

Hope for Children and Families Intervention –Practitioner Guide

Working with Parents Targeting Abusive and Neglectful Parenting

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Aims of the workshop

Key Aim

To enable practitioners to become familiar with the modules which focus on targeting abusive and neglectful parenting. This includes:

1. Becoming familiar with the suggested resources.
2. Understand harmful impact on children's and young people's development
3. How to intervene, and rehearse skills and suggested scripts and activities.
4. To understand how to use the appropriate modules.
5. Building on what participants already know and use.

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Underpinning Theory

The impact of abusive and neglectful parenting

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How abusive and neglectful parenting affects children's development, emotional and physical

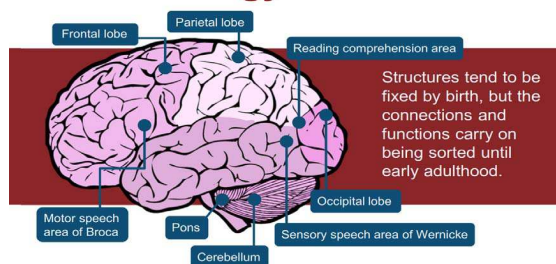
- Importance of developmental issues, and the impact of abuse and neglect.
- Building blocks of the brain is determined by genetic influences, but brain architecture responds to experiences through childhood and to young adult life
- Diagram indicates main areas are set at birth, but 'connections' are sorted out during developments
- Exposure to abuse and neglect causes major stress, which in turn affects functions, and long-standing impacts

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The Developing Brain

Neurobiology



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The role of stress – positive toxic stress evoked?

1. The role of abusive and neglectful parenting as harmful stressors causing impairment to a child's health and development is widely recognised.
2. There can be '**positive stress**', which is linked to 'mastery' in specific situations of fear, strangers, monsters and the dark. –short lived physiological responses, buffered through social support of attachment figures -growth promoting
3. When children are exposed to traumatic experiences-this is now described as '**toxic stress**'

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Examples of 'toxic stress'

- Thinking of the examples of children and young people presenting with the impact of abusive and harmful behaviour – could participants discuss the sort of 'toxic stress' children and young people in their experience have been exposed to
- What makes abusive and neglectful parenting 'toxic?'

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How is toxic stress defined

- Toxic stress** occurs in the context of extreme, prolonged and unpredictable stress during vulnerable periods of development, associated with vigorous and chronic activation of the biological response to stress leading to detrimental consequences for physical and mental health.
- When **younger children** are exposed to enduring experiences of physical abuse/emotional abuse/witness D.V

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When is toxic stress evoked?

Children may exhibit the same biological response even when not threatened if they are in contexts that bear even minimal resemblance to the original traumatic experience (i.e. fear conditioning)

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How can the impact of toxic stress be reversed? What helps children to develop their capacities?

- Safe, stimulating, and predictable** time and motivation to engage in learning,
- Responsive-** learning occurs in the context of play and through interpersonal interactions,
- Disorganised attachments** can be helped to become secure
- Developmentally sensitive-** challenges appropriate to their abilities

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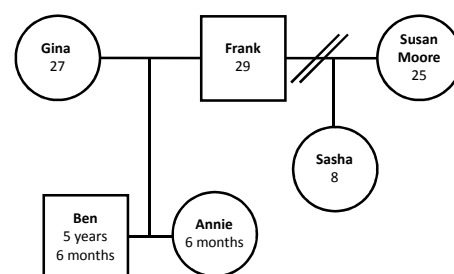
Steps to recovery

- Key practice elements used in 'Gold Standard' shows that **'Psycho-education'** –inform parents about the harmful nature of exposure to abuse and neglect
- Helping parents understand and **manage their own stress** more effectively – links with angry punitive, rejecting responses
- Addressing **negative perceptions of children** which justify abuse and neglect
- Other modules focus on improving the **'environment of care'** promoting safety, good quality care, improving attachments, helping children directly
- Importance of **reconciliation, taking responsibility, apologies – restorative justice**

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Case Study: Ben Bradshaw



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Parenting strengths and difficulties task

- Watching DVD clips of a family assessment.
- Home assessment of Ben Bradshaw, aged 5 years 6 months and his parents.
- Focus in particular on both parents Gina, Frank and Ben and Annie on thoughts, feelings, responses and consequences which resulted in potentially harmful actions

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Parental/carer stress

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Cycle of situations, feelings, thoughts, behaviour and consequences

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Feed back observations

- Feed back from the perspectives of each participant
- Discussion of the interaction of these cycles
- What is the risk?

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Safeguarding analysis

- During the following assessment –
- An episode of inappropriate manhandling by Gina – Gina became angry as Ben had trashed his bedroom, she grabs him, pulls him upstairs – at the top of the stairs he struggled to break free fell down the stairs, Frank heard the shouting, sore ribs, insists on taking him to the Doctor. Fractured rib, and two old fractures on x-ray, rib and collar bone –aged 3 and 4 –no record
- Agree to Ben being placed temporarily and for them to work with the practitioner to address concerns-

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Oppositional to M increased since Annie's birth, aggressive


- Compliant with father,

Identity

- Assertive and self-aware - his mother thinks he's bad,

Family and social relns

- Close to father, frightened of mother - frightens other children



Family History

- M troubled adolescence truanting, -extensive drug use in mid-teens. Terminations overdoses, convictions to fund drug habit.
- F middle of 2 brothers, occasional unhappy conflictual relationship with former partner, poor contact with daughter.

