

Psychological abuse

Thursday 5 June 2008



The aim of the workshop is to provide working definitions of child and adolescent psychological abuse for social workers and psychologists involved with children and families. The assessment is based on the Childhood Experience of Care and abuse interview (CECA) - a standardised interview and scoring measure developed

in research work on childhood maltreatment in relation to mental health outcomes.

The workshop will examine policy definitions of emotional abuse, and the extent to which these are similar or differentiated from other abuses defined. Lack of specific indicators in policy definitions will be discussed. In addition, research on maltreatment with specific focus on psychological abuse and related experiences of cold and hostile parenting, neglect and complex abuses (psychological abuse overlapping with physical or sexual abuse) will be outlined.

The family contexts related to psychological abuse, including parental loss and family structure, parental psychiatric disorder and parental conflict in the home will all be examined. Attendees will be shown DVDs of interviews of psychological abuse experience to prompt discussions of interview style and technique. Vignettes will be provided for rating severity of psychological abuse, through case material. Implications for practice will be discussed in full with assessment and analysis of psychological abuse in different practice contexts will be discussed.

Workshop leaders will include Prof Antonia Bifulco (director of the Lifespan Research Group and designer of the CECA), Geraldine Thomas child psychotherapist and expert on assessing maltreatment in children, Sue Skrobanski, lecturer on child protection on social work BSc and MSc courses and freelance trainer in standardised assessment tools in child protection.

Workshop timetable

9.30	Coffee
10.00	Introductions
10.15	Presentation: 'Research Findings on psychological abuse in childhood'.
11.00	Coffee break
11.15	Measuring psychological abuse- Interviewing a mother (DVD) Interview questions and rating severity
12.15	Rating vignettes of psychological abuse (group work)
1.00-2.00	LUNCH BREAK
2.00	Impact of psychological abuse on children
2.45	How to use the Psychological Abuse assessment in practice
3.15	Open discussion
4.00	Finish