

Working with Parents with Learning Disabilities: Enabling parental rights whilst promoting resilience and better outcomes for children.



Plan for the session

- **Special Parenting Service**
- - Overview
 - - Early Intervention
 - - Video Interaction Guidance
 - - Parental education and college
- **Joint Agency Protocol**
 - - Background
 - - Aims
 - - Principles and Recommendations
 - - Joint Agency Co-ordination Group
 - - Promoting joint working

Special Parenting Service

- The Special Parenting service is a service for parents with Learning Disabilities.
- We are a small team of psychologists - two and a half of us - and we work across the county.
- Our main focus is working with parents who have a learning disability (IQ below 70 and an impairment in social functioning) however we also work with parents in the borderline range (IQ up to 85).

What we do

- Help to find out if parents have any learning needs
- Provide intervention and therapy direct to families
- Offer early intervention and support to expectant and new parents
- Help professionals to adapt their work for parents with learning needs, through consultation, advice and training.
- Contribute to multi-agency safeguarding plans.

Service Aims

- Improve the health and well-being of children and reduce inequalities in outcomes
- Provide specialist assessment of vulnerable parents' parenting abilities to help identify their and their families' needs and inform an appropriate course of action.
- Provide interventions that improve the knowledge, skills and parenting practise in order to promote family preservation, competence and parenting ability.
- Support the safeguarding of children in Cornwall, in partnership with other relevant agencies, reducing the numbers of children who are subject to child protection plans and entering into care/adoption.
- Promote the independence of, and empower vulnerable parents using person centred care approaches to access community resources
- Provide specialist advice and guidance to health professionals working with vulnerable parents to ensure that those parents can fully access universal services.

Think Child, think parent, think family.

- Family relationships and roles are highly significant and interdependent. While the child's needs will always be paramount according to the Children Act, support for the adult as parent or carer will in turn support the child.
 - Think value base
 - Think challenge barriers and assumptions
 - Think wider family, multi-agency and community
 - Think inclusion

The Evidence Base: Effective Support

- Thorough, competency-based assessment has positive impact on outcomes.
- IQ alone not linked to parenting abilities.
- Many parents have additional difficulties, especially emotional problems and experiences of abuse.
- Parents can learn new skills, but may have difficulties with generalisation and maintenance.
- Groups and educational opportunities for parents are cost-effective and improve networks and self-esteem.
- Early support.

Interventions

- Evidence based
- Solution/competency based
- Individually tailored to family needs and parents learning style
- Visual aids, step by step instruction
- Teaching alongside practical support
- Multi-agency co-ordination
- Evaluation and monitoring – outcomes for child

Video Interaction Guidance

- An intervention that uses video to help promote attuned communication between parents and their children.
- Builds on successful moments of interaction.
- Enables clients to reflect upon and 'see' their own positive interactions and identify goals for future changes/development.
- Is evidence based (NICE)
- Addresses interaction and attachment style of parents.
- Is a collaborative approach dependent on therapeutic relationship – not skills teaching.

Why Video?

- The use of the video is of central importance both as a focus for developing new possibilities and as a trigger for revealing feelings, which can be the key to lasting change.
- Provide positive feedback of them succeeding and parenting.
- It seems that the video helps families uncover alternative stories about themselves.
- Involves learning through seeing and doing.
- In this way they can develop new ways of being without having to consciously remember and put in place new skills.

How Does It Work?

- Parents are helped to make their own goals. Asking them what it is they want to change helps to ensure that they are engaged in the process.
- The aim is to give individuals a chance to reflect on their interaction and communication drawing attention to elements that are successful and supporting clients to make changes where desired.
- Turning points for parents and professionals seem to be around moments of joy or vitality, which can be observed on the video and celebrated by both the professionals and the families and then again with the supervisor.

Shared Review



Shared Review

- Throughout filming and feedback sessions, clients are supported to become more sensitive to children's communicative attempts and to develop greater awareness of how they can respond in an attuned way.
- In the process of standing back and looking at themselves on screen, parents are able to analyse what they were doing when things were going 'better than usual'.
- In this way they are empowered to make an informed decision about how they would like to improve situations that are more problematic.

Principles of attuned interactions and guidance

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|---------------------------------|---|
| Being attentive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Looking interested with friendly posture · Giving time and space for other · Turning towards · Wondering about what they are doing, thinking or feeling · Enjoying watching the other |
| Encouraging initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Waiting · Listening actively · Showing emotional warmth through intonation · Naming positively what you see, think or feel · Using friendly and/or playful intonation as appropriate · Saying what you are doing · Looking for initiatives |
| Receiving initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Showing you have heard, noticed the other's initiative · Receiving with body language · Being friendly and/or playful as appropriate · Returning eye-contact, smiling, nodding in response · Receiving what the other is saying or doing with words · Repeating/using the other's words or phrases |
| Developing attuned interactions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Receiving and then responding · Checking the other is understanding you · Waiting attentively for your turn. · Having fun · Giving a second (and further) turn on same topic · Giving and taking short turns · Contributing to interaction / activity equally · Co-operating - helping each other |
| Guiding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Scaffolding · Extending, building on the other's response · Judging the amount of support required and adjusting · Giving information when needed · Providing help when needed · Offering choices that the other can understand · Making suggestions that the other can follow |
| Deepening discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supporting goal-setting · Sharing viewpoints · Collaborative discussion and problem-solving · Naming difference of opinion · Investigating the intentions behind words · Naming contradictions/conflicts (real or potential) · Reaching new shared understandings · Managing conflict (back to being attentive and receiving initiatives with the aim of restoring attuned interactions) |

Contact Principles for Shared Understanding Attuned Responses to Initiatives



Evidence Base

- The evidence–base for the effectiveness of VIG studies has been building up over the last 20 years through relatively small-scale studies in the Netherlands and the UK.
- It is the only psychological therapy in the NICE Guidelines for under fives emotional and social development.
- VIG has now been selected to be part of European evidence –base interventions as a follow-up to the above review.
- Video Interaction Guidance was one of two recommended programmes in the NSPCC’s evidence to England’s review of the delivery of early interventions (NSPCC, 2010).

Parental Engagement in Learning and Education

- Research suggests that improving adult education and skills development can also improve outcomes for parents, families and children
- Flexible support packages, which focus on improving literacy rates for parents and children through the use of home reading support.
- Group work and education based approaches for parents with learning disabilities are proven to be effective in improving outcomes for both parents and children.
- Increases skills and competencies, promotes self-esteem and social contacts, decreasing isolation and social exclusion.

Parents Opening Doors Course

- Running at Cornwall College for parents with learning needs that do not have any qualifications.
- Provides teaching on literacy, maths, healthy eating, relationships, parenting and returning to employment.
- Runs from two sites - Camborne and St Austell.