

All adults have a one in four chance of experiencing a period of mental illness in their lifetime. Parents constitute a substantial proportion of mental health users. Being a parent with mental illness is especially challenging. Children in these families are at greater risk of a range of mental health problems and adverse life experiences. Working directly with mental health users as parents and their children can have an immediate impact on the parents' recovery process which safeguards the child.

The Family Model as a conceptual framework identifies that there are risks, stressors and vulnerability factors increasing the likelihood of a poor outcome, as well as strengths, resources and protective factors that enable families to overcome adversity. Risk and protective factors interact with parental mental illness, child development and mental health, parenting and the parent-child relationship in a bi-directional manner. Over time, the complexity and multi-directionality become more complex as the child's behaviour impacts on the parent's mental health, the parent's mental health impacts on his or her parenting and the parent's mental state and style of parenting affect the child's behaviour.

This one day course will focus on how to use the Family Model effectively in working with families as a reflective tool as part of the safeguarding process, but also as a tool to facilitate parental motivation. We will also focus on how to communicate with children and young carers effectively in a way that they will find supportive. 'Think Family, Think Child, Think Parent' is at the core whilst working with parental mental health and safeguarding children and young people.

Objectives

- ✓ To consider the impact of mental illness within the family as part of the referral/assessment process
- ✓ To develop an awareness of the experiences and needs of children and young people who live with adults with mental health problems
- ✓ To develop knowledge and skills in how to work with the Family Model as a central tool
- ✓ To develop specific skills in communicating with children and young people about their experiences of living with mental health problems.
- ✓ To develop skills in supporting the adult in their parenting role
- ✓ To increase knowledge of good practice such as outlined in key government policies and research initiatives such as Crossing Bridges, Patients as Parents, Research in Practice, SCIE etc
- ✓ To reflect on interagency working and how to strengthen these links

Learning Outcomes

- Considered values and assumptions in relation to working with parents where mental illness is a central feature
- Developed a deeper understanding of the nature of mental illness, diagnosis and current thinking in mental health in relation to the importance of families in the recovery process
- Gained knowledge to key aspects in research around parental mental health and the impact on parenting ability
- Developed a working understanding of the Family Model as a central tool to think about the family within a systemic framework
- Gained an understanding of how children experience parental mental health and their needs
- Developed skills in how to engage the parent in a framework that enhances parental responsibility and recovery
- Developed skills in how to communicate with children about the parent's mental health that will strengthen resilience and recognise their voices as central

Teaching methods include: power-point presentations, DVD material as developed by the Royal College of Psychiatry, case studies and practising using key tools in small groups.

Lesson Plan

Day 1: Timings	Workshop Sessions
09:30 – 10:15	<p>BACKGROUND TO PARENTAL MENTAL HEALTH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and Introductions • Workshop objectives and agenda, • Introduction exercise: In small groups explore the challenges around working with parental mental health. • Quiz style exercise around mental illness/recovery, exploring assumptions and values • PPP on the Background to Parental Mental Health
10:15 – 11:00	<p>KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power Point Presentation on key findings about the impact of mental illness on parenting ability, safeguarding children and findings from serious case reviews • DVD presentation on children's experiences living with mental illness followed by reflection
11:00 – 11:15	<i>Tea/Coffee break</i>
11:15 – 12:15	<p>THE FAMILY MODEL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power point Presentation: Introduction to the Family Model as a Reflective Tool with a case presentation • Small group exercise= Exploring how to use the Family Model with case scenario's
12:15 – 13:00	<p>WORKING WITH PARENTS/FAMILY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPP of current research on how relationship and motivation affect process of change with regards to Mental Health • Exercise using case scenario's exploring different styles used within the context of Safeguarding and working with parents with parental mental health
13:00 - 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>

14:00 – 15:00	COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN <ul style="list-style-type: none">DVD example Followed by small group exercise where delegates will work in groups of 3 as a worker, observer and client practising core skills
15:00 - 15:15	<i>Tea /Coffee break</i>
15:15 – 16:00	WORKING WITH THE WIDER SYSTEM <ul style="list-style-type: none">Exercise -Critical review about current cases focusing on what helps/hinders work that will impact on recovery and family functioning
16:15:16:30	FINAL THOUGHTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">Group exercise- Reflecting on how to take ideas forward with current client group. Evaluations