Assessment and Intervention

Improving the protection and wellbeing of children in Europe: enhancing the curriculum
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Small Group Activity:

Define what term assessment means to you?

What do you bring personally which might influence what you see and hear (and don’t see hear) and the sense you might make of that?
Assessment

“An ongoing process of gathering information, structuring it and making sense of it, in order to inform decisions about the actions necessary to maximise children's potential.” (p36)

Children and assessment

“Assessment is an intervention, not a neutral act...”

Relevant legislation

- Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (“CSA”)
- 3 overarching principles
  - Child’s welfare
  - Child’s views
  - No order unless better
- Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 (“CHSA”)
- Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007
Children (Scotland) Act 1995

- Parental Responsibilities and Rights – PRRs (s1 to s11, etc.)
- Interventions by local authority without parental objection (e.g. s22 and s25)
- Duties towards Looked After Children (s16 and s17)
- Exclusion Orders (s76)
Children’s Hearing system (s60, s66, etc)

Child Protection measures:
- Child Assessment Orders (s36);
- Child Protection Orders (s38 & s39);
- JP order (s55); and
- police power to remove to place of safety (s56)
Children in need of protection
Section 53 Children (Scotland) Act 1995

Provision of information to the Principal Reporter
(1) Where information is received by a local authority which suggests that compulsory measures of supervision may be necessary in respect of a child, they shall—
(a) cause inquiries to be made into the case unless they are satisfied that such inquiries are unnecessary; and
(b) if it appears to them after such inquiries, or after being satisfied that such inquiries are unnecessary, that such measures may be required in respect of the child, give to the Principal Reporter such information about the child as they have been able to discover.
Group Exercise

- Go to Section 53 Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and Section 67 Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011

- Looking at the information you already have about John, what grounds of referral do you think might be met?
What are you assessing? Child’s needs and Parenting Capacity

- Basic care
- Affection—physical and emotional intimacy
- Security—including consistent routines, stability, continuity of care
- Stimulation
- Guidance and Control
- Age—appropriate responsibility
- Age—appropriate independence to make decisions

What frameworks might you use to help you think about John’s needs, the risks he might be experiencing and strengths within the family?
GIRFEC framework

Well-being
Successful Learners
Confident Individuals
Respected
Achieving
Healthy
Safe
Nurtured
Active
Responsible
Included
Efficient Contributors

Assessment
Appropriate, Proportionate, Timely

Resilience Matrix used when required for more complex situations

Adversity
Protective Environment
Vulnerability

Well-being
Successful Learners
Confident Individuals
Respected
Achieving
Healthy
Safe
Nurtured
Active
Responsible
Included
Efficient Contributors

Observing and recording
Events/Concerns/Observations/Other Information

Gathering Information and Analysis

Planning, Action and Review
What is the impact of adversity on elevated vulnerability?

What protective resources for parent and child can be identified and supported?

Can the parent and child be assisted to benefit from these resources?

What can be done to reduce the factors elevating the risk of harm?

What is the impact of adversity on elevated vulnerability?
Risk and need are two sides of the same coin

Risk and the right to take risk is a normal part of life – can be positive

Assessing and managing risk are part of the same system

Risk has to be understood broadly in relation to all aspects of children’s well-being

Risk includes looking at the current risks and the long term impact

Risk involves looking at failure to meet needs and the impact on the child

(Aldgate, J & Rose, W. 2008)
Parenting Capacity

Parents’ capacity is dependent on three inter-connected components:

- Ability
- Motivation
- Opportunity

What are you assessing?
Meaning of child and parent

- What is the meaning of the child to the parent and the meaning of the parent to the child

- What is the parents capacity to empathically understand and give priority to child’s needs

The Dynamic Process of Assessment

Gathering Information → Decision Making → Reviewing & Evaluating

Making sense of information → Moving into action
Gathering Information

What kind of information?

- What?
- Who from?
- Why?
Chronology – thinking about historical information

Chronologies can help identify patterns of events or accumulation of concerns (or positive developments). They should be reviewed and monitored by managers with a quality assurance role. Care should be taken to ensure chronologies are cross-referenced with relevant information from other agencies. p 29

Exercise: In Pairs

- From the information you already have about John and his family, start a chronology.
- What are the gaps?
- What would you want to be asking members of the family/other professionals?
- For every piece of information you collect or you see/hear, ask yourself what that information may mean for John and his lived experience, now and in the future.
Genograms in practice

Pairs Exercise

Consider John and his family. Map a genogram and ecomap as far as you are able to
Involving children and families in assessment processes

- What have children told us:
  - Take time to explain to them what is happening and why
  - Listen to and respect their views and experiences
  - Believe what they said
  - Talk to the people they think are important
  - Provide them with something to remind them of what was decided

What children and young people have said (Whincup 2011)

**Helpful**
- Practitioners who care and are reliable and consistent
- Practitioners who listen (and act)
- Information about processes in which they are involved
- Processes which include them in ways which are meaningful

**Not so helpful**
- Practitioners constantly changing, unreliable or inaccessible
- Feeling like they have no control
- Not being listened to and included
- Practitioners making assumptions
- Language which is unclear/judgemental
Involving John

- What might John’s behaviour tell you about his experiences?
- How might you engage directly with John?

