

Better Together

BUILDING
RELATIONSHIPS,
STRENGTHENING
FAMILIES

OUR PRACTICE
FRAMEWORK FOR
SUPPORTING CHILDREN
AND FAMILIES



Better Together Practice Tools and Resources Compendium

Contents

| | | |
|------|--|-------------------------------------|
| I. | Connect tools and resources..... | 4 |
| A. | Restorative Check in..... | 4 |
| B. | Direct Work Rucksack..... | 4 |
| C. | Direct work Team Resource | 4 |
| D. | Language Tools..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| E. | Practice Guidance on Visits | 6 |
| II. | Curiosity tools and resources | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| A. | Restorative Circles..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| B. | Chronology | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| C. | Genogram and Cultural Genogram | 7 |
| D. | Social GRRRAAACCEESSS..... | 7 |
| E. | REPAIR Domestic Abuse Guidance and Tool Kit..... | 7 |
| F. | Neglect guidance and Tool kit..... | 7 |
| G. | Harm Outside the Home Guidance and Tool Kit..... | 8 |
| H. | Trauma Informed Practice | 8 |
| I. | Restorative Supervision Framework | 9 |
| J. | Listening Circles..... | 9 |
| III. | Community tools and resources | 9 |
| A. | Ecomaps | 9 |
| B. | Family Group Conference..... | 10 |
| C. | Lifelong Links | 10 |
| D. | Increasing Community Capacity Guidance..... | 10 |

| | | |
|-----|--|-------------------------------------|
| IV. | Co-production Tools and Resources | 11 |
| A. | Participation and co-production guide | 11 |
| B. | Restorative Approach to Child Protection Conference | 11 |
| C. | Advocacy | 11 |
| D. | Safety Planning | 11 |
| E. | Words and Pictures..... | 12 |
| F. | Good Lives Model | 12 |
| G. | Restorative Care Planning Template | 12 |
| H. | Increasing Community Capacity Guidance | 12 |
| V. | Collaboration tools and resources..... | 12 |
| A. | Restorative Three Step Process | 12 |
| B. | Social Discipline Window | 13 |
| C. | Affective Statements | 13 |
| D. | Learning and Development Offer | 13 |
| VI. | Checking Back tools and resources..... | 13 |
| A. | Feedback templates..... | 13 |
| B. | Practice Week and Practice Observation templates..... | 13 |
| C. | QA Framework..... | 14 |
| D. | My Annual Review | Error! Bookmark not defined. |

1. Connect - tools and resources

A. Restorative Check in

'Check-in' is a way to facilitate conversations, connections and relationships between individuals or a group. This is done by asking questions that allow people to introduce themselves, form connections and seek to understand each other. We encourage a check in circle at the start of meetings with colleagues and families.

[Check in circle question ideas](#)

B. Direct Work Rucksack

Direct Work supports practitioners in building positive relationships with children and families. It acts as an outlet of expression for children, to support our understanding of the child's lived experience. It is a fun yet informative technique to communicate concerns and provide support for the benefit of the children we work with.

Practitioners can access a Direct work Rucksack as well as a wide range of additional toolkits through their respective managers or advanced practitioners in each team.

If you have any difficulties in accessing these resources, please contact the Principal Social Worker or any member of the Social Work Academy (socialworkacademyteam@towerhamlets.gov.uk).



C. Direct Work Team Resource

In addition to the Direct Work Rucksack, Direct Work Team Resources are available to all practitioners across the Supporting Families Division in Tower Hamlets.

You can find the resource with items available to borrow, alongside contact details, should you have any queries. Any team not listed can speak to Ann Walker or Sam Nair in the Learning Academy.

- **A&I**
They are located on the 4th floor in a cupboard opposite the duty area. If there are any difficulties locating the tools please speak to Miglena Vladimirova.
- **Eva Armsby**
It is located in front office, in the locked cupboard, which you can access via the Business Support Team (Jacquie Gray, Rona March).

