

HOPE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

**MODULAR
SYSTEMIC
INTERVENTIONS**

Targeting abusive and neglectful parenting and impairment of children's health and development

**An Introductory
Overview**

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South London and Maudsley 
NHS Foundation Trust



Hope for Children and Families
Targeting abusive and neglectful parenting
and the associated impairments of children's health and development

Modular Systemic Interventions (MSI): Building on Strengths, Modifying Difficulties
A Resource Pack for Practitioners
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1 Introduction

Child maltreatment is not a disorder as such, but a context in which children and young people are exposed to abusive or neglectful parenting. When maltreatment has occurred, the emphasis needs to be on a process of assessment and intervention to prevent the recurrence of child maltreatment and to promote recovery from associated impairments suffered by children and young people.

The development of *Hope for Children and Families: Modular Systemic Interventions* (HfCF) is part of an overall approach to evidence-based assessments of parenting and family life, the analysis of the impact of harm to the child, the risks of future harm and the prospects for intervention. The *HfCF* approach provides an evidence-based approach to testing the capacity of parents to modify abusive and neglectful parenting and work with the professionals to reverse the emotional, behavioural and developmental impairment of children and young people. The resource pack is designed for use by a wide range of practitioners and aims to provide the building blocks and a toolkit for developing foundation skills in intervention. The resource pack adopts a modular system, each module providing a step-wise approach to delivering an evidence-based intervention.

This introduction outlines:

- the core principles underpinning the *HfCF* approach
- the definitions of child abuse and neglect, and overall aims for intervention on which *HfCF* is based
- the location of *HfCF* in the wider context of assessment, analysis and planning with children and families
- the role of proactive case management and contraindications for using the *HfCF* approach
- the research and evidence base informing the development of *HfCF*
- the steps towards constructing *HfCF* and the structure and content of the Resource pack
- Research and General Therapeutic Factors which support effective interventions using *HfCF*
- models of change and associated skills used in *HfCF* to promote effective outcomes
- guidance on how to use the resource pack.

2 Core principles underpinning HfCF

The title *Hope for Children and Families* indicates that in contexts where there has been significant abuse or neglect, practitioners need to be aware of the potential for harm but also recognise potential strengths. A unifying factor is the need to motivate and support parents who have often themselves suffered significant disadvantage and adversity to address abusive and neglectful parenting and the harmful impact on children and young people.

The subtitle *Modular Systemic Interventions* reflects the self-contained modular nature of the approach, which integrates a variety of practice elements distilled from evidence-based research on effective outcomes in working with families where there has been abusive and neglectful parenting. It is 'systemic' because of the need to take a broad view of the interlinking parent, child, family and community factors.

Children need to be helped to recover from harmful emotional, behavioural and developmental impairment, and their needs are central. This requires the development of a *multidisciplinary team around the child*. The *HfCF* approach recognises the central role played by front-line practitioners across a range of disciplines, professionals and others (e.g. foster carers and adoptive parents) and aims to provide a toolkit of foundation skills and interventions which can be used in an integrated way by those forming the team around the child.

The essence of the *HfCF* approach is to provide a method that fits each of the main forms of abuse and associated impairment and can be adapted to meet a variety of different situations, including multiple forms of maltreatment.

3 The wider context of assessment, analysis and planning with children and families

The *HfCF* approach fits with the wider evidence-based approaches developed by Child & Family Training (Cox and Bentovim 2000) for use by practitioners working with children and families and linked to the Assessment Framework (Department of Health et al. 2000).

3.1 Model of assessment, analysis and planning interventions, and identifying and measuring outcomes

The seven-stage model of assessment, analysis and planning interventions in the safeguarding and child protection context covers:

- Stage 1: Identification of harm and initial safeguarding
- Stage 2: Making a full assessment of the child's needs, parenting capacity, family and environmental factors, and creating a chronology
- Stage 3: Establishing the nature and level of harm and harmful effects on the child
- Stage 4: Systemic analysis of patterns of harm and protection
- Stage 5: Child protection decision making and care planning: the safeguarding analysis
- Stage 6: Developing a plan of intervention to include therapeutic work in a context of safety and protection from harm
- Stage 7: Identifying outcomes and measures for intervention.

3.2 Evidence-based assessment tools

A range of standardised, evidence-based assessment tools and approaches have been developed to support assessment, analysis and planning, including:

- assessing parenting and the family life of children using The HOME Inventory (Cox and Walker 2002) and The Family Pack of Questionnaires and Scales (Cox and Bentovim 2000)
- assessing families in complex child care cases using The Family Assessment (Bentovim and Bingley Miller 2001)
- communication with children using the In My Shoes Interview (Calam et al. 2001)
- using The Attachment Style Interview (Bifulco et al. 2008) in adoption, fostering and child care contexts
- child protection decision making and intervention approaches – The Safeguarding Assessment and Analysis Framework (SAAF) (Bentovim, et al. 2009, Bentovim et al. 2013).

HfCF has been developed to provide intervention for children and families when this is deemed appropriate.

4 The role of proactive case management in successful outcomes and contraindications for using HfCF

4.1 Proactive case management

The work of Farmer and Lutman (2012) in the neglect field demonstrates that a proactive case management approach is required for a successful outcome. This finding applies to intervention with all forms of maltreatment. The most effective results are obtained when there is a proactive approach to case management throughout the process of work.

