

2022

# RETHINK FORMULATION GUIDE

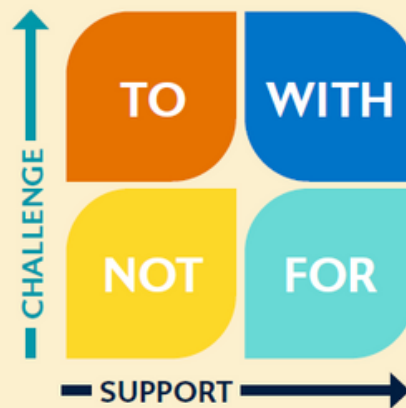
## GETTING STARTED

Being curious about what we know helps us to work out what is going on. The Rethink Formulation uses a commonly available model of case formulation to help us organise information and structure our conversations to reach a shared understanding from which to base our plans.

### THE SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW

We believe that by working WITH families we can help and support them to make positive change where and when needed.

We will give high support (listening, encouraging and helping) and high challenge (setting limits and boundaries) that help families own decisions.



High Challenge and Low Support = Punitive/authoritarian = Doing things TO people  
Low Challenge and Low Support = Neglectful/not interpreted = NOT doing much of anything  
High Support and Low Challenge = Permissive/rescue/makes excuses = Doing things FOR people  
High Support and High Challenge = Restorative/Authoritative/Relational = Doing things WITH people

The 4 Ways of Being is a window through which we, and families, perceive our work. Are we doing 'to' them, doing 'for' them, working 'with' them or 'not' doing at all?

Only when we are able to work together and provide both high challenge and high support, are we truly working with families. Working 'with' creates effective relationships between families and services that lead to sustainable change.

## RETHINK IS A WAY OF MAKING SENSE OF THINGS

Formulation supports us as agencies and practitioners to have a shared language and way we talk about families and consider practice.

When we complete a formulation on our own or with colleagues and peers from different agencies and settings we can learn so much! People from different organisations and backgrounds ask different questions in different ways which can support us to think differently about our practice and our approach to work with children, young people and families.

Often, as practitioners, we will use different terms or describe presenting issues differently. Formulation allows us to explore this with one another and reach a shared understanding with a deeper, more meaningful analysis of risk and need.

## START YOUR FORMULATION WITH YOUR 6P'S DISCUSSION

### You will need:

**Someone to share a case.** This can be **anyone** who is currently working with a family, child or young person where there are presenting issues or concerns that we might as professionals be struggling to respond to. It doesn't have to be complex or over complicated and can be one particular issue a family are facing or you are struggling to work with. You can also complete a formulation on your own - it is a way of reflecting and thinking and does not need to be an 'event'.

### Someone to take notes:

It is helpful to write down the discussion as this supports in keeping everyone on track in terms of which factor is being discussed or considered. We have provided a template for you to use to record your Rethink formulation.

If you are completing a formulation in a group or as part of a meeting you will need **People to support and contribute to the formulation:**

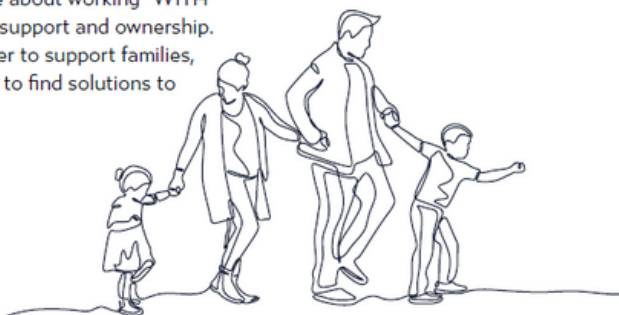
Formulation is not a spectator sport, we all have a role to play! Whilst you may not be the person sharing a case, it is important that you give your full attention to the discussion.

The intention is for the case sharer to share details about the family and the current concern/concerns that we might be stuck with. To do this **it is good practice to start the formulation with the case sharer providing information about the 'Presenting Issues and Predicting Factors'**.

Other people in the group should ask questions to support explore each of the other 6P's. You can start by asking the question that is directly under the title of each box as a way to support the discussion to get going!

### HIGH SUPPORT, HIGH CHALLENGE

Our approach will be about working "WITH"  
- Maximum growth, support and ownership.  
We will work together to support families,  
relatives and friends to find solutions to  
problems.

