

For parent carers of children with ADHD



The
Insiders' Guide
parent carer support course 2018

Written by: Kim Aumann and Carrie Britton

The first 5 courses were written in 2007 by Kim and Carrie with acknowledged help from the many people mentioned in the preface.

A further 3 courses, completed in 2017, built on the originals and were written by Kim Aumann and Karin Anjos.

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Course for parents of children with ADHD



Foreword

This course is for parents and carers of children with additional needs with a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). It aims to help parent carers review the journey so far and gain new skills and confidence to tackle the challenges of the future. Parents and course facilitators share experiences and solutions and together practise how to successfully negotiate with school and professionals, update their understanding of ADHD and how this impacts their children and families, and consider ways of positively managing some of the typical features of ADHD.

There is enough material for six 3-hour sessions. The parents and facilitators feedback from the course has been very positive, with some describing it as an uplifting and life-changing experience.

This course for parent carers of children with ADHD has built on the original Insiders' Guide, was designed and piloted in 2017, and fully evaluated by the University of Brighton. A copy of both evaluation reports is available from Amaze.

Parents' quotes include:

I understand more about what 'ADHD' is and how to help my child deal with it

I am much more aware of my children and how they work, so how I cope and parent them has been altered or at least I'm working on it!

The best thing is that I am starting to allow my child to problem solve for himself, I've not been so hard on myself and I'm calmer in my approach

This course has given me practical and coping strategies to manage myself, my child and the professionals involved

It was really good getting to know other parents in the same situation

I understand more about what 'ADHD' is and how to help my child deal with it

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1 Preface

All of the Insiders' Guide courses are for parent carers of children with special needs. It is an insider's view, or in other words, it starts from the parent's perspective, from the parent's view of life with a child with special needs. It draws on their guidance navigating the unique journey of bringing up a child with special needs. It is intended for use by parent carers and practitioners interested in understanding and strengthening parent's experience and skills.

Amaze is a Brighton based charity that works with families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) across Sussex. It has been providing parents with information, advice and support since 1997.

The original edition of the Insiders' Guide Manual was published in 2007 and was based on a pilot course supported by a grant from The Parenting Fund. Further evaluations have been completed and are summarised at the end of the manual.

It's hard to know who to accredit what to, as the final product and its subsequent improvements are the result of a range of experiences: tips and inspiration we have collected over the years from parent carers who've been at the coalface raising children with special educational needs and disabilities; absorbing information from the literature, workshops and conferences about supporting parent carers; and testing various well-established strategies and techniques in our own practice with children and families.

Invaluable contributions were made by the original team of parent-practitioner co-facilitators who tested the materials for us as they delivered the first pilot course to five different groups of parents.

Particular thanks goes to the following:

- **Penny Baldwin** *Parent*
- **Helen Burley** *Specialist Health Visitor*
- **Sandra Chitty** *Parent*
- **Sinead Gillespie** *Parent*
- **Tania Heard** *Parent*
- **Abby Maitland** *Children's Disability Services Manager*
- **Donna Ward** *Parent*
- **Trudy Ward** *Nurse Practice Educator*
- **Liz Whitley** *Educational Psychologist*
- **Amelia Wilton** *Nursery Nurse*
- **Sue Winter** *Amaze Transition Development Worker*

And to these workers and organisations who contributed their expertise by helping to plan or deliver the original specialist modules:

- **Lizzie Batten** *Amaze DLA Co-ordinator*
- **Carrie Britton** *Parent*
- **Ros Cook** *Amaze Assistant Director*
- **Lilli Howell** *ASD Support Service Manager*
- **Linda Winchester** *Community Nurse Specialist*
- **South Central Regional Inclusion Project**
- **Alison Orphan** *Real Life Parenting*
- **Triangle**
- **Friends of Downs View Special School**

The Original Project Advisory Group included the following members:

- **Kim Aumann** *Amaze Director*
- **Dr Carrie Britton** *Parent*
- **Alastair Burtt** *Amaze Trustee*
- **Helen Burley** *Specialist Health Visitor*
- **Dr Angie Hart** *Project Research Supervisor*
- **Jon Ota** *General Manager SDH (NHS Trust)*
- **Dr Sue Virgo** *Project Researcher*
- **Trudy Ward** *Nurse-Practice Educator*

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A note on language: We took a really broad view about the phraseology to use and parents guided our way. We decided to use the term 'special needs' throughout this manual. While not the preferred term for some, we felt it was the best solution to finding a language that did not isolate parents and that most could relate to. We also use the term 'parent carer' and 'parent' throughout the materials in the hope that readers will view it as a generic term intended to include anyone in a 'parenting' role with a child such as foster and adoptive parents, grandparents and carers too. We trust readers will appreciate the difficulty encountered with language and forgive any unintended exclusion.



2 Introduction

Insiders' Guide came about because we noticed an interest amongst parents to have time to reflect on their experience, meet up with others in a similar situation, acquire information and learn new skills and strategies to cope with the added demands of caring for their children with special needs.

Amaze has been working alongside parents since 1997. It is a 'one stop shop', providing information, advice and support in a variety of ways that recognises parents are all different and are not one homogenous group. We know that one form of support does not suit every parent and so the organisation provides a telephone helpline service, written materials written by and for parents, access to library resources, individual one to one casework support, small and large workshop and conference opportunities, informal group meetings and the chance to contribute to decision-making service planning groups.

While parent carers tell us they share in common a range of experiences, they also tell us that they need access to different types of support at different times and some need more support than others. This course adds to the repertoire of approaches to supporting parent carers with the task of raising their children and building resilience in the process.

We were surprised when we embarked on this work, to find very few courses that speak to the unique characteristics of bringing up a child with special needs. There are many parenting support courses for mainstream parents, many courses for specific problems such as behaviour, poor reading and youth offending, a few for very particular groups such as the Early Bird programme for parents of young children with autism, and a few that have added 'special needs' sessions to their generic mainstream programmes along the way. However, with the exception of a few notable examples, such as Time Out by Positive Parenting and Moving On by Alison Orphan there are very few courses devised for parents of children with special needs from the outset. And even fewer involve parents in their design and delivery.

Consequently, we searched the literature, scanned websites, queried the Parenting UK database and visited their library looking for advice about good practice when designing and running courses.

Insiders' Guide aims to build parent's resilience so they are well placed to enjoy their journey bringing up their children with special needs. It offers a structure within which parents can:

- share and explore their travels so far
- take note of and celebrate the skills they have acquired along the way
- map their needs in preparation for the next adventure
- practise and rehearse possible strategies for building their skills and strengthening their resolve to journey on.



3 Value Base of Course

The course is based on four fundamental assertions:

The course is based on four fundamental assertions:

1. Parents are key to improving child and family outcomes
2. Parents of children with special needs travel a unique journey
3. Parents enter a frequently unfamiliar world of disadvantage directly related to having a child with special needs
4. That the best can be achieved for a child, when parents and practitioners work together.

The course focuses on what it means to be a parent of a child with special needs.

We know much about this experience. Wide ranging research has consistently shown that families of a child with special needs are more likely than other families to experience poverty (Every Disabled Child Matters 2007, Prime Minister's Strategy Unit 2005), relationship breakdown (Beresford 1995, Glenn 2007, Higgins et al 2005), general health and mental health problems (Barlow et al 2006, Knafl and Deatrick 2002, Oelofsen and Richardson 2006), unsuitable housing and problems associated with employment such as finding suitable childcare and returning to work (Bennett 2009, Beresford and Rhodes 2008, Prime Minister's Strategy Unit 2005).

Research has also shown that how parents cope with the additional demands of caring for a disabled child will be influenced by many factors. These include: their internal, built in capacity to manage challenges; the external support and resources available to them; family support; their pattern of communication and problem sharing; their value and belief systems; and the extent of the adversity they face. While parent carers of children with special needs have diverse individual backgrounds, resources and preferences, studies have shown that they share in common a distinct set of experiences that set them apart from parents of children without special needs (Gammon and Rose 1991, Russell 1991, Worthington 1994).

Most parents face a huge learning curve and are met with obstacles as they seek to acquire information and knowledge about their child's disability or special needs and the support available for them. Many are managing varying degrees of loss and disappointment, and live with a sense of chronic sorrow as their children reach regular developmental milestones differently. Celebrating ordinary experiences and joy can get buried. Professionals often descend and unintentionally de-skill parents in the process, failing to involve them respectfully as partners in the decision making about their children's lives. Without any preparation, parents are called upon to negotiate the maze of services and support, and meet with professionals to repeat their stories and discuss progress and provision, on an ongoing basis. A large number of parent carers fail to get consistent nights sleep and have little access to breaks as friends and family support dwindles and limited childcare or short break opportunities are available to them and their children.

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Insiders' Guide promotes partnership working. Bridging the gap in culture and understanding between parent carers and practitioners can create better outcomes for children. We believe that when these two sets of knowledge and expertise come together, the best can be achieved for a child. This course has actively involved parent carers in its design and delivery. And it has drawn on the advice of experienced practitioners who deliver good practice on a daily basis. It is intended to be jointly delivered by parent carers and practitioners and in so doing, helps to demonstrate the value of team working. It models the capacity we all have to work together co-operatively and collaboratively to a common goal.

Insiders' Guide also introduces the idea of building resilience and what we know can help children and young people and their parents and carers to bounce back when life is particularly tough. We suggest that in order for parents to foster their children's resilience, they need to notice their stress levels and build their own strengths because bringing up a child with special needs can be difficult.

Resilience is the ability to withstand and recover from stressful life challenges, strengthened and more resourceful. It's a concept and source of knowledge that informs both the work at Amaze and this Insiders' Guide course. We've worked with a team of academics at the University of Brighton and parent carers and practitioners in the field, to translate the messages from resilience research into practical things we need to make happen to help children and families manage life when it's tough (Aumann and Hart 2009, Hart and Blincow 2007, www.boingboing.org.uk). Taking account of how social, economic and health inequalities impact the difficulties faced by children and families, and searching for the best ways to work alongside them to build capacity to manage life's challenges, is at the heart of this course.



4 The Delivery Style

The modules reflect a journey that has a beginning, middle and end. They are structured to provide a pattern that we recommend is followed to maximise group development and individual learning. Each module uses the same format and begins with a checking in time and an explanation of the module theme. The middle section is based on an adult learning process that follows a cycle of listening to each other's experience, reflecting on the theme, learning about the theory and bringing these stages together by practising a relevant strategy or skill (Merriam and Caffarella 1999, Jarvis 1987, Kolb 1984). All the modules end with an exercise that reminds parent carers of the importance of looking after themselves and a checking out that encourages parents to get rid of any worries from the session and helps them end positively and relaxed.

In recognition of parents' different learning styles, the materials have been designed to include a range of exercises such as storytelling, written materials, group discussion, reflection, modelling, visual cues, formal presentation, and active skills practise.

For years now, Amaze has delivered consistently well evaluated parent workshops, conferences and learning events. We have observed that parents do not like lecture presentations and prefer being involved and playing a part in their learning. While other styles may work, we have found that the participation way works well time and time again because it facilitates maximum involvement, accepts where parents are at, and is non-judgemental and inclusive. Most importantly it encourages the sharing of experience and the exchange of ideas. While the more theoretical parts of the modules are instructive in style, the overall delivery is participatory and works with what parents bring to the course. Consequently, the course is designed to be delivered by people with some experience of running parent training sessions or groups, or who have attended a 'training for trainers' course beforehand.



5 Course Structure

The course is divided into six weekly modules, four of which are common to all courses. We add additional material for two specialist modules that can be chosen to meet the needs of different groups of parent carers. While each of the modules could be used separately and independently of one another, they are designed to be used as an integrated whole because each builds on work covered in earlier sessions.

The structure within each module is based on good practice and works well. The sequence of topics is logical and reflects the parent carer journey. However, we have prepared the material in such a way that you have some flexibility to change or alter parts and build in your own ideas. Each of the modules has a considered blend and order of exercises that provide time for reflection and sharing, physical activity and the introduction of learning material.

The common modules are:

- Module: The journey so far
- Module: Travelling on
- Module: Getting the best out of others
- Module: Looking ahead

In 2011, the authors, Kim Aumann and Carrie Britton, built on parent feedback and facilitators experience of delivering the course, updating the manual and adding a sixth final module which provides a stronger summary and conclusion to the course. Any extra modules should be added before this final one.

Specialist modules in this course are:

- Module: Understanding ADHD
- Module: Managing ADHD

The eight complete courses are:

- Under 5s
- Under 12s
- Teens
- Complex health needs
- Severe learning difficulties
- ADHD
- Anxiety Under 12s
- ASC Moving On

While the course modules are designed to last three hours, the demands of childcare for particular groups might require shorter sessions, hence reducing the content and timings.

Evaluation and feedback:

We have provided an end-of-course parent evaluation sheet to be used during Module Six. However, we would recommend the use of additional tools to evaluate the impact of the course for parent carers. A range of standardised questionnaires could be used such as the short Depression Anxiety and Stress Measure (DAS) or the Brief Parental Self-Efficacy Scale. These measures often require parents to complete a questionnaire before the start of the course, and again at the end, as this can help to capture any change a parent feels, having completed the course.



6 Preparation for Course Facilitators

Co-Working

Co-delivery of the course brings together parent expertise and experience with practitioner skill and knowledge.

Choosing to use parent carers to co-deliver the course has many advantages, for example, they can lend an authenticity and credibility to the course. Many parents have told us that they worry about participating in support groups and training led by professionals,



because they feel their skills as parents might be criticised, or because they have negative memories of schooling themselves, or they have had poor experiences with professionals in the past. Because parent facilitators share similar experiences, they have the ability to break down barriers and even reach other parents who do not easily engage with professionals or would otherwise be anxious about attending.

For you as an individual facilitator, the advantages of co-working are numerous. You can give each other support, provide continuity, draw on each other's expertise and offer different styles and strengths. It also means you can share the work of preparing and facilitating tasks and it gives you the chance to divide the group and work with each half at the same time. But it does require the allocation of extra time to share the experience and communicate clearly with each other along the way.

Workers and parent carers can bring their own unique insights and skills to bear on the problems raised in the group and working together can reduce the differences in perspectives. But choosing to co-deliver a course makes the relationship different to others as it's less hierarchical and can be disorientating at first. Workers may be worried about how they are perceived or feel pressured to know everything. Parents may be worried about not having enough formal training or work experience. We assumed it might be more difficult for parent facilitators to handle. However we found that while parent facilitators were called upon to manage their personal feelings and reactions without immediately acting on them, worker facilitators were called upon to support their co-facilitators afterwards, because the course content has the potential to open old wounds.

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It will help when embarking on delivering this course, to have some experience of negotiating the maze of services and personnel involved in delivering support to families. And even better if you have good collaborative relationships with other local agencies and workers, as you are likely to need to signpost parents to sources of extra information. You may also want to enlist their help to deliver specialist parts of the course depending on their background or expertise in the relevant field.

Getting Prepared

We have already said that Insiders' Guide is designed to be participative and focuses on understanding and strengthening parent's experience. We advise a low tech approach in an attempt to remove any obstacles to talking about and sharing the real content of parents' lives. An external USB memory stick is provided to enable flexible use of the material and preparation of handouts. Deciding whether or not you want to pass out handouts as you go along or prefer to bundle them into a pack that you give to parents at the outset, can help with preparation.

Included at the beginning of each module instruction is a list of things to remember to have to hand. Most modules require the use of a flipchart and marker pens. Some require handouts and the preparation of a few diagrams. And you need to purchase a 'not now net' (toy fishing net and weekly small token gifts for participants. All require a large cloth (250cm x 125cm kite material), spray mount, masking tape and drawing pins, lots of A5 coloured paper, and plenty of felt tip pens for parents to use.

We have drawn on a teaching tool introduced to us by ICA:UK called Technology of Participation, or ToP for short (www.ica-uk.org.uk). We recommend this tool for the course because it encourages active parent participation and enables the group to visually cluster, sort and prioritise their ideas. To explain further: we purchased a piece of parachute like fabric from the local kite making store measuring approximately 250cm x 125cm (or they can be purchased from ICA:UK). This was then generously spray mounted to create a sticky surface on which paper could be attached. The cloth was fixed with masking tape and drawing pins on a wall for everyone to see. Then as we proceeded with the exercises, parents were asked to write or draw their thoughts and ideas onto an A5 piece of paper which they then add to the cloth. Because the cloth is spray mounted, the A5 paper sticks to it but can be easily removed or repositioned, as the exercise requires.

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Tips for Facilitators

Time Limits: We have found that setting time limits for exercises and discussion provides a strong framework and promotes self-discipline within the group. It can also help to maintain a good pace and flow. While there is no value in keeping time just for the sake of it, if more time is needed this can be negotiated and extended, rather than running over without clarity or sense of purpose. Parents will have lots of important tales to tell, but aim to apply enough pressure to achieve specific tasks within your time limits. Often the shortest time limits produce the most exciting work. Parents should be made aware of the time constraints and the method being used in feedback or discussion. Some of the methods are especially useful to get the group to talk openly while tensions are high.

Clear instructions and guidance: This is essential for all the exercises. Every exercise should have a feedback and discussion period at the end of it and every module ends with time to evaluate and reflect on the session. It is important that these periods are well structured and well facilitated. The more the group becomes used to disciplined and brief comments, the less you will be required to keep things in order and on time.

Keeping to task: It really helps to keep the dynamics within the group constantly monitored. Try not to let grumbles become stored up or buried. It's best to get problems out into the open. However, the course may not be able to deal with the range of problems or issues raised, and still remain focused on its aims. Therefore we have found that agreeing a 'not now net' early on, in Module One, will help to acknowledge these other issues and provide a way to move on. The 'not now net' is simply a toy fishing net and each time an issue is raised that distracts the group from the primary task of the course, a note is written and added to the net. This signals that the matter is interesting enough to catch but not central to the course topic, so that the group can decide at the end of the session or course to revisit items in the net and signpost to more relevant information sources.

Self-Disclosure & Reflection

Your feelings are important to notice because they are a good way of understanding how parents might be feeling in the group. We found that just like parent participants, we were looking forward to the modules while also feeling a little worried about how things would go. Certain activities or discussions may remind you of your own experiences, particularly if you are a parent too. Just be careful that what you are feeling does not confuse your understanding of what is happening in the group. Keeping the two things separate means you will be more helpful to the group. While you are not a group member and will not be joining in, it can sometimes help to use your own experiences to illustrate certain activities. But you need to be aware of why you are disclosing these – is it to help move the group along or not? Your de-brief sessions and supervision times are the place for you to discuss your own reactions – not with the group.

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When working with parent carers, the main tool we bring is ourselves irrespective of the materials or exercises we use in the course. One of the aims of this course is to promote the importance of parents taking care of themselves and building their resilience, so that they are well positioned to care for their children. You need to do the same, so that you are well placed to care for parents on the course.

One way to support yourself is to take time to reflect on the course. It can be really helpful to keep a log or journal to capture your thoughts about each module. The activity of writing things down can help process the experience for yourself, often making it easier to move onto other tasks. It can also be a great learning tool as it provides your immediate reflections that are then available to look back on in the future. Alternatively, some people allocate a quiet time and a quiet place to simply reflect on what has happened to date. Just sitting and considering the experience can help point you to what needs to be done next.



