



Integrated Service for Looked After & Adopted Children

Fostering Attachments Group

The Fostering Attachments Group is a group-work programme that is designed to provide support and guidance to carers and adopters parenting children with insecurity of attachment. The Fostering Attachments Group explores Attachment Theory and links this to the House Model of Parenting. This provides a coherent set of ideas for parenting the children in a way that fosters security of attachment and therefore resilience and emotional growth. Practical suggestions are offered but these are grounded in theory so that carers can develop a deeper understanding about what they are trying to achieve, and can be flexible in the way they use and adapt the ideas being discussed.

“ The group has been a lifeline and great source of information. I now feel I have more tools to carry on with the important role of being a foster carer. Thank you so much. ”

Why a group work programme based on Attachment Theory?

“Where the child has been emotionally damaged by their early experience the provision of a stable, loving home is necessary but not sufficient to facilitate developmental recovery” (Quinton et al, 1998)

Children living in foster or adoptive families have all had to live through the trauma of leaving their birth families and adjusting to a new family. For many of these children they are also leaving behind an early experience of inadequate parenting including abuse, neglect and/or exposure to the trauma of living with domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse. Early experience of separation, loss and inadequate parenting is likely to leave its mark. Looked after and adopted children are at increased risk of attachment difficulties.

An attachment difficulty occurs when a child struggles to trust a carer, compromising the affectional bond between them. The child has difficulties in deriving security and comfort from the carer. Attachment difficulties leave the child at increased risk of later developmental and emotional difficulties whilst the experience of a secure attachment acts as a protective factor against later adversity.

Foster carers and adoptive parents therefore need to provide nurture and support to children who may have a range of difficulties stemming from their early unsatisfactory relationships. They need to find special ways of parenting the children to help them experience a secure attachment and develop resilience and emotional health. In order to do this successfully carers will need support and guidance. In particular these parents need to understand and manage the complex and difficult behaviour often presented by the children whilst finding ways to meet the emotional needs, however they are presented.

“ I’m sure the help the group gave me helped to hold the placement together. He is now very different to how he was in those days. His behaviour apart from a few minor blips is no more than I would expect from any 13 year old boy. ”

NHS

Worcestershire

Aims of Group

1. To provide support to carers and parents who can feel very isolated caring for children with attachment insecurities.
2. To increase understanding of the children and their behavioural and emotional needs through an increased understanding of attachment theory.
3. To explore ways of applying this understanding to the parenting of the children.
4. To increase the skill and confidence of the carers and parents.

Content of Group

The programme is divided into 3 modules with 6 sessions per module.

Module 1:

Provides an understanding of attachment theory, patterns of attachment and implications for parenting.

Module 2:

Introduces the House Model of Parenting, providing guidance on how to help the children experience the family as a secure base.

Module 3:

Continues exploring the House Model of Parenting, with consideration of how the parent or carer can both build a relationship with the child and manage their behaviour. In this way the children's confidence and security increases and in time gives them the ability to manage their own behaviour.

“ Gives confidence in what we are doing and strength to carry on. Brilliant discussion and empathy with the group. My night out! ”

Is the Fostering Attachments Group for me?

If you like meeting others, sharing your parenting experiences, having a laugh, and exploring new ideas about parenting then The Fostering Attachments Group is likely to be for you. Over the 18 session group you will have an opportunity to increase your understanding of Attachment Theory and explore different ways of parenting children who have had a disrupted early start in life. The group is highly supportive, and provides an opportunity to think more deeply about fostering or adopting than single training events can allow for.

“ This session tonight has helped me to restore some faith in myself and what I am doing, ”

For further information, support or advice:

If you have any question or would like to access our support please contact us in the following ways.

By telephone:

01905 752819

By post:

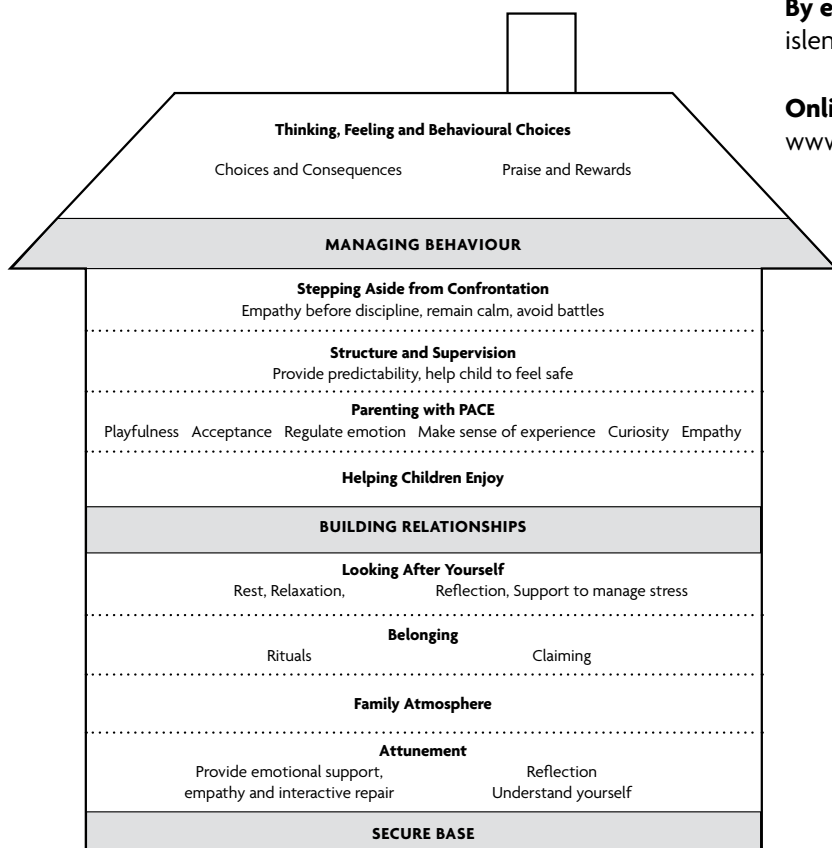
ISL Team 2, Worcestershire County Council, The Pines, Bilford Road, Worcester, WR3 8PU

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The House Model of Parenting