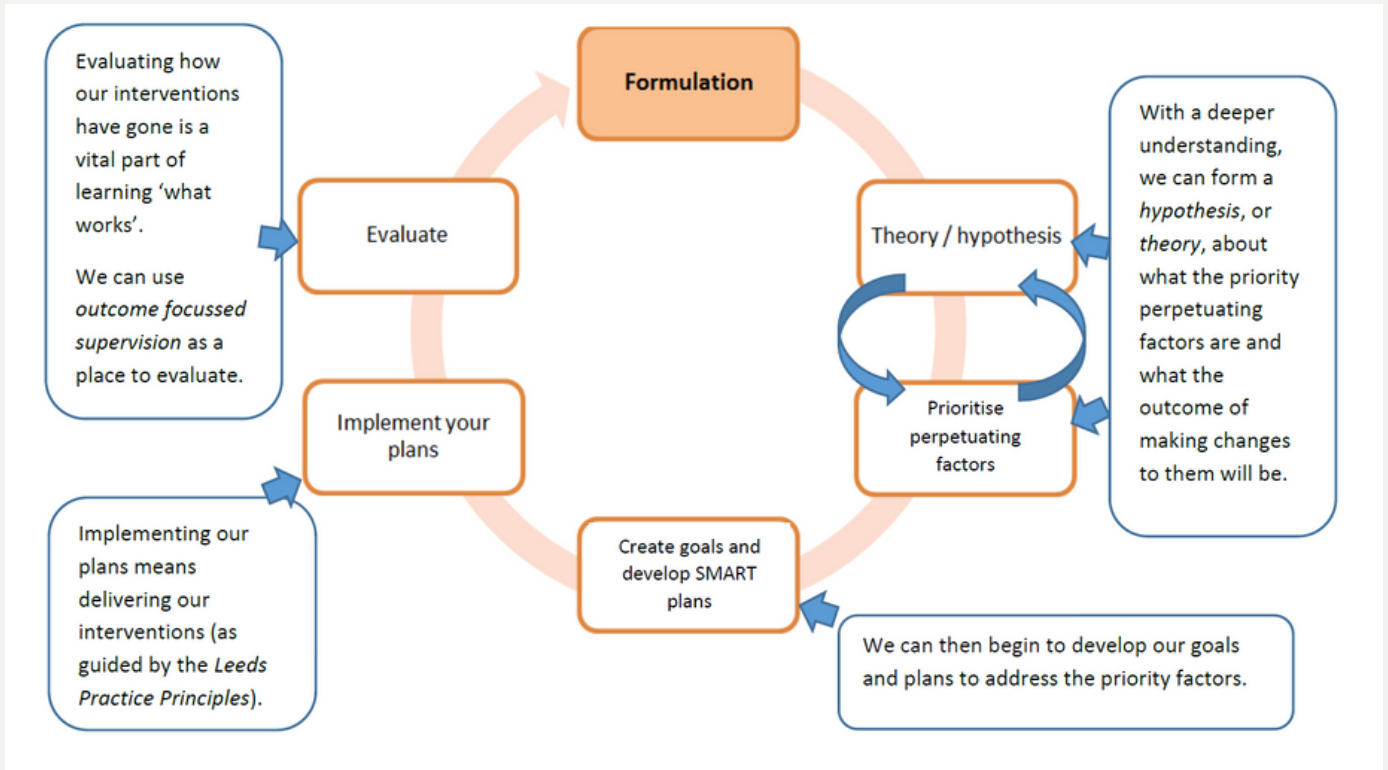


The rethink formulation is an opportunity to challenge and support each other. It is important that challenge is offered with the intention of building on the discussion and considering practice and should NEVER blame the individual actions or choices of a family member or practitioner.

We are trying to understand *why* things are the way they are to work towards a way forward together. We are not looking to assign blame.