- **FSP**
The Direct Work Team Resource are on the 4th floor in the first cupboard by FSP desks, opposite the fire exit. If there are any difficulties practitioners can contact Mary-Anne Bamfo and Eva Mannan.
- **CWD**
Direct Work Team Resource is in the CWD stationary cupboard on the 5th floor. If you encounter any problems, you can contact any of the CWD Team Managers.
- **CLA**
The Direct Work Team Resource has its home in the cupboard unit behind Sherwin's desk. Those in CLA can speak with Sandra Garner (Life Story Social Worker) or Michelle Mentessi (CLA Team Admin) regarding access.
- **Edge of Care Service**
The Direct Work Team resource is located in KitKat Terrace on the first floor in the main room, in a cupboard in the big room. Practitioners can speak with Charlotte if there are any difficulties.
- **Fostering**
It is in a cupboard on the 4th floor. The fostering Business Support Officer (Susan Quashie) is able to give access to those in fostering who require it.
- **Through Care**
The toolkit is at KitKat Terrace and is kept in the Duty room. Practitioners can speak with Benjamin Yeboah, Jama Abdi if there are any difficulties.

Book onto a Learning Wednesday session or Direct Work Training session to find out more about what we have in our Direct Work Rucksack and Direct Work Team Resources and how best to use them.

D. Language Tools

We know from research with children and families, that the way we have traditionally recorded information about them has been hurtful. We want to change this and make sure that the way we talk and write about the children and families we are working with communicates our values. These tools will give some ideas about changes we can make.

“Professionals need to understand that not everyone speaks the same language as them, and for children it can feel complex and overwhelming, and sometimes even embarrassing, as there is a lot of stigma attached to some of the terms used by professionals” Ashleigh, “Language that Cares”

[Using appropriate language around exploitation](#)

[Language about children we care for](#)

[Restorative practice and the use of language](#)

E. Practice Guidance on Visits

In line with the **Better Together Practice Guidance**, this manual sets out the basic practice expectations and standards that children and families can expect of Social Care Practitioners in Tower Hamlets. These practice expectations are informed by statutory regulation; the social work professional capabilities framework, knowledge and skills statement; standards of proficiency for social workers and the Pan London Child Protection Procedures.

[Better Together Practice Guidance One Minute Guide.docx](#)



2. Curiosity - tools and resources

A. Restorative Circles

A restorative circle is a technique that builds and restores relationships through equal opportunity sharing and listening. They can be used proactively, to develop relationships and build community or reactively, to respond to wrongdoing, conflicts and problems. Circles give people an opportunity to speak and listen to one another in an atmosphere of safety, decorum and equality.

The circle has a wide variety of purposes: conflict resolution, healing, support, decision making, information exchange and relationship development. Circles offer an alternative to contemporary meeting processes that often rely on hierarchy, win-lose positioning, and argument (Roca, Inc., n.d.).

Commonly used formats are Listening Circles, Problem Solving Circles, Learning Circles and Group Supervision Circles.

[A Guide to Listening Circles](#)

[Restorative circles and how to conduct them](#)

B. Chronologies

Chronologies are used as a way of recording significant incidents and events in a child's life, that can help build a picture of what has been happening within a family over a period of time. As well as providing a succinct overview of key events, they are useful to identify patterns and inform risk assessments. Practitioners in Edge of Care are particularly focusing on Analytical Chronologies in their work to support a child returning home as a way to analyse the history, focusing on the risk and protective factors associated with the child returning home and evidence of parental capacity to change.

Whilst chronologies are often focused on the agency's involvement with a family, chronologies can also be completed with children, young people and families to build connection and understanding regarding their views on what has been significant in their life.

[Guide to chronologies](#)

C. Genograms and Cultural Genograms

We encourage genograms to be co-created with families so they can help us understand their family connections better. It is important to seek permission to capture information that may be sensitive or difficult to talk about such as family members that have died, including through miscarriage. When used as a conversational tool in a sensitive and culturally competent way it can help identify family themes and dynamics, rather than a simple factual representation.

Building on genograms, a cultural genogram encourages a practitioner to consider with a family additional information regarding ethnicity, culture and family beliefs and the impact this has on their experience of living in Tower Hamlets.