Key was the recognition and continuing recognition from before birth and following about the child's welfare, with firm plans to protect and plan for the future. Parents were given the chance to show they could parent their children safely, but action was taken if they could not. Care proceedings and child protection plans were used effectively to protect children, bring about increased cooperation from parents or plan for permanence.

Proactive approaches were used whether or not there were courts or child protection procedures involved. This is the basic approach advocated in this resource pack, to provide hope for children and families against a background of clear protection of the child's welfare. Lutman and Farmer also found that an approach that is initially proactive, but later becomes passive and laissez-faire was ineffective. A passive case management approach was also ineffective as a result of lack of direction and planning, no permanence planning and insufficient clarity with parents about what needed to change, by when and what the consequences would be if no change took place.

4.2 When and when not to use the HfCF approach: the importance of careful assessment, analysis and planning

The aim of this resource pack is to provide resources for front-line practitioners to deal with the range of problems they encounter when working with parents who are responsible for abusive and neglectful actions impairing their children's health and development.

The resource pack contains a range of modules of intervention. These interventions include work with parents individually and with children and young people; with children and young people individually and with parents/carers; and with family groups.

The interventions cover a wide spectrum of levels of harm and risk of future harm to a child; levels of severity and complexity of parenting problems; and individual, family and environmental factors. They also cover different ages and stages of development of children. Interventions need to be chosen to suit the individual child.

Not all interventions are suitable for all levels of risk to a child or complexity of parental, family and environmental problems. Some interventions may increase the risk of harm to a child if used inappropriately. Interventions should be carefully planned and form part of the wider child protection plan for the child.

It is essential to make an accurate assessment and analysis of the profile of harm and risk of future harm to the child and the prospects for change as the basis for planning interventions. Clear and measurable outcomes should be identified for the child's health and development; parenting difficulties; and the individual, family and environmental factors which are impacting on parenting capacity and the child.

In some situations the level of risk of future harm to the child and the severity and complexity of problems encountered by the parents and family mean that the HfCF approach is not appropriate and that specialist

help is required. Some abusive and neglectful parenting behaviour, for example when a parent shows serious sexual behaviour towards a child within the family circle, require a highly specialist level of intervention. Some children and young people, as a result of extensive toxic stress and trauma, have symptoms of such severity that they may show self-harming behaviour, or aggression and sexually harmful behaviour at such a level that specialist services are required. The severity of some adult individual and family problems, for example relating to adult mental health, substance misuse and domestic violence and family conflict, is such that specialist services need to be involved.

Managing the boundary between what practitioners can tackle and what needs to be referred requires skilled management and supervision. Consultation with and referral to specialist colleagues and multi-agency planning form a crucial part of safeguarding work.

4.3 Specific indications

- *When specific risks of impairment have been identified to an unborn child* – e.g. when a parent is young and has been subjected to abusive or neglectful parenting; a previous child has been harmed; a parent has mental health, alcohol or drugs misuse problems; a parent is living in a context of violence – the aim is to work with parents through the pregnancy, birth and early months, fostering attachment and good-quality parenting.
- *When there is evidence of abusive and neglectful parenting and of potential or actual impairment to a child's health and development* – e.g. identified by early intervention teams, health service surveillance, in a family centre or as a result of a child protection investigation – the aim is to work with parents to modify abusive and neglectful parenting, and to ensure that children's health and development is supported.
- Interventions based on specific modules targeting abusive and neglectful parenting may need the support of a child protection plan or a court order. Collaborative work may be required with mental health, alcohol or substance misuse teams, or specialist services – e.g. for parents responsible for serious sexual abuse or induced illness.
- Children whose health and development has been impaired may be living at home or in alternative care, and may display traumatic symptomatology or disruptive behaviour. Interventions utilize modules focused on various impairments, delivered by a variety of workers from social care, child and adolescent mental health (CAMHS), fostering and adoption services, youth offending teams (YOTS) or educational services, in collaboration with a supportive carer – a non-abusive parent or alternative carer.
- Family intervention teams (FITs) working with families with multiple problems can enhance their approach to improving family functioning by delivering modules focused on aspects of parenting, family and community relationships, and impairments of health or development.

5 The research and evidence base informing the development of HfCF

5.1 Research on interventions to prevent child Maltreatment

When interventions to prevent the recurrence of child maltreatment and associated impairment are examined (MacMillan et al. 2009) it is clear there is little consistency in approach and that:

- The range of effective interventions is extensive – e.g. psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioural, video feedback
- The range of foci is wide – e.g. individual, parent and family
- Different approaches incorporate effective elements of other interventions – e.g. trauma-focused interventions
- Similar models are applied to differing forms of maltreatment successfully.

The practitioner has to choose between competing effective models, which require differing levels of skill and training. To be competent working across the maltreatment field would require many years of complex training. Inevitably practitioners often choose one approach. This may limit the capacity of practitioners and agencies to meet the needs of children and families who may well have complex maltreatment patterns and multiple needs.

5.2 The development of the common elements approach

To confront this issue, Barth et al. (2011), based on the work of Chorpita and Daleiden (2009), advocated the value of a *common practice elements* framework, which conceptualises practice in terms of generic components which cut across many distinct treatment protocols, identifying specific clinical procedures common to evidence-based practices (also see Garland et al. 2008; Wampold 1997).