Role play:
You are about to meet John and his family. Practice saying hello to John. How would you explain who you are and what your job is?
Involving children and families in assessment processes

What have parents told us about their experiences

- Like fish in a bowl”
- “Like walking on egg–shells”
- “I’m just a mother”
- “Burden of innocence”

Complexities

- Conflicting discourse – partnership/perpetrator

- Balancing needs of parent/needs of child


Role play

- Practice introducing yourself to Elaine and Sean.
- How would you explain your role?
- What might some of their anxieties be – how might this manifest in their behaviour?
- What might you be anxious about? How might this be manifested in your behaviour?
Initial hypothesis formed on basis of incomplete information, and practitioners become committed to this hypothesis

- Poor recording
- Focus on pressing problems – the concrete and tangible
- Insufficient attention to information from informal networks
- Insufficient attention to children
- Insufficient engagement with parents to assess risk
- Risks to older children overlooked
- Lack of support for working with “difficult” clients
- Poor communication
- “Everyone’s job” becomes “no-one’s job”

Intervention

“The purposeful actions we undertake as professionals in a given situation, based on knowledge and understanding we have acquired, the skills we have learned and the values we adopt”

Effective Interventions

Interventions which address multiple domains might include
- Child–focused
- Parent–focused
- Parent–child focused
- Family focused

Modes of Intervention

- Authoritative
- Facilitative

Group Discussion: Discuss each of these modes in relation to John and his family
Legal basis for Intervention

- Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012
- Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011
- Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) 2004 as amended
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People

- What are you trying to achieve?
  - Outcomes for children and young people

- How are you going to achieve it?
  - Your role in children’s lives
  - Multi-disciplinary intervention
  - Models and approaches to care planning

- How will you know when you have achieved it?
  - Review, evaluation and endings
Group discussion

- Thinking about Thompson (2008) three questions
- What are some of your immediate thoughts about what you want the outcome to be for John?
Three types of outcomes (Miller, 2011)

- Quality of Life Outcomes
- Process outcomes
- Change outcomes
Outcomes

- Different timescales for intervention:
  - Short Term
  - Medium Term
  - Long Term

- What would be appropriate for John here?
It is important to think about the developmental base for intervention

- Intervention must match the developmental level of the child/parent
- Affect regulation a primary aim
- Promotion of resilience

Developmental Base for Intervention

The aims of intervention with the child and his/her parent and/or carer are to:

- Increase security
- Improve mind–mindedness, emotional intelligence and self–regulation

Timescales for Intervention

- Balance between allowing intervention to work and moving into drift
- Need to have some clarity at the beginning about acceptable timescales
- Link timescales to children’s developmental needs
“Timescales for decision making and then implementing those decisions are necessary to prevent drift...Timescales should be meaningful, achievable, useful and quality assuring. Timescales set a benchmark of how long is long enough, albeit recognising that each individual child’s needs are different”

“There are some parents who will not be able to change sufficiently within the child’s timescales in order to ensure that their children do not continue to suffer significant harm…”

What timescales and developmental base are you working with for John?
Development of a secure base
(Gilligan, 2009)

- Responsiveness
- Relationships
- Reciprocity
- Routine
- Ritual
Small Group Exercise

- Thinking about John, consider how you and other members of the helping team can intervene to support him using the ‘5 Rs’
Multi-agency Interventions

- Interventions are often not done in isolation with only one social worker being involved with a family
  - Universal services
  - Secondary
  - Tertiary
  - Quaternary
GIRFEC Approach

- This means that at each stage of an intervention, all involved practitioners should ask:
  - What is getting in the way of this child or young person’s wellbeing?
  - Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?
  - What can I do now to help this child or young person?
  - What can my agency do to help this child or young person?
  - What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?
Evaluating Intervention

- Did it work?
- Did it achieve what was intended?
- Is it worthwhile?
- Is it worth the resources?
- Is it good?
- Is it bad?
- Is it good enough?

Children: Well being indicators

- Safe
- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Respected
- Responsible
- Included

- Scottish Executive (2007) *Guidance on the child’s or young person’s plan*
Small Group Exercise:

- Discuss John in relation to the SHANARRI well-being indicators.
  - What would you like each of those outcomes to look like?
  - How will you know when you have achieved them?
  - Be specific.
Endings

“An understanding of attachment theory and human growth and development suggests that where relationships are built and attachments occur the way the relationship ends is important”

What kind of endings are around for John?
Endings

- Focus on child
- Planned carefully
- Constructive
- Set tone for any future involvement
- Role of universal services
“Taking care with the way a contact ends consolidates what has been achieved. While many (social work) actions are one-off activities, others involve a longer relationship where someone is expected to share a great deal of personal information…it seems essential that a profession that seeks to respect others and to promote their wellbeing makes the time to fully face and discuss the endings of work, making time to introduce new workers or celebrate achievements” – Seden, J. (2005, p77) *Counselling skills in social work practice* (2nd edition) Basingstoke, Open University Press
Final Group work:

As the lead professional for John, develop an intervention plan which reflects his assessed risks and needs.

- How you will ensure Johns rights and views are included?
- What will you do to ensure that the plan is reviewed on a regular basis?
- How will you know that the plan is working/not working?
- How have you considered endings?
References: