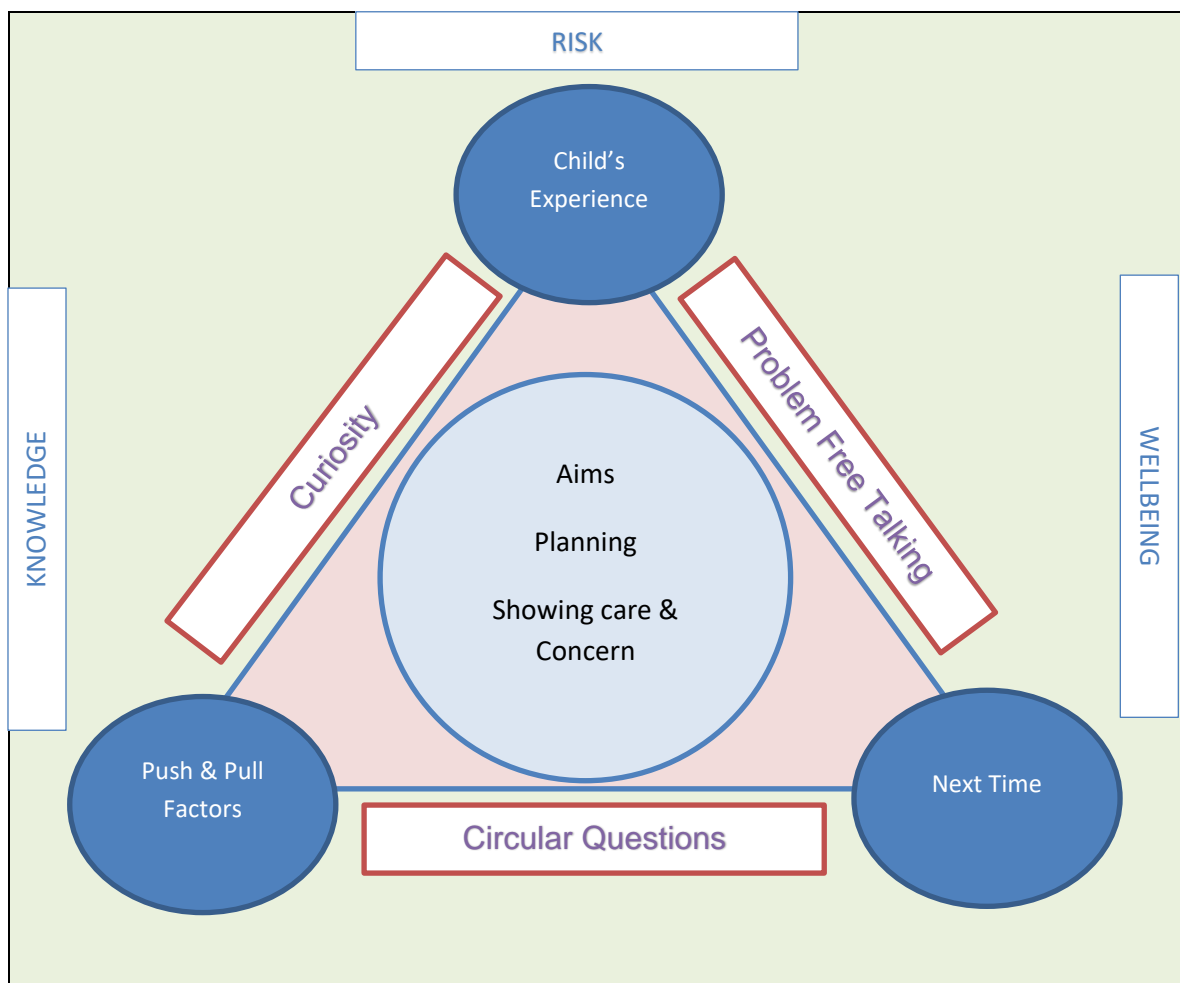
- Take time to show you are glad to see the young person and that they have returned.
- Start if possible with problem free talking - getting to know the young person; finding out how they are and what has it been like since they have been back? What have they enjoyed/not enjoyed? Who missed them most or least and who did they miss most or least?
- Share rationale for wanting to talk to the young person. E.g. Concerns about them and their safety, holding them in mind while they were missing. Checking out if they are ok and what we can do to help reduce further incidences and reduce the risk. Be honest with where information will be shared and with whom.
- Ask permission from the young person to talk about their experiences and if they want to, acknowledge lots of people might be putting pressure on them to talk about this. Explore what they are willing to share (talking about talking) – “what would help us talk or be unhelpful?”
- Try to discover what is their understanding and experience of going missing and what are their pull and push factors to going missing. (possible worksheet)

4. Safety Planning for next time (Possible worksheet)

- It's possible that the young person is unwilling to talk about what happened to them.

- Use your conversations to progress to safety planning and what happens next time.
- Consider asking questions like, what would you say to a friend who was going missing? How could they keep safe? What would you want your best friend to know?
- Provide contact numbers of organisations (local and national) that can help including emergency services.
- Explore different options and places of safety. What would they do differently next time if anything?

The diagram below has been designed as a prompt and to show the interplay between what is helpful to keep in mind and be thinking about during the return home conversations.



Appendix 2: Return Home Conversations – Question Ideas

These are some questions we've thought about that we might use when we speak to young people who have been missing. They are just some ideas and we'd usually just pick a few, always concentrating on the responses we get and building on what we know about the young person and our connection with them.

Problem Free Talking – think about connecting with the young person and use what you already know about the young person to start off the conversation.

- How have things been since you got back? What have you noticed?
- Did you have any ideas about us meeting today? What did you imagine we might talk about?
- If I were to be helpful to you right now, what would I be doing?
- Have you been seeing anyone else since you got back? How's that been?
- How would I know that our conversation was going well or not going well? What would I notice?
- What questions should I be asking you if we were going to talk about what happened? Do you want me to talk about it with you or tell you what I know first?
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Opening spaces – think about asking questions that help to open up conversation and create connections.

- When you went missing, we were really worried about your safety – does that make sense to you?
- What do you think we were most worried about?
- Who missed you the most do you think? Did this surprise you?
- What was it like for you while you were away? What ideas do you have about what was going on for your carers/family/parents?
- What do you think I most need to know about? Is there a way in which its okay for you to tell me stuff?
- Who was on your mind when you were away? Did you think going away was helpful?
- Were you thinking about leaving again what might you say to yourself?
- What could your carer/parents do differently when you want to leave?

- Do you know of other people who go missing? Do you think they see things like you do?
- What are the bad points about running away? Who can you talk to about that?

Future Orientated Questions – think about asking questions that are linked to the future moving away from the present difficulties future together.

- Who could you speak to in future before leaving?
- If you do go, what are you going to do to keep yourself safe?
- What ideas do you have about who can help you stay? What do they need to be doing?
- Where are the safe places that you go and hang out? Where are the unsafe places?
- If you had a friend who was in a similar situation to you or going missing what would you want them to know about and do? What would you share with them?

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