[The Cultural Genogram Hardy and Laszlofy \(1995\)](#)

[Cultural Genogram](#)

[Using genograms in practice](#)

D. Social GRRRAACCEESSS

This concept, developed by John Burnham, enables a practitioner to reflect on how aspects of their identity may be affecting how they relate to people who have the same or different characteristics. The letter in the words GRRRAACCEESSS represent a range of factors that can influence how we are perceived and perceive others. We encourage culturally competent practitioners who think about how social GRRRAACCEESSS may be influencing them and those they work with.

[Social-GRRRAACCEESSS-and-the-LUUUTT-model](#)

[Working with Muslim Heritage children we care for](#)

[Supporting Young People who identify as LGBTQ+](#)

E. REPAIR Domestic Abuse Guidance and Toolkit

We know that historically we have placed a lot of pressure on the non-abusive parent when we work with families impacted by domestic abuse. REPAIR is an approach to domestic abuse which ensures we hold perpetrators accountable for their actions, support and empower victims whilst not overburdening them, and support children to heal from the harm they have experienced.

[DASH Risk Assessment Template](#)

[REPAIR concept document](#)

[REPAIR assessment tool](#)

F. Neglect Practice Guidance and Toolkit

We encourage practitioners to use the neglect toolkit *with* families rather than as a tick box task that is completed in the office. This can be a way of sharing or understanding where you and a family have similar views or where they differ, which can then help us understand how best to support and intervene.

[Neglect Practice Guidance](#)

[Neglect Toolkit](#)

[Neglect Tool Kit PDF](#)

[Neglect in the context of poverty and austerity](#)

G. Harm Outside the Home Guidance and Toolkit

'Harm Outside the Home' is an approach that is specifically aimed at protecting children who are being significantly harmed as a result of exploitation or abuse outside their homes or families. The approach seeks to employ a wider partnership approach to manage the harm experienced by children within the community and make these places and space safe. It recognises the influence of social contexts on children: Known as hotspots or 'spaces and places' where children spend time, and the risks they face within these 'hotspots'.

It also focuses on ensuring appropriate transition arrangements and support within Adult Services for children at risk of Harm Outside the Home who are transitioning into adulthood. In summary, the Harm Outside the Home approach (also known as Extra-familial harm) seeks to blend the concepts of Contextual, Complex and Transitional Safeguarding into a singular operational approach.

[Working with Adolescents](#)

[Single Assessment Harm Outside the Home prompts](#)

[Harm Outside the Home Guidance](#)

[Harm Outside the Home Pathway](#)

With a Research in Practice log in (which all who have a towerhamlets.gov.uk email can create), you can access these e-learning resources

<https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/children/content-pages/learning-pathway/adolescence-and-exploitation/>

H. Trauma Informed Practice

Repercussions of trauma experienced in childhood may persist through adolescence and into adulthood. The intention of Trauma Informed Practice is an increased understanding of the ways present behaviours and difficulties can be understood in the context of past trauma.

With a Research in Practice log in (which all who have a towerhamlets.gov.uk email can create), you can access these e-learning resources

- Trauma Informed Practice with Children, Young People and their Families (RiP webinar) - <https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/children/content-pages/slides/trauma-informed-practice-with-children-young-people-and-their-families-webinar-2/>

- Working with Trauma Experienced Parents - (RiP webinar series) - <https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/children/content-pages/videos/working-with-trauma-experienced-parents-in-children-s-social-care/>

I. Restorative Supervision Framework

It is important that supervision whether 1-2-1 or group, values relationships and encourages reflection and hypothesising. The 1-2-1 and group supervision formats have been created with this in mind. The group supervision is also known as a problem-solving circle with the idea being that all are able to contribute.

