

## Exercise

In small groups, read the case study material and discuss the following:

1. What might get in the way of effective working between parents/carers and practitioners?

- First discuss this from the parents/carers perspective.
- Then consider the practitioners' perspective.

Consider that many parents/carers mistrust formal services because of:

- fear that contact with statutory services will result in removal of their children
- fear of stigma or suspicion of statutory services
- a belief that their behaviour would be judged as harmful to their children
- differential power relations between them and practitioners.

Do you think any part of these statements may be true of parents of neglected children?

Why might this be?

Continued ↘

# Exercise

2. Again, in your small groups consider the model provided.

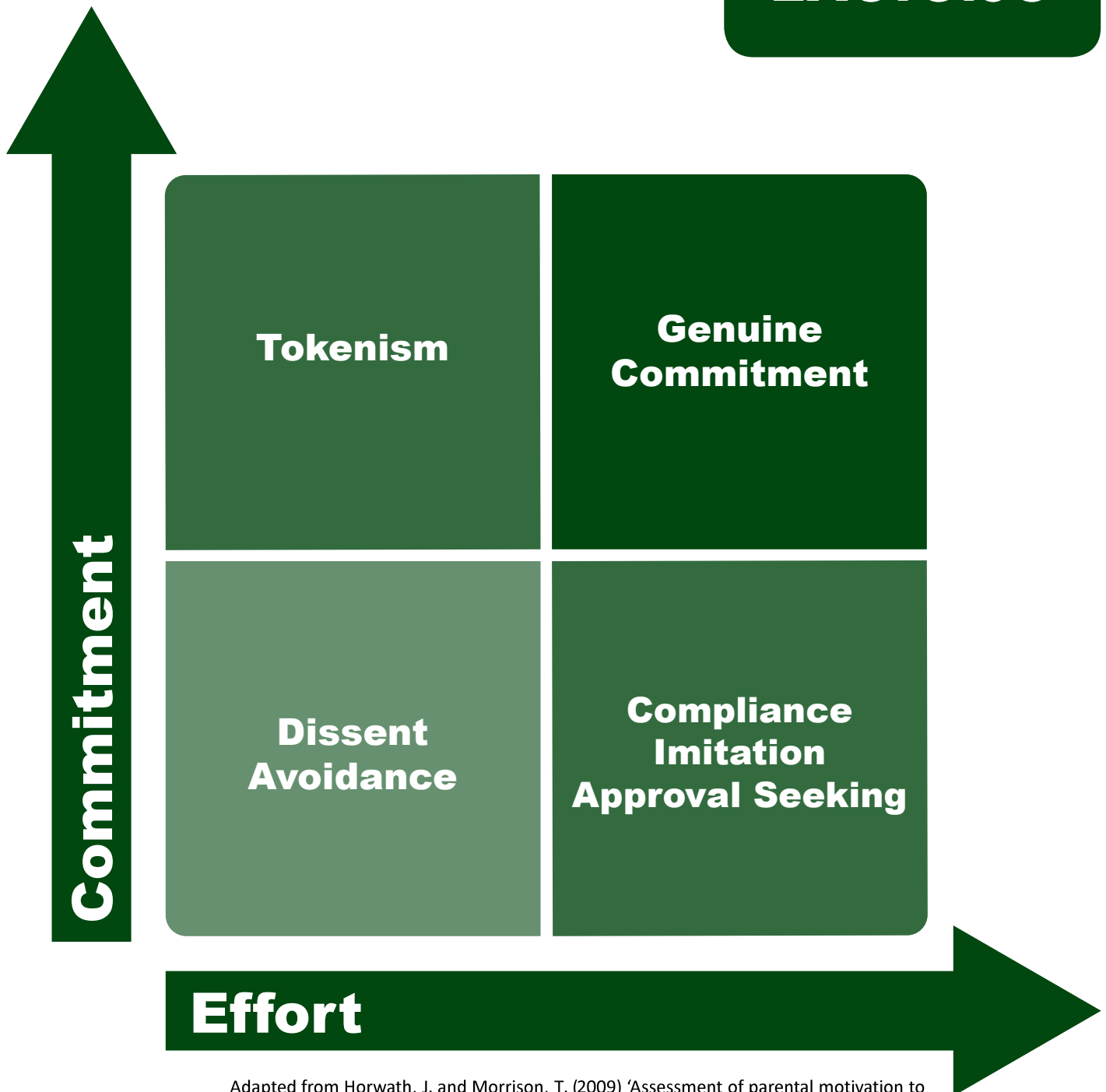
The categories can be summarised as follows:

- **'genuine commitment'** where parents make good efforts to change and show commitment to improving their parenting for the benefit of the children
- **'tokenism'** where parents express commitment to change, but for a range of possible reasons do not put in actual effort to change
- **'compliance imitation' or 'approval seeking'** where there can be high effort to make changes (perhaps sporadically) but the commitment to sustained change is not demonstrated
- **'dissent' or 'avoidance'** where there is a combination of low effort and low commitment.

Read and listen to the following statements and group them in different ways to represent different combinations of the two dimensions of commitment and effort: Consider how you could incorporate this kind of analysis into your assessments of motivation and willingness to change, and how you communicate with parents or carers.

- I want to change
- I don't like things as they are
- I am asking for your help
- I have resources to help solve this
- I think you can help me
- I think things can get better
- I have other support which I will use to encourage me
- I accept that I am doing something wrong
- I accept what you say needs to change
- I accept that others are right (family, friends, community, agencies)
- You defining the problem clearly helps
- I understand what change will involve
- I understand that if I do not change you will take my children away
- I can change if you do this for me
- I'll do whatever you say
- I agree to do this so the family can be reconstituted
- It's your job to solve my problem
- You are my problem
- I am right and you are wrong
- I don't have any problems

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Adapted from Horwath, J. and Morrison, T. (2009) 'Assessment of parental motivation to change.' In Horwath, J. (Ed) (2009) *The Child's World: Assessing Children in Need*. London, Jessica Kingsley.

Promoting and maintaining  
meaningful change

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