

Practice and Learning Bulletin

July 2021

Welcome to August's Edition of the Practice and Learning Bulletin

We are now entering the 6 month of our Focus on Practice Workshops; there are two main themes this month, **Assessments** - pulling together the golden threads of everything you have learnt in the previous workshops and **Impact** - understanding how individual experiences affect children and young people. There is a article about assessments in this months edition.

- Learning from Research
- Learning from Complaints and Serious
- Learning from the recent thematic review
- Training and Development

Thank you for everyone taking part in the mandatory training and for your evaluations which are helping the learning and development team to make sure we are pitching this right for you. I hope you are finding that this is reinforcing what you already know but also introducing some new resources and practices that will help you in your day to day work with children, young people and their families.

“...it's not just learning that's important. It's learning what to do with what you learn and learning why you learn things that matters”.

- Norton Juster

As always please let me know if you want to see something in the bulletin or want to contribute.



Best wishes

Traci Taylor

Principal Social Worker/Service



ON PRACTICE

Assessments

Assessments are a core function of our work with children and families; its function is to help to understand the situation, identify the relevant factors and determine a course of action. Assessments should be dynamic; as situations change so do people and so it is important not to see a completed assessment the end of the process and to continually reassess situations to measure change and progress.

We have been running our workshops over the past 5 months and in August we are delivering mandatory workshops on Assessments where we will be pulling the threads together from the previous workshops to show how all the different factors feature in writing a good, purposeful assessment; one which evidences that you, as the practitioner, understands the experiences of the child and the adult and how this is impacting on them now or is likely to impact on them in the future.

When starting the assessment think about our **practice model** (which should be at the forefront of all of your work) - the focus should be able to recognise the strength in the situation you are assessing, with relationships at the heart and understanding people's unique experiences (often trauma in our work).

The key to assessments is being professionally curious when gathering your information, always asking yourself the **so what** question; so what does this mean? so what does this tell me? So what difference does this make? So what do I need to do? - these are just some examples.

By being professionally curious you are analysing information, what you are told, what you observe, what you have read and putting a meaning to this information. In essence, professional curiosity is not taking things at face value but exploring things. We will be running some workshops about professional curiosity in the next couple of months.

Our practice standards tell us that every child or young person should have an up to date assessment; when key decisions are being made it is good practice to update the assessment to show your rationale for any decision such as ending work with a child or young person.

We have practice guidance on how to complete an assessment in Tri-x .



IMPACT

What do we mean by impact when we talk about the impact on a child or young person?

In our work with children, young people and their families we are looking at how a situation, or an experience has affected them (impact) and what does this mean for them. This can be a long term experience such as ongoing neglect but can also mean a sudden and powerful incident such as witnessing an assault on a parent, an assault on them etc.

In our assessment and work with the child, young person and/or their family we need to look at the experience and work out what this experience has done to them (impacted on them).

By understanding impact we can start to put the right support in place but also start to understand behaviours. So instead of saying they have behaviour problems you can say exactly what is happening for the child or young person. For example, **“the impact of their experiencing domestic violence is that they struggle to understand their emotions and this is displayed by angry behaviour.”** Or **“the fear that they have experienced by living with violence is that they struggle to trust people and this is displayed by them testing out boundaries with adults”**.

It is really important that we understand impact and that we use appropriate language which explains behaviour rather than coming from a negative place and victim blaming.

Look out for the workshop on impact—dates will be circulated soon.



LEARNING FROM THEMATIC REVIEWS A CHILD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE REVIEW

Many of you will be aware of the Thematic Review around the historical child sexual exploitation of young people and Bradford featured that has been published this month.

It is clear from the review findings that there is learning from previous practice where young people were let down by the services involved; it is important that we learn from those findings to make sure that this does not happen again.

There was a briefing on the findings for staff; the power point slides are available and being sent to managers for discussion in your team meetings.

The findings from the review recognised that this is an area of difficult and complex work but that there were missed opportunities to safeguard these young people.

The review also identified that Bradford has made positive movement to work with children and young people at risk of CSE now; specific learning was identified which as practitioners we all need to be aware of.

Education: The importance of being involved in the protective factors of education. The children (now young people) involved in the review had disrupted education.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs): All the children involved had experienced traumatic experiences (remember our practice model and understanding the impact of this).

Perpetrators of sex offences: recognising the actions and motivations of others (professional curiosity).