[Group Supervision Guidance and Recording Template](#)

[Reflective Supervision Prompt Questions](#)

[Supervision Contract Template](#)

[Supervision Recording Template](#)

[Tower Hamlets Supervision Policy.pdf](#)

J. Listening Circles

Listening circles are opportunities for people to come together and share their perspective, often relating to a particular issue or experience. Whilst circles can be sequential (going round the circle) or 'popcorn' (where people choose when to input), it is important is that all have an opportunity to speak and careful attention is paid to ensure one person doesn't dominate. The purpose is to listen without responding although once the circle is complete it may be helpful for a response, on other occasions actions that are needed as a result of what has been heard will be agreed as a group. Listening circles are used in Tower Hamlets for Senior Leaders to hear about the experience of staff, but they can also be used with families to create a space for them all to listen and be heard about each family member's experience, for example, in relation to a significant event that has happened.

[A Guide to Listening Circles](#)

3. Building Community - tools and resources

**Better
Together**

A. Ecomaps

It is important that we understand who are the important people and communities in a child's life. Ecomaps can uncover resources and protective factors within a family that we may previously have been unaware of. Whilst a standard ecomap may simply name people and organisations, it can be used to facilitate a conversation about the strengths of relationships and uncover where there are strained relationships or potential risks. Like with genograms we encourage the use of ecomaps as a conversational tool to be co-produced with families.

B. Family Group Conference

Family Group Conferences (FGC) are a way of putting family and friends at the heart of decision making in relation to how their child's needs will be met. Whilst a practitioner will develop certain questions they want the family network to consider, an important component of FGC is the private family time when they create their own plan to put forward. Our commitment is that all families who are being supported throughout the Supporting Families division will be offered a family group conference, whether they are supported through Early Help, Youth Justice and Young People's Service or Children's Social Care, and it should be offered at the earliest point in the child's life. Any family plan created should inform and lead forward any other plan.

Contact Jane Towey (jane.towey@towerhamlets.gov.uk), Nargis Khatun (nargis.khatun@towerhamlets.gov.uk) or Richard Desjardins (richard.desjardins@towerhamlets.gov.uk) for more details.

[Family Group Conferences one minute guide for family](#)

[Family Group Conference Information Leaflet](#)

C. Lifelong Links

We recognise that children who have been brought into local authority care unfortunately often lose connections with important people in their lives whether family, friends, or other significant people. Life Long Links aims to rebuild connection with these people through the skilful work of a trained Life Long Links coordinator. We encourage all social workers supporting children that we care for to consider a referral.

Contact Jane Towey (jane.towey@towerhamlets.gov.uk) or Tracy Whitehead (tracy.whitehead@towerhamlets.gov.uk) for more information

[Lifelong Links One Minute Guide](#)

D. Increasing Community Capacity Guidance

This Research in Practice guide explores how local authorities can work with children, families and communities to address the challenges they face.

[Growing Community Capacity](#)

4. Co-produce - tools and resources

A. Participation and co-production guide

This is a Research in Practice tool that considers what it looks like to include children and young people in statutory social work, but is also relevant across all aspects of the Supporting Families Division. It draws on various models to help the practitioner to consider how to meaningfully ensure children are included and consulted on decisions that impact them.

[Participation and co-production guide](#)

B. Restorative Approach to Child Protection Conference

It is important to acknowledge the power imbalance that families often experience when participating in a Child Protection conference. We are trying to ensure that these are more restorative by ensuring that families are really clear on why the meeting is taking place and what will happen, that they have at least 12 days notice of the meeting is taking place, that reports are written in a clear and jargon-free way, and are shared with families before the meeting. Child Protection chairs will also meet with the parents/carers ahead of the meeting to hear their perspective and answer any questions. Advocates should be offered to all children over 5 and every parent/carer. The conference will focus on the impact on the child and what needs to happen next rather than on attributing blame and judgement. It will ensure that strengths and protective factors are considered.

[Restorative Approach to Child Protection Conferences offer](#)

C. Advocacy

Advocates are available to work with children or their parents/carers to participate in Family Group Conferences or Child Protection conferences. They are also able to work with parents of children who we care for. Children and young people who we care for can also access advocates through Barnardo's advocacy service, the advocate will consider with the child/young person or parent how they want to be supported, whether this is by way of attending a meeting with them or sharing the person's views on their behalf.

Advocates can be requested through Jane Towey (jane.towey@towerhamlets.gov.uk).

