



Principal Social Worker's Practice and Learning Bulletin December 2022

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



As always it is busy and I am sure that most of us are on the count down to the Christmas break; for those who celebrate Christmas this is a special time religious time but it is also a time when we spend it with families and usually overindulge. Whatever you choose to do enjoy it.

In this months edition I am revisiting developing cultural competence and what good performance looks like and what this means for children, young people and their families.

As always we will be visiting the outcomes of some of our complaints and focusing on what training and development opportunities there are.

Have a great Christmas break

Best wishes

Traci

What is cultural competence and what does this mean in practice?



Cultural competence is the ability to create and interact with other individuals or groups who are different in some way to you. This is, at times, mistakenly taken to mean from different ethnic groups but, it refers to any difference including socio-economic backgrounds too.

In a global world of difference it is really important that we all develop skills in cultural competence; think about the city we live and work in and the diversity all around us. In our work with children, young people and adults, and each other we need to ensure that we assess/look at our own cultural competent skills. If those from a different culture from ours do not feel that we have those skills they will not feel valued or respected. Think about how this all links into our model of practice which is based in developing relationships with others to influence positive changes.

So, what does cultural competence look like in practice?

Practice openness: by demonstrating acceptance of difference.

Be flexible: by demonstrating acceptance of more than one interpretation.

Demonstrate humility: through suspension of judgment and the ability to learn.

Be sensitive to others: by appreciating cultural differences.

Show a spirit of adventure: by showing curiosity and seeing opportunities in different situations (we would describe this as professional curiosity in our work).

Use a sense of humour: through the ability to laugh at ourselves.

Practice positive change or action by demonstrating a successful interaction with the identified culture.

There is some training in Evolve that will help you to develop cultural competence and we will be exploring this in a workshop in 2022. **The e-learning 'Unconscious Bias'** is a really good starting point; all of us would like to say we are culturally competent, this eLearning explains how the brain works and processes information in a way that we form immediate judgements based on how someone looks or sounds, but also explains how we can address that so that we are actively avoiding our own bias. This is part of our mandatory training so please ensure that you have completed this.



In my role as the Principal Social Worker, I complete exit interviews for practitioners leaving the authority. I frequently hear concerns expressed in those interviews that Bradford is a “tick box organisation and children are not at the heart”. I also hear this said from lots of different sources. However, I want to turn this on its head and hopefully link how performance actually is designed to be child focused as it is our evidence that a child or young person is getting the right service from us, at the right time, based on an assessment of their needs.



If we used child focused language this would lead to a better understanding of why we look at performance and would lead to us always linking what we do, or don't do always making a difference to a child or young person. For example, instead of saying “I am worried about your performance figures this week” saying what is meant would be more meaningful, **“I am worried that some of the children have not had a good service this week, can we talk about this?”**.

The word performance seems to have negative connotations when actually we can use more positive language to change this perception, “your performance figures for your visits shows that you have seen all of your children this week” because this is what we mean by this performance indicator.

Demonstrating Empathy: putting yourself in the families shoes we work with.

Assessments completed on time mean children and families get the right service from us at the right time.

If someone was assessing you, your child or a family member for something and that service or support could not be in place until the assessment was completed you could be left frustrated

and angry or upset if this was not done in a timely way. In fact we are more likely to complain about this. This is exactly the same for our families who can be left without the right intervention for long periods of time.

Plans completed on time mean that children and families have a clear plan of action; they understand what needs to happen and how it is going to happen; who is doing what and when

If someone told you that you had to make some big changes but you would be helped to do it – you would want to know what needed to change, how you would be supported to make the changes and who was going to do what by when.

Visits completed on time mean that we can be more confident that children are being seen regularly and are safe; we are confident that we know what is happening to them and families know they have the right support

The above does not seek to criticise anybody, everyone wants to do the best for the children and young people that they are working with and everyone is very busy. However, what I wanted to do is to highlight the meaning of performance when this is being discussed, to change the narrative and understanding.

Our Practice Model underpins all of our work by:

- A commitment to delivering high quality children's services that are effective and have a positive impact on children, young people and families lives in Bradford.
- A vision to ensure that children are given the best start in life to be safe, healthy, happy and resilient.
- An aim to consistently deliver services with care and compassion to strengthen families through a positive working relationship
- A mission to always put children at the heart of all that we do.



