



Our Programmes:

Key Skills



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Learning Outline:

Understanding & Using Child Development in Practice



Knowledge of child development is essential for all workers who come into contact with children. Understanding development is an important step towards able to promote children's safety, progression and well-being. It is also critical to recognising possible issues of neglect or abuse. For children's social care staff a good working knowledge of child development is a crucial component in family support and child protection and in assessment and planning interventions.

This course will enable practitioners to develop an understanding of what 'normal' children development is to support effective assessment and planning for children and young people including:

1. Physical development
2. Mental health and emotional development
3. Learning and cognitive development

The course will demonstrate how to assess development and how to recognise, assess, analyse and evidence possible delays in development and the impact for the child and relevance to case management and care-planning.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- Understanding child development from pre-birth to adulthood. What is typical age related physical, cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural development over time – Considering both culture and individual needs of the child and family.
- Be able to assess development taking into account the impact of any physical or learning needs.
- Be able to assess and evidence the impact of parenting behaviours, poverty and engagement with universal on development.
- Understanding the physical and emotional world in which the child lives and how their development is impacting on their current and future life chance.
- Be able to link child development and case-management and care-planning.

Learning Outline:

Working with Families That Struggle to Engage



This two-day programme will explore some of the challenges involved in working families who may present with difficult, potentially dangerous and evasive behaviours.

The day will explore the impact of fear in these situations for both families and professionals, and support participants to think through strategies for effective engagement while ensuring children and young people are safeguarded and best interests are promoted.

The programme will support participants to recognise and understand why these behaviours occur and how to work with them positively.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- Understand the variety of ways in which families behaviour can create challenges for staff in safeguarding effectively – and how to keep the child at the centre.
- Explore communication methods and approaches delegates can apply when faced with difficult situations to engage families and prevent escalation.
- Be able to undertake risk assessments which assess parental capacity to change.
- Revisit the importance of multi-agency working and effective communication.
- Reflect on casework, using case studies provided by the participants and SCR to improve their understanding and practice.
- Understand the importance of maintaining professional boundaries and using supervision appropriately.

Learning Outline:

Motivational Interviewing Techniques



This session is designed to support Social Workers and Social Care staff to feel better equipped to engage reluctant service users or family members in services. Motivational Interviewing is a communication technique aimed at eliciting behaviour change by helping clients to explore and resolve ambivalence.

Delegates will learn how to support service users to actively utilise their own strengths and those of their networks and services to meet their own needs. Delegates will be supported to understand the process of change, the nature of ambivalence and how to support service users who feel 'stuck' or frequently relapse.

The programme aims to establish and develop the skills needed to facilitate and encourage change when working with complex behaviours. Participants will learn how to apply the stages of change model and understand the purpose and principles of Motivational Interviewing as a person-centred approach to maximise positive change.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- An understanding of the Stages of Change model and how this can guide intervention selection and the key theory, principles and philosophy underpinning a motivational approach.
- Understanding MI as a key tool within a Relational Model of Social Work.
- An understanding of how to 'roll with resistance' to avoid entrenching behaviours.
- An understanding of what is meant by ambivalence and how to approach it to support self-efficacy.
- An understanding of how to apply the tools for change such as working with scales and decisional balancing can be used to maximise commitment to change.

Learning Outline:



Basic Motivational Interviewing Skills in Children's Social Care

Motivational Interviewing is an essential skill for embedding a relational approach to working with families. The focus is on the individual as the expert in their own lives, able to find their own motivation, resolve their own ambivalence and commit to a change strategy that will be effective in both the short and the long-term. The role of the worker is facilitation and using the Motivational Toolbox to help service users identify changes they want to make, commit to those changes and make them in a sustainable way that is beneficial to the child and the whole family system. This course helps practitioners to understand how to enable families to find new ways of responding to previously entrenched behaviours.

