



EVERY PROFESSION HAS ITS OWN LANGUAGE

HANDOUT 3B

One way to think about the Pathways to Healing framework is to treat it as a new language that can illuminate new ways of seeing, thinking, and doing. Marielle Zagada writes that language “widens our perspective, deepens our knowledge, and changes the way we perceive the world.”¹ Every profession has its own language. Specific words and ideas serve as shortcuts in creating narratives and communicating what is needed. These profession-specific shortcuts – or professional norms – represent ways of seeing, thinking, and doing that define the values, purpose, and practices of different workplaces.

LANGUAGE OF PROTECTION



LANGUAGE OF EMPOWERMENT



LANGUAGE OF WELL-BEING



- Child welfare speaks the **language of protection** and tends to be incident-focused and organized around crisis management, care and protection, elimination of violence and threats, stability, and permanency.
- The underlying purpose is to decipher what happened, when, to whom, where, how, how many times, and who was present. The answers are used to determine whether child maltreatment occurred and who is responsible.

- Domestic violence advocates and child and family therapists speak the **language of empowerment**. It tends to be advocacy-focused and justice-oriented.
- This work deals consistently with managing the demands of “here and now.” It is geared towards helping survivors get away from the person who has abused them and obtain independence.

Both of these professions prioritize safety and worry about risks. However, they may think differently about what those two conditions mean and how to manage around them. Criteria for safety are not always survivor-generated and centered, and risks are generally focused on the potential for violence and not necessarily on the impact of trauma.

Sometimes, professionals in these fields are bi-lingual, so to speak, and draw on their understanding of the nuances of both professional landscapes to communicate seamlessly between them. As Zagada wrote – they have learned to see the world with a wider perspective.

Bridges to Better introduces a new language and, therefore, another vision of life. With a new vision comes new possibilities.

- The **Pathways to Healing** framework is about the language of well-being. It is impact-focused, healing-oriented, and growth-driven.
- In this framework, risk analysis and decision-making center on impact and well-being, and not solely on threat reduction or elimination of danger. Ongoing consideration is given to questions such as what has happened to you and how it impacts you, your health, your decision-making, your well-being, your relationships with others at home, in the community, at work, etc.
- The language of well-being is connected to a new vision to address DV and child maltreatment that includes intentional efforts to promote hope, healing, repair, and growth. It is future-oriented. It is full spectrum decision-making.

1 Retrieved from “[More Than Words: How Language Affects The Way We Think](#),” a blog post by Marielle Zagada.