

An Evaluation of Nurturing Attachments Training Programme for Adoptive Parents

The 'Nurturing Attachment Training Programme' is a manualised programme (Golding, 2013) that is designed to provide support and guidance to adoptive parents who are parenting children who have experienced maltreatment, trauma or are having attachment related difficulties. The training resources include theoretical content and a range of activities supported by reflective diary sheets, activity sheets, and handouts.

The programme is based upon the concepts of attachment theory, an understanding of child and relationship development and the impact of trauma on children's development. The programme has developed a 'House Model of Parenting' that aims to help parents to develop parenting skills that are matched to the emotional and behavioural needs of their children. Parents are encouraged to manage behaviour but within the much broader context of building trust and security with the children and enhancing their development. The programme provides a coherent set of ideas and practical suggestions for therapeutically parenting the children in a way that nurtures security of attachment and therefore contributes to the building of resilience and emotional growth.

The evaluation

The overall aim is to assess changes in adoptive parents' knowledge, attitudes, and practice with a pre, post and follow-up design

Funded by the Department for Education training will be delivered in four regions of England between September 2015 and February 2016. The programme will be delivered in three modules of six three-hour sessions delivered on a weekly basis during term time. Each group will have a maximum of 15 parents.

The trainers were selected at interview after responding to advertisements recruiting for the role. The trainers are either experienced adoption social workers, therapists or clinical psychologists and all will be trained and supervised by Kim Golding, the author of the training programme.

Adoption Plus (<http://www.adoptionplus.co.uk/>) will recruit adoptive parents who have recently had a child /ren placed in their home. Where possible both partners will be encouraged to attend the training.

Research questions

- a) Did the programme have an impact on participants' understanding of attachment theory; the impact of developmental trauma upon capacity for relationships, and the need for therapeutic parenting to increase security of attachment and capacity to enter reciprocal relationships?
- b) Were the parents satisfied that the outcomes of the training met their goals?
- c) Did the programme increase parents' reflective functioning and in particular increase their curiosity about children's mental states?
- d) Did the programme improve communication within the family?
- e) Did the programme have any effect on parents' sense of self-efficacy and increase their well-being?

Measures

A range of measures will be used to evaluate the training and attention will be paid to issues of fidelity.