Family Diversity & Including Everyone

We all have experience of being parented in some way or another. And it's pretty obvious, that we all have personal experiences and expectations of what being a parent means and the values and beliefs related to parenting. It's impossible to completely put aside our own backgrounds, beliefs and prejudices and nor would we want to, as often the best we can bring to the role of facilitating a parent course, is our authenticity, realness and willingness to be ourselves. However, our beliefs are our own and may not match those of others attending the course. It is important to acknowledge and understand our thoughts and feelings as best we can, so that they don't get in the way of listening well to parents, as they share their stories with us and each other.

Most parent courses are likely to include parents from a variety of family backgrounds, cultures and experiences. Being mindful of anyone likely to be a minority in the group such as fathers, lesbian and gay parents, or parents from ethnic minority communities can help us remember to use inclusive language. Talking about the experience of parenting can provide a common language that overcomes differences – such as sleepless nights, worrying about children, handling tricky

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meetings, and the funny things children say and do. However, different cultures and different family compositions may address these things in different ways and give them different meanings. Inclusive language can be a powerful way of showing respect for difference.

For many parent carers attending the course, their child with special needs may be their first introduction to the world of disability. They are likely to have different and changing responses and it is possible that they will have had little opportunity to reflect on their relationship to disability. *Insiders' Guide* accepts parents wherever they are on the continuum of philosophical debate about disability. However, it rejects the classical medical model of disability where the child is seen as faulty, diagnosed and labelled, and their impairment becomes the focus of attention while their ordinary needs are put on the back shelf and specialist assessments and services take priority. Instead, the view we take is more aligned with the social model of disability. That is, the child is valued, their strengths and needs are defined and inform an outcome based programme of support where resources are made available, training for parents and professionals is offered, relationships are crucial and diversity is welcomed.

Throughout the course, we suggest you use a circular seating plan because circles can create a great sense of equality and containment for a group. They don't have beginnings or ends, they can help level the group and everyone can see each other.

We recommend a group of between 8 and 12 parents because encouraging parents to speak openly is a feature that is probably easier to achieve, when the size of the group is quite small and intimate.

Some parents may not be comfortable with lots of reading and writing.

The British Dyslexia Association recommends simple ways of making written materials accessible to people such as avoiding glossy paper and using cream or light coloured paper instead of white. Remember that some parents may have literacy difficulties, so don't rely on handouts alone – read instructions out loud and think carefully about how you pair people. Suggesting parents use a range of ways to express their views such as drawing a picture or diagram, choosing one person in a pair to write things down or simply speaking to the issue, can help.



7 Using the Manual

This manual provides detailed information about delivering each of the modules. It includes a programme timetable, notes about preparation, text explaining the content and copies of recommended handouts.

Each module is formatted to last for 3 hours and the time allocation for each activity is offered as a minimum for the theme to be properly explored. If you think more time is needed, you can remove another exercise from the module to make this possible.

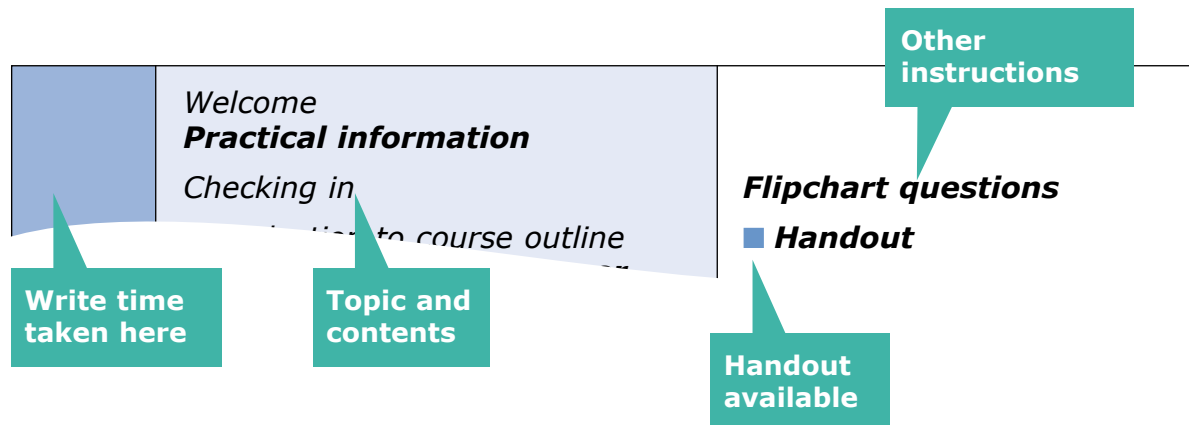
Each module is divided into 8 sections, for example:

10.00	Checking In	To aid arrival	15 mins
10.15	Explaining the Theme	To ensure structure and clarity	5 mins
10.20	Listening to You	To engage our emotions	30 mins
10.50	Tea/coffee	To network	20 mins
11.10	Taking a Step Back	To reflect on the module theme	30 mins
11.40	Learning More	To access the theory	20 mins
12.00	Practising	To bring it all together and apply	35 mins
12.35	Taking Care	To nourish and build resilience	15 mins
12.50	Checking Out	To help parents leave relaxed	10 mins

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In the notes for facilitators, we have kept a left-handed column blank for you to put in your timings. Some courses will be held in the mornings, some in the afternoon and some in the evening. We advise trainers to jointly work out the timings and tell parents when to expect a tea break!



Instructions for the exercises within each module follow a format:

Note about preparation for each module

Description of each exercise

Aim of each exercise

Directions for each exercise

8 Course Programme

- Module One: The journey so far
- Module Two: Understanding ADHD
- Module Three: Travelling on
- Module Four: Managing ADHD
- Module Five: Getting the best out of others
- Module Six: Looking ahead

9 Appendices

- Handouts
- Evaluation Sheet
- Sample Advertising Flyer
- References
- Summary of Evaluations

INSIDERS' GUIDE... to bringing up children with special needs

Module One: The journey so far



Module One: The journey so far



Course outline

- Module One: **The journey so far**
Finding out what we have in common
- Module Two: **Understanding ADHD**
Thinking about ADHD and how it impacts family life
- Module Three: **Travelling on**
Managing stress and building resilience
- Module Four: **Managing ADHD**
Exploring ways to support children with ADHD
- Module Five: **Getting the best out of others**
Handling tricky meetings
- Module Six: **Looking ahead**
Summary of what we've learnt
and preparing for the future

Module One: The journey so far



Module programme for facilitators

	<i>Welcome</i> Practical information		10
	Checking in	Flipchart questions	10
	<i>Introduction to course structure</i> What the course will cover	■ Handout: Course Outline	5
	<i>Introduction to today's module</i> Exploring what's happened What do we have in common?	■ Handout: Module Programme	5
	<i>Hopes and worries</i> About the course	A5s onto cloth	20
	<i>Group agreement</i> Sorting ground rules	Flipchart Not Now Net	10
	<i>Listening to you</i> The winning ticket Welcome to Holland	■ Handout: Welcome to Holland	20
	The Insiders' Guide to the Allotments	■ Handout: IG to the Allotments	20
	TEA TIME		
	<i>Taking a step back</i> Changing expectations What's different now?	1st and 2nd large parent diagram	25
	<i>Learning more</i> News from other parents	■ Handout: News from other parents	10
	<i>Practising</i>	3rd large parent diagram	20
	<i>Taking care</i> Because you're worth it	Tags & gifts	15
	<i>Checking out</i>		10

Module One: The journey so far



PREPARATION

Make sure you have everything you need: large cloth and spray on mount, flipchart, pens, paper, name labels, folders, etc.

Handouts needed today include:	Other bits needed include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Handout: Course outline■ Handout: Module One programme■ Handout: Welcome to Holland OR■ Handout: The Insiders' Guide to the Allotments■ Handout: News from other parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not Now Net (toy fishing net)• 3 large figures: 'Me the past', 'Me Now', 'Me the Future'• A5 paper & felt tips• Treats – small notebooks for all

Arrive early to sort the seating, refreshments, equipment and get the cloth onto the wall.

The physical environment is important:

- get some air into the room but check the noise levels from outside
- think about a 'do not disturb' sign on the door after everyone has arrived as it's important not to be interrupted
- check location of loos
- check any fire alarm procedures
- identify a separate area or room to go to for tea and coffee as this makes a distinction between 'work' and 'non-work'.

NOTES

The main aim of the module is to help parents feel relaxed and comfortable in the group and to find out what they might have in common. It also aims to place parental experience within the larger social context of prejudice, intolerance and disability discrimination, to emphasise the adjustments and adaptations parents are making and therefore the need to take care of themselves.

Time should always be allocated at the beginning of the module, to agree how parents want the course to work for them. Sometimes it is tempting to avoid spending time on the group agreement but it's a really important way to make sure everyone starts out feeling as safe and secure as possible.

This is the first time this group of parents have come together, so allow lots of time for introductions and a calm pace to help people engage with each other. This is the 'forming' stage for the group. It is likely to involve a

range of dilemmas or risks for individuals as they adjust to being together. Typical concerns that are not always entirely obvious to us, might include:

- will I like anyone here?
- will these people accept me?
- is this a safe place to say how I feel?
- how much should I say?
- will I be taken care of here?

So what's important is to just let people arrive and relax into getting to know what it's like to be in the group – it's not the best time for people to expose lots or to expect them to reveal too much.

It is also important for one of the facilitators to agree to collect and keep the various materials that parent carers generate each week. You will use these to decorate the room at the final group meeting, as memory prompts for group reflection on what was covered in each module.

Module One: The journey so far



PROGRAMME TODAY

Introduce yourselves (5 mins)

Create a light and lively tone to relax the group and create an atmosphere of fun and working together. So give some thought to how you might introduce yourselves, with a giggle.

Information about practicalities (5 mins)

Briefly outline the following practical information:

Toilets, fire escapes, timing and tea breaks, communication arrangements with the crèche, smoking area, mobile phones. You might want to also suggest that parents put any bags and belongings together on a spare table, as they will be moving about the room throughout the morning.

CHECKING IN (10 mins)

Point out that you are going to do proper introductions in a while but for the moment we are just going to do a 'check in' which is a way of helping us to arrive and focus on the session.

Demonstrate the checking in method, by briefly answering three questions yourself: my name is, anything I need to shelve, how I feel at this moment. Then facilitate a check in (this means each person taking their turn to contribute, and this instruction appears every week).

Point out that parents are not being asked to say much and can say as little as they like. Check in is a time to be listened to, without interruption or questions from others.

INTRODUCTION TO COURSE STRUCTURE (5 mins)

Description

To inform parents of course content.

Aims

To reassure parents of the structure and explain the consistent format for each module.
To introduce the theme of building resilience that runs through the six sessions.

Directions

1. Flipchart themes for six modules and explain the logic behind the choice. Explain that you imagine parents are wondering what the course is going to be like, what it will cover and how it's going to feel taking part.
2. Explain the course was written with parents and is based on what they said would be useful. It assumes that there are extra challenges in bringing up children with special needs but there are things that can help build our resilience to face those challenges and come out stronger and more resourceful. For example, we know it helps to talk about our experiences, explore some of the emotions involved and share that with others in a similar situation, so the course has opportunities for that throughout but especially in modules 1 and 3. It also helps to learn new information, get practical tips and try things out for ourselves so the course also has plenty of that too, especially in modules 2, 4 and 5.

Module One: The journey so far



3. Flipchart the plan for today's session. Explain that each week we will follow a plan that starts with "Listening to you", has a chance to reflect by "Taking a step back", includes some learning or information "Learning more" and a time for "Practising" some of what we have learnt. We will always end with "Taking care" of ourselves as that is a key step in building our resilience.

Flipchart how each session is structured:

Checking in	- to aid arrival
Explaining the theme	- to ensure structure and clarity
Listening to you	- to engage our emotions
Taking a step back	- to reflect on the module theme
Learning more	- to access the theory
Practising	- to bring it all together and apply
Taking care	- to nourish and build resilience
Checking out	- to help parents leave feeling relaxed

4. Explain Handouts will be provided as we go along and/or provided in one folder and to refer to from time to time. Essentially they are for parents to take home and read if they want to. ■ **Handout: Course Outline.**
5. Encourage parents to speak to you privately if they have any worries about the course.

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST MODULE (5 mins)

Description

A whole group presentation: The journey so far.

Aims

To find out what's happened and identify the common ground amongst the group.

Directions

1. Explain that today is about finding out where parents are at in their journey and to find out what's happened and identify the common ground amongst the group.
2. The group will be looking at: the broad context within which they find themselves; why lots of parents talk about feelings of anger, exhaustion and guilt; and, why it can be difficult to easily care for children with special needs.

■ **Handout: Module One Programme**, or flipchart today's plan.

Module One: The journey so far



PARENT INTRODUCTIONS (20 mins)

Description

An exercise in pairs to explore hopes and fears for the course.

Aims

To reassure parents that everyone is likely to have some anxieties about joining the group. To identify the level of anxiety and find out about parents' hopes.

Directions

1. Ask parents to introduce themselves to the group by answering three simple questions:
e.g. their name, the name and age of your child with ADHD, where they go to school.
2. Now divide the group into pairs, and ask parents to answer two questions:
 - What are you most looking forward to/hoping to get out of this course?
 - What are your worries/worst fears about attending this course?Post onto cloth the two questions: "hopes"? "worries"?
3. Each pair to write their answers onto the A5s. One colour paper for "looking forward to" and another colour for "worries".
4. Explain that the pairs should write one idea per sheet. Demonstrate.
5. Once finished, parents post their A5s onto cloth under two headings: Discuss.

Link

"So what might we need to agree in the group agreement to help make this space easy to be in?"

MAKING A GROUP AGREEMENT (10 mins)

Description

Whole group exercise to agree group ground rules.

Aims

To assist parents to set a framework for the way in which they wish to conduct themselves while meeting as a group.

Directions

1. Explain why seeking a group agreement is important.
2. Start with three statements on flipchart and check for group approval:
 - Confidentiality
 - Listening and respecting each other
 - No right or wrong views, just different.
3. Ask group to brainstorm additions to these three, thinking about what would help them to feel comfortable in the group.
4. Explain that this list will be put up on wall at every session to remind parents of what has been agreed.
5. Explain list can be added to as we go along.

Module One: The journey so far



Now provide a brief explanation about the style of the course ...

1. Parents do not have to join in but everyone will be encouraged to do so.
2. Parents are asked to reveal as much or as little as they feel is comfortable.
3. Given parents will be spending time talking about their children, it's possible they might at times feel a bit upset or sad or worried, all of which is to be expected and okay to talk about in the group. You might want to add e.g. "We can always take a few moments to see what's triggered the feelings and check whether you want some space alone".
4. The course encourages parents to use "I statements" – demonstrate.
5. It is likely there will be things that come up that the group will not have time to discuss or are beyond the scope of this course. However, suggest it would be good to catch these things for future consideration and therefore would like to agree a 'not now net' to catch all those things. Show net and check it's okay to use.
6. Before proceeding any further, ask group to agree the most appropriate language they would like to use throughout the course e.g. children with difficulties, special needs, illness, disability, etc? And what shall we use to talk about workers, professionals? No need to get too bogged down with language, as none of it is perfect. You might also want at this point to ask whether or not group want to agree to avoid swearing?

LISTENING TO YOU (20 mins)

Description

A whole group exercise – The Winning Ticket.

Aims

To illustrate the lack of preparation parents have to help equip them to plan ahead.
To help parents notice the challenges they are mastering.

Directions

1. This is a quick exercise that is meant to energise the group and encourage talking. Announce to parents that they have just won the first prize in the Adventure Travel Competition.
2. The prize is valuable but it's to a mystery destination.
3. You have to leave tonight.
4. You must rush home now and get ready to board the plane at Gatwick at 9.00pm. What do you have to do?
5. Ask parents to suggest all the things that occur to them in order to claim their prize and be on that plane at 9.00pm.
6. Flipchart all the suggestions.
7. Decide which of the two handouts you wish to use. ■ **Handout: Welcome to Holland** OR **The Insiders' Guide to the Allotments** (or you might be aware of another version appropriate for the particular parent group) and read it out loud
8. Ask group to comment on the exercise.

Module One: The journey so far



TAKING A STEP BACK (25 mins)

Description

A whole group exercise exploring how parents' expectations have had to change and may be continually called upon to adapt and change.

Aims

To find out more about what's happened for each parent. To discover some common ground.

Directions

1. Have three large outlines of figures drawn on different coloured pieces of paper prepared beforehand (or draw them in different colours – you just want to be sure to make each of the three figures looks different).
2. Whole group to consider the following questions:
Figure One 'Me the past' – think back to when you were expecting your child or before you found out your child had special needs, what were you expecting?
Just answer spontaneously – scribe answers onto large diagram of Parent One.
3. Then stick Figure Two 'Me now' up on cloth – now you know your child has special needs, and has been with you for a while, what it's like now, what's different?
Again scribe the answers onto diagram of Figure Two.
4. Discuss the two maps of expectations by asking the group the following:
 - What do you notice?
 - What is it about the two different maps that strike you?
5. Draw out from the group that they have been making an enormous adaptation – so not surprising it might have been difficult at times.

Link

"Despite all being different, we found common things in that last exercise. We know there are common things that help families deal with the challenges of caring for their children, and sustain them into the future".

Module One: The journey so far



LEARNING MORE (10 mins)

Description

A brief presentation to whole group summarising what we know from experienced parents – parents who have already travelled the path.

Aims

To introduce parents to the knowledge collected by experienced parents who have already been through the system.

Directions

1. ■ **Handout: News from other parents.** Briefly outline the range of things that we know parents who have already been there have told us can help. What can we learn from them? Be aware that the language on the handout may not be familiar to all parents, so explain the words and their meanings as you go over the points.
2. Now make it relevant for parents on the course. While we know something about what parents have learnt along the way, we are also all individuals and what matters is what helps you.
4. Ask parents to briefly look at the list with the person next to them and decide if they think the list is helpful or not?
5. Seek any feedback from the whole group, which is likely to be quite brief.

PRACTISING (20 mins)

Description

This is an exercise to do in pairs to help parents identify what helps them manage the challenges of caring for their children.

Aims

To share tips and ideas that help.

Directions

1. "What helps?" Put the third large colourful parent up on the cloth, with the question added to an A5 sheet above the Figure Three 'Me the future'.
2. Ask parents to work in pairs with someone they haven't worked with yet. Write or illustrate on A5 notes the things that they find help and support them to care for their children – list anything and everything – one idea per A5.
3. Encourage parents to be specific – so not just 'my friend Jo helps' but instead, 'time to talk with Jo'; OR not 'time on my own' but a 'full 15 minute bath', and so on. You could illustrate the exercise with one of these examples, such as 'talk to other parents who have been there', 'remain calm by counting to 10', 'make a list and do one thing at a time', 'be solution focused rather than panicking, 'get information about' and so on).
4. Ask pairs to place these notes up onto Figure three for all to see.
5. Discuss.
6. Explain that this course is planned to strengthen your ability to be this third parent.

Module One: The journey so far



TAKING CARE (15 mins)

Description

An individual exercise "Because you're worth it".

