

Handout

Based on:

Beesley, P. (2011) *Identifying Neglect: Ten Top Tips*.
London: British Association for Adoption and Fostering.

Examine the context in which you are working

- Consider the impact of your personal and professional experience.
- Consider the impact of professional and ethical values.
- Understand the legislative, regulatory and practice guidance framework.
- Consider the culture of your work environment.
- Consider your awareness of issues of diversity and difference.
- Consider the barriers to effective working in the area of neglect.
- Desensitisation and accommodation.
- "Start again" syndrome.
- Fear.
- Culture of optimism.
- Focus on the parent and not the child.
- Thresholds.
- Misinterpreting the signs of neglect.
- Consider how competent and confident you feel in working with neglect cases.

1

Learn the lessons from serious case reviews

- Be aware of the prevalence of child neglect in those cases subject to Serious Case Reviews.
- Consider some of the main themes emerging from Serious Case Reviews – Loss of focus on the child, focus on the adult, lack of overview or reflection on events, poor assessment and analysis.
- Not recognising indications of risk of harm from chronic neglect.
- Not acting on assessment or loss of momentum.
- Over-optimism about parental capacity in difficult circumstances.
- Poor information sharing, recording, management, supervision and training.
- Understanding factors common to children who die or suffer serious injury from neglect.
- Be able to identify features common to neglectful parents.
- Reflect on how you and your agency respond to working with neglectful parents and their children.
- How well do you share information with other agencies? Are you clear about confidentiality?

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Identifying neglect
-Ten top tips

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Recognise when a child is being neglected

- Understand what children need for healthy development.
- Understand what we mean by the term 'neglect'.
- Consider the nature of neglect.
- Pre-birth experiences.
- Basic needs.
- Signs that basic needs may be unmet.
- Protecting from physical and emotional harm or nature.
- Home conditions associated with neglect.
- Supervision.
- Neglect of emotional needs.
- See the child, hear the child.
- Recognise neglect in the disabled child.

3

Listen to the child

- The child has a right to be heard.
- Be aware of the barriers to working with and listening to children, and consider how to overcome them.
- Ensure that you have the necessary skills and confidence to work with children and young people.
- Building trust.
- Encouraging self worth.
- Before you start working with the child, think about what you know about them.
- Have a range of tools and methods available for working with children and young people.
- Resources for working with children and young people.
- Resources for practitioners.

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Understand the impact of neglect on children

- The impact of neglect on the child's developmental needs.
- Consider neglect from an attachment perspective.
- Disorganised neglect.
- Depressed, passive neglect.
- Emotional neglect and abuse.
- Severe deprivation and chronic neglect.
- Be aware of the impact of neglect upon early brain development.
- Don't forget the adolescent brain.
- Be aware of the impact of parental factors on children's wellbeing.

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Understand why parents neglect their children and identify signs of risk

- Consider the parent's history and how it affects their parenting capacity.
- Look for connections between the parents' past and present and what this means for parenting.
- Assess current functioning as a parent.
- Consider the parents' current lifestyle and the implications for child neglect.
- Domestic violence.
- Mental illness.
- Problem drug and alcohol use.
- Learning disability.
- How can practitioners engage with resistant parents?



Consider different components of the assessment

- Assess using an ecological framework.
- Assessment framework.
- Principles underpinning the assessment framework.
- Have a clear theoretical basis for the assessment and plan a framework.
- Consider using a range of assessment tools.
- Communicate with parents and other professionals.
- Communicating with parents.
- Working together with the professional network.
- Assess parental cooperation and resistance.
- Focus on the child.
- Focus on the needs of the disabled child.
- Assess parenting capacity.
- Revise framework for assessment of parenting.
- Consider the interaction of risk and resilience factors.



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Recognise when children in public care are suffering neglect

- Learn the lessons from Serious Case Reviews.
- Consider the characteristics of children and young people in public care.
- Recognise the signs of children and young people in care.
- Ensure the recruitment and assessment processes aim to identify residential care workers, prospective foster carers and adoptive parents who can provide safe and secure care
- Undertake careful matching of the child with the carer or parent.
- Support the placement.
- Understand the responsibilities for safeguarding children in public care.

Use Interventions effectively

- Interventions and child neglect.
- Basic good practice in neglect.
- Understand the continuum of intervention and how this shapes responses to child neglect.
- Be proactive.
- Target intervention to the needs of the child and the family.
- Building resilience – factors that promote resilience.
- Provide a caring environment for children and young people unable to remain at home.

Know when enough is enough

- Have early discussions with your legal adviser.
- Bring together the evidence supporting the need for legal intervention.
- Consider the child's permanence needs.