

# **Risk Assessment**

**A Simple Approach  
for Identifying Risk**

**August 10, 2015**

# **Purpose of this Training**

- 1. Provide an easy-to-use assessment tool for risk identification and reduction strategies.**
- 2. To encourage greater consistency in how risk assessments are conducted across the public ID/DD system**

# **What is a Risk?**

**A risk is the possibility that. . .**

- an event will occur**
- with harmful outcomes**
- for a particular person or others with whom they come into contact.**

# **Why Do Risks Exist?**

**Risks may exist due to:**

- a physical impairment or disability (falls)**
- use of medication (adverse reaction)**
- inadequate staff training (abuse or neglect)**
- lack of warning systems (house fire)**

# Should We Eliminate All Risks?

## YES AND NO

**YES**, there are risks, such as environmental and life safety risks we must eliminate,

And

**NO**, there are some risks that involve individual choice and our role is to help the individual to minimize these risk.

# **Why Perform a Risk Assessment?**

**Providers have a duty to protect individuals under their care from organizational risks**

**Providers must identify organizational risks and take action to avoid harm**

# **What are Organizational Risks?**

**Organizational Risks have the potential to cause harm to and all individuals receiving services in a particular setting.**

**Examples of organizational risk areas include . . .**

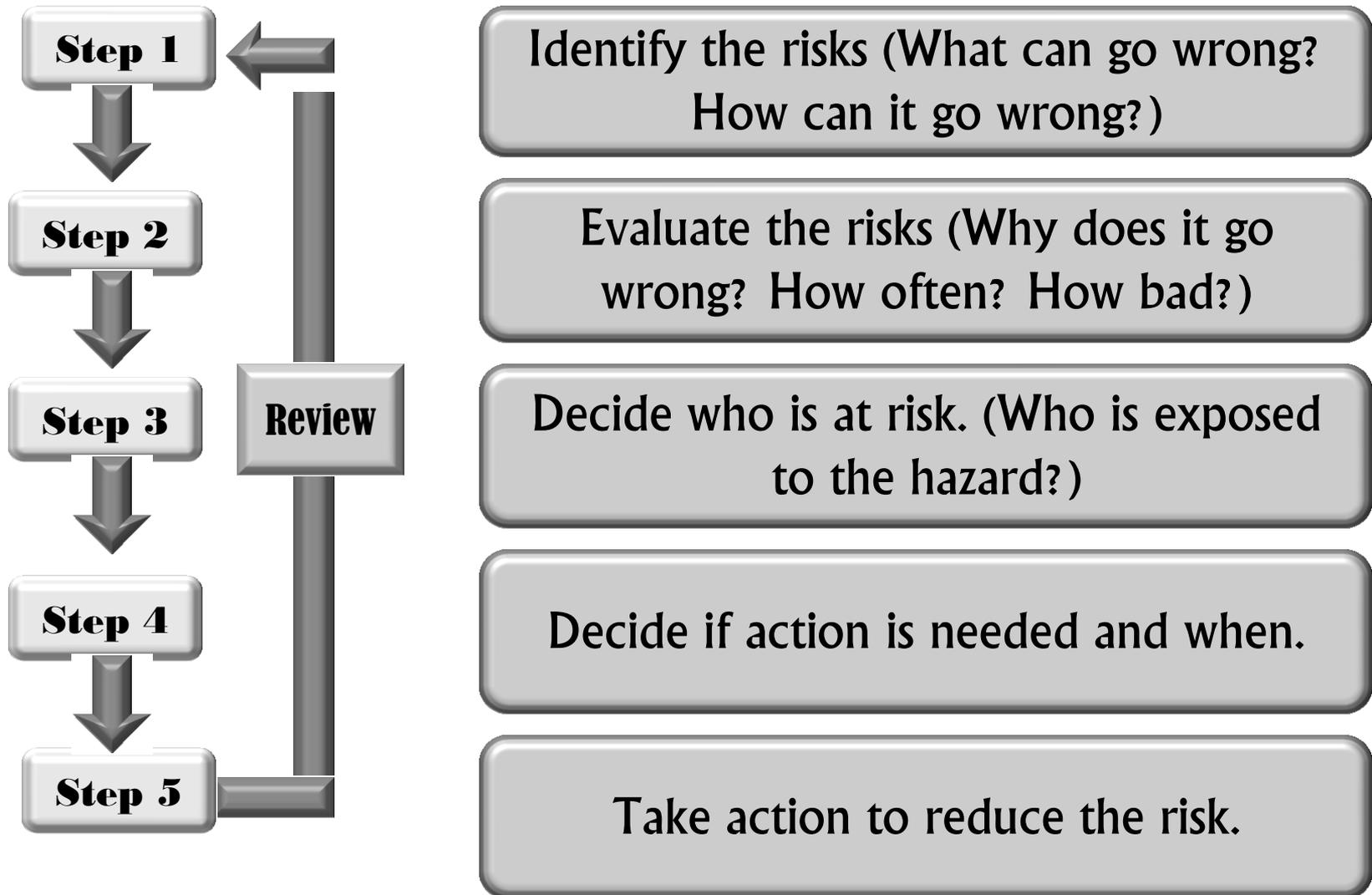
- Lack of or inadequate staff training**
- Life safety code violations**
- Unavailability of services and supports**
- Lack of preparation for disasters and unexpected events**