Aims

To encourage parents to look after themselves and prioritise their own care, in order to sustain their caring role.

Directions

1. Choose one thing from the list we have completed – to borrow and try out; to do more of; or choose something not on the list.
2. It has to be something entirely for you.
3. Pass out stringed tags. Ask parents to write their name on one side.
(You may want to do this exercise in pairs if parents have a literacy difficulty).
4. Now write the words "because you're worth it" on other side of tag.
5. Close your eyes and hand everyone a small gift.
6. Ask parents to tie the tag onto the gift.
7. Good luck with taking care of yourselves – gifts are for parents to take home to treat themselves.

CHECKING OUT (10 mins)

Description

Whole group exercise to finish the module.

Aims

To have a relaxed wind down before parents depart.

Directions

1. Ask everyone to choose just one word to describe how they feel as they leave.
2. Can be any sort of word – negative or positive, flat or bright and anything in between.



INSIDERS' GUIDE... to bringing up children with special needs

Module Two: Understanding ADHD



Module Two: Understanding ADHD



Module programme for course facilitators

	<i>Welcome</i> Checking in	■ Handout: Module Programme	15
	Introduction to module		10
	<i>Listening to you</i> The strengths and difficulties of having ADHD	■ Handout: Executive Functioning Skills	25
	<i>Taking a step back</i> What does it feel like to have ADHD?		30
	TEA TIME		15
	<i>Learning more</i> The ADHD brain – mental processes and skills that help us to get things done		20
	Practising	■ Handout: Problem Solving ■ Handout: Activities for Mental Processes and Skills	40
	<i>Taking care</i> Noticing your own strengths		15
	<i>Checking out</i>	Notebooks	10

Module Two: Understanding ADHD



PREPARATION

Check the programme outline to make sure you have everything you need: large cloth and spray mount, flipchart, pens, paper, name labels, handouts etc. Arrive early to sort the seating, refreshments, equipment and get the cloth onto the wall. Have the group agreement posted on the wall in order to remind people of the group agreement we are using to conduct ourselves in the group.

Handouts needed today include:

- Handout: Module Two Programme
- Handout: Executive Functioning Skills
- Handout: Problem Solving
- Handout: Activities to help with mental processes and skills

Other bits needed include:

- Flipchart of group agreement
- Flipchart of 6 module programme
- Tray, tea towel and 10-15 small objects for the tray game
- Treats – small notebooks for all

NOTE

This is still the 'forming' stage for the group. While it is important to just let people arrive and relax into getting to know what it's like to be in the group, it is likely that parents will be ready to disclose more. One of the best ways of helping the group to feel safe enough to begin to take risks and talk more about themselves is to provide a strong framework for every module. Setting time limits for exercises and discussion promotes safety as well as discipline within the group. It can also help to maintain a good pace and flow during the modules. It's important that you and your co-facilitator monitor how parents are managing the structure and pace, and change things if necessary.

If parents begin to disclose tricky or painful things, it can really help the group to gel together and it can make it easier for others

to also take the risk. Parents will learn that it's okay to share difficult feelings together and as long as you handle the situation caringly and sensitively, parents are likely to feel better as a result of being listened to carefully.

If you feel that too much is revealed too soon, you can help facilitate the situation by avoiding challenging comments and instead use lower level interventions by simply acknowledging or paraphrasing what has been said. For example, "Lesley that sounds really hard and thanks for telling us. Our checking in, or the exercise is coming to an end now, is it okay to move on?"

The aim of this module is to offer parents a chance to think about what ADHD is and consider how this impacts on their children and their families. It lays a foundation for thinking later about ways to support children with ADHD.

Module Two: Understanding ADHD



CHECKING IN (15 mins)

Aims

To provide space for parents to arrive, prepare to focus on the course and warm their voices by saying something very short.

Directions

1. This is only the second time parents have met, so the parent facilitator may need to demonstrate a check in round again so that the group remember what it is.
2. Point out that parents are not being asked to say much and can say as little as they like. Check in is a time to be listened to, without interruption or questions from others, it's just a way to arrive. For example: my name is ..., something to offload or shelve ..., how I feel at this moment ...
3. Then facilitate the group taking turns to do their individual 'check ins', without interruption.

REMINDERS (5 mins)

Aims

To emphasise group safety by reminding parents of the group agreement and to demonstrate genuine interest by asking how the homework task went.

Directions

1. Remind parents that when they met last week they made a group agreement that is posted up on the wall – about how they agreed to take care of themselves and each other.
2. Remind parents that we finished last week with the 'Because you're worth it' exercise. Ask the group how they got on with trying something out at home that was just for themselves. Be sure to mention that it might be that some didn't manage it and that's okay. Wait for people to comment and don't force parents to contribute. Simply check whether anyone else wants to share what they did.

PROGRAMME (5 mins)

Aim

To explain the session today so that parents know what to expect.

Directions

1. Welcome parents back. Introduce today's theme which is Understanding ADHD. (It can help to refer to the flipchart with the 6 modules so that parents visually see the order of the course). Explain that the focus is on thinking about what's happening for children with ADHD and why there are things that can be particularly hard for them, which in turn can make parent's lives hard too. Remind parents that if we can understand what's happening for children with ADHD, chances are we will be in a better position to know both, how to support them, and to cope with the frustrations ourselves, because remember, this course is about building your resilience so that you can build theirs.
2. Remind parents of the format by having the session structure pasted up on the cloth and letting them know when the group will break for tea. ■ **Handout: Session Two programme**, or flipchart today's plan.

Module Two: Understanding ADHD



LISTENING TO YOU (25 mins)

Aims

To engage parents by seeking their understanding of their children's strengths and difficulties and possible positives or negatives about living with children with ADHD.

Directions

1. Ask parents to get into pairs to discuss: 'What is ADHD like for their child?'
2. Use two different coloured A5 sheets and ask each pair to write their answers to the following: first colour – 'What are their difficulties?' and the second colour – 'What are their strengths?' (It can help to offer a visual cue so as you explain, paste an A5 sheet in the first colour with the title 'difficulties', and another in the second colour with the title 'strengths', onto the sticky cloth).
3. The parent facilitator could offer an example here by naming a difficulty and a strength their child has and pasting these examples on A5s under the headings (e.g. difficulty might be 'doesn't finish things', and a strength might be 'very enthusiastic' but choose your own example here so that it is genuine). Remind parents to record one idea per A5 sheet, to make it easier for others to read.
4. Once finished, ask parents to paste their A5s onto the sticky cloth, under the appropriate heading. You might very quickly cluster a few similar things together too, as a way of illustrating commonalities and differences in the group.
5. Discuss. You want to draw out that while there are difficulties which are not to be underestimated, there are also strengths about having ADHD that can be drawn on. Building resilience is often about finding the positives or the strengths to work with and highlight. Ask parents if they spot any skills and strengths on the sticky cloth that they use to help their child with the challenges of having ADHD.

Note: Parents may struggle with this question so the parent facilitator can help to illustrate with one of their own examples here.

TAKING A STEP BACK (30 mins)

Aims

To introduce what it can feel like to have ADHD and how the mental processes and skills we need to get things done in life, can be hard to access when children are stressed.

Directions

1. Explain that this is a whole group fun exercise called *Nod and Clap*. Ask parents to stand up and to just relax and follow your instructions (assuming parents can all stand comfortably, otherwise this exercise can be done sitting down however it often helps to boost group energy to change from a sitting to a standing position). Lead the group with the following instructions (which you will want to have practiced beforehand!)
see overleaf for instructions.

Module Two: Understanding ADHD



Nod and Clap Instructions

- a) When I say clap, I want you to clap. When I say nod, I want you to nod.
Demonstrate these instructions as you physically do the movements.
- b) Give these instructions quite quickly but give parents the chance to follow.
Nod (you nod), Clap (you clap), Clap (you clap), Clap (you clap), Clap (you clap), Nod (you nod), Nod (you nod), Nod (you nod), Clap (you clap).
- c) Now tell parents that we are going to add on. When I say left, I want you to look left. When I say right, I want you to look right. And reassure parents *'Don't worry, I sometimes don't know my left from my right, so just do the best you can'*.
Nod, Clap, Left, Right. Nod, Clap, Left, Right. Then start to mix them up all the time physically doing what you are asking parents to do.
Nod, Left, Clap, Right. Right, Clap, Left, Nod etc.
Once the group has done this a few times, stop.
- d) Explain that we are now going to make it a little more difficult by doing the opposite. When I say Nod, I want you to Clap. When I say Clap, I want you to Nod. When I say Left I want you to look Right. When I say Left I want you to look Right. Call these instructions out but you don't have to demonstrate it as you give these new instructions. Start to speed it up and usually within 30 secs, parents give up.

2. Once you have finished, ask parents to sit back down and then ask them how it was doing the exercise? You want to give parents a chance to let off steam and explain how horrible or hard the task might have been.
3. Then ask parents to think about the skills and strategies they had to use in order to follow your instructions. While one facilitator seeks feedback from parents, the other can scribe the skills that parents identify onto a flipchart list.
4. Once you have created the list, ask parents what they notice about it? You want to draw out how the skills involved such as, watching or copying others, looking at the instructor, remembering what they said etc. etc. are all mental processes and skills that we use all of the time to help us to get things done in life. Explain that these skills as well as things like the flexible thinking that they used when asked to do the opposite, or regulating their emotions and not losing their temper as they were getting stressed when the instructions were getting harder to follow are referred to as 'executive functioning skills'.
5. Together, look at the ■ **Handout: Executive Functioning Skills**, to get a further idea of what sort of skills we mean. Explain some parts of this handout, reassuring parents that it can be a lot to take in, so the handout is to take home to think about more. Check if there are any skills on the list that are hard to understand.

Module Two: Understanding ADHD



6. Finish by explaining that because children with ADHD have trouble with these type of skills, it can help to explain why they can be hard to live with! For example, one of the skills in the handout is 'regulating our emotions'. Explain that when you gave instructions that got too hard, many or all started to give up. When someone is giving a child with ADHD a task that they find hard to follow, they are more likely to express their frustration and stress in a more negative way, and do more than just give up. For example, they might storm out or throw something or yell or tip up the table – because it is harder for them to regulate their emotions. It's already hard for a child with ADHD to access these mental processes and skills but when they get stressed, the chances of accessing them gets reduced too, so they get caught in a vicious cycle. So the more we can understand how to help the better – let's talk about them a bit more.

LEARNING MORE (20 mins)

Aims

To provide parents with information about the way in which the ADHD brain works to help explain the difficulties involved with mental processes and skills or executive functioning skills.

Directions

1. Explain that the next 20 minutes is to provide some theory about the ADHD brain and executive functioning skills and it has two parts.
2. Firstly, one way of understanding executive functioning is to imagine you are the CEO of a company. You are in charge of overseeing all the different tasks and departments that get a job done from the beginning right through to the final deadline or finished product. So your company would include the planning department, the memory storage section, time lines about when you need to complete different tasks and so on. So, if you are the CEO you would get the planning department to sort out the goals and the steps to take to get there; and when you needed to remember something about a contract, you would go to the storage department to find the right piece of information and so on. However, when you are stressed or have executive functioning difficulties, it's like going to the planning department and there is a sign on the door that says they are on holiday this week. So then you go to the memory storage department to see if you can find the instructions from last time and someone is there shredding everything. That's what it is like when your executive functioning skills don't work very well - which is the norm in children with ADHD.
3. OR, here is a second way to understand what's going on for someone with ADHD or who has challenges with their executive functioning.

Note for facilitators: There are lots of ideas on the web about how to explain this, and you could for example, draw an outline of the brain structure as you explain things, as it is always helpful to have some visuals. This is just one link to help you to do the presentation.

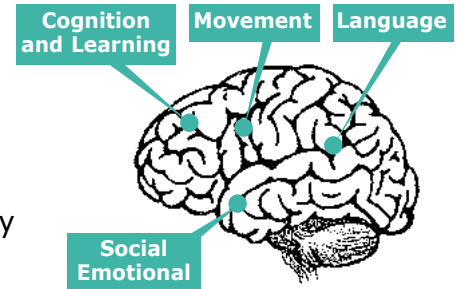
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gm9CIJ74Oxw>).

Module Two: Understanding ADHD



Executive Functioning Skills – *Flipping the Lid Presentation*

Have a simple drawing of the brain prepared on flipchart to illustrate where different parts of the brain you are going to refer to are located, or handout copies of the illustration provided. Explain to parents that you are going to share a model for understanding your child's brain and use your hand to demonstrate the parts as you talk. (One facilitator could read the script while the other demonstrates physically using their own hand and pointing to the diagram at the appropriate moment! – you could make this quite fun).



If I take my hand and tuck my thumb inside and my fingers over my thumb and turn it so that you can see my fingernails (put your hand up beside your head), then this is a bit like how our brains look. These fingers are the front of the brain, and the rest of my hand is the back of the brain. Our brains have different parts that do different things and sometimes if you understand what's happening in the brain it can help to manage yourself in situations. This is very simplified, but imagine my arm is the spinal column, which is very important because it carries neurological information from all the organs in your body to the brain. So when you have that sick feeling in your stomach that you feel scared, it's because there is neurological matter in your intestines and your gut that sends messages directly to the brain. It lets your brain know that there is a problem. So there's neurological material all over our bodies sending messages up and down the spinal column. These messages go straight to the brainstem (which is in the palm of your hand) which is the part of the brain responsible for keeping us alive – the breathing, digestion, pumping blood. (All animals, from mammals, humans, reptiles up, have this, and it's the very primitive part, which is purely the survival part of our brains that controls our fight and flight or freeze response to danger or threat).

Now, if you put your thumb across, this is the limbic system (the hippocampus, the hypothalamus, amygdala are all here) or the emotional parts (the feelings, instinctive behaviours, the problem solving, emotions and emotional regulation). See how close it is to the brain stem – messages go very very quickly back and forth. Then if you fold your fingers down, this is the cortex (the wrinkly bit you see

in pictures of the brain). This is where most of the executive functioning skills are based and if you think of the fingernails as the pre-cortex, this is the most recently developed part of the brain (the decision making, planning and thinking, impulse control).

So the brain works best when all the different parts are communicating (sideways, front to back etc.) and this happens best when we are well rested, eating well, doing exercise, not a lot of stress. When those things are not in place, the brain is not so integrated so it doesn't operate so well. When the limbic system gets loud, our physical body is agitated, we're stressed or afraid, it's all noisy in the system, it's like our prefrontal cortex goes off line, we flip our lid. The only bit that is online is the reptilian bits, which is why you cannot reason with someone in this state, because the frontal cortex is not online to help to do that. It is very hard to do rational thinking when these parts of our brain are very noisy and very activated. So what we want to do is get the prefrontal cortex back online so that we can think straight, rather than this emotional thinking which is 'I have to get of here, or I've got to fight, or I'm frozen'.

So when you flip your lid, you have to find ways to calm the system down. Calming the body down is much more effective than rational thinking to calm down, when the rational mind isn't online in the first place. It's very hard to enlist the rational mind to help get the rational mind on board. Children with ASC have trouble with executive functioning skills and they can often be anxious, so it usually means we have to give more attention to ways to help them find ways to get their pre-frontal cortex back online.

Module Two: Understanding ADHD



4. Finish by explaining that because children with ADHD have weaknesses with these type of mental processes and skills, it helps when parents and teachers and adults give more attention to helping children with building their executive functioning skills, which is why you will move onto the following simple ideas and activities that can help.

PRACTISING (40 mins)

Aim

To illustrate and demonstrate some games and activities that can help children with managing the impact of weaknesses in the executive functioning area.

Directions

1. Explain to parents that you have prepared three very quick games and activities that can help with managing different areas of executive functioning. The first activity is about helping children with their impulsivity and hyperactivity. Games like 'Simon Says' and the card game 'Snap' are examples that can be helpful for fighting impulse. You may need to explain these games if parents in the group don't know them, or ask those that do to explain them to everyone.
2. The second activity is a problem solving one. Ask if a parent would be willing to volunteer a problem incident they had with their child, because you want to demonstrate a problem solving technique parents can use. Then pass out the ■ **Handout: Problem Solving**, which lists a series of steps that you will go through with the volunteer parent. Now you want to ask the parent the series of questions on the handout: so what happened, can you describe the bad incident briefly now, what they did then, what other people did, what happened next etc. You want to draw out that using this approach can help children to review challenging situations and alternative ways of managing them.
3. The third activity is a memory one. Have a number of small objects on a tray (10-15) that is covered with a tea cloth until you are ready to play. Explain to parents that they have just 60 seconds to look at the objects and remember them in their head – when everyone is ready show parents the tray and time 60 seconds before covering up the tray again. Now ask parents to recall what was on the tray. Then take the tray away or ask parents to look away while you remove and hide from view, two objects. Now ask parents to recall the missing objects.

Simon Says is for 3 or more players where 1 player takes the role of "Simon" and issues instructions (usually physical actions such as "jump in the air" or "stick out your tongue") to the other players, which should only be followed if introduced with the phrase "Simon says". If players perform the action when Simon has not started with 'Simon says' then the player is out of the game.

Snap is a matching game, using a deck of cards that is shuffled and dealt out equally to all the players. Players do not look at their cards and take turns to take the card from the top of their pile and place it face up in the middle for all to see. If at any moment the top two face up cards match, anyone who notices shouts 'snap' as they slam their hand on the pile. They then win those cards and add them to the bottom of their own pile. Once you have no cards left, you are out of the game, while the last player with cards is the winner.

Module Two: Understanding ADHD



4. Finish by passing out ■ **Handout: Activities to help with mental processes and skills**, for parents to try one of these ideas at home over the coming week. Be sure to mention that children and parents will have developed very habitual ways of doing and reacting to things, because we will have had years to get into certain ways of problem solving, or managing difficult situations. It can be really difficult to change our own patterns of parenting or to get our children to do things differently, because we and they have probably developed ways of reacting to things that are now familiar and sort of comfortable. So deciding to introduce a new way of managing a situation might seem difficult at first, but over time and with practice it can become easier.

TAKING CARE (15 mins)

Aim

To encourage parents to consolidate their learning by doing something from the day's session, at home.

Directions

1. Remind parents that today's session started by thinking about both the strengths and difficulties of having ADHD. Share with them, that it can often be the case that as parents, we concentrate on the things we don't manage to do so well, or we get deflated when we try something new and it doesn't work first time around.
2. Handout the notebooks and ask parents to write 'Strengths Notebook' on first page.
3. On the second page, ask parents to identify 3 things that they have done well in the last 24 hours – and to record these in the notebook.
4. Explain that the homework is to try to do this regularly - because as parents of children with ADHD, we can get caught up in thinking we are 'not good enough'. It can help if the parent facilitator shares an example of feeling like they were a bad parent here. ('I used to lay in bed at night and notice all the things that I hadn't done, e.g. I didn't do any homework with them, I didn't cook a meal with five different vegetables etc. I'd lay there and list all my failings. We can be harder on ourselves than anyone else. So I started to list the things I had managed to do: I did manage to get 3 children washed & dressed, I did take them to the park and so on').
5. Share with parents that it can really help to get into the habit of noticing the positives and what we do well. The Notebook is your chance to start getting into that good habit. Try it for one week and report back next time we meet.

