

The CareLeaders



A Tool for **Change**

Understanding the lived experiences of children who have been supported by social services

Virtual training that shares real experiences from children's services to challenge, enlighten and enable better relationships with young people.





Times: 15:45 to 17:00

- Cohort 1: 24th & 31st Jan, 7th, 21st & 28th Feb, 7th Mar
 - Cohort 2: 15th, 22nd, 29th March, 19th & 26th Apr, 3rd May
 - Cohort 3: 11th, 18th & 25th May, 8th, 15th & 22nd Jun
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Adverse Childhood Experiences - Born to love and be loved.

This session explores the impact of being born into adverse family dynamics and the different ways in which social care and school can support children and families.

Adverse childhood experiences impact almost all children. Whether it's abuse, neglect, poverty, divorce or seeing parents in conflict, it's likely we have all experienced an adversity. More extreme adversity can have a detrimental impact on a child's development, attachment needs and mental wellbeing. This session takes you step-by-step through the most common adverse childhood experiences, the impact they have on children and families and how to support those experiencing them.

We want all children to go through positive experiences that enable them to thrive, and feel safe and supported. Young people are constantly learning from their parents and the environments around them. When young people experience adverse childhood experiences it can have a damaging impact on their development, sense of well-being and how they form attachments with those around them.

This course explores adverse childhood experiences such as divorce and the bereavement this causes for young people. We look at the impact of living between parents and family members, and what this means for a child's learning and development when schools and friends change. We will also explore the different roles of social care and the various levels of support young people and families can receive.

We will share lived experiences and theories about parenting styles, exploring different examples that include discussions about the impact of abuse, poverty and neglect. We will look at attachment styles, how they form and what you can do to help young people build trusting relationships with you. Finally, you'll understand the different types of abuse, how to spot it and what to do to keep a child safe.

Learning Outcomes

Recognise the impact of adverse childhood experiences for children and families

An introduction to attachment styles and how they are developed

Gain an overview of how trauma impacts the brain and behaviour

Develop an understanding of the stress response and how it triggers

Learn about abuse, neglect and poverty and the statistics on a local level



Messages in Behaviour - What children are really telling us.

This session will help you recognise and respond to messages in children's behaviour.

We all behave and communicate differently and at different stages in life. Whether it's a little child crying for the attention of their mother, a teenager acting in a way we consider challenging or an adult losing control. All behaviour is communication that we can understand. This session explores how behaviour is formed, and what it's really telling us and gives you the skills to respond to it.

Our systems are often set up to 'manage' behaviour young people display rather than helping us understand why they are behaving as they do. So what their behaviour communicate? This session aims at exploring it.

We recognise the importance of listening to children; we also know that not all communication is verbal. Young people are developing as they grow and learning new methods to communicate with us adults. Some of these messages are clear and conscious and some are unconscious and hidden in their behaviour.

We understand the difference between managing and understanding behaviour. To understand is not to condone but to condemn is a dead-end that is ineffective. When behaviour becomes 'challenging' traditional services usually focus heavily on management and are often flustered when strategies don't work. When we understand behaviour and its origin, we feel more confident, young people feel listened to which reduces anxiety and they become calmer. Understanding behaviour is often the best way to get the outcome that we wanted when we are trying to 'manage it'.

The language we use can be a barrier between adults and children. Terms like 'complex', 'challenging' or 'risk taking' to describe behaviour leave young people feeling misunderstood and unheard and can often exacerbate behaviour.

Through understanding the messages in children's behaviour, we are able to provide a space where children recognise their feelings; we create empathy and this builds trust and respect, which goes a long way when trying to get the best for young people.

Learning Outcome

How behaviours are formed and reinforced

Child development theories such as attachment, conditioning, psychosexual and social development

The cycle of abuse

How children develop 'survival' behaviours

De-escalation and responding to behaviour

Using tone and language effectively

Enhanced listening + communication skills



Trauma and Transitions

Creating stability for children who have instability in their lives.

This session looks at the different types of transitions for young people and how you can support them through it.

Children feel confused and lost moving through the system; parents are hurt and often frightened about the changes happening around them, whilst practitioners are under pressure to ensure all young people are safe and provided the right support. Everyone in social care experiences transitions, this session helps us understand what they are and how best to support children experiencing them.

Transitions happen to all children, they have big ones like changing schools, moving house and coming into care. They can be everyday experiences like returning from break time, going home, or starting something new. For children who are supported by social care transitions can be the changing relationships, an intervention or change in living circumstances.

It's important to recognise that we all know what it is like to transition, we could be anxious about starting a new job, feel the ambivalent nervous-excitement about starting a relationship or having to shift our mind from a fun weekend to a focused Monday. Transitions happen to us all, but for young people who may have experienced instability in their lives, their transitions may need some extra support.

Trauma and transitions can be linked. Imagine what it's like for a young person who has just come into care and started a new school, they will come with a host of difficult feelings. The changing of a classroom teacher may remind them of feelings of abandonment which can result in it being hard to focus. We don't know how children will be impacted by transitions until they happen, but we can learn the skills to support all young people through them.

This session explores the various transitions young people go through and how childhood experiences impact the way young people manage them. Starting with the transitions in the family, then within school and onto social care. Giving you a clear picture of the different types of transitions, how they can impact young people and what you can do to enable them to feel safe, supported and stable.