Chorpita and Daleiden (2009) distilled the practice elements of over 600 evidence-based interventions in the child mental health field, and developed the MATCH protocols for the treatment of common mental health problems. (Weisz and Chorpita 2009). The intervention is delivered in a modular form, bases on consensus studies of best practice, providing a detailed step-by-step approach and guidance on how to meet the changing complex needs of children and families.

A similar conclusion was reached by Kolko et al. (2011) who evaluated the sustainability of evidence-based practice in a specialist child protection centre. Staff had been trained in a variety of approaches including trauma-focused CBT. He noted there were 'core components that are common to these approaches'. Given the significant investment required to train in specialised approaches, the value of a 'common elements framework' approach was seen as a potentially valuable alternative to explore.

5.3 The development of the common factors framework

An additional approach is provided by the common factors framework (Duncan et al. 2010) a complement to the common elements approach. This approach asserts that the personal and interpersonal components of intervention (e.g. alliance, client motivation, therapist factors) common to all interventions are responsible for treatment outcomes to a significant extent.

5.4 The development of an evidence-based, modular, step-by-step approach

The aim is the development of an evidence-based modular, step-by-step approach targets abusive and neglectful parenting and associated impairments in children and young people who have suffered harm. The intervention approach needs to be accessible to the wide range of front-line practitioners who work with children and families in the community, including when there are concerns about abusive parenting and harm to children. These include those who work in physical and mental health and social care, and educational practitioners. Such approaches are emerging as a complement to the more complex treatment approaches described in this resource pack.

5.5 Application of the Chorpita approach to the field of child maltreatment

5.5.1 Common practice elements

The specific forms of neglectful and abusive parenting and associated impairments that needed to be addressed include physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and emotional abuse, which are the recognised forms of abuse in the UK.

Practice elements of a number of the studies to prevent the recurrence of abuse and associated impairment had already been analysed by Chorpita and Daleiden as part of their automated review of random control treatments (PracticeWise LLC 2012).

The approach Chorpita and Daleiden (2009) took was to develop a 'glossary' describing practice elements – such as 'providing tangible rewards', 'personal safety skills', constructed from gold standard intervention studies which had demonstrated superior outcomes in random control trials.

An overall intervention contains a number of practice elements. There are a reasonable number of well-conducted outcome studies in the physical and sexual abuse field, and a limited number in the fields of emotional abuse, neglect and exposure to domestic violence. Well-conducted studies were added even if they did not reach the gold standard, as were consensus studies of best practice. The information was categorised with a focus on interventions that targeted: abusive and neglectful parenting; the impact on children and young people; and the family as a whole. (Bentovim and Elliott 2014)

6 General therapeutic factors that support effective interventions using HfCF

Research has highlighted the importance of a range of general therapeutic factors that have a positive impact in work on achieving change with children and families. These skills and approaches are central to using HfCF effectively to achieve successful outcomes. They include:

- Developing a capacity to orientate and motivate parents and children through active social engagements, convincing families that the worker is aware of both the difficult factors to be confronted and hopeful elements to be built on. Disorganised attachments can lead to avoidance, distancing, rejection or attempts to control – self-protective responses which need to be understood and responded to appropriately.
- Warmth and responsiveness help build alliances. This is the fundamental bedrock of being able to carry out the difficult tasks associated with challenge and change. There needs to be a balance between supporting the family's mode of coping and maintaining sufficient challenge to achieve goals and promote a sense of hopefulness within the family. Using the authority of the child protection system, courts can be of assistance in maintaining challenge in the face of parental resistance.
- Involvement in a consistent process of work activates attachment systems, generates a sense of security, and encourages a capacity to explore difficult areas of individual and family life. A virtual circle is created, promoting reflection and thought about feelings rather than being caught in defensive resistance and denial.
- It is essential to be sensitive to cultural contexts, viewing the family through an appropriate cultural lens.
- It is also essential to be sensitive to the impact of physical and learning disabilities, mental health problems, and domestic violence and substance abuse on the capacity of parents and children to engage in intervention work. Managing the pace and approach is essential to engage effectively (Cleaver et al. 2011).
- Establishing a supportive multi-disciplinary team around the child – the team around the child – is an essential element to working effectively. The team may include the practitioner, agencies providing services for parents in their own right, supervision and support, and is an essential ingredient in the creation of a therapeutic milieu.

7 Steps towards constructing HfCF and the structure and content of the resource pack

7.1 Integrating information on practice elements and interventions to create HfCF

The question was how to bring together this information to provide a coherent resource pack for practitioners across the spectrum to target abusive and neglectful parenting associated impairment.

The MATCH-ADTC approach developed by Chorpita and Weisz (2009) includes modules relevant to anxiety, depression, trauma and conduct difficulties characteristic of the impairments of children and young people exposed to maltreatment. These and other sources provided models which helped shape the modules included in this Resource pack.

