



Parent Mentoring Project

St. Francis' Children's Society



- » Date: Saturday 4th February 2012
- » Bishops Mental Health Conference, Leeds



Presentation Overview

- Aims & Objectives of the Parent Mentoring Project
- What we did
- What we've learned
- Next steps



Project Aims

- To enhance emotional health and well-being for whole school community
- Strengthen support for whole family and achieve greater parental engagement
- Develop knowledge and understanding of issues affecting children and families amongst school staff



Parent Mentoring – How?

- Extended 1:1 counselling work to include parents of vulnerable children
- Introduction of themed workshops for wider parent groups
- Delivery of group mentoring for non-teaching staff
- Introduction of new Family Worker role



Support for school staff

- Senior School staff commitment to well-being already in place and dedicated resources
- Delivered 2x peer group mentoring programmes for staff
- Learning outcomes included greater empathy and awareness of issues affecting families
- Knowledge and understanding of how Attachment difficulties impact on learning



Needs of vulnerable children in school

- Increasing numbers of children presenting with challenging and confusing behaviour and who are under-performing
- Variation in readiness to learn – barriers



Needs of vulnerable children

- Behaviour management systems not enough
- Adverse impact on school staff and other pupils
- Theory as a framework for building understanding and developing helping strategies



Attachment difficulties can affect:

- Children who have experienced a major loss and/or change in their life
- Children who have experienced inconsistent care or neglect
- Teachers and other education staff working with children who have attachment difficulties



“In schools, we can support distressed children by valuing the importance of **relationship** in all work we do with them i.e. helping them to think differently and to take control over their feelings and behaviours”

Louise Bomber



Case study

- Single mum, abusive ex-partner
- Sharing 1-bed flat with daughter aged 8
- Presenting with behaviour problems at school, involvement of Behaviour Support Team
- Mum very depressed, not able to access support



Benefits

- For the children: supportive relationships; fewer incidents and exclusions
- For the parents: non-judgemental support; sharing of problems and worries; ability to contribute to making things better
- For school staff: knowledge and understanding; guidance on introducing new ways of working; a reduction in staff anxieties and stresses



Lessons learnt

- Relationships have to build over time – can't be rushed and can't be 'packaged'
- It might not work first time
- Take care of the 'helpers' and their well-being first – model of support for non-teaching staff
- Value of a joined-up approach



Next steps

- Increase numbers of parents accessing themed workshops
- Offer group mentoring to parents who have been supported through 1:1 counselling and direct work with the Family Worker
- Introduce bespoke parenting programme for engaged parents