

Evidence-based
approaches for assessing

Children & Families

Child and Family Training run courses on a series of standardised assessment tools and approaches to analysis and planning for use by professionals working with children and their families.

The courses provide professionals with essential skills in making evidence-based assessments of children's developmental needs, parenting capacity and family and environmental factors, analysis, planning how to intervene and identifying and measuring outcomes. The training usually includes gaps between formal training days for participants to use the assessment tools in their work context as part of the training process. Briefing and working with managers to enable them to support, supervise and audit their staff's effective use of the tools and approaches by their staff is a further component of the training programme. A process for training and licensing agency-based trainers to deliver Child and Family Training courses is also available.

The training courses are designed for professionals in health, social care, education, the police and independent sector organisations who work with children and families. For further information see:

www.childandfamilytraining.org.uk.

Tools for Evidence-Based Assessment, Analysis and Planning

Child and Family Training with others were commissioned by the Department of Health, to develop a range of standardised assessment tools and associated training for use by professionals when making assessments using the *National Assessment Framework*. Training in the use of the *Attachment Style Interview* was developed in partnership with the Lifespan Research Group at Royal Holloway University of London and Child and Family Training.

More recently a model of analysis, planning interventions and identifying and measuring outcomes using the Assessment Framework has been developed and is included in the training. The assessment tools and model of analysis and planning is integrated into 2010 Working Together (HM Government 2010, paragraphs 5.4, 5.92, 5.121, 5.123, 5.129, 5.133, and pages 350 and 378).

The assessment tools are referenced in a range of government guidance and procedures linked to the *Assessment Framework* including:

- Working Together 2010
- Initial and core assessments
- Every Child Matters
- Safeguarding Children materials
- The Integrated Children's System
- Looked After Children Records
- Practice Guidance on Preparing and Assessing Prospective Adopters and on Assessing the Support Needs of Adoptive Families

The assessment tools can be used for a wide range of purposes including:

- Initial and core assessments
- Safeguarding and specialist assessments – assessing the nature and level of harm to a child and the risks of re-abuse/likelihood of future harm and prospects for successful intervention
- Assessing children's developmental needs, parenting capacity and a range of family and environmental factors
- Analysis, planning effective interventions and identifying and measuring outcomes to assess change
- Exploring the children's experiences at home, at school and elsewhere
- Preparing reports for court in care proceedings under the Public Law Outline and in Private Law cases relating to residence and contact issues
- Planning for permanency and assessing and supporting adoptive parents, foster carers and kinship carers

Training can be tailored to link in with other assessment frameworks such as *Getting it right for every child* in Scotland, *UNOCINI* in Northern Ireland and the *Framework for the Assessment of Vulnerable Children & their Families* in the Republic of Ireland.

Child and Family Accredited Trainers have been trained by the authors of each of the assessment tools and deliver training across the UK, Europe and elsewhere.

Training can either be commissioned for groups of staff in agencies or individuals can attend Open Training Courses organised by Child and Family Training.

Training on Evidence-Based Assessment, Analysis and Planning

Assessing parenting and the family life of children, including disabled children, using the HOME Inventory and Family Pack of Questionnaires and Scales

This 3-day course trains participants to use the *HOME Inventory (Home Observation and Measurement of the Environment)* and the *Family Pack of Questionnaires and Scales*. The *HOME* assesses parenting and a child's experience (including disabled children) of the care and home environment provided by their parent/carer. The *Questionnaires and Scales*, provide an economical and effective way of gathering information about emotional and behavioural difficulties in both children and adults, parenting problems, recent life events, mental health difficulties, alcohol problems and the quality of family life. A *model of analysis and planning interventions and identifying and measuring outcomes using the Assessment Framework triangle* is introduced and applied. This course includes training on evidence-based interviewing skills and methods. The training is suitable for a wide range of staff including those involved in initial, core and parenting assessments as well as reports for court in care proceedings under the Public Law Outline, assessments for Private Law cases relating to residence and contact issues and in the fostering and adoption context.

Assessing families in complex child care cases using the Family Assessment

This 3-day course trains professionals in the use of the *Family Assessment* which provides a systemic and evidence-based approach for observing, describing and assessing family life, relationships, parenting and the impact of family history. Course members also develop skills in engaging and working with children and families during the assessment process. A *model of analysis and planning interventions and identifying and measuring outcomes using the Assessment Framework triangle* completes the training. The *Family Assessment* is particularly helpful in complex childcare cases where an assessment of the impact of family relationships/parenting difficulties on children's development is required, e.g. core and safeguarding assessments and in care proceedings under the Public Law Outline or Private Law cases relating to residence and contact issues.