This 2 day course will introduce, explain, and explore the concepts of the cycle of change, the challenge of ambivalence, rolling with resistance, identifying and building on discrepancies between the current situation and their desired outcomes for their family and eliciting self-motivational statements that can form the basis of a plan.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- Understand the nature of motivation and the cycle of change.
- Understand the philosophy of MI and be able to apply the principles.
- Have an understanding of the key principles of Motivational interviewing (Processes and OARS).
- Develop skills in exploring ambivalence and readiness for change.
- Be able to engage with young people and families using a range of MI skills.
- Develop skills to aid children, young people and families move through the stages of behaviour change including maintenance and relapse prevention.
- Have explored ways to use MI within work with children, young people and families.

Learning Outline:

Advanced Motivational Interviewing Skills in Children's Social Care



This 2 day advanced Motivational interviewing programme is aimed at embedding relational approaches to practice in Children's Services. It is based on building and maintaining respectful and trusting relationships WITH people, rather than just "doing to" or "doing for" and ensuring that to achieve and sustain change, the approach supports parents to care for their children. The course revisits the key principles of Motivational Interviewing and explores what practitioners have successfully been able to embed and what they are struggling with.

Practitioners will be encouraged to take part in a deeper reflection on their own practice, any ambivalence they may hold in respect of this way of working and explore their own motivation to develop their skills further. Using this experience of self, practitioners will be supported to explore advanced Motivational Interviewing skills in terms of rolling with resistance, working with ambivalence and building commitment to change, even within the potentially challenging remits of child protection or care proceedings. This course will challenge practitioners to explore how they can use MI in all areas of their work with families and provide the opportunity to practice the more advanced microskills of MI.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- To refresh their basic MI knowledge.
- To extend their knowledge and skills in MI.
- To have deepened OARS skills.
- To have enhanced ability to recognize, elicit, and respond to change talk.
- To Improved their working with discord skills.
- To have enhanced skills in working with ambivalence.
- To have learnt strategies for developing change/action plans.
- To know how to evaluate progress – including their own progress as well as that of the child, young person or family.
- To know how to offer information and education in an MI-consistent manner.
- To be able to apply techniques in practice to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Learning Outline:

Motivational Interviewing Skills for Support Staff



Administrators and support staff are key to any organisation and in Children's Social Care are often the first point of contact for service users. It is critical that support staff understand all key approaches underpinning the approach of the organisation in working with families and that they also have some of the same skills to use in their interactions with service users.

This half-day awareness session ensures administrators and support staff understand the use of Motivational Interviewing and how this approach is part of achieving better outcomes for children by taking a solution-focused, strengths-based approach of finding their own internal motivations for sustainable change rather than being directed by services.

The course also provides a brief introduction to useful approaches that these staff can apply in their interactions with families – such as rolling with resistance, solution-focused language and reinforcing self-motivational statements.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- Understand the principles of MI.
- Understand how MI is being used in the organisation
- Be able to use some basic Motivational Tools in interacting with families to roll with resistance, be solution-focused and reinforce motivation where they see it.

Learning Outline:

Motivational Interviewing for Senior Leaders



Research into change management highlights the importance of leadership in both achieving and embedding change. This session is for Directors and Assistant Directors who are leading the roll-out of motivational interviewing across their organisation.

Senior Managers will be able to ask questions of the programme team delivering training to the wider workforce and we will invite senior leaders to explore their own accountability for the success of programme using motivational interviewing techniques to explore the potential barriers to change and ways to strengthen and maximise the likelihood of change occurring.

Utilising an Appreciative Enquiry approach – this half day session will enable Senior Managers to be able to clearly articulate their vision to their own managers, enabling them to model motivational interviewing to their management team to reduce resistance and promote commitment to change.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- Have a good understanding of the training being delivered to the wider workforce including the opportunity to ask questions and challenge.
- Be able to articulate & promote the purpose of the programme across the organisation.
- Have contributed to the messaging to the organisation.
- Be able to model to simple motivational interviewing techniques with managers to reduce barriers to implementation
- Be able to promote motivation to embrace the approach.