7.2 Steps towards constructing the resource pack

Consideration was given whether to develop a resource pack for specific forms of maltreatment or across the range of abusive and neglectful parenting. Research on intervention, as described above, focuses on specific forms of maltreatment. In practice there are always combinations of neglectful and abusive parenting and a wide variety of responses to exposure to abusive action, depending on a variety of children's developmental and individual factors. Successful interventions bring together various combinations of significant practice elements, many of which are utilised across the child mental health approach. We have gathered together a set of practice elements into practice guidelines through a set of modules to be used across the field of maltreatment to fit the specific needs of parents and children.

A group of practitioners from the voluntary and statutory sectors, with long experience of using evidence-based approaches in the maltreatment field, provided the 'local experience' to order the practice elements which emerged from the research.

The aim was to develop a series of modules which could target the profile of abusive and neglectful parenting, the associated impairment of children and young people's health and development, and the individual family and environmental factors which establish and reinforce negative parenting.

7.3 Using the Assessment Framework to map interventions in child maltreatment

The Assessment Framework (Department of Health et al. 2000) (Figure 1) provides a helpful map (as in the Children Act 1989) of parenting capacity and the developmental needs of children, and the family and environmental factors that impact on children's health and development.

Figures 2 and 3 are based on the Assessment Framework, but use descriptors of its various dimensions. This approach to operationalising the Assessment Framework was described by Bentovim et al. (2009), elaborating each of the dimensions and providing a series of descriptors of parental strengths, the positive responses of children, and aspects of family and environment which can in turn helpfully influence parents' capacity to meet their children's needs – a positive systemic pattern.

In Figure 2 the attributes of parenting capacity are more likely to be associated with a child's good physical healthcare, adequate growth, and protection from physical and sexual harm. The family and environmental factors are also more likely to be associated with a positive cycle of functioning.

In Figure 3 abusive and neglectful parenting and the associated impairment of children and young people are linked with negative descriptors of parenting, children and young people's impairments, and family and environmental factors that have a negative impact on parenting.

Figure 1 The Assessment Framework



Figure 2 Parental strengths and children’s resilience



Figure 3 Abusive and neglectful parenting and associated impairment of children and young people



8 The structure and content of the resource pack

The resource pack aims to work with children and families where there are sufficient strength and resilience factors to justify intervention, to test whether a profile of more positive parenting and children and young person's health development can be promoted to achieve the five outcomes set out in the Children Act 2004. Elements of the resource pack can be used at different stages – e.g in the phase of 'early' help when there are concerns about potentially abusive and neglectful parenting, or when there has been a separation and the child or young person is 'looked after', and intervention is required to address the impairments of children and young people's health and development.

Figure 4 demonstrates the range of modules that have been developed to modify the 'profile of harm'.

In each module of intervention you will find:

- the goals
- a briefing for the practitioner – the step-by-step approach to achieve the goals
- materials to support the development of therapeutic work
- tools to assess the success of the intervention for the child
- guidance on the skills required to deliver the module and how the modules can be integrated.

8.1 The modules in more detail

The resource pack is divided into areas, based on the assessment framework focusing on:

- The initial stages of work
- Working with parenting – modifying difficulties, promoting capacities
- Working with the impairment of children's health and development
- Working to modify parental stress and improve family relationships.

In practice, the modules are combined to match the particular profile of harmful processes which drive the problem areas and build on strengths which can potentially promote better outcomes for children. The following describes the 'Library of Modules'

Figure 4 Targeting abusive and neglectful parenting and associated harmful impacts: Modular systemic interventions



8.2 Library of Modules

Initial stages of work:

- Assessment, analysis, establishing a profile for intervention
- Engaging families, parents and children: Promoting hopefulness
- Goal setting

Modules -working with parents: modifying difficulties, promoting capacities

Promoting good quality care

- Identify and understand children's physical and emotional needs
- Providing good quality basic care and attention to health needs
- Nutritional care and attention to faltering weight

Promoting protection and safety in the home and community:

- Psycho-education -How abusive parenting affects children's development
- Ensuring safety and protection, preventing harm in the home and community
- Promoting safety for children harmed sexually in the family or community

Promoting positive emotional care

- Promoting attachment, attuned responsiveness and positive relationships; – younger children
- Promoting attachment, attuned responsiveness and positive relationships – older children – one on one time

Promoting development of skills

- Promoting development early and later – play, communication, stimulation

Promoting Positive parenting: Guidance and Boundaries

- Praise
- Attention and ignoring
- Giving effective instructions
- Rewards
- Shaping challenging behaviour
- Modifying disruptive behaviour
- Working with children and young people responsible for sexually harmful behaviour

Modules supporting children, young people and their carers to address adverse emotional and traumatic outcomes

Generic interventions

- Developing a child-centred approach
- Psycho-education about the effects of maltreatment
- Safety Planning
- Coping Skills
- Relaxing and calming
- Describing and monitoring feelings
- Activity selection
- Problem solving

Problem specific interventions

- Working with anxiety problems
- Working with mood problems
- Working with trauma problems
- Maintenance and building resilience

Modules supporting children, young people and carers to address adverse disruptive behaviour

- Enhancing children's competence: 'the good life'
- Coping with disruptive behaviour
- Assertiveness training
- Working with children under 12 who have displayed Harmful sexual behaviour
- Working with adolescents (age 12+) who have displayed Harmful sexual behaviour
- Developing positive relationships with family and friends

