

Analytical Risk Management in Adult Protection – East Lothian and Midlothian

This is a risk assessment framework to support risk analysis and SMART action planning in Adult Support and Protection work.

Definition of risk

Risk can be defined as ‘the possibility of beneficial and harmful outcomes, and the likelihood of their occurrence in a stated timescale’.

Principles

Risk identification, risk assessment and risk management are core elements of any risk assessment framework. Key principles of these include:

- Involvement of the adult and any carer/relative
- Multi-agency working to identify, assess and manage the risk
- Evidence based practice – use knowledge from research, theory and experience to understand the adult’s experience.

Risk is a dynamic process. Static risk factors are those things that do not change (e.g. historical factors such as childhood history of abuse). Dynamic risk factors are things that have the potential to change (e.g. someone’s state of mental health). Risk is therefore fluid, shaped by a range of events and movement in the context and setting where it occurs. In approaching the risk assessment there is a need to take into account not just the current picture and past history, but future potential and capacity to change.

Risk assessment process

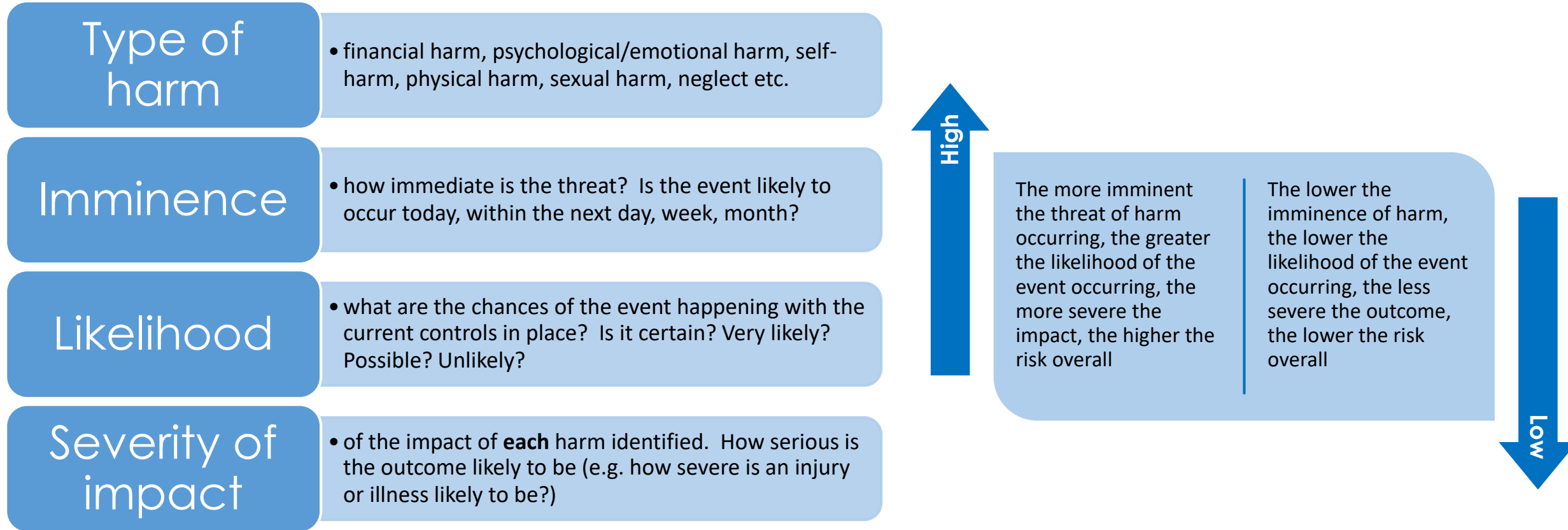
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An analytical approach to risk assessment – the TILS framework

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A helpful approach to assessing risk is to consider the interaction of the following component parts:



Risk responses

Risk management involves taking active steps to limit the impact of a risk occurring. This can sometimes be known as the 'four Ts'. For any risk management plan, it is important to know what the response is. Decide your response, and whether you are seeking to:

- **Treat the risk** - putting in measures to reduce the likelihood of the risk happening, or reduce the severity of the impact (e.g. corporate appointeeship to manage the risk of financial harm).
- **Terminate the risk** – to remove the risk altogether (e.g. may involve the adult moving to live somewhere else if the risk of the person living alone cannot be safely managed).
- **Transfer the risk** – transfer the consequences of a risk event to another party (e.g. power of attorney).
- **Tolerate the risk** – involves accepting the risk but putting in place contingency plans for managing the risk if it occurs. This may be necessary where all options have been explored, everything has been put in place, but the risk cannot be reduced (e.g. not putting in an overly restrictive action that potentially could have unintended harmful consequences).

All options require good recording and support defensible decision making.

Develop your SMART plan for addressing the risks that have been identified and assessed. Consider using a tool such as SWOT analysis (identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) when reviewing the effectiveness of the SMART plan.

Record your assessment and develop your SMART plan

A common method of assessing risk is to consider the interaction of the following component parts:

Specific

- should address each type of harm identified, and should be clear and unambiguous

Measureable

- how will you know when the risk has been managed

Achievable

- must be attainable and sufficient resources must be available

Realistic

- how is it realistic and relevant for the adult

Timebound

- must reflect the imminence of risk and be reviewed regularly, within the context of risk being a dynamic process