

The ***Working With Families*** series

Families with complex needs – mental health

Frontline workers confront increasingly complex family situations where children's safety is linked to serious and seemingly chronic parental issues. This package (Families with complex needs – mental health and Families with complex needs – substance use) comprises separate evidence-based modules, focused upon decision making which balances safety with least intrusive intervention. This module considers practice skills in working with families to make a difference, when parental issues relate to ***mental health***. The other module considers application of these skills when families are affected by substance use. Each module provides frameworks for understanding parental functioning, including change theory, and considers how best to respond to the needs of children in these circumstances. Each module can be attended as a stand-alone workshop – however for maximum benefit, we recommend completing both 'complex needs' modules.

Families with complex needs – substance use

Frontline workers confront increasingly complex family situations where children's safety is linked to serious and seemingly chronic parental issues. This package (Families with complex needs – substance use and Families with complex needs – mental health) comprises separate evidence-based modules, focused upon decision making which balances safety with least intrusive intervention. This module considers practice skills in working with families to make a difference, when parental issues are affected by ***substance use***. The other module considers application of these skills when family issues relate to mental health. Each provides frameworks for understanding parental functioning, including change theory, and considers how best to respond to the needs of children in these circumstances. Each module can be attended as a stand-alone workshop – however for maximum benefit, we recommend completing both 'complex needs' modules.

Family contact and children in care – getting the balance right

Decisions about family contact for children and young people placed away from home must be made every day, yet the dilemmas are many: How much contact is necessary? Should this be supervised? What emphasis should be placed on the wishes of all concerned, not least the child? When and where should contact occur? Then there is the challenge of making it happen. This popular interactive workshop explores the messages that the latest research says are important, and assists participants to integrate this knowledge with practice within their own work context.

Reconnecting with family – towards identity and belonging

Work to reconnect children/young people and families can be both complex and sensitive. Yet it is imperative that this be done, given that most children and young people in out-of-home placement or homeless return to the ambit of their family. Even for those for whom 'going home' is not possible, research suggests there are benefits in family connectedness, at whatever level is optimal for the individual child or young person. This workshop is designed to enhance practice skills critical to safely reunifying or reconnecting families. Evidence from research is used to clarify

conceptual frameworks and develop skills in: assessing safety issues; planning effective supports and interventions; and working collaboratively with children and young people, their families and carers.

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