

**Audience** Groups 3-6 (Working Together 2010)

**Methods** Small group activity and large group discussion

### Preparation

Trainers might find it helpful to refer to handouts:-

- **H10 Adults who misuse substances**
- **H15 Addiction and Dependence** - this provides the WHO definitions that can be helpful as a guide

These handouts could be printed out and given to the participants.

### Links to Common Core

**Common Core 2** Child and young person development (skills: observation and judgment). Where you feel that further support is needed, know when to take action yourself and when to refer to managers, supervisors or other relevant professionals.

## Childhood Neglect: Improving Outcomes for Children

### Learning Outcomes

To identify concerns about parenting capacity that may contribute to neglect.

### Process

The aim of this exercise is to provide evidence-based knowledge on parental substance misuse and its impact on children's welfare and development. It also serves to elicit attitudes and values, providing discussion for a multi-disciplinary audience.

First ask participants to work in small groups of 3-4 people and to describe what they understand by the terms addiction and dependence. At this stage they should share their knowledge across disciplines and try to pin down whether they see these terms as meaning different things.

Then bring the groups together for a short discussion about the terms. It is beyond the scope of the exercise to develop detailed discussions about the terms and you need not come to a position where there is a complete distinction. However there are some pointers. For example, understandings of the term addiction include:

- an ever growing pre-occupation with the substance
- a sense of compulsion
- focused routines ensuring a steady supply
- consumption is all important – less dependent on what is appropriate
- less inhibition with regards to consequences
- increased consumption as tolerance develops.

Continued ↘

### Time

Total :1 hour

- Small group discussion 10 mins
- Large group discussion 10 mins
- Small group discussion 30 mins
- Large group feedback 10 mins

further

Impact of substance misuse  
on parenting capacity

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## Process Continued ↘

Understandings of the term dependence include:

- describes a compulsion, or desire, to continue taking a drug, or drugs, in order to feel good or to avoid feeling bad
- compulsion is initiated following repeated use and is difficult to control
- dependence frequently leads to serious physical, social and psychological problems for the user
- ‘...overwhelming involvement’ (Alexander 2008).
- ‘The substance misuse may become the person’s central pre-occupation to the exclusion of significant person relationships’ (Scottish Executive 2003, p.9).

Then ask the participants to resume their discussion in small groups and to discuss the implications of both addiction and dependence upon parenting capacity.

Finally bring the groups together for feedback on the implications of substance misuse on parenting capacity and the likelihood of a child being neglected. At this stage, there are also likely to be opportunities to discuss any issues in relation to values that the exercise sparked for the participants. If the group is multi-disciplinary there will be opportunities to explore whether there are differences between disciplines in understandings of addiction and dependence in relation to child neglect.

further

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