Safeguarding Assessment and Analysis Framework: Evidence-Based Approaches to Assessing Harm, the Likelihood of Future Harm and Prospects for Intervention

This 2-day training is designed for professionals working in the safeguarding/child protection context. Course members are trained in the use of the *Safeguarding Assessment and Analysis Framework (SAAF)* which provides a systematic, robust, evidence-based and time-efficient model and a range of methods for assessing and analysing (a) the nature and level of harm to a child or young person (b) the risks of re-abuse/likelihood of future harm and (c) the prospects for successful intervention in safeguarding/child protection cases. The SAAF applies and develops the use of the *Assessment Framework* specifically for the safeguarding context and builds up skills and good practice in compiling and structuring core and specialist assessments and reports for the courts in complex safeguarding cases. The SAAF model of assessment and analysis forms part of the guidance in *2010 Working Together* (HM Government) and in *'Integrated Children's System: Analysing and recording significant harm'* (March 2010).

This training equips course members to:

- Evaluate the level of strengths and difficulties for children and their families in the domains and dimensions of the *Assessment Framework triangle* in the safeguarding context
- Establish the nature and level of harm to the child or young person and create a profile of harm
- Make a systemic analysis of the factors and processes leading to harm as well as protective and resilience factors
- Assess and analyse the risks of re-abuse or likelihood of future harm to the child or young person and the prospects for successful intervention
- Plan for future intervention
- Use interviewing skills and approaches tailored to the safeguarding/child protection context

The training is based on the book: *Safeguarding children living with trauma and family violence: evidence-based assessment, analysis and planning interventions* (2009) Arnon Bentovim, Antony Cox, Liza Bingley Miller and Stephen Pizzey. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. The authors are all members of the Child and Family Training (C&FT) Team which delivers the training. The new Safeguarding Assessment training builds on the training on a range of evidence-based assessment tools for children and families (see www.childandfamilytraining.org.uk). These assessment tools are also referenced in *2010 Working Together* (HM Government). Each course member receives a copy of the book, a Course Workbook and the Safeguarding and Analysis Framework (SAAF).

Training on Evidence-Based Assessment, Analysis and Planning

Communicating with Children: Direct work with children and young people using the In My Shoes Interview

A 2-day course providing training in the use of *In My Shoes* - a computer-assisted interview for communicating with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Course members are trained in the use of the *In My Shoes* software and specific interviewing skills that maximize the effectiveness of the interview. Participants can become *Registered In My Shoes Interviewers* on successful completion of the course requirements. The *In My Shoes* software is supplied with the training. Free ongoing email support is provided. Refresher and update training sessions are available.

The *In My Shoes* interview is conducted with the interviewer and child or young person working using a laptop together with each having a mouse. They work through a series of interactive modules which help facilitate communication about the child's experiences in the various settings in their lives. *In My Shoes* uses images to represent people, places and emotions and is used with a wide range of children and young people including for direct work with young children and those with attention, communication or learning difficulties.

It is an effective tool for:

- Gathering children and young people's thoughts, wishes and feelings about their past and current experiences and the plans for their future
- Helping children talk about troubling experiences (e.g. maltreatment, separation, loss and trauma)
- Exploring and assessing a child's experiences related to home, school, their foster or adoptive families, friends and during contact
- Educational or therapeutic work with a child
- Involving a child or young person in life story work
- Enabling them to participate in reviews, planning meetings and preparing for moves

Using the Attachment Style Interview in adoption and fostering or child care contexts

A 4-day intensive training in the use of the *Attachment Style Interview (ASI)* to assess the attachment style of adults, in terms of secure and insecure styles, the quality of their close relationships, including their partner/marital relationship, and their patterns of support and relating to others.

Course members are trained to use the ASI categories, interview approach and rating system and interpreting the qualitative and quantitative findings from the ASI. The training also helps staff to plan how to implement and integrate the use of the ASI in either adoption and fostering or child care contexts.

In the fostering and adoption context, the *ASI* is useful in assessing potential adoptive parents and foster/kinship carers, helping to identify suitable matches with children and planning how best to provide support.

In assessments of children in need and where there are safeguarding concerns, the *ASI* helps to assess strengths and vulnerabilities in adults' attachment styles and the nature of their close relationships, attitudes towards relating to others and access to and use of support.

For further information and to discuss training for groups of staff please contact:

Liza Bingley Miller, National Training Coordinator
liza.miller@childandfamilytraining.org.uk
or +44 (0)1904 633417

Dr Aron Bentovim
aron.bentovim@childandfamilytraining.org.uk
or write to:
Child and Family Training,
PO Box 723, York YO30 7WS

To apply for the Open Course Training Programme for individuals please contact:

Jane Phythian, Administrator
jane.phythian@childandfamilytraining.org.uk
or +44 (0)1904 424960

www.childandfamilytraining.org.uk

child
and
family
training

Child and Family Training is a non-profit organisation working to promote evidence-based assessments and interventions with children and families
Child and Family Training Limited
Directors: Dr Aron Bentovim and Liza Bingley Miller
Registered in England and Wales
Company Number: 573868
Registered Office: 54 Bootham, York, YO30 7XZ

C&FT 14.09.2010