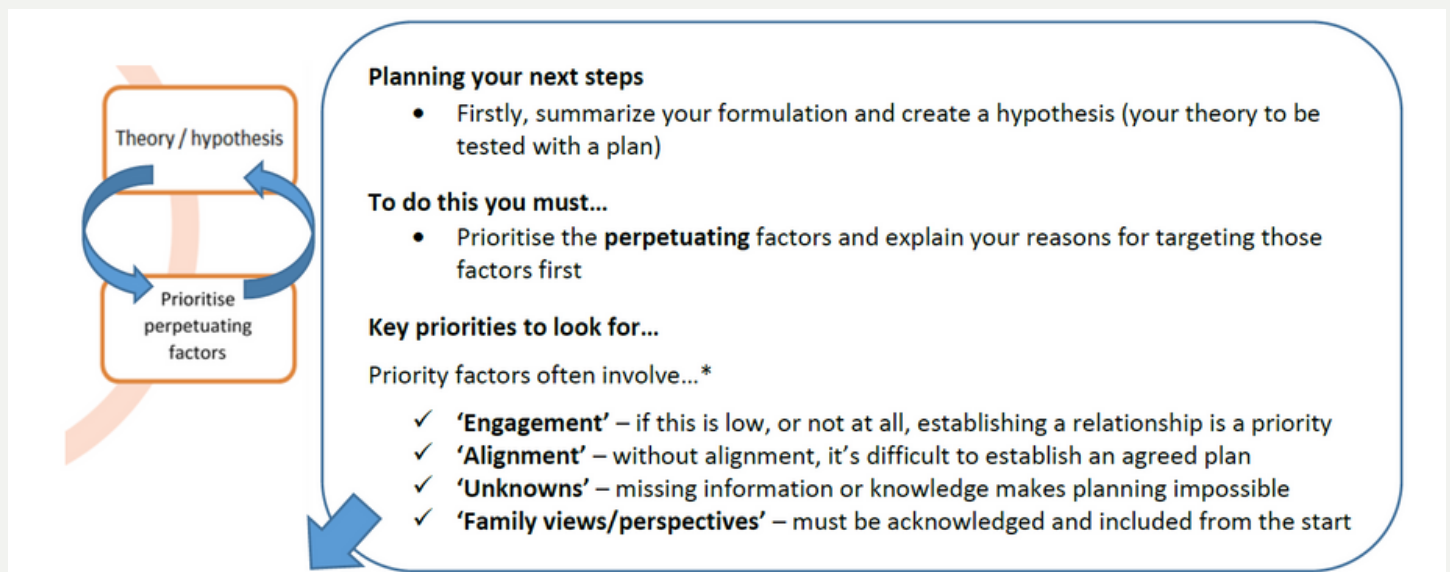
## THE RETHINK PROCESS

Formulating is the starting point of a circular and continuous process that guides the interventions that follow.



## PLANNING FROM YOUR RETHINK FORMULATION

Once you have considered your 6Ps and/or had your 6Ps discussion, you are well on your way to your formulation. Your formulation is completed with your hypothesis, or theory, of what your 6Ps evidence has told you.



*\*Important Note:* Next steps that increase engagement and alignment, and include a family's desired outcomes, result in shared knowledge and understanding. They are much more likely to promote working 'with' the family.

Overlooking such factors, and jumping to interventions without these prerequisites being in place, increases the likelihood of an unsuccessful plan. For example, an intervention is unlikely to lead to sustainable change if we have been unable to engage the family or reach alignment with the plan in the first place.

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD HYPOTHESIS?

A good hypothesis creates a logical link between your formulation and your next steps. It summarises your understanding of what's happening, what needs to change and how it could be changed.

*Example: Summarize predisposing factors; presenting issues; predicting factors; precipitating factors; perpetuating factors; protective factors (then conclude with something like)... Therefore, 'if we can support change with (...priority perpetuating factors), by building on (...protective factors), we may/will see a change in (...presenting issue)'.*



## DEVELOPING NEXT STEPS (ACTIONS)

Your formulation will not give you all the answers. It will give you a starting point.

Therefore, your next steps are not an over-arching plan that tackles everything. They are small steps needed to begin to address your prioritised perpetuating factor(s) and build on any supportive protective factors.

After thinking about, and planning your next steps in this way, you should be able to walk back from your outcome to your presenting issue and explain how your next steps will support you along the way.

Then it's time to implement your plans! Your next steps should be realistic and tangible actions you can take. these will help you explore your perpetuating factors and work towards proving or disproving your hypothesis.

Formulation is an evolving, live process. You can build upon your rethink formulation as you implement your plans and deepen your understanding about the presenting issue.

**Newcastle has partnered with Leeds City Council and the DfE's Strengthening Families Protecting Children Programme to embed relational and restorative practice as our approach to our work with children, young people and their families. Rethink Formulation is a key component of the restorative and relational approach in practice and it is through collaboration with Leeds that these documents and practice guides have been developed. These documents are for anyone who works with babies, children, young people and their families.**