Learning Outline:

Brief Solution Focused Approaches



Brief Solution Focused Therapy (BSFT) emphasises a focus on a specific goal and direct intervention. It is unique in that it focuses on solutions, rather than problems, this is achieved through precise observation, utilisation of natural resources, and temporary suspension of disbelief to consider new perspectives and multiple viewpoints.

This course aims to equip workers with the awareness of benefits of applying a solution focused approach. Emphasising the three key aspects of:

- Individual abilities and strengths;
- Present and future; and
- Aspirations, achievements and successes.

Participants will learn how to apply BSFT techniques to help service users to identify and work towards positive goals and make the desired changes to their lives.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- An increased understanding of the solution focused approach.
- How beliefs and values impact upon the worker-service user relationship.
- Relationship and rapport building in the context of working towards goals.
- Negotiating goals and supporting achievements.
- Practice the skills needed to effectively apply BSFT into practice.
- Supporting individuals to identify and implement their own solutions.
- An understanding of how to apply the tools for change such as exceptions, scales and miracle questioning.

Learning Outline:

Using Systemic Practice Tools in Children's Social Care



This course helps practitioners to understand how enabling families, as the experts on their own family system, to change their relational habits in respect of their family scripts can help families to find new ways of responding to previously entrenched behaviours.

The course will introduce, explain, and explore some key Systemic Approaches including the concepts of Social Graces, Family Systems, Scripts and Life Cycles; how to understand these using therapeutic genograms, hypothesising and reflexive questioning. As well as how to prompt insight, understanding and change using techniques such as circular questioning, externalising the problem, internalised other interviewing, reframing, narrative therapy and coordinated management of meaning tools.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- An understanding of what Systemic Practice is and how it fits with other approaches such as Restorative Practice, Signs of Safety and approaches such as brief solution therapy and motivational interviewing.
- An understanding of Key Systemic Concepts such as Social Constructionism, the Family as a unique system, Social Graces, Family Scripts & Cycles, the concept of multiple truths, the impact of language, and the need for A Coordinated Management of Meaning.
- An understanding of key tools for working with families systemically to prompt insight, understanding and a willingness to make changes such as:
 - Therapeutic genograms
 - Hypothesising, reflexive & circular questioning
 - Externalising the problem & internalised other interviewing,
 - Reframing, narrative therapy and coordinated management of meaning tools.
- An understanding of how to use these tools in assessments, risk assessments, parenting assessments, care-planning and interventions for change.

Learning Outline:

Communicating with & Involving Children with Additional Communication Needs in Assessments



This one-day course is aimed at Frontline Children and Families Children's Social Care Workers who are working with children with additional communication needs. The course will enable Social Workers to identify key communication difficulties that children may have, to consider the implications of these and explore creative ways of ensuring their involvement in assessments and interventions.

The course looks at the importance of 'hearing the child's voice' as an essential principle of practice and explores all the ways children can communicate their wishes and feelings.

The training is to help Social Workers to be proactive in engaging children in a safe, supportive and appropriate manner to their needs and explores the complexities of involving family members, carers and other professionals.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- Recognising the vulnerability of children with additional needs and ensuring their rights are fully upheld.
- How to recognise different types of communication needs.
- Common barriers to communication.
- Ways of and tools for involving children who have limited verbal communication or who are non-verbal in their communication.
- How to gauge wishes and feeling when there is emotional distress, trauma or attachment issues.
- How to appropriately work with parents, carers and professionals and involve them in the process whilst also ensuring children have the confidential opportunity to express their views away from others.
- When and how to use interpreters or advocates.
- Ensuring a child's individuality beyond their additional needs is considered.

Learning Outline:

Undertaking Pre-Birth Assessments



The aim of this one-day course is to explore best practice and approaches to assessment with parents throughout the ante-natal period. The course will consider the purpose and principles of a pre-birth assessment in line with Best Practice Guidance. Local Pre-Birth Assessment and Planning Practice Guidance can be included.