Working to modify parental stress and improve family and community relationships

- Identifying and modifying sources of stress associated with abusive and neglectful parenting
- Modifying negative perceptions of children and young people
- Promoting healthy family functioning and problem solving skills
- Managing conflict and dysfunction in family life
- Reconciling and clarifying the impact of abusive and neglectful parenting
- Support networking for families

9 Guidance on how to use the resource pack

Targeting abusive and neglectful parenting and the associated impairment of children's health and development is achieved through the use of a modular systemic approach building on parenting strengths and modifying difficulties. Earlier in the Introduction an account is provided of the way practice elements distilled from evidence-based research on effective outcomes in working with families where there has been abusive and neglectful parenting have been selected and developed. There are just over 40 modules, which represent a collection of independent therapeutic procedures that can be flexibly arranged to guide a course of individualised evidence-based intervention for children, parents and their families. As well as tackling the predominant form of abusive or neglectful parenting, the modules address the varying impacts on children and young people's health and development.

9.2 Practitioner Guides and Themes

The intervention modules fit around the Assessment Framework configuration, and can be chosen to meet the needs of families where children have been exposed to different forms of abusive and neglectful parenting. Although separate forms of abuse are described, in practice there are invariably varying combinations of emotionally abusive and neglectful parenting, and associated physical and sexual abuse. Emotional abuse is associated with the attribution and perception of a parent that a child is deserving of punishment, harsh parenting or sexual action. Neglect with the failure of the parent to perceive children's physical, emotional or health needs. Therefore the Practitioner needs to establish the profile of harm using the assessment framework model, and relate the various modules to meet those situations. It has been helpful to conceptualise the material into a number of themes for training practitioners, and to develop Practitioner Guides which are designed to meet the common patterns of abusive and neglectful parenting and associated impairment of children and young people's health and development

9.3 Intervention modules

The next section of the resource pack presents the intervention modules themselves. Practitioner briefing modules introduce specific complex modules, such as developing secure attachments, or to introduce a group of related intervention modules, for example around behaviour management. There is also a more extensive practitioner module for conditions that will be less familiar to many front-line practitioners, such as working with sexually harmful behaviours and family work.

The steps of each procedure are outlined in a two-column format, with a checklist on the left-hand side and notes for practitioners, suggested scripts and activities on the right. These provide specific strategies for approaching the steps of the procedure, and are meant to help practitioners who are getting to know the approach. Once practitioners have become acquainted and have used the approaches on a number of occasions, then the information on the left hand side will act as prompts rather than needing the full information. Tips on ways to maximise the delivery of modules are included.

Modules focusing on providing a safe environment and on good quality care need to be undertaken in the home; other modules can be undertaken at home or in the practitioner's work setting. Family modules are explicitly focused on all family members, and can be undertaken at home or in a work setting.

Some modules offer special cases information, which explains how to adapt the material for particular presentations. For example in the section describing sexual abuse of a child by a parent, there is also information about when a child is abused by a close member of the family.

9.4 Handouts, practitioner notes, worksheets and records

The third section of the resource pack contains all the supplemental materials required for each intervention: *worksheets* – exercises for completion by the child, parent or family members; handouts which provide information for children, young people and their parents and carers and *records*, which are formats used for ratings of any of the measures to track progress. It is vital that regular recordings of key variables are made.

9.5 Practitioner Guides and Training themes

Theme 1 -Familiarisation Day

- Introducing the HfCF model through a case presentation, establishing the profile of harm.
- Using the Practitioner guides to understand what modules would fit the profile of harm

Theme 2 -Initial stages of work: Assessment, analysis, engagement and goal setting

- Assessment, analysis, decision making, establishing a profile for intervention
- Engaging families, parents and children: Promoting hopefulness
- Goal setting, establishing a protection plan , a case specific plan and outcomes to be achieved

Theme 3 Working with parents: Targeting abusive and neglectful parenting

- Psycho-education how abusive and neglectful parenting affects impacts on children's physical and emotional needs
- Coping with stress linked with abusive parenting
- Coping with negative perceptions of their children
- Reconciling the impact of abusive and neglectful parenting

4d Positive parenting: managing difficult behaviour

- Positive parenting managing difficult behaviour
- Praise
- Attention and ignoring
- Giving effective instructions
- Rewards
- Shaping challenging behaviour

Theme 5 Working with children young people and their carers to address adverse outcomes of health and development:

5a Working with Emotional and traumatic responses – generic interventions

- Developing a child-centred approach
- Psychoeducation about the effects of maltreatment
- Safety Planning
- Coping Skills
- Relaxing and calming
- Describing and monitoring feelings
- Activity selection
- Problem solving

**Theme 4 Working with parents and carers:
Promoting children and young people's health,
development and well-being**

**4a Understanding development and promoting
development of skills**

- Identify and understand children's physical and emotional needs
- Promoting early development -
- Promoting later development

**4b Meeting children and young people's safety
and physical needs**

- Ensuring safety and preventing harm
- Providing good quality basic care and nutrition
- Nutritional care and attention to faltering weight and failure to thrive

**4c Meeting children and young people's
emotional needs**

- Promoting attachment, attuned responsiveness and positive relationships; – younger children
- Promoting attachment, attuned responsiveness and positive relationships – older children – one on one time