CHECKING OUT (10 mins)

Aims

To have a relaxed wind down before parents depart.

Directions

1. Ask everyone to choose just one word or phrase to describe how they feel as they leave today – negative or positive, flat or bright and anything in between. Just a chance to notice where you are and get your feet on the ground before leaving.

INSIDERS' GUIDE...
to bringing up children with special needs

Module Three: Travelling on

We've been there
I felt like that too
there is a way through
not on your own!
Parents ideas
What works





Module programme for course facilitators

	<i>Welcome</i> <i>Checking in</i> <i>Introduction to today's module</i> Managing stress Building resilience	■ Handout: Module Programme	35
	<i>Listening to you</i> Iceberg model Stress busting TEA TIME <i>Taking a step back</i> What's resilient about you? <i>Learning more</i> The ordinary magic needed to be	■ Handout: Symptoms of stress ■ Handout: Stress busting ■ Handout: Resilient Therapy framework ■ Handout: RT – 5 Magic Potions for building parent resilience	35 20 20 20
	<i>Practising</i> Belonging and the relationship web <i>Taking care</i> <i>Checking out</i>	■ Handout: Belonging ■ Handout: Relationship web	25 10 10

Module Three: Travelling on



PREPARATION

Have the group agreement posted on wall in order to remind people of the rules we are using to conduct ourselves in the group.

If the course has involved a break for school half term, you will need to refresh parents' memories and remind them of the themes and work completed in previous sessions. You could ask parents to try to recall all that took place at the last session, or prompt their memories by displaying past work up on the cloth.

Handouts needed today include:	Other bits needed include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Handout: Module Three programme■ Handout: Iceberg: Symptoms of stress■ Handout: Resilient Therapy Framework■ Handout: RT Five Magic Potions for Building Parent Resilience■ Handout: Belonging■ Handout: Relationship web	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flipchart of group agreement• Flipchart of 6 module programme• Prepared flipchart with quotes• A large bundle of postcards or pictures from magazines (min 30)• A3 brightly coloured Potion Bottles x 5 (These will be re-used and pasted up each week so you could use card)• Coloured A4 paper for parents to draw webs• Flipchart for web• Treats – for all (e.g. small candles, bubble bath, foot scrub etc.)

NOTES

The aim of the module is to help parents note the journey they have travelled so far, and consider what they might need to continue moving on.

Parents will have met at least twice before today's meeting, so it's likely they are starting to feel a little more comfortable in the group together. They may have shared more difficult feelings in the last session, which focused on stress busting, and therefore feel the group is a safe place to be.

This stage in the group is sometimes referred to as the 'norming' stage, which means parents are feeling comfortable and secure together and are ready to move on and do some work. They are likely to feel more as though they belong to the group and resort less to defence mechanisms – after all they have returned for a third time.

It is quite likely that your guidance and interventions are less necessary by this stage. However be aware that because the group has now formed and is working well together, it is also likely that the group is able to talk about trickier things. Sometimes in groups, there is a feeling that something is 'in the air' but no one is naming what it is. Often the 'in the air' sense is to do with emotions like anger, shame or guilt. As a facilitator, you could draw on your own experience to name these feelings and test whether this is what others might also be feeling. For example: "Feels to me like there is something we are not saying ... I might not have this right, but it reminds me of a meeting I had where I just felt my parenting was being blamed – I was feeling so ashamed ... is anyone else noticing something like this?"

Module Three: Travelling on



PROGRAMME (5 mins)

Welcome parents back. Remind them of the format and timetable for today.

■ **Handout: Module Three Programme**, or flipchart today's plan.

CHECKING IN (10 mins)

The parent facilitator could start as a way of reminding parents: my name is ..., something to offload ..., how I feel at this moment ... Then facilitate a group round

REMINDERS (15 mins)

Description

A whole group exercise to remind parents of the group agreement and find out how the homework went.

Aims

To emphasise group safety by reminding parents of the agreed ground rules.
To demonstrate genuine interest in parents by asking about the homework task.

Directions

1. Just a quick reminder of the group agreement, posted up on the wall.
2. Wondering how everyone got on with their homework – one was to try out a game about mental processes and skills and the other was to see if you could record the positives each day in your notebooks? Wait for people to comment and don't force parents to contribute. Simply check whether anyone else wants to share what they did.
3. Introduce today's theme, but first link with what happened last week ... the expectations exercise. Have the third large parent (from the first week's exercise) stuck up on the cloth and remind parents that the course is about understanding and strengthening parents' experience.
4. Today we are going to move to "Understanding where we are now and getting equipped for tomorrow". Our focus is on stress busting and resilience and what makes for growing a tough skin, bouncing back and becoming robust.

Note for Facilitators:

Parents may think noticing difficulties will only make them feel they can't cope – this next exercise is about making life more than survival and to notice they are coping day to day without time to reflect on the impact. It's about encouraging parents to check their stress levels to ensure a safe journey.

Module Three: Travelling on



LISTENING TO YOU (35 mins)

Description

A whole group exercise.

Aims

To encourage parents to identify what's hard about coping with the demands of caring for a child with special needs. To illustrate and encourage parents to be familiar with stress symptoms.

Directions

1. Before we can talk about ways to manage stress well, we need to know what stress looks like.
2. Draw the tip, above sea level, of a large Iceberg onto a landscape page of flipchart paper, which is stuck high up onto cloth – showing the sea level with waves. (Leave plenty of space under the waves so you can add more A5s).
3. Ask parents to answer the following question: "You are the iceberg and this tip is the bit the rest of the world sees. This is the coping you – what do they see about you?" Ask the group to offer ideas that you scribe onto the iceberg tip (e.g. smiling, coping, washed and dressed etc). Remind parents that the way we present ourselves has a positive function – it helps us to make connections and assists others to relate to us, it helps us 'fake it till we make it' sometimes.
4. Now ask parents to work in pairs, and answer this question – "What lies below the tip, what doesn't the world see, what's hidden?"
5. Pass out pieces of A5 paper and ask parents for one idea per sheet.
6. Then ask parents to place their A5s under the sea level. Discuss.
7. Now explain that we know from all the work done with people who have suffered a trauma, that stress shows itself in 3 general ways. Place on the cloth in a separate area these three headings: feelings; physical; behaviours. Be aware that parents can struggle with separating out their behaviours and physical symptoms from feelings, so you might need to prompt or illustrate here.
8. Ask the group to help you cluster the ideas they have placed under the waves, and move them under one of these three headings.
9. Comment that without realising it, we can be carrying stress symptoms that we all forget to attend to, because we don't recognise them as stress.
10. Draw out the analogy with the coping parent (tip of iceberg) that everyone sees and the dangerous rest of the person under the surface – even the largest ships can be sunk by the unrecognised. It's important to notice the symptoms and tend to them. Handout: Symptoms of stress.

NB Parents may raise and you might also want to talk about the reasons the 'under the waves' parent is hidden. For example: there isn't anyone to help; hiding the feelings avoids being too vulnerable; hiding some feelings can be a coping mechanism in itself. BUT evidence tells us that stress symptoms have to be tended to if we are to avoid the ship sinking. Parents need to at least notice the symptoms themselves so they avoid a collision.

Module Three: Travelling on



TAKING A STEP BACK (20 mins)

Description

This is a whole group exercise to introduce the idea of 'resilience'.

Aims

To help parents notice their own resilient qualities. To assist the group to identify and share an understanding of what 'resilience' means.

Directions

1. So what helps – what are some of the ways that help us manage stress?
2. Explain that two bodies of research that can be worth referring to are the ideas that come from post-traumatic stress and the other is from resilience research. What helps many but not all people recover from traumatic or crisis incidents is to have the chance to talk about the incident ... over and over again. In our experience, the act of talking about the experience and giving it words or a language, actually helps people heal. It's not helpful to bury the experience and always avoid talking about it, although there is always the need to check that we are not getting stuck in it, and making sure that we remember to invest time in other things and different aspects of our lives.
3. The other area of work that can help us is the research around resilience.
4. Have laid out on a table a bundle of postcards or pictures (at least 30).
5. First, let's think about what the word 'resilience' conjures up for you. Ask parents to think of a good day, when they were feeling on top of things. Then ask them to wander around the table of postcards and choose one from the pile that might help illustrate what they each think is resilient about themselves. This may be a new activity for parents, so explain that it may just be the colour, or a line, or some vague aspect of the image that speaks to you.
6. Once parents have sat down again, ask them to explain why they chose that particular card to the group. As they do so, flipchart the qualities they identify so that you end up with a list of positive words (not sentences!). NB: some parents may choose a bleak card because they don't feel at all resilient – acknowledge this, and then ask them and/or the group to help think of a word for the opposite. Add this to the flipchart list.
7. Ask the group to comment on the list, drawing out how positive it is and how these are traits or ingredients that we would wish for everyone, so the trick is to find ways of building resilience in our children and ourselves.

Module Three: Travelling on



LEARNING MORE (20 mins)

Description

A summary introduction to the idea of resilience and how it can help us bounce back.

Aims

To introduce parents to the 'ordinary magic' that helps strengthen their resilience.

Directions

1. Explain that we know lots about resilience and there are many many models about how to build resilient capabilities. We're deliberately using one model called Resilient Therapy, because it's designed for anyone to use and because parents of children with special needs have helped to shape it. There is a huge body of research and most of it relates to children – and to children who are facing extra challenges or particular disadvantages. Resilience is all about trying to work out how it is that when two children faced with seemingly similar challenges, one bounces back and another doesn't do so well. What might be going on in their network or their environment, or what skill or way of thinking might they have learnt that helps.
2. There are lots of definitions for resilience. It's most often described as "positive development despite adversity". OR Flipchart – "...the ability to withstand and rebound from disruptive life challenges, strengthened and more resourceful". (Walsh 2008).
Resilience researchers are interested in what helps people to survive difficulties.
3. What we know from the last 40-50 years of research into resilience is that the things that seem to make one child more robust than another, can be clustered into three broad areas: Draw the concentric circles on a flipchart as you explain the following:
 - a. **Things about the child: e.g. good looks, good nature and temperament**
 - b. **Things about the family: e.g. good parenting, good relationships with brothers and sisters**
 - c. **Things about the community: e.g. good schooling, decent friends, meaningful hobbies.**
4. What the research doesn't tell us much about however, is how to use this thinking to help bolster children – how to build it when they haven't all been dished equal doses of these wonderful ingredients.
5. Anne Masten is an American psychologist who has done loads of resilience research and she talks about resilience as: Flipchart:
"Ordinary Magic: Resilience does not come from rare and special qualities, but from the everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources ..."
(Masten 2001)
In other words, it's about the ordinary, little things we can do each day. You don't have to be a therapist or a psychologist or teacher to do this stuff – we can all do it.

Module Three: Travelling on



6. Resilient Therapy borrows the magic idea and uses the concept of potions and remedies to illustrate that we can add a bit of this and a pinch of that to make things happen that build resilience. That's why 'Resilient Therapy' suggests five magic potions to building resilience. Outline the five while you paste the potion bottles (each prepared on different coloured card) up onto the sticky cloth as you explain what is meant by each of them. These will not surprise you:

- Basics** – getting the material basics right and sorted like a decent meal on the table, feeling safe, having enough money to live, getting fresh air and exercise
- Belonging** – making good relationships and having people around you that improve your life
- Learning** – includes formal education but it's more than that, it also includes developing other interests, talents, hobbies and skills
- Coping** – ideas we need to get by in everyday life and manage the daily hiccups like problem solving, knowing how to calm down, having a laugh
- Core Self** – the deeper aspects of who we are, how we get to like ourselves, feeling we can make a difference, things that shape our character.

7. For a long time, research focussed mostly on individual children, in isolation of their environments and social situations, as if resilience was a personal trait or a set of individual skills that set you up well for managing difficulties. It's important to remember that while there does seem to be a biological factor, resilience involves a combination of 'nature' (what a child is born with) and 'nurture' (what they learn and are offered along the way). Children (and families and adults) become more or less resilient depending on the opportunities they are given, not because they are born with a quality called 'resilience'.
8. So that's why Professor Angie Hart and Kim Aumann (a parent support worker) say resilience is: Flipchart: **"The kinds of things we need to make happen (e.g. events, strategies, relationships, resources) to help children manage life when it's tough. Plus ways of thinking and acting that we need ourselves if we want to make things better for children". (Aumann and Hart 2009).**
9. What this framework offers is a way of thinking about what to focus on and where best to put your energies. So, where you might see a weakness or a deficit, you can choose to try to improve it, or if this is not possible or tricky for the moment, you can choose to develop a different area and concentrate on building that up instead. Wherever you start is good enough as it can often have a knock on effect to improving other areas too.
10. Thinking back to the first module when we looked at how we have adapted in the past, and Welcome to Holland or The Insiders' Guide to the Allotments (whichever handout you used in the first module), acknowledge that yes there are problems and difficulties and sometimes it helps to focus on those things to find solutions and ways that can help. At other times it's good to focus on what's going well and build on these, to help strengthen us in the journey. Remember – the nice thing about Resilient Therapy is that anyone can do it – they are just everyday things that increase the positives and helps us bounce back.

■ Handout: Resilient Therapy Framework

Module Three: Travelling on



11. Very briefly explain the RT Framework and the table format pointing out the five columns or potion ideas and the remedies underneath each column. In pairs, ask parents to take a quick look at the Framework and to scan their eyes along the table, to find two things that they currently do well (there is not time to notice more). Suggest that if we think back to the first module and the things parents said helped – lots of those ideas were resilient moves that we might just not have labelled or used the language of resilience for.
12. It is a lot of information to take in, so that is why you have two handouts: the RT Framework in the table format, is about things to do with children. This other handout has adapted the table to suggest things to do to build YOUR resilience. They are to take home and ponder. ■ **Handout: Resilient Therapy – Five Magic Potions for Building Parent Resilience.** Let parents also know that there is website on the bottom on the handout (www.boingboing.org.uk) where they can find out lots more about resilience.

Link

"For now, let's illustrate how you might apply just one of the ideas from the Belonging Potion Bottle".

PRACTISING (25 mins)

Description

Individual exercise to illustrate one of the resilient ideas – Belonging – and to practice.

Aims

To demonstrate the importance of putting effort into making good relationships with family, friends and others.

Directions

1. One of the things that Resilient Therapy tells us is that it's really important to make good relationships, hopeful healthy ones that include good times and fun places, and to keep these relationships going and try to find people you can count on.
2. Draw a web on flipchart and explain we are going to make a Relationship Web.
You might want to provide just one or two examples to demonstrate your own web which will help to illustrate the exercise and who goes in which circle.
3. Draw the 4 circles first: you are in the middle in this first inner circle you would include those you live with and often those closest to us like family members, the next second circle include names of friends, the following third circle add in names of acquaintances, and then in the final outer circle include the names of people paid to be in your life like dentists, childminders, teachers, paid helpers and so on. We are trying to draw a map of your contacts for someone who does not know you.
4. Pass out A4 coloured paper and coloured pens and ask parents to individually map their own relationship web.
See handout Relationship Web
5. Make sure you explain that their webs are private and they will not be shared with the group. Allow time for everyone to do this, and it's fine if the maps are not completed as you just want to give parents an idea of charting their relationships. Suggest that everyone is different, some parents have very few people to include while others are not sure where to put who – just give it a go.

Module Three: Travelling on



6. Now explain that you would like to ask parents to think about a slightly different question. Suggest to parents, that we often have people in our lives who we look after in some way. However, this question is about trying to focus on who helps US. Ask parents to quietly think about the people they have added to their relationship web and consider who on their web offers them support? In other words, if the web was drawn according to the people who most support you in the inner circle and the people who least support you in the very outer circle, would your map change? Parents might like to tick or highlight the people who most support them or help their lives to run more smoothly.
7. Discuss what it was like doing the web, reminding the group that they can say as little or as much as they like about their own private webs. Prompts could include:
 - Were there any surprises about your own web?
 - What did you notice as you did it?
8. Explain that doing a web can help us think about things like: whether we have too many people in our life who make us feel drained, or whether or not we are looking after our supportive relationships enough.
9. ■ **Handout: Belonging**
■ **Handout: Relationship Web** and suggest that parents might like to do one at home with their child in mind. In other words, who is important in your child's network.

TAKING CARE (10 mins)

Description

Looking after yourself.

Aims

To encourage parents to identify people who can act as a resource and support.

Directions

1. Using your notebooks, choose one person from your relationship web, to ask something more of, or a different person to ask a different thing of, before we meet next week.
2. Jot it down in your notebook and then repeat your pledge to the person next to you. "I am going to do my best to ask ... to ...". This is your homework to report back on next week.
3. Hand everyone a small treat that suggests taking care of themselves such as bath bubbles, or a candle or foot scrub, and encourage parents to take time to use it over the week.

CHECKING OUT (10 mins)

Description

Whole group exercise to finish the module.

Aims

To have a relaxed wind down before parents depart.

Directions

1. Ask everyone to choose just one word to describe how they feel as you leave.
Can be any sort of word – flat or bright and anything in between.

INSIDERS' GUIDE...
to bringing up children with special needs

Module Four: Managing ADHD





Module programme for course facilitators

	<i>Welcome</i>		
	<i>Checking in</i>		10
	Introduction to module	■ Handout: Module Programme	10
	<i>Listening to you</i> What goes well and not so well at home		20
	<i>Taking a step back</i> The demands of parenting	■ Handout: Parenting JD	15
	TEA TIME		15
	<i>Learning more (A)</i> Parenting styles	■ Handout: Parenting Styles	20
	<i>Learning more (B)</i> House rules, giving positive instructions and logical consequences	■ Handout: Giving Positive Instructions	10 15 10
	<i>Practising</i> Breaking tasks into smaller steps	■ Handout: Bedtime Routines	35
	<i>Taking care</i>	■ Handout: Visitor Mindfulness	10
	<i>Checking out</i>		10

Module Four: Managing ADHD



PREPARATION

Have the group agreement posted on the wall in order to remind people of the rules we are using to conduct ourselves in the group. (And if there has been a break for school half term, you can prompt memories by displaying past work up on the sticky wall too).

Handouts need today include:	Other bits needed include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Handout: Module Four Programme■ Handout: Parent Job Description■ Handout: Parenting Styles■ Handout: Giving Positive Instructions■ Handout: Bedtime Routine■ Handout: Visitor Mindfulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A5 paper & felt tips• Flipchart of group agreement• Flipchart of 6 module programme

CHECKING IN (10 mins)

Facilitate a group round.

REMINDERS (5 mins)

Aim

To demonstrate genuine interest by asking how the homework task went and to encourage parents to try the activities.

Directions

1. Wondering how everyone got on with asking someone for extra support? Wait for parents to comment and don't force them to contribute. Simply check whether anyone else wants to share what they did.

PROGRAMME (5 mins)

Aim

To explain the session today so that parents know what to expect.

Directions

1. Introduce today's theme which is about Managing ADHD. Explain that the focus is on exploring some of the ways parents can help and some tips and ideas for supporting children with ADHD that we know from others that can work.
2. Remind parents of the format by having the course sessions pasted up on the wall and the session structure including the time to break for tea. ■ **Handout: Module four Programme**, or flipchart the plan today.

