

Therapeutic interventions after abuse and neglect

A quick guide for practitioners and managers supporting children, young people and families



You can help and support abused and neglected children, young people and their families – but only if you know what works

Abuse and neglect can have a long-lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

It is important to know how to respond, and the evidence suggests that the following interventions may be effective for children and young people. If possible, offer a choice and explain what each intervention will involve and how you think it may help. Not all interventions will suit everyone, and the choice should be informed by a detailed assessment.

Interventions after physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect

Attachment-based intervention:

e.g. Attachment and Biobehavioural Catch-up

- After neglect or physical abuse
- For parents or carers and their children
- At least 10 sessions in parent or carer's home

Child-parent psychotherapy:

(based on Cicchetti and Toth model)

- After physical or emotional abuse, neglect or domestic violence
- For parents or carers and their children
- Weekly sessions over 1 year in parent or carer's home

Attachment-based intervention (foster carers):

- After abuse or neglect
- For foster carers, adoptive parents, those providing permanence and their children

Parenting intervention:

e.g. SafeCare

- After physical or emotional abuse or neglect
- For parents or carers and their children
- Weekly home visits lasting at least
 6 months from a trained professional

Parent-child interaction therapy:

- After physical abuse or neglect
- For parents or carers and their children
- Group sessions for parents or carers, combined with individual child-parent sessions

Parent training intervention:

e.g. KEEP

- After abuse or neglect, where the child is showing problematic behaviours
- For foster carers of children aged 5–12
- Groups of 8–10 for at least 16 weeks

Aims to:

Improve nurturing; help parent understand the child's behaviour; respond positively to the child's feelings and manage their own feelings

Aims to:

Explore parent's understanding of the child's behaviour, explore relationship between parents' emotional reactions and perceptions of the child and their own childhood experiences

Aims to:

Improve nurturing; help foster carer/ adoptive parent to understand the child's behaviour; respond positively to the child's feelings; manage their own feelings and behave in ways that will not frighten the child

Aims to:

Address parent-child interactions; structures and routines; parental stress; home safety

Aims to:

Develop child-centred interaction and discipline skills

Aims to:

Develop strategies to manage behaviour and discipline positively; include video, role play and homework practice

Multi-systemic therapy for child abuse and neglect:

- After abuse or neglect
- For the whole family, including the parent or carer
- 4–6 months duration

Trauma-informed group parenting intervention:

- After abuse or neglect
- For foster carers, adoptive parents and those providing permanence for children and young people aged 5–17 (parents only)
- At least 4 day-long sessions

Aims to:

Address multiple factors contributing to the problem; include round-the-clock on-call service to provide support in crises

Aims to:

Help foster carers to develop the child/young person's capacity for self-regulation; build trusting relationships; develop proactive and reactive strategies for managing behaviour

Interventions after sexual abuse

Trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy:

- For children and young people showing symptoms of anxiety, sexualised behaviour or post-traumatic stress disorder
- 12–16 sessions
- Separate sessions for the non-abusing parent or carer

Therapeutic programme e.g. Letting the Future In:

- For children and young people
- Up to 20 sessions, extending to 30 as needed
- Up to 8 parallel sessions for nonabusing parent or carer

Discuss fully with child or young person; be clear that there are other options if they prefer

Provide separate sessions for nonabusing parent or carer

Therapeutic relationship crucial Tailored support; range of approaches including counselling, socio-educative and creative (e.g. drama or art)

Group psychotherapeutic and psychoeducational sessions or individual psychoanalytic therapy:

- For girls showing emotional or behavioural disturbance
- Up to 18 group sessions or 30 individual sessions
- Separate support sessions for non-abusing parent or carer

Provide separate sessions for nonabusing parent or carer to help them support their child's attendance and address issues in the family



Working with children and young people after abuse and neglect

The following principles were identified as particularly important by children and young people who have experienced abuse and neglect:

Involving them in decisions about their life Finding
the right way
to communicate,
taking into
account their age,
communication
needs and any
disabilities

Explaining about confidentiality – when you might need to share information and with whom

Making
a record
of your
conversations
with them and
asking them to
sign it

Developing good working relationships with their parents and carers

Sharing reports and plans with them, as appropriate to their age and understanding

Giving them a choice of different therapies and support Asking permission if you need to touch them and explaining what you are going to do

Making
sure they
know how to
contact you and
checking how you
can contact
them

Working closely with other organisations so they don't need to keep re-telling their story

Further information

<u>Child abuse and neglect</u> – NICE guideline. Additional information about therapeutic interventions is included in the 'Terms used in this guideline' section.

Working together to safeguard children – Department for Education

Children's attachment: attachment in children and young people who are adopted from care, in care or at high risk of going into care – NICE guideline

This content has been co-produced by NICE and SCIE and is based on NICE's guideline on child abuse and neglect.

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