**5b Working with emotional and traumatic
responses –problem specific interventions**

- Working with anxiety problems
- Working with mood problems
- Working with trauma problems
- Maintenance and building resilience

5 c Working with adverse disruptive behaviour:

- Enhancing children's competence: 'the good life'
- Coping with disruptive behaviour
- Assertiveness training
- Developing positive relationships with family and friends

Theme 6 Working with families

- Promoting healthy family functioning, family communication and problem solving
- Managing conflict and dysfunction in family life
- Support networking for families

Theme 7 Working with sexual abuse

- Promoting safety for children harmed sexually in family or by a trusted member of the community
- Parents work with children's harmful sexual behaviours HSB
- Supporting parents to work with children's harmful sexual behaviour
- Working with adolescents (age 12+) who have displayed HSB

Theme 1: Familiarisation Day

Familiarising trainees with the HfCF approach was achieved through presenting a case study material through the Ward family and referencing the relevant practitioner briefings, modules and tools linking to the presented case study material. Trainees are encouraged to make observations, carry out analyses, establish profiles and examine the various practitioner briefings and guides to see which themes and modules might apply, and begin to practice some of the main steps, scripts and activities to see how they might apply to the videoed case material

Theme 2: Initial Stages of Work

The goal of this theme is to use the approach illustrated through a videoed 'given' case and apply this approach to the practitioners own cases. Small groups are encouraged to choose an appropriate case, preferably early enough not to have embarked on a process of work, but with sufficient knowledge to carry out the process of analysis, establishing a profile, making a decision about potential harm and prospects for intervention. This Guide provides the practitioner with information about the process of assessment and analysis, establishing a profile for intervention, engagement and goal setting.

Further briefings introduce the approaches to engaging families, parents and carers: promoting hopefulness, and goal setting. Important aspects of this process include guidance for practitioners in discussing various forms of child maltreatment with families, developing a safety plan, establishing intervention goals, establishing a management plan. Associated with the Initial Stages is the development of a case specific format to record the initial stages of work, collaborative goals and outcomes and suggests measures to assess change.

Theme 3: Targeting abusive and neglectful parenting.

This is the key theme to address emotionally abusive parenting associated with negative perceptions of children and young people justifying harsh parenting and the humiliation associated with physical and sexual abuse. Practitioner Briefings include an account of how abusive parenting affects children's development, emotional and physical through a psychoeducation approach, and the approach to working with parents to modify abusive and neglectful responses.

Using case videoed case and practitioners own cases practice sessions explore guidance on psycho-education, recognising the possible effects of the impact of abusive and neglectful parenting on children's presentations, including discussion about the developing brain, and the effect of 'toxic stress'. Parents coping with stress and the link with abusive and neglectful parenting is a key module, using the notion of stress to help understand the way in which a number of factors, including situational stressors, children's temperament, and family of origin issues, mental health and substance abuse can all have an impact on parenting and associated negative perceptions of children. Approaches to modifying such responses are described, and a process of clarifying, sharing and reconciling the impact of abusive and neglectful parenting once the appropriate work has been done with parents and with children as a way of establishing a positive future.

Theme 4: Working with Parents and Carers: Promoting Children and Young People's Health, Development and Wellbeing.

This the key theme to address the impact of neglectful parenting by systematically working with parents to promote children's health, development and wellbeing. The work is divided into four separate Practitioner Guides:

Theme 4a: Understanding Development

This includes a Practitioner Briefing on working with parents to develop early and later stages of development, understand developmental sequences, introducing a variety of different approaches to promote and support development, of particular relevance in contexts of neglect. This includes helping parents understand children's needs, physical and emotional.

Theme 4b: Meeting children and young people's safety and physical needs.

This Practitioner Guide and Workshop theme is of particular relevance in working the neglect. It includes Practitioner Briefings on approaches to ensure safety and prevent harm, provide good quality basic care as well as addressing nutritional care – weight faltering and failure to thrive. Ensuring safety and preventing harm includes an examination of areas of risk, ensuring prevention of home accidents, home safety precautions and sources of risk and accident. Providing good quality basic care includes attention to basic healthcare needs, establishes concerns and agreed goals and uses the Home Condition Assessment as a way of assessing the value of intervention. Growth charts and nutritional care: weight faltering and failure to thrive module assists practitioners to address these needs.

Theme 4c: Meeting children and young people's emotional needs.

This includes a Practitioner Briefing providing guidance to promoting attachment, attuned responsiveness and positive emotional relationships and modules and associated tools provide guidance on promoting attachment with younger and older children.

Theme 4d: Positive parenting – guidance and boundaries.

This Practitioner Guide and Workshop theme provides briefings on positive parenting, managing difficult behaviour and provides a range of modules including the use of praise, the use of attention and ignoring, giving effective instruction, providing appropriate rewards and shaping challenging behaviour through the use of time out.