Emotional Warmth

- F warm tone and physical responses. M rejects Ben, critical, harsh, a bad child, absent praise or warmth. F defuses conflict
- Triangulated

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Future outlook for health and development Saaf assessment

Overall prospect for successful intervention.

- Ben has suffered physical, emotional harm, broken ribs.
- Strengths in several areas.
- Ben articulate, clear wanting his mother to stop smacking him.
- Gina blames Ben, does not understand her role.
- Gina acknowledges she needs help with Ben's behaviour,-

Choose which modules to work with

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Psychoeducation: how abusive and neglectful parenting affects children's development emotional and physical

Basic Principles

- To address whether parents feel Ben has been affected by harm he has experienced.
- To discuss his behaviour and responses and indicate they could be related to being exposed to harmful experiences, even when young.

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Parents coping with stress and the link with abusive and neglectful parenting

This module focuses on stress as a key factor linking with abusive and neglectful parenting and the impairment of children.

- Using stress as a way to speak about the way abusive and neglectful actions can arise. A way of introducing a factor which is inherent for all parenting and which can be modified.
- Using CBT principles to manage stress and understand it is key to this module.

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Cycle of situations, feelings, thoughts, behaviour and consequences



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Parents coping with stress and the link with abusive and neglectful parenting

Managing stress


- Learning to relax can help combat bad feelings.
- Practice brief self-calming techniques.
- Discuss mindfulness training.
- Discussion of relevance to practice.

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My Relaxing Place

My relaxing place is _____


What I see:




What I smell:




What I feel/touch:



What I hear:



What I taste:



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Overview of modules - continuing

Parents coping with stress and the link with abusive and neglectful parenting

- Activity – discussing the model of stress –toxic stress
- Focussing on children’s temperament.
- Exploring situational stressors.
- Parental reaction to family of origin issues.
- Managing stress.

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Parental reaction to family of origin issues

- View the video clips of Frank and Gina’s childhood.
- Role play discussion with parents, page 18.

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Other relevant themes

- Modules from other themes** need to be linked together to create an intervention that fits the needs of the particular family. This includes choosing modules from other key themes:
 - Providing good quality care and safety.
 - Promoting safety within the home and environment.
 - Promoting secure attachment, attunement and positive emotional care.
 - Positive parenting
 - Addressing abusive and neglectful parenting,
 - generic interventions for children improving safety, managing feelings, coping skills, problem solving and building resilience.

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Building a picture of the child’s life and building a rapport with the child

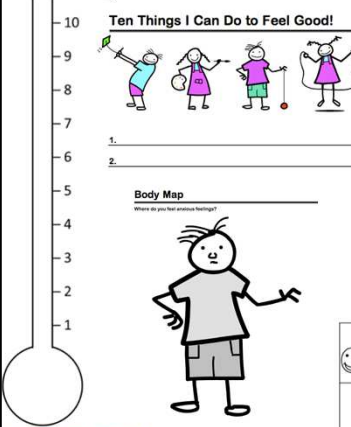
All About Me!



- Get to know the young person- All about me/ my galaxy/ my world/ my life as an advert/ life as a song/ a rap
- Ask them their areas of interest/ hobbies/ favourite things e.g. animal/ food/ hobby/ TV program/ subject at school/ time of year/ sport etc.
- Bring humour/ playfulness/ a sense that you are really interested in getting to know them- what makes them tick/ what makes them sparkle?

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Ten Things I Can Do to Feel Good!



Five S-T-E-P-S to Problem Solving

S Say what the problem is.


T Think of solutions.

E Examine each solution you listed above. What good & bad things might happen if you did each one?

P Pick one and try it out. Which one are you going to try?

S See if it worked. If it worked, great! If it did not work, then go back to your list of solutions and try another one.

Identifying feeling states



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Clarifying, sharing and reconciling the impact of abusive and neglectful parenting

- This is an important module which can bring together work with parents and children individually to address abusive and neglectful parenting.
- Relieving the child of responsibility, parents taking responsibility and developing an approach for the future which will be safer.

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Overview of modules - continued

Clarifying, sharing and reconciling the impact of abusive and neglectful parenting

- Working with parents to acknowledge hurt.
- Clarification processes.
- Working with the child to prepare him for meetings.
- Clarification of family meeting, establishing the ground rules.
- Addressing basic themes in family meeting.
- Exploring children's questions, statements and feedback.
- The future – sharing family experiences.

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Reflections on applying learning to current practices and reflections on learning

- Discussion about what the work has triggered in participants own practice
- How might they be able to use the material in their own practice
- Reflections on the day

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