It is important that you feel that you are supported to do a good job and these are some of the ways that the authority supports you in practice.

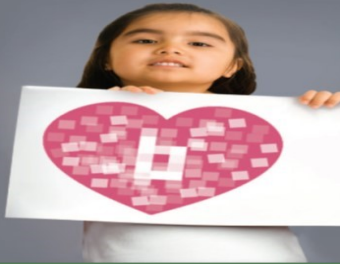
- **Skills** - Training and development opportunities
- **Knowledge**— Practice guidance, research, lessons learnt, reflective supervision.
- **Processes**— Practice Standards, Policies, procedures
- **Legal**—Frameworks, statute

Bradford

Practice

Standards

Checklist



We have a practice standards checklist so that:

We have a consistent approach to work with children, young people and families.

Everyone knows what is expected of them, by setting this out clearly.

It is your responsibility to be aware of the contents of the guidance and/or to access this if you are unsure; the practice standards can be found in Tri-x

Performance conversations should be child focused and thinking about the difference that our work is making to that child or young person.



LEARNING FROM



This month we have learning from two separate complaint outcomes to consider from Investigations into complaints made about our services or practice

This complaint went to Stage 2 of the complaints process and so was independently investigated; it was made by an adoptive parent who adopted her child who had a number of complex needs and the adoption broke down; this resulted in a number of changes of places the young person lived including periods of returning to her adoptive parent's care. While several of the elements of the complaint were not upheld there was some key learning from this complex and difficult situation.

Recommendation

The recommendation would be to ensure that management are more robust, provide more management oversight and more challenge when decisions are being made. These discussions should also be recorded on the child's records.

It is clear that the young person had a number of interventions in place to support her but she did not always see the benefit of this professional intervention. At times this was reactive

.CSC should ensure that a child's identity is fully considered/addressed in any assessment or plans.

Learning

It is important that Managers maintain good oversight of decision making and are robust in their challenge to ensure that this is the correct course of action. These discussions should be recorded on the child's file so that the rationale about how and why decisions are made are clear to all.

This young person was dual heritage but this was not always clear in the records and in the assessments. Ethnicity is an important part of any child's identity and needs to be considered in a child or young person's assessment of needs so that there is an understanding if there are any issues arising for the child or young person as a result of ethnicity/racial identity such as cultural needs, bullying, etc.

All assessments should consider a child's ethnicity and cultural identity.

It is recommended that CSC should ensure that issues such as loss and separation should be considered earlier and not just focus on a child/young person's behaviour.

Loss and separation are to be considered for all children when undertaking assessments and consider what the impact is on the child or young person and whether it links to their behaviour which could be as a result of trauma.

This should also be included in a child's care plan.

The Workforce and Learning Service offers 3 modules on Trauma:

- Trauma—what is it?
- Trauma—Informed Practice
- Trauma—looking after yourself.

This forms part of our mandatory training so if you have not yet completed this please book on through Evolve.

CSC should ensure that as part of the case records a full chronology is written and updated accordingly

It is difficult to understand a child or young persons journey/life if there is not a comprehensive chronology available. Our practice standards say that we will update the chronology with key, or significant events including the impact on the child or young person.

We also have practice guidance in Tri-x about how to complete a chronology and there is a training course available which is part of our mandatory training offer so please ensure that you have completed this.

Remember that back catalogues of the Practice and Learning Bulleting can be accessed in Tri-x





Development Opportunities for January 2023

10th January – NEW Pre-birth Assessment – Session for Team Managers

Practice Educator training - 10th, 12th, 17th, 19th and 24th January (participants to attend all 5 sessions)

10th January - Little Minds Matter: Infant Mental Health Awareness (<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/little-minds-matter-training-dates-218079>)

ASYE Assessor training – 11th, 12th, 18th and 25th January 2023 (participants to attend all 4 sessions)

11th January - Early Help Assessment and SMART Planning

12th January – Understanding Risk and Safety Planning

13th January – Trauma 3 (Taking Care of Ourselves)

19th January – Assessment, Analysis and Planning

19th January - Little Minds Matter: Infant Mental Health in Action (<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/little-minds-matter-training-dates-218079>)

24th January - The Team Around the Child and Measuring Impact

24th January - Research in Practice: The Route to Permanence and Stability (3 x 90 minute sessions available)

26th January - Workplace Supervisor training

26th January - Engaging Families

31st January – Parent Assess for Managers