

# Guidance for Practitioners

## 3 Islands

### Purpose

- To enable the child or young person to have a voice which is listened to and acted upon.
- To enable the child or young person to give their view on the support they receive.
- To enable the child or young person to identify what help they would like and who from.
- To enable a child or young person to think about and discuss risks, strengths, hopes and dreams. It is usually most effective with older children [or with families] where you are finding it difficult to devise an effective intervention plan. You can use it with individuals or with a group.
- To enable the child or young person to give their views on actions for change.
- To enable the child or young person to review what has worked or not worked for them.
- To improve outcomes and evidence what difference listening to the child or young person has made.

### Guidance

- It's important to plan a safe space for children and young people to participate in this work.

### What resources do I need?

- Either the 3 islands worksheet or 3 large pieces of paper (A3 or bigger), one for each island, and pens, crayons or pencils or toys and models.
- Conversation summary sheet.

### What do I do?

- The child or young person should draw three islands on the pieces of paper. Draw a bridge between the first two islands and a gate in the middle of it (the practitioner can support the child or young person to do this), or they can choose to use the 3 islands worksheet.
- Label the drawings of the 3 islands:
  - The Island of Always
  - The Island of Sometimes
  - The Island of Far Away.
- Explain to the child or young person that this is a game and that they live on the first island. Ask them to draw themselves or use one of the toys to represent them. They can then draw anything else they want to be on this island with them (which could include people, animals, activities, objects).



- On the second island, ask the child or young person to draw or put anything that they want to see but not all the time. Explain they have the only key to the gate on the bridge, so anything on the second island can only cross when the child or young person lets them.
- On the third island, ask the child or young person to draw or put anything that they want to be far away from them or never see again.
- As the child or young person is drawing or putting toys on the islands, make sure you ask them who or what they are and why they have put something on a particular island.
- The conversation summary sheet should be used to record the child or young person's words including views and wishes and feelings.
- You are free of course to use this tool flexibly to meet the needs of the individual child or young person.
- The child or young person (with the support of the practitioner) should complete the action plan to identify the support they feel they may need. Practitioners should ensure their words are recorded and work progresses at a pace suitable to each individual child or young person and set a date to review progress.
- The child or young person with the support of the practitioner should complete the review form recording the child or young person's words.
- The action plan and review should be used in line with other plan processes as appropriate, for example Team Around the Family (TAF), Children in Need (CIN) Reviews and Child Protection Reviews. This tool should contribute to the overall plan for the child or young person.

### **What am I looking for?**

- Anything in the drawing or model that seems odd or worrying, as well as anything that makes the child happy.

### **Warnings**

- You should be careful about interpreting what is drawn or shown too literally. For example, if they draw a picture of a man and a woman fighting, this would not necessarily mean they have experienced domestic abuse. Drawings / modelling are a way for the child to express an emotional state or process something they have seen or experienced.
- You should avoid questioning where the child places things. For example, you can ask why they have put their mother on the second island but you should not say: 'Oh, but I would have thought your mummy should be on island one?' The child may end up trying to please you (or displease you).
- There may also be immediate reasons why a child has put something on either the second or third islands – for example, they may put their pet cat on island two because the cat scratched them earlier in the day.

## **Outcomes**

- The 3 islands tool helps gain an insight into a child or young person's life without having to rely on question and answer interviews, which can be intimidating for some children and young people.
- Information gathered will expand the focus from only danger and harm factors:
  - to identify what keeps children safe during the times they are not being harmed
  - how they themselves manage adversity
  - the positive and negative aspects in their families
  - how workers/professionals help or hinder them.
- The child or young person should be able to identify what has helped or not helped.
- The child or young person and practitioner should be able to identify where further support is required and this should inform assessments and/or any future referrals.
- The practitioner should have a better knowledge and understanding of the child or young person.

## **References:**

Developed by Kate Iwi, young people's services officer at charity RESPECT, UK.





Derby City Council

Voice of the Child ...  
so what difference will it make?

# 3 islands

Name ..... Age.....

Today's Date .....



**island of always**  
(anything you want)

**island of sometimes**  
(anything you sometimes want...  
but not all the time)

**island of far away**  
(anything you want to be far away  
from you and never see again)

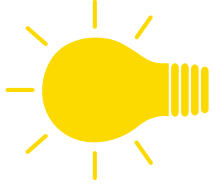
# Conversation Summary

**island of always**  
(anything you want)

**island of sometimes**  
(anything you sometimes want... but not all the time)

**island of far away**  
(anything you want to be far away from you and never see again)

# Action Plan



Name .....

Date .....

What is going to help you?	How is it going to help you?	Who is going to help you?	When would you like it to start?
What else might help?			



# Review



Name .....

Date .....

How much has it helped you?

A lot

A little

Not at all

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