Pregnancy and cycles of care: 5 of the girls became pregnant as a result of their sexual abuse.

Children with disabilities: two of the children had disabilities that affected their communication and their behaviour was seen as disruptive rather than a symptom of abuse.

Mental Health and Well-being: the complex relationship between mental health and sexual abuse (trauma informed practice).

Criminalisation of children: 4 of the 5 children were arrested and charged and for some convicted due to their behaviours (trauma informed practice).

Drugs and alcohol: for every child the perpetrator used drugs and alcohol in their coercion and abuse.

Change in cultural identity: 2 of the children began to wear Muslim dress and change their cultural identity. Need to consider grooming and possible radicalisation - no referral to prevent.

Please make sure that you read the report and its findings and the recommendations made.



It is important that we learn from the complaints that are made about anybody's work or practice. By learning from the findings of complaints, it will stop us repeating the same mistakes in the future when working with other families.

This month's learning from a recent complaint is around the importance of sharing information with families and focuses on our decision making process.

It is really important that we share decision making with children, young people and families. We need to explain what decision has been made, how we made the decision (our rationale) and what this decision means for them. This allows people to ask questions and although they may not agree it allows them to have an understanding of what is happening for them.

Relationship based practice means that we work co-operatively together with someone; we work **with them**; this builds open dialogue and trust. This will lead us to share information in an open way.

It is also important that we learn from compliments - these are shared in Irfan's newsletter and it is evident that there is some really good practice being demonstrated. What we do know from reading the compliments is that when people feel that they are involved and part of the solution that this has a really positive outcome for children and young people.





As always, there are lots of opportunities for your continual professional development.

Mandatory training: Please make sure that you have completed all of your mandatory e-learning training and completed any refresher training required. For our mandatory training some of the modules have e-learning workshops to complete before attending the virtual training.

- Case recording
- Domestic abuse
- Supervision for managers.

Tri-x: all of our new practice guidance, any changes to policies and procedures etc. are added into Tri-x. This is our online facility that all practitioners should be accessing to ensure you are up to date. There are a number of new additions added in June, please have a look. The Practice Standards document has been amended here is the link -

https://bradfordchildcare.proceduresonline.com/files/practice_standards_checklist.pdf

New guidance has been added; please keep Tri-x on hand to answer your questions and also make sure that you are aware of our standards.

Adoption: A reminder about our adoption training here is a lot of training being offered around adoption work and processes currently in addition to the internal training on Life Story Work (bookable via Evolve).

We have some 2 workshops being offered for social workers by One Adoption - the first available date is at the end of August (flier to follow).

We have also commissioned Julia Pearmain in to do some workshops with us. She has offered 3 dates for managers focusing on quality assuring Child Permanence Reports. Two sessions have taken place and received good feedback. Spaces are available for the 21st September workshop - book through me.

Julia is also offering a number of sessions to level 2 and level 3 social workers who are responsible for completing child permanence reports. The first of these was held last month and the next one is in September- booking through me.



Research and Practice and Children's Social Work matters are both valuable resources for your CPD - you can access webinars both live and recorded, news articles, research articles and tools to use in practice. As an authority we subscribe to these organisations so that you can have a learning account. Remember if you access any learning you can use this to evidence your CPD record and for social workers who are required to evidence CPD through Social Work England you can go directly to SWE and upload to your CPD account.

If you have not already done so please set up learning accounts.

Research in Practice: www.researchinpractice.org.uk

Children's Social Work Matters: www.childrensocialworkmatters.org

EVOLVE: Is the training platform where we can book and access more than our core training. Please take a look as there are lots of interesting training topics - a lot of these are e-learning for you to do in your own time.

The workforce and learning service is looking at some new e-learning modules and we will update you as they are completed; Emma Morgan (L and D officer) is currently writing one for private fostering and we are looking at an introduction to Child Sexual Exploitation.

The safeguarding partnership is also working hard to pull together a training programme around all aspects of exploitation including modern slavery, trafficking etc.



As a learning organisation feedback is really important to us to make sure that we are getting things right.

Please have your say about the training and development being offered via your evaluation forms as we are using this feedback to adapt our workshops.

Thank you to everyone who has sent responses, feedback and suggestions for this Practice and Learning Bulletin and the bite size learning events and emails sent.

**WE APPRECIATE
YOUR FEEDBACK
THANK YOU!**