Module Four: Managing ADHD



LISTENING TO YOU (20 mins)

Aim

To engage parents feelings about what does not work so well at home and why.

Directions

1. Ask parents to imagine that you are a 'fly on the wall' in their house or are looking in through the window and ask them to think about what you might see not working so well? It can help if the parent facilitator offers an example here in a light hearted way e.g. 'well if you were looking in my window at tea time, you would see chaos, me shouting etc'. Then ask parents for suggestions about what is not going well and flipchart these replies.
2. Then create a second list, which is created as you ask parents to focus on what you see going well.
3. Divide parents into threes and give each group A5 sheets to use. In their groups, ask them to pinpoint the skills they use to make those things on the second list go well. You want them to tease out actual skills used (e.g. patience, routine, clear instructions etc.). The parent facilitator could provide another example here to illustrate a skill.
4. Parent sub-groups then paste their A5s onto the sticky wall for all to see.
5. Discuss. Referring to the first flipchart list, ask parents if there are any skills on the sticky wall that they could use to help with the areas that are not going so well? Parents are likely to struggle with this question – you want to draw out that it can be really difficult to know how to change our patterns of parenting or trying to get our children to do things differently. Remind parents of session two where the group talked about the difficulties children with ADHD have with mental processes and skills (executive functioning) and how they have probably developed habitual ways of doing and reacting to things which is why it can be hard to help them to practice new ways. It's a bit the same with us – it might look difficult to apply some of the skills to those problem areas, but suggest with practice it does become easier.

TAKING A STEP BACK (15 mins)

Aim

To reflect on the demands of parenting and the complexity of roles involved.

Directions

1. Ask parents to think about all the many tasks or roles involved in parenting. Flipchart their ideas.
2. In pairs, ask parents to see if they recognise all the roles and tasks listed in the **■ Handout: Parent Job Description**. You may want to read this out quickly if necessary.
3. Explain that it can be really challenging to parent children with ADHD but we do know that there are some ways of parenting that work better than others.

Module Four: Managing ADHD



LEARNING MORE (A) (25 mins)

Aim

To introduce the idea of parenting styles that can help children with ADHD.

Directions

1. Explain that quite a lot is known about styles of parenting that suit children with ADHD. Draw and outline the four parenting styles on a flipchart. Here you want to illustrate the different styles by taking turns to role play what that style would look like. You could use the 'Breakfast Cornflakes' scenario to do this and use these statements as you point to which style it is:

- **TO** (authoritarian/punitive/stigmatising) – 'You have to do it this way, use this bowl, you can only have that cereal, sit there to eat it' etc.
- **FOR** (permissive/protective/undemanding) – 'I'll just get all the breakfast sorted for them: put the cereal in their bowl, take the bowl to them, pour the milk for them, oh and I could feed them too'.
- **WITH** (authoritative/relational/respectful) – 'Would you like cornflakes or rice crispies, which bowl would be best, can you pour the milk or would you like help?' Teaching and supporting so child can manage themselves.
- **NOT** (neglectful/passive/indifferent) – 'I'm not getting out of bed today, they can forage for themselves, let them find whatever they can for breakfast, or the table is covered in last night meal, so they can eat their cornflakes off the floor'.

3. ■ **Handout: Parenting Styles**, and in pairs, ask parents to see if they recognise their own style?
4. Finally, ask the pairs to suggest what the different styles would look like if they were encouraging a child to get dressed in the morning. You could allocate the first style to one pair, a second style to a different pair etc., and ask the pairs to suggest what the statements might be. Time is likely to be tight, so be ready to help the pairs to find a statement idea that they will share with the group.

- **TO** (authoritarian/punitive/stigmatising) – 'You have to wear those clothes, turn your socks around the right way, you cannot leave the house until you have tucked your shirt in properly, you have 5 minutes to do and if you don't, there's no TV for you today.
- **FOR** (permissive/protective/undemanding) – 'I'm going to dress you, I've chosen your clothes...'
- **WITH** (authoritative/relational/respectful) – 'So what do you need to wear today, what do you think goes on first, is there something that needs to go on before your trousers ...'
- **NOT** (neglectful/passive/indifferent) – 'Find whatever you can, there's no clean clothes....'

Module Four: Managing ADHD



LEARNING MORE (B) (30 mins)

Aim

To introduce different strategies and options for disciplining children that provide them with helpful boundaries and limits.

Directions

1. Explain that you are going to introduce 3 simple strategies for managing your children's tricky behaviours: i) using house rules & boundaries; ii) giving instructions positively; iii) applying logical consequences, letting parents know that you have handouts for each. Let parents know that the chances are, they will recognise all of these strategies – however the trick is that each of them rely on the adults being immediate, consistent and decisive, which is probably harder.
2. Start with **Strategy One: House Rules and Boundaries**. Children need limits to know what is expected of them and how they should behave so having a few basic house rules helps. The rules need to be clear to everyone. And they need to be fair, simple, easy to follow and positive so that that they are about what to do rather than not do. The rules need to be enforceable if they aren't followed, and they need to match what your particular household needs. Ask parents what rules they have or would like in their house now? Flipchart. Discuss – who is the rule for, you or them? For example, you might want to check out parent expectations of their child and relate it back to the parenting styles. At this point, the parent facilitator could illustrate a few rules that they have that are positive and/or ask parents to share a rule they have that helps. For example:

Making Family Rules:

Dinner time was always hard. They kept getting up or would sit on half the seat. They were known to jump on the furniture and found it hard to calm down at bedtime, so we worked out a few simple easy to remember rules: Bums on seats; Feet on floor; Heads on bed. They still forgot and needed reminding but it was much easier once we agreed the rule. It was better for me to say 'feet on the floor' instead of yelling 'get down off the sofa'. I learnt to say what they should be doing rather than what they weren't doing – 'we walk in the house' rather than 'don't run'. At bedtime I always had to sit there to get him to go to sleep so I'd put my hand gently on his back or leg while he was fidgeting but stay with the rule 'heads on the bed' and it did work eventually.



And another example from the parent facilitator might be something like this:

Family Meetings:

I put a blackboard in the kitchen and a notice saying there would be a Family Meeting on Sunday after dinner time, so anyone could add what they wanted to discuss. We got some silly stuff of course but mostly household things like the washing up rota, pocket money, curfews for summer days, requests to stop coming into my room. I'd make a dessert so we had something nice while we had the meeting. We had to help them to break down the rule: you want your brother to stop coming in your room, so how can we do that? Okay, so you want him to knock first, but also wait until you say you can come in? So what if the door is open, can he come in then? Yes, but he has to knock if the door is shut. The rules changed over time but that was the advantage of having a tradition of family meetings – it was a way to reinforce that everyone had to follow the rules including parents. For example, we got fed up with the level of yelling in the house, so I wanted a rule that if you want to speak to somebody, you come to where they are and talk. In the first week, I noticed that I was the one yelling and so then I was knackered going up and down the stairs. But because the kids then came down to speak to me, they ended up getting their drink themselves, so it was less work in long term.

Module Four: Managing ADHD



3. **Strategy Two: Giving Instructions Positively**

Many children with ADHD love praise, so taking any opportunity to notice something good that they have done builds their self-esteem. For example, 'I saw you sitting on the couch instead of standing, well done', or 'Thanks for following the rule' and so on. There are also some children who find praise very difficult to hear, so it can be better to simply verbalise what you notice, 'I noticed you put your boots in the cupboard', or 'You've put the dishes away'.

When asking children with ADHD to do something, it helps to be clear and direct and calm! The way we give the directions can make all the difference. Flipchart these steps:

- Get close and gain their attention
- Tell them specifically what to do
- Give them time to cooperate
- Praise or thank them for co-operating
- Repeat your instruction again if they haven't done it
- Back it up with a consequence if they don't cooperate

■ **Handout: Giving Instructions Positively.** Ask parents to break into 3s and using the steps above, decide the instructions they could give in the suggested situations.

Child is asked to ... (to do something they are interested in e.g. meals)	
Child is asked to stop doing ... (something irritating e.g. kicking chair)	
Child is asked to ... (help with something e.g. clear bedroom)	
Child is asked to ... (do something they are not interested in e.g. get dressed)	

4. Finally, **Strategy Three: Logical Consequences**

Explain that thinking about the consequences for a child not following an instruction in advance, can help parents to be ready to apply them in the moment and help children to learn about limits and co-operate better. As parents we need to find the right level of consequence to match the instruction, and then apply these consistently. Parents have to follow through, even when children complain or say they don't care. Logical consequences is a way of teaching children to stop certain behaviours.

For children with ADHD, it is best if the consequences are immediate and brief so that they have the chance to remember the connection between the consequence and what

Module Four: Managing ADHD



they have done. Plus they get the chance to try following the instruction as you wanted them to do in the first place. Your consequences might be about withdrawing the activity (remove the toy, turn the TV off, reduce pocket money, 10 minutes late coming home), or returning the activity (when you hold my hand we will walk to the park, or when you sit on your seat we can have dinner, 10 minutes off your curfew time) or other consequences such as quiet time or time out. The parent facilitator could illustrate these ideas using their own examples.

Ask parents to stay in the same subgroups and decide the logical consequences for their chosen situation. Then share and discuss with the whole group.

5. Finish by linking this strategy to the earlier parts of the session. Suggest that each of things we have talked about today link well together. That is, setting some house rules, giving clear and simple instructions and applying logical consequences needs authoritative parenting. It helps children to know their boundaries and limits.

PRACTISING (30 mins)

Aim

To consolidate learning about the ADHD brain and difficulties with executive functioning by helping parents to value and practice the art of breaking down tasks into small steps.

Directions

1. Ask parents to divide into subgroups (it helps to limit subgroup size to 3 or 4 parents so that everyone has time to contribute).
2. Explain that the exercise is about practicing the skills involved in breaking tasks down into smaller steps. You can be encouraging about this exercise by reminding parents that lots of parents of regular children don't have to be so superhot on this skill but if you have a child with ADHD, it's something really worth learning so that it becomes second nature to you.
3. Explain that you have chosen some typical tasks, one per subgroup for parents to tackle. (You will need to choose appropriate tasks relevant to the parent group and the age of their children). For example:

Get ready for bed	Tidy bedroom	Cook beans on toast	Get ready for school
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4. In your subgroups, try breaking the tasks down into as many steps as you can think of. Parent facilitators could illustrate this by explaining how to break the task of 'making a cup of tea' down into many steps, while the co-facilitator writes the steps on a flipchart (just doing a few steps rather than all of them, ought to be enough for the group to understand what the exercise is about). Ask each subgroup to flipchart their steps in order to share with others.



5. Then ask each subgroup to paste their flipcharts up onto the cloth. Examine the flipcharts in turn and ask someone from each group to explain the steps. (Every group is different, but it can be a good opportunity to boost parent confidence by asking parents to stand up and feed back to the whole group, although you will need to judge if parents are comfortable to do so).
6. Discuss – how easy or hard was it to think of small steps, seek any examples from parents when this approach has worked, or how they have got around hurdles etc.
7. Finish by providing an example of a visual aid for bedtime Handout: Bedtime Routines. Remind parents that it helps children to have a pictorial plan of the steps or a sequence of pictures or diagrams to follow rather than only relying on their memory or parents telling them.

TAKING CARE (15 mins)

Aim

To encourage parents to prioritise their own care in order to sustain their caring role, by providing a short mindfulness exercise.

Directions

1. Explain to parents that you are going to end with a short 'mindfulness exercise'. Mindfulness is like meditation – it's about noticing where we are at and being kind to ourselves. By focusing on our breath, our bodies, our minds and the world around us, in the moment, we can gain a stronger sense of wellbeing. It has a growing evidence base for increasing levels of well-being and changing negative moods to positive ones, so it's a way to build our own sense of calm. Apparently, it can over time and with practice affect the brain patterns that are present when we are anxious, stressed, depressed or irritable – and it can be learned through practice.
(<https://mindfulnessinschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Evidence-for-Mindfulness-Impact-on-school-staff.pdf>)
2. Explain that you are going to talk them through a simple exercise together that focuses our attention on the present moment. This is about just noticing and accepting your thoughts and feelings as they come and go – and can be really good to use if it feels like your thoughts or mood are moving in a negative direction. This exercise catches negative thought patterns, without criticising them and then lets them slip away. It takes just 3 minutes – I am going to time it so that you get an idea of how little time it would take to practice at home.
3. Follow these instructions to guide parents through a 3 minute breathing mindfulness exercise. (It helps to practice it first to get a sense of pace and using the whole 3 minutes to complete the exercise).



Mindfulness Instruction

1. Get comfortable in your chairs and close your eyes so that you can concentrate just on yourself (*but if you really don't like closing your eyes keep them open*).
2. Have your feet on the floor and sit very definitely in your chair, noticing you are here, awake and present. Just notice how you feel this very moment as you sit in your chair.
3. Start to become aware of what thoughts are going through your mind – just clock them, no need to do anything about them other than notice they are there.
4. Now notice what feelings are around for you at the moment too. If there are unpleasant or uncomfortable feelings, no need to push them away or shut them out, just notice them – ‘ah, there you are or that’s how I feel right now’.
5. Now bring your awareness to your body – are there sensations or tensions, can you notice if you are holding on or letting go of those sensations. Just notice what arises in this moment. So you are just getting a sense now, of what is happening in this moment – you have stopped being on automatic pilot, you are just here and now.
6. So, we are going to shift our attention to just one thing – your breath. Gather yourself and focus your attention just on your breath – what it feels like as you breathe in oxygen, the feeling in your abdomen, the rise and fall of the belly, the feeling of letting the breath out. In and out. Spend a minute or so to focus on the motion of your abdominal wall going in and out as your breath, moment by moment, breath by breath. Notice when the breath is moving in, and when the breath is moving out, just being with the breath as it moves in and as it moves out – in and out of your body.
7. Now allow your awareness to take in your whole body. Let the breath move to the background a little and just notice the entire length of your body from head to toe – including any tightness or sensations of holding or bracing yourself. Just bring your awareness in this whole body space, breathing in and breathing out. (*Silence*)
8. Begin to notice the sounds in the room, bring your attention to the room, and when you are ready open your eyes and come back to this space.

Adapted from The Centre for Mindfulness Studies: 2014, <http://www.mindfulnessstudies.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/31.-Session-3-Three-Min-Breathing-Space-Script-.pdf>

4. Ask parents if they would like to comment on the exercise and how they felt doing it. Explain that there are lots of guided breathing and mindfulness exercises available on the web or as apps. Good to listen to them first to find one you like before downloading them. And pass out ■ **Handout: Visitor Mindfulness**

Module Four: Managing ADHD



5. Ask parents if they will try something from today's session at home over the coming week: it could be a skills to manage your child's ADHD (using house rules & boundaries, or giving instructions positively, or applying logical consequences, or breaking tasks down, or practice a mindfulness exercise). Make a commitment now to try one of these things and feed back to us next week.

CHECKING OUT (10 mins)

Aim

To assist parents to share how they are feeling in order to close the session and aid parents leaving in a good state.

Directions

1. Ask everyone to choose just one word or phrase to describe how they feel.

INSIDERS' GUIDE... to bringing up children with special needs

Module Five: Getting the best out of others



Module Five: Getting the best out of others



Module programme for course facilitators

	<i>Welcome</i>		10
	<i>Checking in</i>		10
	Introduction to module	■ Handout: Module Five programme	5
	How to get the best out of others and me at meetings		
	<i>Listening to you</i> The Maze Game	Flipchart and ■ Handout: The Maze	20
	<i>Taking a step back</i> What do you see? Joe's Story Different angles	■ Handout: Two women ■ Handout: Joe's story Flipchart: the 3 questions about meetings	5 25
	TEA TIME		15
	<i>Learning more</i> 3 keys to communication Communication Pie	Flipchart: 3 keys to communication Flipchart: communication pie Flipchart: tone quote Flipchart: 90% in 90secs ■ Handout: download the latest from https://amazesussex.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Meetings-and-paperwork-1.pdf ■ Handout: Negotiating at meetings	30
	<i>Practising</i> Different slants Keep it positive?	Flipchart: the 5 statements	20
	<i>Taking care</i> Getting mended Miniature heroes	Jigsaw parent Chocolates to share	25
	<i>Checking out</i>		10

Module Five: Getting the best out of others



Be sure you have the following handouts available

Handouts needed today include:

- Handout: Module Five Programme
- Handout: The Maze
- Handout: Joe's story
- Handout: Negotiating at meetings
- Handout: download the latest from <https://amazesussex.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Meetings-and-paperwork-1.pdf>
- Handout: Two Women

Other bits needed include:

- Flipchart of group agreement
- Flipchart of 6 module programme
- 3 different coloured marker pens
- Sweets for Maze Game
- Flipchart the maze
- Flipchart 3 keys to communication
- Flipchart communication pie
- Flipchart tone quote
- Flipchart 90% in 90 secs
- Flipchart the 5 statements
- Large Parent Jigsaw pieces
- 'Miniature Heroes' chocs treats

NOTES

The purpose of this module is to remind parents it's worth reducing the negative impact that might be accumulating from past meetings, in order to arrive at a stronger place to manage future ones. The module begins with reminding parents of the number and range of meetings they attend, followed by a look at the value of noticing the different perspectives held by people at the same meeting. It then moves on to include ideas for fine tuning communication skills and keeping discussions going, with a conclusion that stresses actively finding ways to recover afterwards.

Module Five: Getting the best out of others



PROGRAMME

CHECKING IN (20 mins)

Welcome parents and remember to use a 'yes set' to start off, as you will refer to this later in the 'Learning More' section. A 'yes set' is when you deliberately start a conversation with a comment or question in a way that the group has to respond with the word 'yes' or an affirmative nod, in order to set a positive mood for the meeting. For example, 'Everyone knows ...', "Most of us have experienced..." etc.

After parents have completed their check in, ask them how they got on with the homework set last time the group met, which was a choice of: using house rules & boundaries, or giving instructions positively, or applying logical consequences, or breaking tasks down, or practicing a mindfulness exercise. There's no need for everyone to report back.

INTRODUCTION (5 mins)

Introduce today's theme and structure for the session – How do I get the best out of others and me at meetings?

An active module with exercises to practice some of the ideas for making meetings work well for you.

■ **Handout: Module Five programme** or flipchart today's plan.

LISTENING TO YOU (20 mins)

Descriptions

A whole group exercise called the Maze Game, which is meant to be light and lively, and relatively quick and energetic.

Aims

To illustrate the different paths parents have travelled as they seek information and support and the number of meetings they have already had to attend. To help parents notice that the 'system' and meetings can be confusing despite their best efforts.

