

Capacity to Change Guidance

Introduction

This guidance is for frontline practitioners who work with children and families within Salford. It offers simple guidance and a tool to support the multi agency assessment of capacity of change.

Parenting capacity considers parents **current ability** to meet the developmental needs of their children: an assessment of capacity to change asks whether parents- when provided with the right support over a specified period of time- are able to **make the necessary changes** to ensure their child's well-being is safe (1).

For more detailed research and guidance please access Research in Practice materials online, this includes webinars and guidance documentation.

(Research in Practice, assessing parents capacity to change, 2014)

What is 'Capacity to Change'?

The assessment of capacity to change enables the parent/s to understand and have the opportunity to address the concerns identified within the current parenting assessment. The capacity to change assessment therefore should be lead from an evidenced based assessment of parenting capacity. Capacity to change considers the following:

- The persons ability to recognise the need to change
- The person's engagement and alignment with the change process (this is about working with parents, joint goal setting and ensuring plans as driven by them and the multi agency group).
- The person's ability to make the changes, for example, to employ appropriate parenting strategies or utilise wider family support.

The impact of the above will be assessed and tested through multi agency support, review and analysis, in partnership with the parents and will focus upon the impact upon the child's lived experience.

Assessing Capacity to Change

Practitioners and the multi agency partnership, with the parent and child, need to:

- Have SMART plans to evidence change and impact

- Consider barriers to change and ensure multi agency plans address these, for example: appointments for the child being at a time that the parent can accommodate.
- Consider realistic objectives, to support change is being successfully achieved and avoiding parents being overwhelmed.
- Willingness to change should be fully acknowledged- the evidence base for successful change much be the focus of the multi agency plans and review.
- The improved parenting is the evidence and therefore impact upon the child's outcomes.

Supported by research from: (Bickley et al, 2006; Barlow and Scott, 20110)

The principles of the Salford family model should be implemented through our approach to working with children and families, essentially:

- Ascertaining the parental views and experiences, considering ACE's
- Obtaining the parental desired outcome and goals
- Obtaining the parental hopes and core beliefs
- Considering the alternatives (contingency planning)

Four stages to assessing Capacity to Change:

1. Multi agency EH / CAFAS / parenting assessment completed.
2. Short terms goals agreed with the parent/care giver and (where appropriate) the child.
3. Time limited plan in place that is SMART
4. Plan reviewed and impact assessment and articulated
 - Review
 - Build on evidence (making plans purposeful and specific)
 - Revisit earlier analysis and assumptions within new evidence base.
 - Inform decision making
 - Consider need for any additional assessment (back to stage one)

The approach to how we assess, Intervene and evidence the ability of a parent/carers capacity to change will impact upon the outcome for the child.

Multi agency tools and assessment frameworks to support practice:

- Early Help Assessment
- Child and Family Assessment
- Parenting Capacity Assessments
- Team around the family plans
- Child in Need plans
- Child Protection Plans
- Young Persons Plans
- Collective report analysis for Child protection
- The Resilience Framework
- Ecomaps
- Family Partnership Model Practice Tools
 - Quick Win: The Steps I will take
 - Understanding: A shared picture
 - Goal Setting: Agreeing change for the future
 - Goal Setting: Naming change for the future
 - Making a plan
 - The Plan: The steps I will take
 - Implementation: Taking Action
 - Review: How's it going
 - Ending: Sustainability and moving on

Systemic Model of Practice