Learning Outcomes

Recognise the different types of transitions within the family, school and social care

Understand how instability in childhood can impact how young people respond to transitions

Learn ways to support young people who have unstable home lives

Recognise how transitions can trigger previous trauma and gain skills to co-regulate with young people

Spot the signs when a young person may be struggling with transitions

Develop skills to create positive transitions for young people



Children's Social Care

The people and services

This session is all about the people and services within children's social care so you know who young people are being supported by.

There are many reasons young people have a support from social care, whether it's because they need extra support at home, they may have a disability or it could be a child in care. This session explores the different people and services within social care so you understand who supports children and why.

This session explores the different types of social care support, starting by looking for support for families, then looking at children in need and on the edge of care. We then move into exploring the lived experiences of young people entering, living in and leaving care.

Support from social care is forever changing, a young person may be visited by a social worker at home with their parents, giving them advice and guidance focused on keeping families together. If they come into care they will meet legal representatives who are deciding their level of support, various other social workers who support their family and foster carers. Lots of other people too, including health professionals, education support workers and other practitioners. It can be an overwhelming place for a young person and difficult to make sense of who everyone is and what their roles are. When children leave care their support falls away, which can awaken feelings of previous abandonment and loneliness, all whilst trying to manage the practicalities of being independent and maybe dealing with the traumas of their past.

Adults deserve to understand the different roles and services within social care so they know what's going on for the child, who to speak to if they feel they need some support and recognise the stage of life that young people are in. This knowledge is crucial to ensure you can provide them the right support at the times they may need it the most.

This session aims to give you insights into social care, so you can better support children receiving it.

Learning Outcomes

Understand the different types of support young people receive from social care

Learn about the different roles and professionals within social care

Recognise why young people are supported

Hear the lived experiences of young people who enter care

Gain insights into leaving care and how young people transition into independence

Know the systems surrounding children in need, in care and leaving care



The Impact of Communication - Trauma, attachment and unconscious bias

This session explores how attachment, trauma and unconscious bias influence how we behave and communicate whilst giving you evidence-based tools to raise aspirations for children and their families.

Our upbringing impacts how we view the world and communicate with it. Our caregivers and immediate support network influence our morals, and beliefs and their views shape our own. Being brought up in adversity can often mean young people have developed different methods to communicate which can feel challenging for adults to respond to and leave young people feeling unheard. This session helps you understand young people's communication and how to shape your own to bring out the best in them.

A study was once done where teachers were told that they were teaching a class of exceptionally clever young people and taught the class believing that these children were gifted. The outcome was that the class did the best out of all the other classes in the school. The reality was that this was a class of random students and psychological study to prove the psychological concept of a self-fulfilling prophecy; a "prediction" or expectation coming true simply because the person believes or anticipates it will.

The point here is that what we believe shapes how we behave and communicate, and unfortunately for children who have been through adversity, we tend to believe they will achieve less than their peers. This is a problem because we communicate this belief to them, whether it's verbally through pity, compassion or empathy, or non-verbally through body language, facial expressions or tone of voice. We can unintentionally be telling young people we don't think they can achieve.

We have a duty to be aspirational, ignore our judgements and hold the belief that young people can achieve anything they want. Our experiences do not have to define us, we can define our own experiences.

As practitioners we have an opportunity to show young people they have agency, empower them to believe in their abilities and provide guidance and reassurance. This session helps you understand your unconscious bias, and beliefs and become aware of your communication so you can learn the skills to be aspirational to young people.

Learning Outcomes

Understand unconscious bias and how to overcome it

Recognise how our beliefs can impact how we communicate with young people

Learn about self-fulfilling prophecies and how young people respond to them

Develop the skills to communicate aspirationally to young people

Gain an understanding of verbal and non-verbal communication



Two Timetables - School and Social Care.

This session helps you understand the lived experiences of social care and school for young people. Exploring what you can do to support them to feel safe, settled and able to learn.

When young people are supported by a social worker and in school they have two commitments; those of social care and those of school. What happens when these systems clash and how does that impact the child? In this session we will explore what it means to be a child engaging with social care whilst at school and what you can do to support them.

In this session we will explore the practical, procedural and cultural systems within schools and how they impact young people.

Practically we will look at what it is like for a young people who have to meet their social workers, see their parents and attend meetings, all whilst having to go to class and do homework. Procedurally we will look at behavioural management policies, exclusions and reduced timetables and explore examples showing the effectiveness of these strategies. Finally, we will look at cultural systems and how we respond to young people based on our school's culture and our own biases. Drawing from understandings of attachment aware approaches, intersectionality and unconscious bias.

We will take a deeper look into the experiences of vulnerable young people, looking at their lives outside of school. Focusing our attention on their unstable home lives, family dynamics and the communities where they live. From this we are able to build a picture of what it is like for young people at home and how they are likely to bring challenges to school.

Within this session we provide you with practice focused, evidence-based tools and theories to improve young people's educational outcomes. Highlighting the importance of holding high aspirations, how to hold them accountable for their behaviour without shaming and how to communicate with young people to motivate them.

This session will give you the skills to ensure schools are a safe place where children can grow, learn and develop meaningful relationships with their peers and staff.

Learning Outcome

Understand the lived experiences of young people with a social worker

Learn about attachment and trauma-aware approaches to managing behaviour

Hear evidence-based approaches to improve the educational achievements of young people

Recognise how social care and school systems can clash, how they have adverse impacts on young people and what you can do to help

Develop skills to respond to young people who are showing unmet attachment needs

Explore the impact of exclusion, reduced timetables and behavioural management on a vulnerable young persons learning