Module Five:

Getting the best out of others



Directions

1. Ask whole group to think back to the time when they first found out or thought their child had special needs.
2. Ask parents to call to mind and think about the workers or professionals they met over the few months after they found out, (or around the time they were telling others there was a problem).
3. Draw a large maze on the flipchart.
4. We are going exploring – one co-facilitator travels the path through the maze while the other awards parents a sweet every time a parent sees a professional.
5. Ask for two parents to volunteer to tell us about who they came into contact with after they found out their child had special needs, or after they noticed there was a problem.
6. On the flipchart, use a different coloured pen per parent, and follow their journey through the maze. Explain the game is fast and fun. You do not want to dwell on how parents felt at the time but instead to focus on the range and number of people they met along the way.
7. So start out on the maze with the coloured pen, and every time parent visits a professional, co-worker pops a sweet into parent's cup.
8. Then repeat the exercise on a fresh piece of flipchart paper with the second parent volunteer.
9. Once completed, give cup of sweets to parents as their reward for volunteering.
10. Pass out remaining sweets so that all parents have at least one each.
11. ■ **Handout: Maze Game** is available for parents to do at home if they fancy charting their own paths.
12. If there is time: ask group if anyone knows what all these professionals do? Whoever can explain whole list, gets an extra few sweets.
13. Explain to parents that the game was simply to illustrate that parents are often meeting with lots of workers and professionals to discuss their children – and often have to repeat their stories, or return to see the same people and repeat the story again and so on. Sometimes parents don't quite know what the meetings they are going to are for, or what the worker actually does.

Link

"Some of these meetings and discussions will have gone well, and others will have left us feeling confused and unsettled. This next exercise is about meetings and discussions, and how we can really strengthen our ability to get the best out of them. We're going to look at some resilient moves to make meetings go better".

Module Five: Getting the best out of others



TAKING A STEP BACK

What do you see? (5 mins)

Description

A short whole group exercise.

Aims

To illustrate the value of noticing that different views exist: but you have to see 'both sides' in order to progress.

Directions

1. Ask parents to divide into pairs. ■ **Handout: Two women** for each pair. Ask parents what they see?
2. There are two pictures in same exercise – some parents will struggle to see both.
3. Discuss and prompt:
 - how hard was it to see the other picture?
 - what was it like when someone pointed the two out to you?
4. You want to draw out how difficult it can be to see the other perspective and how good it feels when everyone sees things the same way – it's like a lightbulb switching on. That's why it's worth trying to get meetings going well.

Link

"We are going to introduce a pretend situation (case study) now, which is based on a school meeting. However, the ideas can be applied to any situation – or any type of meeting".

Exercise two (25 mins)

Description

Different angles.

Aims

To remind parents that workers and parents may often be approaching the same meeting or discussion differently. Coming at meetings from different angles can sometimes make it difficult to work well together.

Directions

1. Divide group into three and ask each group to assume a role: parent, class teacher, SENCO. Randomly allocate an A, B, C to each parent. (You might want to decide on a different case study and different composition of roles dependent on your parent group theme).
2. In the assigned role e.g. as a parent, class teacher, SENCO, consider questions after listening to the following scenario.
3. ■ **Handout 3: Joe's story** – explain it is not necessary to remember the detail – just trying to paint a picture of a situation.
4. Read scenario out loud.

Module Five: Getting the best out of others



5. Now ask the three groups to answer three questions – flipchart these. Read the questions out loud.
 - What do you want to get out of the meeting?
 - What concerns or fears do you have?
 - How might you be feeling?
6. Three groups then agree answers.
7. Feedback to larger group – answering one question from all three perspectives, then move to next question and so on.
8. You want to draw out the different angles but also notice that all at the meeting share some similar feelings or anxieties. This is not just to appreciate others view per se. The resilient move here is about COPING and problem solving. It is often easier to get our message across and decide our strategy, when we appreciate where others are coming from and know what they feel and think.

Link

"So, given the different starting points or different priorities for everyone at the meeting, it makes it even more important to communicate well – to get your message across clearly.

It might sound very obvious and you probably already use these communication skills already without even realising you are doing it. Today is about getting more conscious or aware of what you do to make for good communication, so when things are going adrift you can call on these skills from your toolkit – you can use them on purpose to bring discussions closer to what you want out of meetings".

LEARNING MORE (30 mins)

Description

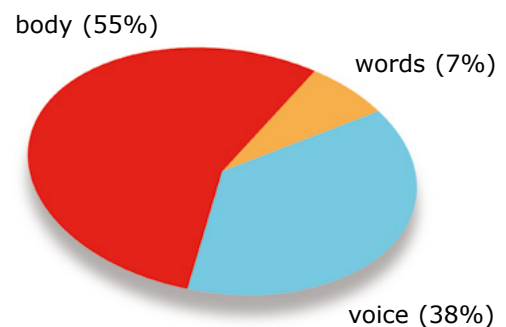
A whole group exercise

Aims

To stress the most important elements of good communication. To consider ways parents can prepare for meetings and get them off to a good start.

Directions

1. Explain that we know from the world of conciliation and conflict that there are three keys to excellent communication – to successfully negotiating. Flipchart these: build an understanding dialogue; know what you want; be flexible.
2. Ask parents to guess what the most important aspect of good communication is. Then show them the flipchart you have prepared with the Communication Pie Chart – to illustrate the significance of body language.



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Module Five: Getting the best out of others



3. Co-facilitators illustrate the significance of body language by demonstrating a very quick open and closed style of communication. Ask parents what they noticed about the two styles? Draw out the way in which good use of body language encourages dialogue and therefore, even when you may not agree with what the other person is saying, you can use your body language to try to keep a dialogue going, if necessary.

4. It's not what you say but how you say it that can matter most.

Flipchart this sentence: "So what can you do to help Joe?". Ask for a volunteer to read it out loud to the group using an aggressive tone. Now ask for another volunteer to try reading it out loud in an enquiring tone. And you can ask for a third volunteer to read it out loud in a sarcastic tone. Point out that tone changes meaning and how people respond to what we say.

5. Getting meetings off to a good start:

- consider seating: for example choosing where to sit sends unconscious messages such as sitting at the head of a table assumes authority or sitting opposite someone you know you disagree with can reinforce opposition and hinder constructive discussion.
- greetings are important and can set a friendly or antagonistic, formal or informal tone for a discussion. 'Yes sets', are a simple technique to start a meeting off on an agreeable or positive tone and at this point you could remind parents of the 'yes set' you used at the start of the session.
- 90% in 90 secs (flipchart this statement). Remind parents that first impressions count, so it's worth thinking about how to appear, what to say, what to wear etc., beforehand.

Point out that all these ideas are the BASICS for helping to get meetings off to a good start and are part of the preparation for thinking about what they want out of a meeting.

6. ■ **Handout: download the latest from <https://amazesussex.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Meetings-and-paperwork-1.pdf>**, and
■ **Handout: Negotiating at Meetings**. Explain this is a checklist that reminds you to prepare yourself, purpose, time available, notes or not, taking a friend, etc.
7. Suggest parents put these factsheets together with the paperwork they have about their child, as a useful tips list to read before any meeting and let them know there are a range of good factsheets to download on www.amazesussex.org.uk.
8. And to finish, ask parents to think of a time when a meeting went well. Ask them to identify what they or someone else did in that meeting to help it go so well? Share a few ideas with the whole group.

Module Five: Getting the best out of others



PRACTISING (20 mins)

Description

An exercise in small groups: Ask not criticise.

Aims

To understand how thoughts lead to feelings and actions, and practise an alternative approach to keep communication positive.

Directions

1. Refer back to the three keys to good communication. We know we need to “build an understanding dialogue” if we want a meeting to be useful and constructive, but sometimes things happen that knock us off course. Write on a flip chart: *Thoughts Feelings Actions*. Use an example to explain how this works e.g. someone bumps into us in the street. If we think they are rude and careless, we will probably feel angry or upset and we may act by glaring at them or saying something rude ourselves. If on the other hand we think of some of the other reasons why they might have bumped into us (they are feeling unsteady, they are upset, they have visual impairment, they just misjudged the space by accident), we will feel and act differently.
2. Illustrate how the same process can happen to us in a meeting. Someone says something, we assume they mean it negatively and get upset or angry and communication can break down. Or we can choose to break that cycle and try thinking differently. One way to do this is to decide to stay curious and “Ask not criticise”. This assumes that there might be some useful information behind what the person has said and that we can use it to move things forward. We might ask them to tell us more about why they said that.
3. Split the parents into four or five groups. Remind them of the Joe story. Give each group one the following statements. Ask them to imagine they are Joe’s mum and his teacher has just said this to them. In their group they should briefly discuss what Joe’s mum would probably think, feel and do after hearing this. Then they should practise using “Ask not criticise” instead. Ask them to come up with actual words and follow up questions Joe’s mum could use.

“Joe’s going to be excluded permanently soon if things don’t change.”
“I don’t think this school is the right place for Joe.”
“I don’t know what I can try next with Joe. Nothing is working.”
“I have to think of the rest of the class.”
“Is there anything up at home because Joe is being really difficult lately.”
4. Invite each group to read out their statement and the “ask not criticise” responses they came up with as a group. Discuss whether these could lead to different/better outcomes for Joe and his mum.
5. Talk about trying to use this technique themselves. Prompt the parents to consider how they would also need to think about body language and tone to do this successfully.
6. If there is time, it can help to end on an optimistic note, by asking parents to think of a time when a meeting went well. Can they identify what they or someone else did in that meeting to help it go so well? Share a few ideas with the whole group.

Module Five: Getting the best out of others



TAKING CARE (25 mins)

Description

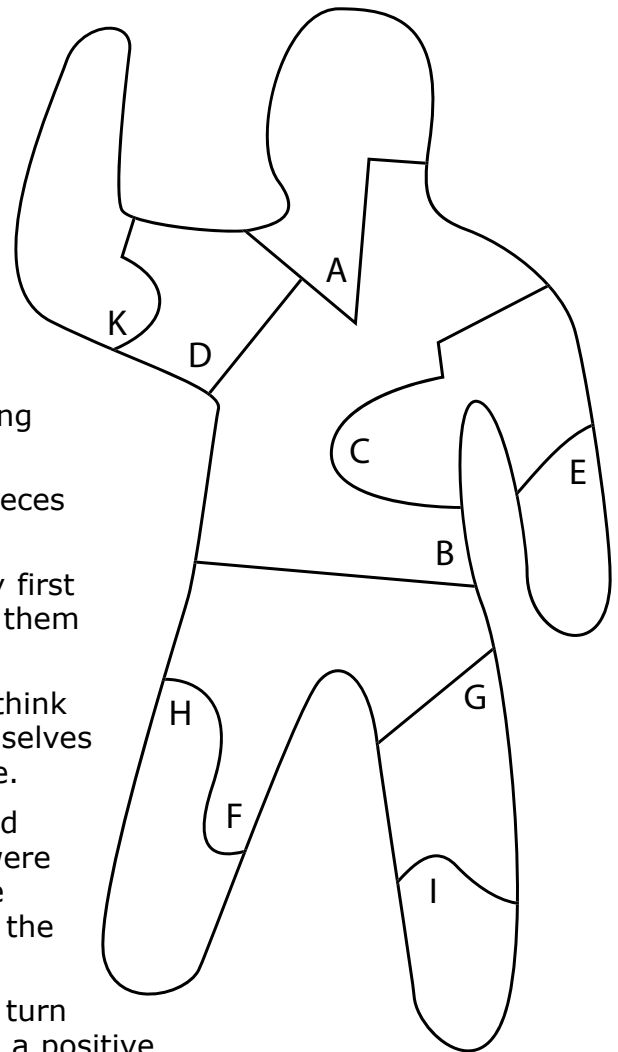
Whole group exercise: Feeling in pieces?

Aims

To illustrate the importance of taking care of yourself each time you attend a tricky meeting. To help parents think of ways to recover and put themselves back together and to promote the importance of mending, so things might go better second time around.

Directions

1. Have a large drawing of a person cut into jigsaw pieces (it helps to code the pieces A or B in pencil front and back so you can assemble the jigsaw easily) – assemble the pieces in a shambled sort of way on cloth, so that the side marked 'A' is showing.
2. Ask parents to call to mind a meeting they have had in the past that was really tricky or left them feeling unhappy or upset – could suggest parents close their eyes to concentrate on how they were feeling when they came out of that meeting.
3. Lots of parents talk about feeling a bit in pieces – pointing to the jumbled jigsaw pieces.
4. What did you feel, coming out of that tricky first meeting – add their suggestions by writing them on to each of the jigsaw pieces.
5. Now ask parents to look at the pieces and think of anything they might do to help put themselves back together again – let's do one at a time.
6. For example, let's take this 'upset' piece and turn it around – what could you do if you were upset – e.g. 'talk to someone' – so turn the piece over and write these new words onto the same jigsaw piece.
7. As parents suggest things you are going to turn the jigsaw pieces over and slowly assemble a positive whole parent back together. (Right side of jigsaw is marked 1 to 10 so that you can easily connect the pieces).



Module Five: Getting the best out of others



8. Draw out the importance of taking time to heal from each negative encounter so that you can approach the next more positively.
9. Ask everyone think of one thing they could try out at their next meeting – jot it down to aid memory.
10. Finish by reminding parents that not many are called upon to work so closely with workers and professionals and attend so many meetings to openly discuss their children. You really should remember to treat yourselves. Pass out box of Miniature Heroes chocolates for everyone to share.

CHECKING OUT (10 mins)

Description

Whole group exercise to finish the module.

Aims

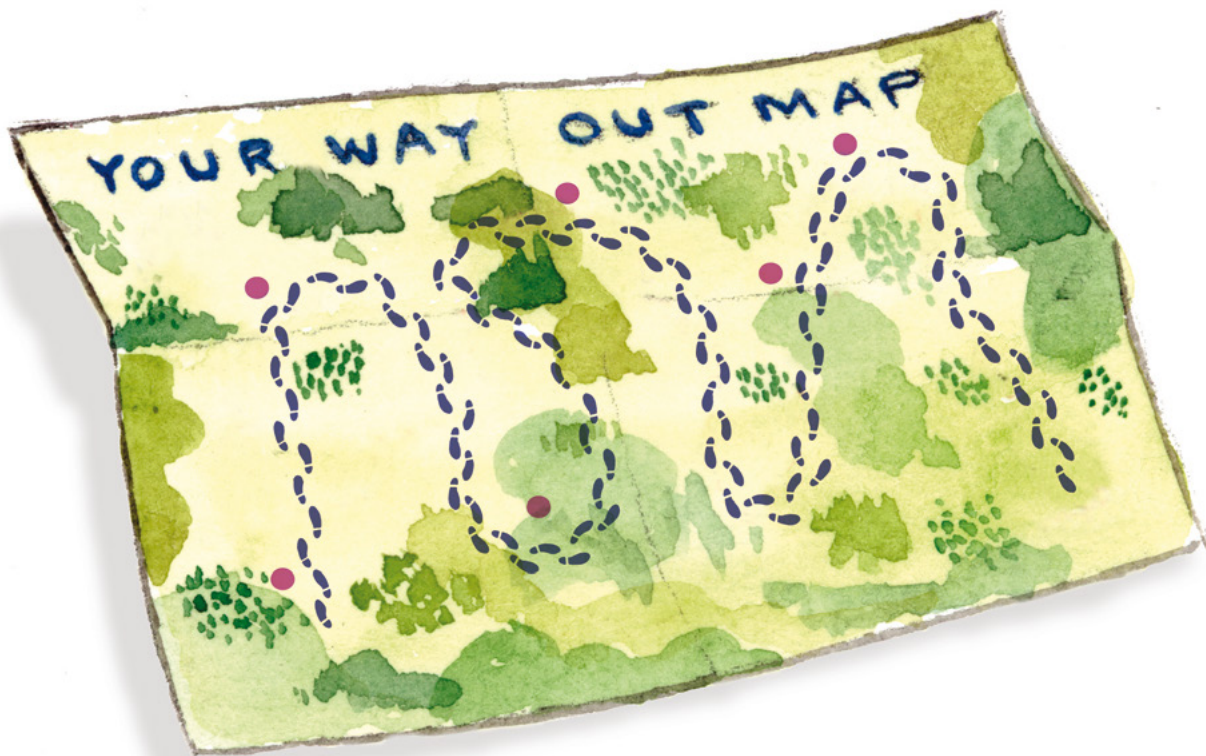
To have a relaxed wind down before parents depart.

Directions

1. Ask everyone to choose just one word to describe how they feel as they leave.
2. Can be any sort of word – flat or bright and anything in between.

INSIDERS' GUIDE...
to bringing up children with special needs

Module Six: Looking ahead



Module Six: Looking ahead



Module programme for trainers

	<i>Welcome & Checking in</i>		15
	<i>Introduction to module</i> Reminder last session Reviewing the course Being equipped	■ Handout	5
	<i>Listening to you</i> Making a visual map of the whole group's journey	■ Handout: Taking stock	25
	<i>Taking a step back</i> Reflecting on what we have felt and learnt on the course	A5 paper (two different colours)	30
	<i>Learning more</i> Relating course learning to parent resilience		20
	TEA TIME		20
	<i>Practising</i> Making a plan Emptying the 'not now net' What next for the group		20
	<i>Taking care</i> A gift for you	Small envelopes	25
	<i>Evaluating the course</i>	Parent evaluation sheet	10
	<i>Checking out</i>		10

Module Six: Looking ahead



PREPARATION

The aim of the module is to reflect on the whole course and identify what's worth taking on the journey ahead. It's a chance to assist parents to notice the resilient tools they have for the next part of their journey and complete the course by taking time to end together.

NOTE

This is the last session for parents and they may have mixed feelings about ending. They may want to share contact details. Be careful not to take on this task, as it is a way for the group to decide and facilitate its own next steps.

It can really help to remind parents of what took place over the last 5 weeks, by posting various pieces of work they have generated around the room in a chronological order. This will then be referred to in the *Listening to You* section.

Handouts needed today include:

- Handout: Module Programme
- Handout: Taking Stock
- Handout: Course Evaluation Sheet
- Handout: Copies of any measures you have chosen to use

Other bits needed include:

- Flipchart of group agreement
- Flipchart of 6 module programme
- 'Not now net'
- Prepare a 'journey map' on flipchart pages
- Samples of work produced over the course
- Original hopes and worries from Module One
- A5 paper (2 different colours) & felt tips
- Blank postcards and 2nd class stamps for each parent
- Small envelopes and paper slips for all
- Certificates (if using)

Module Six: Looking ahead



CHECKING IN (15 mins)

Facilitate a check in with each person taking their turn to contribute without interruption or questions from others.

Then suggest to parents that having used this 'checking in' idea throughout the whole course (as a way to clear our heads and help us to arrive ready to concentrate on ourselves), it could be a helpful tip for other situations. Ask the group if they could think of other times when they might use it? No need to ask everyone individually, and this could be a time for the parent facilitator to suggest a way they use the idea in their lives.

PROGRAMME (5 mins)

Remind parents that this is the final session. Explain that the plan is to review the past five weeks, both as a group and as individuals. The focus is on thinking about being equipped for the next steps of our journey and what could help to take with you.

■ **Handout: Module Programme**, or flipchart today's plan.

LISTENING TO YOU (25 mins)

Description

A whole group exercise.

Aims

To provide reflection time by making a visual map of the whole group's journey.

