The children are watching.
The possible impact of parental difficulties on children and young people

CARLA THOMAS
The Challenge!
It’s a bit like.......
The good...
Chronology

Child’s name:

Events:

[Blank box]

[Blank box]

[Blank box]
Chronology
Child’s name:
Events:

- Food
- Clothing / kit
- Late
- Drop off / pick up
Describing the experiences of children

Which areas of their developmental needs are being affected?

How intrusive are these in their lives?

How pervasive?

The impact of cumulative events
The Challenge!
THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN IN NEED AND THEIR FAMILIES

Family and Environmental Factors

Promoting and safeguarding

Child's Developmental Needs

Parenting Capacity
THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Family and Environmental Factors

- Family History and Functioning
  - Wider Family
  - Housing
  - Employment
  - Income
  - Family’ Social Integration

Child’s Developmental Needs

- Health
- Education
- Emotional and Behavioural Development
- Identity

- Family and Social Relationships
- Social Presentation
- Selfcare Skills

Parenting Capacity

- Basic Care
- Ensuring Safety
- Emotional Warmth
- Stimulation
- Guidance and Boundaries
- Stability

Promoting and safeguarding

Community Resources
THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Family and Environmental Factors

- Family History and Functioning
  - Wider Family
  - Housing
  - Employment
  - Income
  - Family Social Integration

Parenting Capacity

- Basic Care
  - Ensuring Safety
  - Emotional Warmth
  - Stimulation
  - Guidance and Boundaries
  - Stability

Child’s Developmental Needs

- Promoting and safeguarding

Health
- Education
- Emotional and Behavioural Development
- Identity

Family and Social Relationships
- Social Presentation
- Selfcare Skills

Community Resources
The Assessment Process

1. Mental health problem
   - What mental illness
   - Nature
   - Severity
   - Duration
   - Effects of treatment (non-compliance)
   - Affect on the parent social and psychological functioning

2. Effect on parenting
   - History of own parents
   - Expectations of self as a parent
   - Availability for provision to children of:
     - Protection
     - Affection
     - Control

3. Effect on child’s needs
   - Development
   - Basic needs
   - Protection
   - Self-esteem
   - Relationships
   - Love and affection
   - Control
   - Child care demands
   - Stages of development
   - Personality
   - Special circumstances
   - Availability of other adults
## The Assessment Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Question/Information Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Domestic Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How long has it been going on?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History of previous relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attempts to leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help sought/ agencies involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affect on the parent social and psychological functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Effect on parenting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History of own parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expectations of self as a parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Availability for provision to children of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>affection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Effect on child’s needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basic needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Love and affection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child care demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stages of development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Availability of other adults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Assessment Process

1. Use of substance
   - What substance
   - How much/how obtained/how taken
   - When (pattern of use)
   - Where
   - Who with
   - Cost
   - Lifestyle implication

2. Effect on parenting
   - History of own parents
   - Expectations of self as a parent
   - Availability for provision to children of:
     - Protection
     - Affection
     - Control

3. Effect on child’s needs
   - Development
     - Basic needs
   - Protection
   - Self-esteem
   - Relationships
   - Love and affection
   - Control
   - Child care demands
     - Stages of development
     - Personality
     - Special circumstances
     - Availability of other adults
Risk, stressors and vulnerability factors

Child mental health & development

Parenting task and impact on parent-child relationship

Adult / parental mental health

Protective factors and available resources
“Very few children think that their parents are completely sane. They are right: we are all potty at some time”.

Children are mystified by their parents’ behaviour. They have to cope, and they want to do so. They have a deep sense of allegiance.

We need to open our eyes to how wide-eyed are the children who are watching us.

The more severe the parent’s illness [difficulties], the more perplexing it is for the child. But we can do a lot to help parents.”

(Peter Wilson – Young Minds 2003)
THANK YOU!

Any questions?
Understanding lived experiences of children

- Many forms
- Intrusive
- Pervasive
- Cumulative impact
The relationship between parent and child

Parent’s well-being and difficulties

Child’s well-being and difficulties

Risks, stressors and vulnerability factors

Protective factors and resources

Culture and community