The course will include taking into account assessing key factors that impact on parenting capacity including, physical and mental health, substance use and domestic abuse, family and/or community support, personal and family history including previous parenting. It will also explore assessing key people and relationships including current and previous partners and wider family. The course explores working with reluctance and risk ensuring strengths are fully represented. The course will ensure that participants are able to fully analyse the information they have gathered and are able to make clear recommendations.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- Confidence to fully assess strengths and parenting capacity of the mother, father and/or current partner (if different to father).
- The ability to identify potential risks to the unborn child and if these risks can be effectively mitigated or managed.
- The ability to assess the impact of the wider family/social networks of the parents as possible sources of support/risk or as potential alternative carers.
- Strategies for working with families who are struggling to engage.
- A good understanding of timescales and local procedures.
- The ability to record appropriately, analyse information & make recommendations.

Learning Outline:

Undertaking Viability Assessments



Where at all possible, children should be supported to live safely within their family. Where a child cannot remain in the care of their parents, research has often found that children placed in kinship care generally do as well and sometimes better, than children in unrelated foster care, providing the kinship carers understand and can manage the concerns related to the birth parents. These placements can increase a child's sense of identity and belonging and reduce placement breakdown.

It is essential that if a child may not be able to live safely with their parents, practitioners identify potential carers from within the child's network of family and friends and determine whether they will be able to provide safe care to meet the child's needs until they reach adulthood, meet their needs effectively and manage the issues arising from any contact with birth family.

This one-day course looks at how to assess safety, attachment, boundaries, safeguarding, practicalities and longevity of potential kinship placements and analysis the basic likelihood of viability prior

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes – Confident to:

- Identify if proposed 'connected persons' are appropriate to assess including effective screening of potential exclusions.
- Assess connected persons in respect of their understanding of the child's needs and parenting capacity to meet them.
- Assess connected persons in respect of their understanding of concerns and ability to act protectively
- Assess connected persons in respect of their understanding of the child's perspective, their identity, need for contact and ability to manage contact
- Assess connected persons in respect of their ability to manage complex family relationships following the placement of the child.
- Understand timescales and procedures
- Record appropriately, analyse information & make recommendations

Learning Outline:

Undertaking Sibling Assessments



Children who are removed from their main caregivers have experienced significant trauma and loss, and face the challenge of forming new attachments in their final long-term placement. When children are part of a sibling group, it is a key consideration as to whether being placed separately or together is going to be in the best interests of each individual child, the group as a whole and the carers tasked with meeting their individual and collective needs.

Large sibling group or spread across a wide age range may have experienced very different traumas to each other, resulting in very different needs, the children may have different wishes and feelings and could be at risk of re-traumatising each other, harming each other or inadvertently sabotaging each other's ability to attach and settle. Assessing these needs is complex and emotionally challenging; particularly where there appear to be no 'good options' or the needs of one child being met, appears to be at the direct expense of another

This one or two day course is designed to support professionals to understand the fundamentals of how sibling assessments are conducted, how to analyse the options and present recommendations to court.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes – to understand:

- Key issues facing children, carers and professionals when considering permanency planning for siblings/sibling groups.
- The research and best practice to guide sibling assessments.
- The importance of culture, identity and life-long relationships to a child and explore how to evaluate the possible and likely impacts of placement options on these critical factors.
- How to undertake an evidence-based assessment that has a clear analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each placement option in terms of impacts for each individual child, the sibling group and the carers tasked with meeting their individual and/or collective needs.
- How to utilise a wide-range of sources in the assessment including the voice of the child(ren), observations of family-time, family & carer views and professionals that know the children.



Learning Outline:

Undertaking & Using Chronologies, Genograms & Eco-Maps

A good quality chronology is an effective tool for informing the assessment of children and their families at all levels of intervention from Early Help to Care Proceedings. The chronology provides a skeleton of key incidents and significant events in a family's history. It contributes to an emerging picture to ensure new events are understood in the context of historical information. It will contribute to the practitioner's understanding of the immediate and cumulative impact of events and changes upon individuals within a family and therefore inform decision making.

This course will enable practitioners to develop an understanding of what a good quality chronology looks like and how this can be used effectively to inform the assessment and plan for a child/young person and to inform decisions such as whether to escalate a case.

The course also explores genograms and eco-maps as essential tools in assessing and understanding family functioning, including areas of risk, trauma and stress as well as strengths, resources and family support.

Participants will understand how to use these tools to understand the life of the child and how this impacts on the child's care-plan.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- Confidence in undertaking a good quality genogram and eco-map and how to use these for assessment and planning purposes.
- An understanding of the importance of chronologies in understanding current risks, potential for change and patterns of behaviour.
- The ability to produce a good quality versatile and accurate chronology.
- The ability to utilise chronologies in the assessment and care-planning process.

Learning Outline:

Understanding Permanency & Care Planning for Looked After Children



This one-day course will ensure staff explore permanency for children as early as possible if they are at risk of; or have become looked after.

This course supports staff to fully understand the timeline of the child in parallel with the timeline of the statutory and legislative requirements in relation to permanency planning, and how best to coordinate dual planning to reduce delay for children in achieving permanence.

The course explores all the options available for permanence and encourages creative strengths-based family options where appropriate. Staff will be supported to be able to assess the options available and present an accountable and defensible recommendation to conference, panel or court.

This course can be aimed at staff or managers or a mixed audience.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- An understanding of the importance of early intervention and planning for looked after children
- Understanding the routes to permanence for all children and the options available
- Understanding the relevance of attachment and child development in permanence planning and the child's timeframe
- A working knowledge of the legislative framework including pre-proceedings and court timescales
- The ability to make timely decisions to escalate cases in order to minimise delay and maximize successful permanency planning.
- The skills to take a creative and outcome focused approach to care plans for children.
- An ability to apply research and best practice in placement planning.

Learning Outline:

Undertaking Effective Life Story Work



This one-day programme will introduce participants to the skills and knowledge that is needed to enable supportive, effective and time sensitive therapeutic Life Story Work with children and young people who are 'looked after'. This course emphasises the importance of Life Story Work for all children who are, or have been looked after, including working with children in long-term foster care or moving into Kinship Care on Special Guardianship Orders as well as Adoption.

Participants will be supported to actively assume the perspective of the child and consider the child's journey from their perspective, to enable learners to fully appreciate the importance and value of life story work. This course will explore how life story work builds a child's sense of identity, both past and present, enhances their feelings of belonging and answers questions that can cause distress and anxiety if left unanswered. This will help participants understand the importance of life story work in reducing the likelihood of placement breakdown or sabotage, by helping the child understand why they do not live with their parents and why their current carers wanted to have them in their lives as a 'forever family'.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- Understand the value of comprehensive Therapeutic Life Story Work.
- Understand the value and models of information collation
- Know how to communicate with children and adults involved in life-story work and support them to manage their emotions.
- Improve skills in working directly with children and adults in terms of life narratives.
- Learn how to address trauma and loss with empathic understanding and identify positives without minimising losses and challenges.
- Be able to write life story books which are useful, valuable to both the child and their carers.
- Write later life letters that answer the key questions children may have about decisions that were made for them.

Learning Outline:

Monitoring a Child's Experience of Care



The aim of this one-day course is to explore best practice and approaches for Social Workers when working with adoption.

The course will look at the essential building blocks of listening to children, establishing their wishes and feelings and identifying their needs in accordance with the 'Welfare Checklist'. Including the needs of pre-verbal children.

The course will explore how Social Workers can remain focused on the needs of the child whilst still considering the whole family system and ensure that the best interests of the child are at the heart of all decision-making. This will include ensuring Social Workers are able to work effectively in a multi-agency context and with potential or existing adopters.