Directions

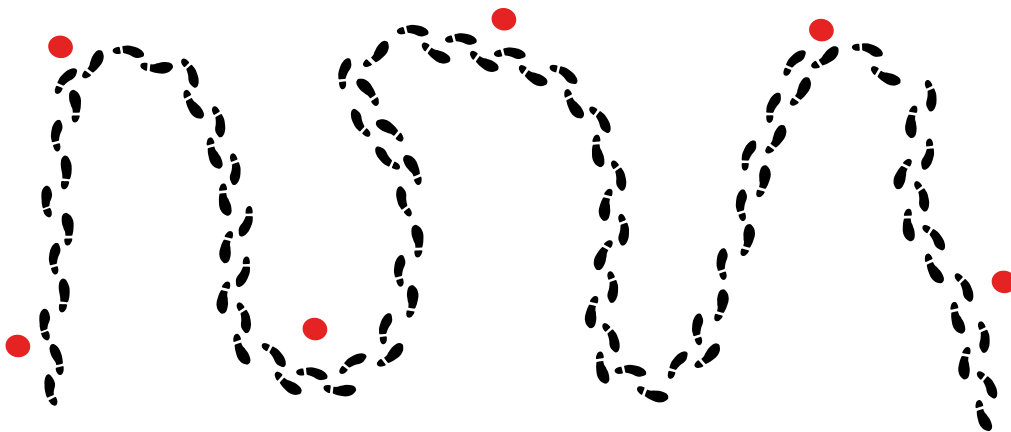
1. Explain that this first exercise is about reminding ourselves about what we have done over the past five weeks, which is why there are various bits and pieces pasted around the room as memory prompts.
2. Distribute the ■ **Handout: Taking Stock**. Explain that today's session is going to explore the four areas listed on the handout:
 - things I have felt during the course
 - things I have learnt
 - things I will leave behind, let go of
 - things I will take with me.

At this point, it would help to refer generally to some of the resilient building ideas that were covered in the course. For example, being brave, following up new and old interests or identifying people you can count on.

Module Six: Looking ahead



3. Beforehand, you will have prepared a very large hand drawn illustration. You will probably need to use three pieces of landscaped flipchart paper butted up against each other to make a large map – draw a wiggly line joining six key landmarks – you need lots of space for this exercise. Post the flipchart on to the cloth, leaving plenty of space below for parents to post their ideas in the next two activities. See the diagram
4. Referring to the series of visual reminders of exercises that have taken place posted around the room, ask the group if they recall the modules. It helps if you can add specific examples to prompt memories (e.g. remember we did the maze exercise in module five and Zara shared her story...). As you do this with the group, add a small illustration on the map you have drawn as another visual reminder (e.g. you would draw a small maze at the fifth module landmark point on the map). You are constructing a visual map to help parents remember the journey they have been on together. You are using the reminders of exercises to prompt memories of what they did in each of the previous modules, which is why it helps to have each module represented in a sequence of 6 landmarks to denote the different modules.



TAKING A STEP BACK (30 mins)

Description

A whole group exercise.

Aims

To reflect on what each person individually has felt during the course.

Directions

1. Ask parents to think about what it has meant for them individually, to take part on this course. Everyone will need to use the same coloured A5s for this exercise.
Note to facilitator: *you want to distinguish between feelings and learnings in these two activities so use two different coloured A5s helps to achieve this visually).*
2. The emphasis of this first part of the exercise is on FEELINGS – what parents felt like at the beginning of the course (e.g. didn't know anyone, not sure if course would be right for them etc., how they felt about hearing different stories and practising new skills, being in a group of people who had had similar experiences and had found other ways of dealing with challenges and so on).
3. Explain that parents have 10 minutes to write on lots of A5s (one per thought). The aim of the activity is to recall what you FELT at different stages of the course.

Module Six: Looking ahead



4. So the first question is: As you look at what we covered in the modules, can you remember what you felt as you did different things? What you felt at the first session, at the second session and so on. When you are ready, jot down one feeling per sheet, and then map your A5s under the drawn wiggly line, to indicate what you felt when.
5. The *second part* of the exercise focuses on what parents have **LEARNT**. This time, using a different coloured A5, ask parents to concentrate on anything they might have learnt from being on the course (assuming there is something of course!).
6. So, as you look back on the course, from the start to now, can you remember anything you learnt along the way even if it seems small and tiny? Jot these thoughts down, one per sheet, and when you are ready, map your A5s under the wiggly line, below the feelings set of A5s, to roughly show what you learnt when.
7. Facilitators summarise what the A5s say and check if anything important has been missed in the summary.
8. Now ask the group to discuss what they notice.
9. Suggest to parents that it can be a nice memento of what you have done on the course, to add a few words to the **Taking Stock** handout, as a reminder to take home with him, and then we will break for tea.

LEARNING MORE (20 mins)

Description

A whole group exercise.

Aims

To relate the learning to the concept of building parent's resilience.

Directions

1. Using the 5 Resilience potion bottles from module three – Basics, Belonging, Learning, Coping, Core Self. stick these up onto the cloth and provide a sentence to remind everyone what that potion represents.
2. Now ask parents to look at their group map (the **LEARNING** A5s under the wiggly line) and re-sort these (which will all be of the same colour), so that they are moved and placed under one of the 5 resilient potions bottles. Explain that sometimes, you might feel that one of the things you felt or learnt could fit in more than one resilient bottle. It doesn't matter at this point, just put it in one or the other.
3. You want to draw out the aspects of the course experience that contribute to building parent resilience – i.e. through the adversity, people become more resourceful = resilience.

Note to facilitators: you will need to think about how to fit all of this onto the sticky cloth, so the first map you draw will need to use about half or two thirds of the space, to allow a final area on the cloth to add the resilience potion bottles.

Module Six: Looking ahead



4. Having finished the map, explain that the group is moving to the final ending exercise.
If the 'not now net' is yet to be addressed: remind parents that they raised some comments which are in the not now net and 5 minutes is allocated to check these and decide how the group might want to address these issues. (You will already have checked the notes to decide if there are any that you can help with such as signposting to ongoing sources of information and support). If there is time, ask parents if there are any resources they have found useful that they would like to share with the group?
5. Finally, if the group show interest, you might want to suggest that if they wish to keep in touch, they could circulate a contact list now. .

TEA TIME (20 mins)

PRACTISING (20 mins)

Description

An individual exercise.

Aims

To use the learning from the course to prepare and personalise a plan for remembering to do 2 things to help their children and themselves.

Directions

1. Provide everyone with a blank postcard, OR ask parents to choose one card from the bundle you prepared for the exercise in Module 2.
2. Ask parents to add their postal address to the right hand side of the back of the card, leaving room on the left to write a message, which you will explain in a moment. And provide 2nd class stamps asking parents to add them to the right hand top corner.
3. Flipchart an example as you ask parents to write on the back, 2 things they will do to help their child with their anxious feelings, and 2 things they will do to help themselves with their anxious feelings?

2 things to help my child:

1.....

2.....

2 things to help me:

1.....

2.....

4. Collect in the postcards and explain that you will post them to parents as a reminder in a few weeks time.
5. (If the 'not now net' is yet to be addressed) – Remind parents that they produced notes in the not now net and 5 minutes is allocated to check the notes and decide how the group might want to address these issues. (You will already have checked the notes to decide if there are any that you can help with such as signposting to ongoing sources of information and support). If there is time, ask parents if they have any recommendation for resources they would like to share with the group.

Module Six: Looking ahead



TAKING CARE (25 mins)

Description

Whole group exercise.

Aims

To encourage parents to reflect on the course finishing and to identify what they have appreciated about each other – to nourish and build their resilience.

Directions

1. Begin by asking parents to notice what it feels like to come to the end of the course.
2. If the group wish to keep in touch, agree how contact details will be shared. If the group want to meet again ask that they arrange this once the course programme is finished.
3. **ENDING.** Hand out a small envelope to each parent and ask them to write their first name on the envelope.
4. Then supply parents with small pieces of paper that each has the name of the other parents on the course. (So, if there are 12 parents in the group, each parent should have 11 small pieces of paper, each with the name of the other parents). You can do this by dividing an A4 sheet into columns, adding 6 parents names to each column and then cutting the page up so you a pile of small slips of paper for each parent.
5. You will have to decide whether or not you as facilitators think it appropriate to join in on this exercise. Some parent groups have wanted to include facilitators, for example. If you decide to be included, it makes sense for you to have completed the slips yourself beforehand, so you can concentrate of facilitating the exercise on the day.
6. Ask parents to work on their own and to write down one thing they have appreciated, admired, welcomed about each of their fellow group members (and the group facilitators).
7. Once completed, ask parents to fold the slips of paper and post them into the correct parents envelope to take home to read in private.
8. If you are producing certificates of completion, have them prepared beforehand and hand them out or if there is time, ceremoniously and hand them out once the previous exercise is completed.

Module Six: Looking ahead



EVALUATING THE COURSE (10 mins)

Use Parent Evaluation Sheet

Description

A whole group exercise.

Aims

To get a sense of how parents have experienced the course to both assist with closure and to provide feedback so that future courses can be improved.

Directions

1. Ask parents if they would be willing to complete the Handout: Parent Evaluation Sheet.
■ **Handout: Parent Evaluation Sheet.**
2. Explain there are some questions to answer with a continuum of possible replies.
3. Depending on the group ability, you could draw the continuum to illustrate the range and show how you would circle an answer. You may want to read the questions out slowly so people can follow the instructions and ring a number as you go.
4. Explain it is not necessary to sign the sheets but parents can if they want to. Put a folder on the floor in the middle of the room and ask parents to insert their sheets as they finish.
5. At this point, IF you have chosen to use additional evaluation measures, then hand these out for parents to complete now. Explain what will happen with the data and how you plan to provide them with feedback about the group evaluation of the course.

CHECKING OUT (10 mins)

Description

Whole group exercise to finish the course.

Aims

To encourage parents to leave behind anything they didn't enjoy about the course and to identify one positive thing they will take with them.

Directions

1. Ask everyone to think of sweet and sour – that is, choose one thing they did not enjoy and would rather leave behind (can be anything: the content, the room, a particular exercise etc) and also one thing that feels positive and that they will take away with them.
2. Thank parents for attending and wish them well on the next part of their journey.



Handouts

Course programme

- Module One: **The journey so far**
Finding out what we have in common
- Module Two: **Understanding ADHD**
Thinking about ADHD and how it impacts family life
- Module Three: **Travelling on**
Managing stress and building resilience
- Module Four: **Managing ADHD**
Exploring ways to support children with ADHD
- Module Five: **Getting the best out of others**
Handling tricky meetings
- Module Six: **Looking ahead**
Summary of what we've learnt and preparing for the future

Module One: The journey so far



Module 1. Programme for parents

	<p><i>Welcome</i></p> <p>Practical information</p> <p><i>Checking in</i></p> <p><i>Introduction to course structure</i></p> <p>What the course will cover</p> <p><i>Introduction to today's module</i></p> <p>Exploring what's happened</p> <p>What do we have in common?</p> <p>Hopes and worries about the course</p> <p><i>Group agreement</i></p> <p>Sorting ground rules</p>	<p>■ Handout</p> <p>■ Handout</p>
	<p><i>Listening to you</i></p> <p>The winning ticket</p> <p>Welcome to Holland</p> <p>The Insiders' Guide to the Allotments</p> <p>TEA TIME</p> <p><i>Taking a step back</i></p> <p>Changing expectations</p> <p>What's different now?</p> <p><i>Learning more</i></p> <p>News from other parents</p>	<p>■ Handout</p> <p>■ Handout</p> <p>■ Handout</p>
	<p><i>Practising</i></p> <p>What helps?</p> <p><i>Taking care</i></p> <p><i>Checking out</i></p>	

Module One: The journey so far



WELCOME TO HOLLAND

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability – to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it – to imagine how it would feel. It's like this ...

When you're going to have a baby it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip – to Italy for example. You buy a bunch of guidebooks and make wonderful plans. The coliseums, the Michelangelo David, the gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says: "Welcome to Holland". "Holland?!" you say, "What do you mean, Holland? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy! All my life I dreamed of going to Italy". But there's been a change in flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay. The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible disgusting place full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy new guidebooks ... and you will learn a whole new language ... and you will meet a whole new group of people you never would have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you have been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around and you begin to notice that Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts!

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy, and they're bragging about what a wonderful time they had there, and for the rest of your life, you will say, "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go, that's what I had planned". And the pain of that will never, ever go away, because the loss of that dream is a significant loss. But if you spend your life mourning that fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things about Holland.

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Module One: The journey so far



The Insiders' Guide to the Allotments

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability – and I do want people who are outside this experience to understand what it's like on the inside; so it's a bit like this ...

Being an ordinary parent is a bit like starting a new allotment, with lots of plots alongside yours with busy people doing the same thing. There are loads of helpers and experienced gardeners to show you what to do; what to expect and what you will need. You expect there to be some hard work ahead: nursing and protecting the tiny plants, weeding and digging, watering and feeding, pruning and shaping: but eventually there will be an individual, productive allotment. After 20 years, you expect to be able to put the spade to one side, and sit down because you've earned a good rest!

You try to be prepared; you might do some reading. But for some of us 'Insiders', we become parent carers. Our next reality is perhaps a long wait when the seedlings you ordered online are not delivered, and days can stretch into years. For some, life changes when the delivery is not what you expected: perhaps two weaker ones that struggle to hold onto life. For others, the first years of gardening go well and then a sudden accident or disease takes hold. Almost overnight, everything has changed.

But in the allotments around you, everyone and everything else is unchanged. They are still busy, heads down, taken up with the demands of their own allotments.

You find your allotment's been re-sited to a steep hillside nearby. This new place feels cut off, and boulders block your view. Rocky soils and gulleys make everything tough going. After a while, you begin to see the opportunities of this new place: you begin to be able to read the hillside, enjoy a new perspective and value for life. There are gardeners here too to guide and encourage; they just take longer to find. You need a different kind of gardening here, it's slower and can be frustrating but you'll see every petal unfurl, and celebrate each new branch.

Nothing can be taken for granted: you do have to fight to make any progress. YOU change and become a different kind of gardener, with a whole new strength, perspective and community. You realise this kind of gardening is indeed a lifetime's calling.

Things are changing for the better: together folks from both allotments have built new paths to join our two worlds. Now we can have short breaks in the allotments in the valley which makes a big difference.

In return, we welcome and appreciate it when folks from the valley come here to visit: but it's funny how most of them rush home at night!

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Module One: The journey so far



News from other parents – what helps?

- **Stay positive and healthy yourself**
- **Focus on what can be done – look for the positives rather than what's wrong**
- **Become your child's 'care manager' – be super organised**
- **Educate others in the family about ways to manage aspects of ADHD**
- **Encourage hobbies – not just theirs, yours too**
- **Manage your own stress levels and keep calm**
- **Establish structure and stick to it – set clear expectations and rules**
- **Get some sleep – regularly**
- **Physical activity and high octane connection time between you and your child can benefit you both**
- **Eat well**
- **Look after your friendships - especially those you laugh with**



Module Two: Understanding ADHD



Module 2. Programme for parents

	<p><i>Welcome</i> Practical information</p> <p><i>Checking in</i></p> <p><i>Introduction to today's module</i> Managing stress</p> <p><i>Listening to you</i> The strengths and difficulties of having ADHD</p> <p><i>Taking a step back</i> What does it feel like to have ADHD?</p>	<p>■ Handout</p> <p>■ Handout</p>
	<p>TEA TIME</p> <p><i>Learning more</i> The ADHD brain – mental processes and skills that help us to get things done</p>	<p>■ Handout</p>
	<p><i>Practising</i></p> <p><i>Taking care</i> Noticing your own strengths</p> <p><i>Checking out</i></p>	<p>■ Handout</p>

Module Two: Understanding ADHD



Executive functioning and ADHD

Feature	Definition	How does this relate to ADHD?
Self-Organisation	Creating and maintaining order in an activity or action; Looking ahead to future events and setting goals; Developing appropriate actions ahead of time to carry out a future task or action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scattered, disorganized approach to solving problems Easily overwhelmed by large tasks or assignments Great difficulty following a series of actions without a sequence or set routine
Temporary Immobilisation	Not acting on impulse, appropriately stopping own activity at the proper time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divulging inappropriate/ too much information at inappropriate times Poor impulse control
Sustained Attention	Maintaining concentration on a single activity over a period of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty controlling their attention, easily distracted Difficulty gaining their attention, changing their focus onto other tasks Has trouble keeping attention on tasks or play if there are unpleasant sensory distractions (such as ticking clocks, flickering lights, radio playing)
Self-regulation	Moving from situations or activities as the situation demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problems shifting tasks Blurt out answers, speak out of turn
Emotional control	Managing/controlling emotional responses. Making sure emotional responses are appropriate to the situation or stressor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triggered very easily often into strong emotions Easily upset, angry, explosive Small events trigger a big emotional response
Reflection	Stopping to think about our actions so that we do not act impulsively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impulsiveness
Working memory	Holding information in mind for the purpose of completing a specific task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forgetfulness Trouble remembering instructions Problems remembering advice/ what to do in certain situations Does not follow through on instructions or complete chores, school work or jobs Loses possessions, toys, materials etc. Difficulty following the plots of stories, TV or films
Self-Appraisal	Self esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low self belief Dissatisfied when they succeed
Social cognition	Ability to read social situations, predict consequences to their actions and respond appropriately for the situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social clumsiness Talks excessively and interrupts others Answers questions before they have been completely asked Lower levels of empathy
Compliance	Conforming to the rules and regulations appropriate for their age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defiant behaviour Respond poorly to authority figures Temper tantrums
Co-ordination	Ability to perform both fine (delicate) motor skills and gross (large) motor skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clumsiness Difficulty catching/ throwing accurately Difficulty with writing neatly

Adapted from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (Brighton and Hove) handout.

Module Two: Understanding ADHD



The Resilience Framework in Action Making Resilient Moves – Problem Solving

1. What happened? (Describe the bad situation)	2. What I did and why I did it?	3. What other people did?	4. What happened next?	5. What good things came out of it?	6. What bad things came out of it?
7. Alternative things I could have done?		8. Good thing that would have come from this?		9. Bad things that would come from this?	
A					
B					
C					

Adapted from: Wright B and Williams C (2007) *Intervention and support for parents and carers of children and young people on the autistic spectrum*: A resource for trainers, London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publications.

Module Two: Understanding ADHD



Insiders' Guide Activities to help children with 'mental processes and skills'

Items on a Tray

Place a number of items on a tray, child has one minute to look at the objects and to try and remember them. Child looks away, take one of the objects away. Can the child, when he looks back at the tray, remember the missing item?

Spot the Difference

Have a supply of these – this activity involves using many different areas of the brain, including the occipital and parietal lobes for special awareness and the relationship between objects, and the frontal lobes for short term memory.

Find the Hidden Object

For example 'Where's Wally' type pictures – Usborne do a number of excellent puzzle books. Again encourages, concentration, short term memory and, if need to be checked off a list, organisational skills.

Hidden object (Could use a counter or works well with smarties.)

Hide the counter under one of six upturned cups whilst the child watches. Move the cups around can he tell you which cup the counter is under? Could increase the number of cups or moves.

Can make this game harder by not showing the cup the counter is under. Can he pick the right cup? Move cups simply (e.g. swop the one he has looked under with another) can he now find the counter? Move cups again. Harder as the child has to remember which cups he has tried and where they have been moved to. Smarties work well to encourage focus!