[Advocacy information](#)

[How can an advocate help you \(children and adult\)](#)

[Stages of Child Protection advocacy process](#)

D. Safety Planning

All safety planning should be done in conjunction with the people it affects and their network. Whilst the goal is to safeguard the child/young person or victim, it is important that the plan is realistic, specific to their situation and considers cultural factors that may make action more or less likely.

E. Words and Pictures

The Words and Pictures concept was developed in the 1980s by Susie Essex and John Gumbleton in their work with children and families in a CAMHS in Bristol. It is a storyboard, using simple words and hand drawn pictures to explain to children and their network what agencies are worried about, and what the plan to address those worries are. We know that when children are clear on what the worries are and what the plan is, they are more able to let people know when things are not as they should be. Similarly, when parents and their network are clear on the worries and the plan, they are more able to keep children safe.

[Words and Pictures](#)

F. Good Lives Model

The Good Lives Model aims to reduce reoffending by thinking with young people about what they value in life and what they need in order to achieve this. Young people are encouraged to identify goals and values underlying their offending and then to collaboratively formulate a good lives plan to identify what will help them meet their goals in socially acceptable ways. It is being used within Tower Hamlets Youth Justice Service.

[Good Lives Model](#)

G. Restorative Care Planning Template

This is something we are working on – more details to come.

H. SMART CIN/CP Templates

This is something we are working on – more details to come.

5. Collaborate - tools and resources

**Better
Together**

A. Restorative Three Step Process

The Restorative Three Step process is about asking three key questions; What happened? Who has been affected? And what needs to happen? It is a way of hearing different perspectives on a situation and can enable an understanding of different points of view and how we may have intentionally or unintentionally hurt others.

[3 step process questions](#)

B. Social Discipline Window

The Social Discipline Window was developed by Wachtel and McCold (2001) and describes a way of working that is characterised by high support and high challenge as the most likely approach to lead to change and growth. This is known as working 'With' as opposed to working high challenge but low support (doing 'To'), high support but low challenge (doing 'For') or offering little challenge or support (not doing anything).

[Social Discipline Window](#)

C. Affective Statements

Affective statements are a way of expressing our feelings, both positive and negative, in response to the impact of someone else's behaviour. They are thought to improve communication and connection and are an excellent tool for leaders and managers in building restorative environments. Below you will find an adaptation of the Marshall Rosenberg non-violent communication process, which is a good example of using affective statements.

[Affective Statements Handout](#)

[Non Violent Communication-4 components](#)

D. Learning and Development Offer

We recognise that our staff are our greatest asset, and we are committed to offering a high quality and flexible learning and development offer to support the needs of our staff. As well as classroom based learning delivered by leaders in their field, we also offer bite sized sessions as part of Learning Wednesday which takes place on the first Wednesday of the month. This is complimented by subscriptions with Research in Practice and Making Research Count. For those wanting to do accredited courses there are opportunities to undertake modules that can build towards a Masters through our teaching partnership, and we are looking to add other forms of accredited training in the future.

6. Check back - tools and resources

**Better
Together**

A. Feedback Templates

B. Practice Week and Practice Observation Templates

Practice Week gives leaders and partner a unique opportunity to hear from families we are working with so they can understand their experiences better. During the week they spend time with staff across the division to observe and audit practices, discuss the work and chat to families.

Observations and reflections from this experience are recorded and drawn together to assist future learning.

C. QA Framework

We seek to ensure that our QA framework is in line with our restorative values, in practice this means placing the conversation with the practitioner who has undertaken the work as well as the family who have been supported as core parts of the audit. We encourage auditors to be curious and ask questions where practice does not appear to be how we would want it and to complete the audit with a spirit of high support, high challenge. The audit should be written in a way that reflects strengths as well as identifying areas to work on as we strive to work towards excellence for children.



D. My Annual Review

My Annual Review is the councils corporate staff appraisal, and it supports meaningful conversations between the employee and the line manager. The annual review takes place during 1st April-31st May and outcomes of conversations are recorded online, as well as training and wellbeing objectives added to the employees development plan.

You can access My Annual Review on Learning Hub