The course will look at attachment and learning from serious case reviews in respect of both matching processes to try and prevent later placement breakdowns and signs that may indicate a placement is causing harm to a child or placing them at risk.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- Understand the importance of listening to children.
- Understand how to establish the needs of pre-verbal children
- Recognise the importance balancing intuitive and analytical skills
- Improve their practice skills in engaging with adoptive parents – looking at attachment and matching processes.
- Understand how to work effectively in a multi-agency context
- Have an understanding of lessons learned from Serious Case Reviews and signs that a placement may be placing a child at risk of significant harm.

Learning Outline:

Effective Case Recording for Children's Social Care



Case recording is an area of professional practice that is repeatedly highlighted as a development need across health and social care. Good record keeping serves many purposes and the frameworks of data protection, care management, and confidentiality are areas participants need to be confident in.

This one-day session is designed to support staff to effectively document their practice and incorporate meaningful analysis into all levels of case note recording. To ensure recordings are linked to, and can be used for, providing safe and effective interventions, monitoring and managing risk and to feed into assessments, care-planning and court work.

The course will provide participants with practical tips for ensuring case notes in all formats, for a range of purposes are concise and easy to follow, whilst still capturing the voice of the child and containing the necessary depth for complex decision making and long-term care-planning.

Please see our additional course on Professional Report Writing.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- How to capture the voice of the child throughout.
- Understand individual responsibilities in relation to consistent and quality case recording.
- Be able to record in a concise, clear, accountable and defensible manner.
- Be clear what is fact, opinion and what is judgement and the role of all three.
- Be able to decide how to give weight/ascertain relevance of information.
- Understand what information means from an individual & service perspective and use the information to make an informed plan with clear outcomes..
- Understand the need for analysis in case recordings to inform risk management, intervention and care-planning.
- Understand the role of case recordings in developing chronologies and informing decision-making.
- Consider the requirements of the Children Act in relation to recordings for Children under CIN, CP or LAC Arrangements

Learning Outline:

Professional Report Writing – Children’s Social Care



Social workers and social care workers are required to write reports in a range of formal situations from conferences to court appearances. It can feel that this is a skill that practitioners are expected to have with very little in the way of training to ensure staff are clear on the expectations and equipped with the skills they need.

This one-day programme is designed to support social worker and social care staff who are required to write formal written reports to develop the core skills and reflect upon their report any further development needs.



Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- An understanding of the principles, expectations and requirements of formal report writing for social work/social care practitioners.
- An awareness of the complexities of reports and the need to meet the legislative framework of decision-making forums such as funding panels/fostering or adoption panels, Conferences or LAC Reviews or Care Proceedings.
- The ability to structure and prepare reports which are based on clear evidence and distinguish between fact, opinion and hearsay.
- Distinguish between information gathering and analysis and improve analytical skills.
- Explore how to provide an overview that is as balanced as possible whilst still containing detailed analysis that is the basis for a clear recommendation – utilising the Welfare Checklist and Balance Sheet Approach.
- The ability to present an argument and defend their own professional judgements within a report format.

Learning Outline:

Court Skills for Children Social Care



Attending Court can be a daunting experience for even the most experienced practitioners. This course provides delegates with an overview of the court and legal processes in Children's Social Care. This includes exploration of the function of family courts, youth justice courts, the high court, and coroner's court.

The course provides key tips on how to prepare good quality evidence, how to present evidence and the opportunity to practice giving evidence and being cross-examined. The course identifies common mistakes and how to avoid them by utilising best practice guidance.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will provide participants with the following learning outcomes:

- The different types of courts, cases and how law works.
- When and why professionals have to go to court
- Key legal terms and concepts.
- What constitutes good evidence.
- How to prepare for going to court.
- What happens when you get there.
- Common mistakes and how to avoid them.
- How to be confident in giving evidence.



We specialise in developing training and learning programmes based on the requirements of our customers, and the knowledge and skills of our crew.

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