

Multi Agency Reflective Learning Circle Agenda & Outcomes

What has happened?

What concerns you about sustainable change?

What do you think about what's happened and what's been done/tried before?

What do you think about what is happening now?

Clarification Questions

**Learning
from the
Core Group**

Who is being affected?

Who has been affected and how?
(child, family, community, you?)

Who else and how?

What has been the hardest thing for
you? *(Individually? As a Core Group?)*

What needs to happen next?

What does the child need?

What does the Family need?

What does the Core Group need?

What has happened?

3 cases were reflected on during the Multi-Agency Reflective learning Circle. 8 Children were discussed during the learning circle their needs were discussed and why they are subject to a 2nd or subsequent Child Protection Plan. Some of the issues raised were the same as the first plan and some new concerns these are as follow:

- Neglect emotional and/or Physical abuse
- Physical Violence – Between parents (DA), family members, friends and in one case the young person and their partner (DA).
- Unhealthy relationships
- Disguise Compliance
- Mother's inability to sustain change
- Children's Behaviours – in two cases the children had poor attendance but other than that they expressed everything was ok. In the one case the young person was taking their own risky behaviours.
- Substance misuse
- Mental health
- Delayed development of the children
- Parent's intimidating behaviours.
- Children being coached what to say to professionals.

The three main questions the circle reflected on about what has happened were, What concerns you about sustainable change? What do you think about what's happened and what's been done/tried before? What do you think about what is happening now? The themes that came out of the 3 sessions were:

- A feeling of frustration and of being stuck. The question was asked as to when the line should be drawn there is a need to feel reassured in the decision.
- All core groups consider they work together well and share information correctly which was evident in the discussions that there has been good work in all cases. It was however noted that Social workers feel they take the overall responsibility of the case and agreed by other core group members this could be shared.
- Clear concern from all the core groups around the Mothers and their capacity to sustain changes due to reoccurring issues. Reoccurring themes around capability and managing crisis.
- Parents play professionals of against one another and make complaints. But the need to be rescued when there is a crisis and become reliant on services.
- Concerns were raised about what to do with aggressive or intimidating parents and perpetrators.
- Concern around disguise compliance. Mother looks as though she is doing everything right and saying the right things but this is not always evident in the affect on the children. What happens behind closed doors.
- Feeling of disappointment when a case is turned away by courts when case doesn't meet thresholds.
- Feeling of being supported by each other and senior managers.

Who is being affected?

Children:

It is clear from all cases that the children's behaviours and development are affected by what is happening at home. The themes are:

Behaviours – Violence/aggression/withdrawn/ detachment/ Hiding/ secretive about home/Coached/ risk adverse

Development – Speech delay/ emotional reactions/ relationship building issues.

Mother:

It is clear from all the cases that a lot of work has happened with the mothers and a lot of time and resource has been spent helping them. The themes that affect the mother's are:

Mental Health issues/ substance misuse/ capacity to learn and cope in crisis/ unhealthy relationships/ aggressive or intimidating/ disguise compliance/ Knowing how to work the system and playing professionals one of the other.

Father:

In all 3 cases the fathers are known . In two of the cases they have a history of being the perpetrator of Domestic Abuse and have Violent behaviours, however in one of the cases work is currently being done with dad to recognise these behaviours and how it effects his children. In the third case the father is heavily involved with his children and he is a good father which is evidenced by the children's behaviours when they are with him, he does however appear to be intimidated by the children's mother and therefore his relationship with his children is not consistent.

Extended Family:

Where the extended family are involved the themes as to how they are affected are:

They feel in demand and find it hard to provide the support needed.

Core Group:

The themes pulled out from the 3 group session around how the Core group feel affected are:

Frustrated/Stuck/ That everything has been done before/ Unsure and uncertain where to draw the line/ Occasional feelings of positivity but short term due to change not being sustained / concerned about complaints from Parents and being played off against each other/ positivity around good practice and working together/ frustration around the legal process/ always feel like they are waiting for something to happen/ constant worry/ supported by managers/ comfortable to challenge each other.

What needs to Happen next?

Following reflection around what has happened and what the affects to everyone involved were we then in each learning circle considered what needs to happen next.

Children:

- Focus needs to always be on the child. Are the children noticing the change? Are the professionals noticing the change?
- Is there a physical change in the children's behaviour because of the work.
- Giving older children the chance to own the responsibility of their Plan.
- For the Professionals involved to continue the good work and remain focussed and determined to build relationships with the children who don't open up to them.
- Children need security and trust.
- Schools to keep strong involvement.
- Allow the children to see the impact of the work that has been done with them.
- Innovative ways to work with the children, ensure the plan is specific to age and needs of the child.

Family:

- Continued support for the parent.
- Work on Father Action plans.
- Continued support to help mother's build Coping skills.
- Encourage parents to take responsibility.
- Firm boundaries and timescales.
- Persistence with managing parents behaviours. Working with them rather than doing too.
- Allow the parents to see the impact of the work that has been done to date.
- Mental health support where needed.

Core Group:

- Effective engagement/discussion and reflections
- Shared Chronology/ everyone knows history
- Re-assurance that core groups have Multi-agency support.
- Re-assurance that any decision they make will be backed up; in relation to when to draw the line.
- Positive challenge is encouraged.
- To adapt style/approach with families. (creative working)
- To understand a day in the life of – create a Balance sheet
- Training around how to deal with aggressive parents.

Problem Solving with the Core Group