Theme 5: Supporting children, young people and their carers to address the adverse outcomes on health and development

Theme 5a: Working with Children and Young People's Emotional and Traumatic outcomes –generic interventions

Practitioner Briefings describe interventions of a generic nature to address the emotional and traumatic responses characteristic of children and young people exposed to abusive and neglectful parenting. These include developing a child centred approach to assist practitioners in being able to make appropriate contact with children and young people, psychoeducation is provided to help children and young people understand the effects of maltreatment and to ensure that they are not blaming themselves inappropriately. Modules are included to plan safety and understand appropriate and inappropriate forms of contact, skills in coping, and finding ways of improving mood are introduced. Relaxation and calming techniques are described, children and young people are helped to describe and monitor their feeling states and understand the cycle of thinking, feeling and doing. Scheduling time for fun, finding different ways of feeling good as well as steps to problem solving are described.

Theme 5b: Working with Children and Young people's Emotional and Traumatic outcomes – problem specific interventions

These generic approaches are essential basic ways of helping all children and young people who are showing some evidence of emotional and traumatic responses. Some children and young people do develop responses of a more extensive nature – associated with a variety of factors including the nature, severity and extensiveness of exposure to harmful parenting. They may take the form of specific problems of anxiety, mood and trauma. Problem specific interventions are described to meet these situations. A module on maintenance of improvement, and building resilience is included. Working with a supportive parent or carer is essential to achieving improvement of these significant difficulties

Theme 5c: Working with Disruptive Behaviour

Abusive and neglectful parenting is associated with the development of disruptive behaviour, particularly as children approach adolescence. Practitioner Briefings provide guidance for working with children and young people to manage anger, reduce disrupted behaviour and manage verbal aggression and impulsiveness. An approach is also included to build a better future by enhancing children's competence, education and talent - the establishment of a "good life". This entails appreciating negative and positive aspects of the self, the notion of an old me and a new me, practicing positive self-presentation and presenting a positive self.

Coping with disruptive behaviour includes a functional analysis of incidents of anger and aggressive behaviour, and provides a number of different approaches for children, young people and their carers to find alternatives to anger. Assertiveness training is an important element as an alternative to the use of aggression and developing positive relationships through family and friends again as an alternative to angry ways of relating is also described.

Theme 6: Working with Families

A Practitioner Briefing provides information about family functioning, promoting healthy communication and problem solving skills and introduces modules to promote these positive aspects of family life. A module also focuses on providing helpful techniques to manage conflict and dysfunction, and given the isolation of many families, an approach to support networking.

Theme 7: Working with Parents and Carers to support children and young people who have been sexually harmed in the family, and those children and young people responsible for harmful sexual behaviours

In the Library of Modules, Working with Sexual Abuse is described in a number of contexts, however in practice it was felt helpful to bring these together so guidance and training in the theme of working with sexual abuse could be provided in a coherent fashion.

Practitioner Briefings are provided giving information about working with parents and carers to support work with children and young people who have been sexually abused, and those young people responsible for sexually abused in the family or by a trusted member of the community. A Practitioner Briefing also provides information about working with parents and carers to support work with children and young people responsible for harmful sexual behaviour. A series of modules and tools address these themes and also provides information about directly working with children under 12 who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours and children over 12.

9.6 Integrating themes in practice

Practitioner Guides and training should not be seen as isolated one from the other e.g. working with sexual abuse requires working with children and young people who may show specific traumatic problems as well as associated sexually harmful disruptive behaviour. There may be high levels of abusive harsh parenting, and neglectful parenting necessitating the integration of approaches modifying abusive parenting, and promoting positive parenting. It may be essential to work in parallel with children and young people who may be challenging and disruptive, with the parents whose parenting may be harsh, and with the parents as a couple and as a family.

The advantage of using a resource pack is that the practitioner, supported by their managers and supervisors, can select the set of modules which seem most appropriate to the needs of the family. Needs may emerge which were not evident initially and it may be important to change directions. Alternatively there may be significant resistance to working with a particular module and it may be preferable to choose an alternative module before returning to the module which seemed appropriate. For example attempting to work with a parent to help them understand the harmful impact of their care may meet with very significant resistance, it may be more helpful to focus on the sources of stress for the parent in meeting the child's needs.

Steps which are outlined in the module and worksheets are valuable evidence-based approaches to achieving a goal. However, although a variety of scripts and activities are suggested, the practitioner needs to find his own words and approaches to negotiate those steps effectively. Chorpita indicates that an experienced practitioner would only require the steps, familiarity with them and testing out the various scripts in practice sessions familiarises the practitioner with the context of the steps so that the practitioner can adopt his own style of working with them.

HOPE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PROGRAMME:

Resources to help professionals help children and families

child
and
family
training

What is the Hope for Children and Families Programme?

The Hope for Children and Families (HfCF) Programme is an innovative resource developed by Child & Family Training (C&FT) and partners.

- It is designed to assist organisations make planned whole system changes to the delivery of children's services, through adopting evidence based approaches.
- It is aimed at organisations and staff working with children and families to support and enhance the quality of direct work.
- It consists of resources for assessment, analysis, planning, intervention and reviewing progress.
- It is relevant for all children and young people and their families, including disabled children.

How does the HfCF Programme work?

- It:
- provides an accessible set of evidence based approaches and resources for the assessment of children's needs, the capacities of parents and the nature of family life, to enable professionals to make a full assessment, plan and undertake evidence based interventions;
 - provides resources to analyse strengths and difficulties, identifying harmful and protective factors, and the impact they have on children, enabling decisions to be made about how best to protect and help children and the capacities of families to work with practitioners;
 - creates a plan for working with children and families, and provides an integrated set of modules that respond to the needs of children, their parents and families;
 - empowers children, young people, families and practitioners to work together, promoting strengths and addressing difficulties;
 - prevents cases drifting, bringing structure to action plans and generating clear programmes of direct work with children and families;
 - evidences change (or lack of it) within children and families and the welfare status and safety of children and young people;
 - evidences decisions and recommendations where harm or the risk of harm continues despite planned interventions.

What type of situations can the HfCF Programme apply to?

Each of the evidence based approaches and resources for direct work is associated with appropriate training and the programme is designed to apply across the breadth of children's services: early help, troubled families, young offenders, children in need (section 17), child protection (section 47 enquiries and assessments), child protection plans, care proceedings, looked after children, kinship, foster carer and adoption assessments and placements and post adoption support.

- These evidence based approaches and resources can be adapted to respond to different types of family situations, and training on the use of the resources is matched with the service context.
- Within early help services the assessment and analysis training is delivered in a single day, whereas in children in need and child protection services training on assessment of children, parenting, family life, and child protection decision-making is more extensive.
- Intervention resources are delivered in a modular form, providing step by step guidance for practitioners and managers/supervisors. Modules are based on common practice elements and specialist treatment protocols, and can be chosen to respond to the child's needs, parenting capacity and family and environmental factors. Early help requires fewer relevant modules, however when children are the subject of a child protection plan a more extensive set of modules would be used.
- Training is delivered to meet the needs of practitioners working within their own organisational context.
- The HfCF Programme is compatible with the requirements of *Working Together 2013*, the practice expectations set out in the Ofsted framework for the inspection of Local Authority services for children and the *Public Law Outline (2014)*.

What are the components of the HfCF Programme?

HfCF is structured around the following elements, which are presented on the following page in grid form:

How are the components of the HfCF programme delivered?

The HfCF Programme includes resources for practitioners and trainers, which are available on-line. These evidence based approaches and resources can be utilised in a planned programme of work for an organisation, and for a particular child and family.

How can the HfCF Programme be helpful?

The evidence-based approaches and resources for direct work with children and families are underpinned by an international literature review and the expertise of practitioners, managers and researchers. C&FT and their partner organisations have had over 10 years experience in implementing and supporting the sustainability of evidence based approaches. They have been involved in undertaking training across organisations comprising of assessments of children, parents and families, child protection decision making and are currently training the HfCF Intervention approaches in five pilot areas. The latter includes a whole service approach to training and innovation.

A further way of promoting the implementation of systemic change has been the training of agency-based trainers to help embed new approaches into organisations, and provide 'champions' who can support the maintenance of new ways of working with children and families.

Assessment, Analysis and Decision Making Resources

	Early Help	Troubled Families	Youth Offending Teams	Children in Need/ section 17	Child Protection/ section 47 enquiries	Children subject of Protection Plan	Care Proceedings	Looked After Children	Kinship Care Assessments	Adoption and Foster Carer Assessments	Post Adoption Support
Resources & Course Options											
Neglect	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Assessment and analysis course	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Communicating with children and young people using <i>This Much</i> and <i>This Feeling</i> apps	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assessment of the child's experience	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parenting Assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Family Assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Family Pack of Questionnaires and Scales	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>In My Shoes</i> assessment of children	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Attachment Style Interview</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interviewing Skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Child Protection Decision Making using the Safeguarding Children Assessment and Analysis Framework (SAAF)				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Intervention Approaches

	Early Help	Troubled Families	Youth Offending Teams	Children in Need/ section 17	Child Protection/ section 47 enquiries	Children subject of Protection Plan	Care Proceedings	Looked After Children	Children in Kinship Care Placements	Post Adoption Support
Resources & Course Options										
Developing a plan of work	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Engagement with children and family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Working with parents and carers: promoting children and young people's health, development and wellbeing – care, safety, secure attachments and positive parenting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Working with parents, targeting abusive and neglectful parenting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Working with children and young people's, emotional and traumatic responses through generic and problem specific approaches and addressing disruptive behaviour	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Working with children and families to promote communication and manage conflict	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Working with parents and carers to support children and young people who have been sexually abused or/and who are responsible for harmful sexual behaviours		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

How can HfCF help to achieve whole system change?

The HfCF Programme can support whole system change by enabling all aspects of direct work with children and families to be underpinned by a firm evidence base. Practitioners and managers continuing professional development needs can be met through providing appropriate types and levels of training, support and supervision. Children and families can receive services tailor-made for their needs: practitioners drawing on the extensive set of resources in HfCF Programme enables them to provide the help required by children and families to support change.

Child & Family Training

C&FT is a not for profit company whose aim is to promote the use of evidence based assessments and interventions in children's services.

C&FT with others were commissioned by the Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills to develop the assessment resources with associated training programmes to assist professionals in children's services who were making assessments of children and their circumstances. The Lifespan Research Group, Middlesex University, developed the *Attachment Style Interview*. The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned C&FT to increase the accessibility of the DfE's neglect materials and develop assessment, analysis and intervention resources.

C&FT trainers have been trained by the authors of the resources and deliver training across the UK and internationally. Training can either be commissioned for groups of staff in organisations or individuals can attend courses run by C&FT.

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