# What is Risk Assessment?

**Risk Assessments attempts to answer 6 questions:**



# 5 Steps to Risk Assessment



# **Step 1: Identify the Risk**

**To prevent harm it is important to understand not only what is likely to go wrong but also  
How it may go wrong.**

# **Identify the Risk (continued)**

**Take into account things that have gone wrong in the past and near-miss incidents.**

- 1. Engage staff and consumers in identifying the areas of greatest risk**
- 2. Walk around the home and talk to consumers and staff.**
- 3. Select the areas of greatest risk**
- 4. Describe specific activities to be assessed.**

## **Step 2: Evaluate the Risk**

**For each identified activity,**

- Identify the reasons something may go wrong (human error, lack of maintenance);**
- Identify how often it may go wrong; and**
- Determine how bad the outcome would be if it went wrong.**

# **Step 2**

## **Identify Who Might Be Harmed**

**When assessing the risk of an activity, ask:**

- What can go wrong?**
- Who is exposed to the hazard?**
- How many people may be affected and over what time period?**
- Who is most vulnerable?**
- Who is most likely to suffer harm?**
- How complex is the activity?**

## **Step 3: Evaluate the Risk**

**Once you've identified who is at risk, you need to evaluate the seriousness of the risk by considering:**

- How often this activity is performed.**
- The controls that are currently in place and their effectiveness.**
- Additional controls that are needed to reduce the likelihood of harm.**

# Use a Simple Risk Matrix

<b>Risk Frequency and Consequences</b>					
	Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
Catastrophic					
Major					
Moderate					
Minor					
Negligible					

Frequency	Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Certain
How Often might an adverse event happen	Can't believe that this will ever happen or recur	Do not expect it to happen or recur but it is possible	Might happen or recur occasionally	Will probably happen or recur but it is not a persistent issue	Will undoubtedly happen or recur possibly frequently

# Scoring With a Risk Matrix

- **Low Risk (green)** – Quick, easy actions implemented immediately
- **Moderate Risk (yellow)** – Actions implemented as soon as possible but no later than next 60 – 90 days.
- **High Risk (orange)** – Actions implemented as soon as possible but no later than 30 days.
- **Extreme Risk (red)** -- Requires urgent action. Immediate corrective action needed.

# Using Risk Scores

- Risk scores are not precise mathematical measures of risk.
- Risk scores are intended for guidance to help decision-makers better understand risks in various areas of the organization
- Risk scores are meant to be used to prioritize actions to reduce risk.

# **Step 4: Take Action**

- Focus on the strengths of the individuals being served to create a positive base from which to develop risk reduction plans.**
- Take into account the physical and mental disabilities of individuals who may be at risk**
- Decide on reasonable steps to reduce the risk of harm**

# **Reassess Risk**

**Reassess the risks assuming the improvement strategies have been implemented.**

- Will the actions taken to reduce risk address all significant risks?**
- Will the actions reduce the risk to an acceptable level?**
- Are additional actions required and what are they?**

# **Document Strategies and Results**

**Good documentation is important. You need to show that:**

- A thorough assessment was conducted to identify all the hazards and treat all significant risks.**
- Risk reduction strategies were reasonable.**
- Solutions are realistic, sustainable and effective.**

# **Step 5**

## **Review & Update your Assessment**

**Routinely review and update your risk assessment.**

**Review your risk assessment**

- 1. When you are planning a change (moving to a new location)**
- 2. Routinely at least on an annual basis**
- 3. When there has been a significant change (for example, a regulatory change)**

## **Some Parting Thoughts**

**“Risk comes from not knowing what you’re doing.” Warren Buffett**

**“Risk Management is a culture, not a cult. It only works if everyone lives it, not if it’s practiced by a few high priests.” Tom Wilson**