

Welcome to the second edition of the Practice and Learning bulletin; we hope that you found the content of the first one beneficial. I had a flurry of emails with lots of suggestions for future editions and will be working through those suggestions. Thank you for your input.

In this addition we will be focusing on Case management, specifically case summaries, chronologies and genograms. There is also a summary about ACES – Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Reading this can contribute to your CPD record which is especially vital for those of you who need to be register your CPD with Social Work England.

Please contact me with suggestions you would like to see in these bulletins or if anyone wants to write a piece about practice issues or research etc. you are more than welcome to be involved.

Traci Taylor – Principal Social Worker

Amandip Johal – Head of Service.



FOCUS ON PRACTICE: CASE MANAGEMENT Why are case file records important for good case management?

Good case management is vital to prevent drift and delay for the children and young people that we work with. The case file shows the work that we complete with children and their families to help them understand the decisions that have been made and what factors have informed our planning and decision making to ensure the right outcome for the child. The case file is the single point of access for all the case information we have; as the child may at some point wish to see their file it is vital that this is accessible, legible and accurate

The case file evidences the journey of the child and it should explicitly tell what daily life is like for the child and lead anyone reading the file to have an understanding of the child's lived experience. It is vital that the case file is kept up to date in a timely manner and the expectations are clearly outlined in our Practice Standards Document and in the practice guidance which can be found in **Tri-x** – please take a look and discuss.

CASE SUMMARIES

The purpose of the case summary is:

- A summary of the work that we have undertaken with a child/young person that gives an overview of any history of involvement why we are involved now, what we have done and the impact.
- Offers an opportunity to reflect on the work undertaken and consider what action needs to be taken next
- Provides a snapshot of key information for colleagues and supervisors in the absence of the case holder.
- Provides a brief overview of the child's experiences.
- Should be updated prior to a transfer to another worker, service or case closure.

Our Practice Standards sets out the expectation that every open case will have a case summary that is updated at least every 3 months (sooner if there is a significant event). The Practice Guidance outlines the purpose of and how the case summary should be written. Please make sure that you read these documents and be clear about your responsibility.

The case summary should be succinct, reflective and pertinent and be written under the following headings:

- Child's Profile
- Background Information
- Purpose of Involvement
- Progress made/Case Update
- Case Goals/What Needs to Happen Next?
- Involvements

Some services may have some additional pertinent information such as contingency plans/contact etc.

Chronology:

An up to date chronology is a requirement for every open case in Children's Social Care. It enables practitioners to gain a more accurate picture of the child's world. They are an effective tool for informing the assessment of children, young people and their families.

The chronology provides a skeleton of significant events. It is a sequential story of significant events in a family's history. It contributes to an emerging picture; significantly, where current events are understood in the context of historical information. It should inform the practitioner's understanding of the immediate and cumulative impact of events and changes upon individuals within a family and therefore inform decision making.

A significant event is an incident that impacts upon a child's safety and welfare, circumstances or home environment. This will involve professional judgement based upon the child and family's individual circumstances. To be of value a chronology should be:

- **Succinct** – if every issue /contact is recorded, the value of the chronology is diluted;
- **Simple in format** – thus ensuring that information is efficiently merged and sorted;
- **Informative** – assist with the decision making process

GENOGRAM:

In social work, genograms are used:

“to display physical bonds between individuals composing a family or social unit”

A genogram is basically a type of family tree. It is a snapshot of the family structure, it is useful as it highlights who in the family is a support, who the family perhaps do not have much contact with and who is a risk. It is useful to try and complete a genogram as soon as possible with the family as you can see straight away from the document if there are patterns in the family history, if they are isolated from family or if there is anything we need to be concerned about.

The completion of the genogram also helps in building a relationship with the family as you would be completing this piece of work together. The construction of a genogram can be a powerful tool and one that we may need to refer to in times of crisis or need. The genogram is a working document and can be updated as often as we need to. The genogram should include all family members/ important people including people who the family say that they do not have contact with and anyone who are deceased.

Every file needs to have a comprehensive genogram completed.

Tri.X

Amandip Johal, Head of Service has re-designed Tri.X to make this easier to find information at a glance. Tri.X is where we store Bradford's procedures on line and where you will find our PRACTICE STANDARDS and PRACTICE GUIDANCE; it is being updated as new guidance is written on an almost daily basis. You can also access the West Yorkshire Consortium Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures alongside other policies and procedures. .

The latest additions to Tri-X are:

- Placement Disruption Meetings.
- Case Summaries
- Care Planning Meetings to Achieve Permanence.



ACEs stands for Adverse Childhood Experiences, and the term is used to describe stressful situations that children may experience; this includes domestic violence, drug and/or alcohol abuse, familial mental health issues, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, separation, loss and incarceration of a family member for example; they may be experiencing this now or experienced this in the past. Many of us may have experienced an (or many) ACE(s) in childhood.

Why understanding ACES is important to understand in our day to day work with children and young people?

Research has been able to evidence that the cumulative affect of childhood stress and trauma has a physical impact as well as an emotional one. When we experience repeated stressful situations we are unable to relax and recover and this helps to explain what is happening to the children we work with that experience repeated stressful situations such as being repeatedly exposed to domestic violence. It can have a physiological impact and affect normal brain development; a child experiencing repeated stressful situations are unable to think rationally or interact with people and is impossible for them to learn which leads to poor academic achievements. It has an impact on immediate and long term health and is responsible for a number of health conditions.

Significantly ACES is responsible for the behaviour of the children and young people we come into contact with (and in a number of cases their parents also). The research shows us that compared to children who have not experience an ACE those who experience 4 or more ACEs have a five times risk of illicit drug use, a 17 times increased risk of alcohol addiction and a 12 times more risk of suicide. The more ACES experienced the more the risks increase.

The good news is that if we understand ACES and the impact on our children we are better equipped to work with them in a positive way; stable and nurturing relationships help children to build the skills they need to become resilient adults and with the right support we can minimise the impact of ACES. Please click on the link to read [THE LITTLE BOOK OF ACES](#) for more information; we will be looking at developing some training to support this model of working which fits into the new practice model for Bradford which will be launched shortly.



All the learning in this bulletin will be followed up by the practice supervisor in your team – it will be on your team meeting agenda to look at what we can do to make sure that the learning in this bulletin is embedded in the work that we do with children and families. Let us know how you get on!

Next Month.....

In the next bulletin we will be focusing on the importance of Life Story Work and Recording of visits including how to use reflection, observations, fact and opinion etc.

For feedback or suggestions please
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children AT THE heart OF all we do