Colour Confusion

On a piece of card write out three colours that the child can read e.g. red, blue, green – need to be able to read the words quite easily. On the top line write these words in the matching colours e.g. red written in red, blue written in blue, green in green. Write the words out again but this time mix the written word with a different colour e.g. write red in blue, blue, in green and green in red. Do this in 3 or 4 different ways underneath.

Red (written in red)	Blue (written in blue)	Green (written in green)
Blue (written in green)	Green (written in red)	Red (written in blue)
Red (written in green)	Green (written in blue)	Blue (written in red)

Ask the child to say what colour they see rather than read the word. This is quite tricky (*try it!*) but encourages strong attention skills and a capacity for self-regulation i.e. inhibiting the automatic response of reading the word.

Module Two: Understanding ADHD



Make checklists

List the steps involved in a task as it can help children to know how to start. Checklists are a visual reminder of where your child left off if she got distracted. You can make checklists for everything from the tasks she has to do before school to how to make a sandwich.

Set time limits

Your child may struggle to budget time for an activity and also for each step of that activity. On your checklists, consider giving a time estimate for each step. If your child doesn't read yet, you can put some inexpensive kitchen timers around the house. Set them for the amount of time your child should be spending on everything from completing a math sheet to brushing her teeth.

Use planners and calendars

Not all planners have to be on paper, which is a good thing if your child has trouble keeping track of items. You can put up a big family calendar somewhere and give your child her own colored marker. For older kids there are free or inexpensive apps and time-management software that can help.

Explain yourself

Children who are inflexible thinkers or who have difficulty with emotional control don't always take feedback well or see the point of learning new ways to do things. Try to spell out why it's important to learn a new skill, or how it may save time and energy in the long run. And if the answer is simply, "Because that's the way it has to be done," don't be afraid to say that.

Let your child explain, too

Just because kids have trouble with executive functioning skills doesn't mean their way of doing something isn't valid. If your child's method doesn't make sense to you, consider taking the time to ask why before saying it has to be done differently. It may actually be an inventive approach that works for your child. The more successful strategies she comes up with herself, the better!

Module 3. Programme for parents

	<p><i>Welcome</i></p> <p><i>Checking in</i></p> <p><i>Introduction to today's module</i></p> <p>Managing stress</p> <p>Building resilience</p> <p><i>Listening to you</i></p> <p>Iceberg model</p>	<p>■ Handout</p> <p>■ Handout</p>
	<p>TEA TIME</p> <p><i>Taking a step back</i></p> <p>What's resilient about you?</p> <p><i>Learning more</i></p> <p>The ordinary magic needed to be resilient parents</p>	<p>■ Handout</p> <p>■ Handout</p>
	<p><i>Practising</i></p> <p>Belonging and the relationship web</p> <p><i>Taking care</i></p> <p>Explorer's notebook</p> <p><i>Checking out</i></p>	<p>■ Handout</p> <p>■ Handout</p>

Module Three: Travelling on



Symptoms of Stress

Feelings

- Emotional numbness
- Blankness, not feeling anything
- Restlessness
- Lack of motivation or focus
- Not being able to cope with everyday situations
- Mood swings: irritable, guilt, anger, suspicion and fear

Physical Reactions

- Problems with sleeping
- Tears
- Easily startled
- Headaches, muscle tension
- Change in sex drive
- Having trouble concentrating

Actions

- Isolate yourself, withdraw from social situations
- Find it harder to make decisions
- Can't remember things so easily
- Increased drug, alcohol or tobacco use
- Change in eating habits - eating too much or too little
- Sudden angry or emotional outbursts





STRESS BUSTING IDEAS

- See looking after yourself as a priority
- Become visible and ask for help
- Be gentle and kind to yourself
- Let your feelings out!
- Make connections with physical and emotional feelings
- Get more information
- Put the 'darlings' second sometimes
- Let go of the expectations and pressures on you – 'good enough is more than enough'



Module Three: Travelling on



Resilience Framework for Children & Young People

adapted from Hart & Blincow with Thomas 2007

SPECIFIC APPROACHES

BASICS

Good enough housing	Enough money to live	Being safe	Access & transport	Healthy diet	Exercise and fresh air	Enough sleep	Play & leisure	Being free from prejudice & discrimination
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BELONGING

Find somewhere for the child/YP to belong	Help child/YP understand their place in the world	Tap into good influences	Keep relationships going	The more healthy relationships the better	Take what you can from relationships where there is some hope
Get together people the child/YP can count on	Responsibilities & obligations	Focus on good times and places	Make sense of where child/YP has come from	Predict a good experience of someone or something new	Make friends and mix with other children/YPs

LEARNING

Make school/college life work as well as possible	Engage mentors for children/YP plan	Map out career or life	Help the child/YP to organise her/himself	Highlight achievements	Develop life skills
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COPING

Understanding boundaries and keeping within them		Remember tomorrow is another day		Lean on others when necessary	
Being brave	Solving problems	Putting on rose-tinted glasses	Fostering their interests	Calming down & self-soothing	Have a laugh

CORE SELF

Instil a sense of hope	Support the child/YP to understand other people's feelings	Help the child/YP to know her/himself	Help the child/YP take responsibility for her/himself	Foster their talents	There are tried and tested treatments for specific problems, use them
------------------------	--	---------------------------------------	---	----------------------	---

NOBLE TRUTHS

ACCEPTING CONSERVING COMMITMENT ENLISTING



Resilient Therapy Detail – Five Magic Potions

When things are hard, think about the following list of ideas that help build resilience. All can build strength and help you feel powerful.

BASICS: This is about getting the basic necessities needed for life sorted

- Better housing
- Enough money to live
- Being safe
- Access and transport
- Healthy diet, exercise and fresh air
- Fun and leisure opportunities

BELONGING: This is about making good relationships

- The more healthy relationships the better
- Keep good relationships going
- Take what you can from any relationships where there is some hope
- Tap into good influences
- Focus on good times and places
- Identify people you can count on
- Assume it's possible to have a good experience with someone or something new

LEARNING: This might include formal education but also includes developing other interests, talents and life skills

- Follow up new and old interests
- Make formal education work with your caring commitments
- Map out a career or imagine yourself doing new things in the future
- Get organised
- Notice achievements and all you have mastered already
- Develop a range of new skills

COPING: This is about getting by in everyday life

- Be brave
- Solve problems
- Stand up for your own views
- Put on rose-tinted glasses sometimes
- Look after your talents
- Learn the art of staying calm
- Remember that tomorrow's a new day
- Lean on others when necessary

CORE SELF: These ideas work very deeply to shape your character

- Learn to be hopeful
- Find your own sense of morality
- Draw on all your senses to get a good solid sense of yourself: seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, balancing etc.
- If you have a specific problem, find out about and get treatment that can help
- Take responsibility for yourself – it can help you feel powerful

Module Three: Travelling on



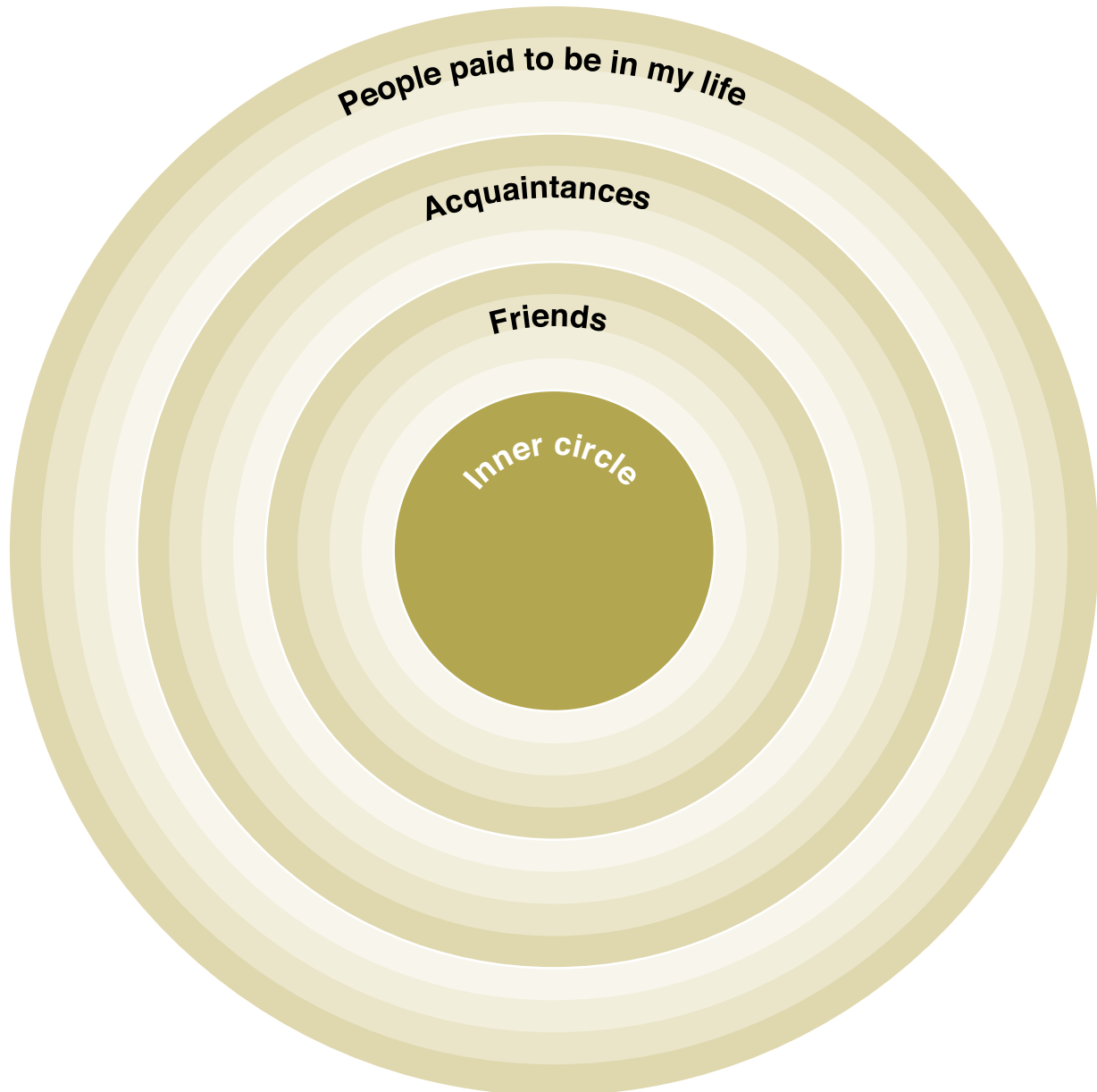
Belonging: making good relationships

- The more healthy relationships the better
- Keep good relationships going
- Take what you can from any relationships where there is some hope
- Tap into good influences
- Focus on good times and places
- Identify people you can count on
- Start out positive – assume it is possible to have a good experience with someone or something new





Relationship web



© Alison Orphan/*Sure Start*

Module Four: Managing ADHD



Module 4. Programme for parents

	<i>Welcome</i> <i>Checking in</i> <i>Introduction to today's module</i>	■ Handout
	<i>Listening to you</i> What goes well and not so well at home? TEA TIME <i>Taking a step back</i> The demands of parenting <i>Learning more (A)</i> Parenting styles <i>Learning more (B)</i> House rules, giving positive instructions and logical consequences	■ Handout ■ Handout ■ Handout
	<i>Practising</i> Breaking tasks into smaller steps <i>Taking care</i> <i>Checking out</i>	■ Handout ■ Handout



Parent Job Description

WANTED

Parents to raise children
with special needs

Dedicated adults needed to work in a busy, demanding and fraught working environment. This is a long term position so you must have staying power, excellent communication skills and the ability to plan and organise family life for everyone. No previous experience required but you will need to be a good negotiator, determined to make the most of things, and have an excellent sense of humour.

Main Purpose of the Job

To raise happy children by taking the lead for their day to day care

Tasks Involved

- To be flexible and adjust swiftly to bad news even if crumbling inside
- To expose your life to professionals and ask for help from others
- To understand child development without basic training or information
- To anticipate children's needs at every stage of their life
- To teach children new skills regardless of their age, ability or impairment
- To identify problems and assess situations even when unsure yourself
- To keep things ticking over, pay the bills, manage the budget and share it out fairly
- To learn on the job and promote clever solutions at a moment's notice
- To negotiate disputes even when all are behaving badly
- To keep track of records and reports when you'd rather forget the bad news
- To control yourself when it feels like it's all too hard to manage and you want to explode
- To be consistently kind and look like you're enjoying it all the time
- To keep your spirits up even when you're feeling tired, unsupported or criticised
- To stay in there through thick and thin and be grown up and responsible even when you are bored, exasperated and want to behave like a teenager

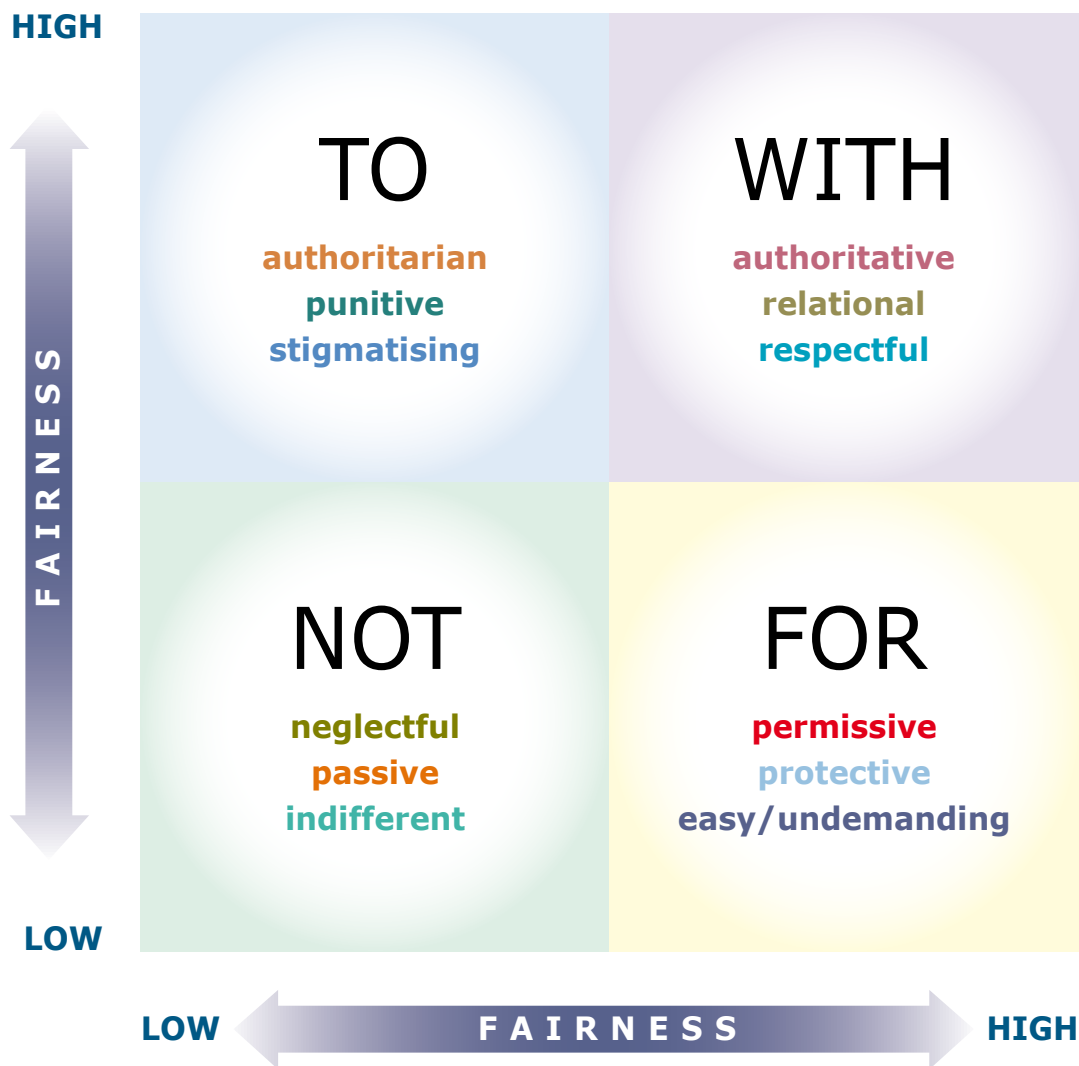
Pay: Not much. You're doing this for love.

Reference: Aumann, K., and Hart, A. (2009) *Helping children with complex needs bounce back: Resilient Therapy for parents and professionals*. Jessica Kingsley: London

Module Four: Managing ADHD



Parenting Styles



Adapted from: McCold, P., & Wachtel, T. (2001). Restorative justice in everyday life. In J. Braithwaite & H. Strang (Eds.), *Restorative justice and civil society* (pp. 114-129). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.



Four Styles of Parenting

Parenting styles is a psychological concept that refers to the way parents raise their children. Baumrind's (1991) theory is probably the most well-known and includes 4 different styles.

1. **Authoritative** parenting does WITH their children. They set reasonable expectations with suitable rules and guidelines which offers warmth alongside supportive guidance. Authoritative parenting involves open discussion and negotiation about the rules, guidelines and directions. Parents would use clear communication and lots of reasoning. They encourage independence and individuality, allowing children to make choices and explore freely. While they would set limits, they are consistently firm and fair. If they have to discipline a child they would explain why and give their reasons. Consequently, authoritative parents raise children who are likely to be responsible, independent, have high self-esteem who can control their aggressive impulses.

2. **Authoritarian** parenting does TO their children. They have high expectations of children to conform and demand compliance to the rules and directions. Parents here tend not to allow children to make choices or to freely express themselves. They value obedience and order, tend not to explain the rules and guidelines and may use physical punishment to discipline children. Consequently, children can lack initiative or independence and will often depend on others to make decisions. They may also develop low self-esteem or become aggressive. Or they may rebel by openly defying their parents.

3. **Permissive** parenting does FOR their children. They have few behavioral expectations of children and set few rules and guidelines. These parents can have difficulty enforcing the rules or doing so consistently, which provides little structure for children. They are very nurturing and accepting but not demanding. They will often do anything the child requests. Consequently, children may have low self-control and little ability to handle frustration. They can also remain immature or have difficulty accepting responsibility.

4. **Neglectful** parenting does NOT parent. They may provide the basic needs for children but often reject or ignore them. Also known as 'nonconformist parenting' these parents allow children to do as they please. While they are not demanding, they are also not responsive to them. Consequently, children can find it difficult to trust others, may have low self-esteem and can miss out on developing their understanding and skills.

Adapted from: Four Styles of Parenting, <http://www.kidsgrowth.com/resources/articledetail.cfm?id=1212>. Baumrind, D. (1991). Effective parenting during the early adolescent transition. In Cowan, P.A. & Hetherington, E.M. (Eds.), *Advances in family research* (Vol. 2). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Module Four: Managing ADHD



Giving Instructions Positively

When asking children with ADHD to do something, it helps to be clear and direct and calm! The way we give the directions can make all the difference. Following these steps can help:

- Get close and gain their attention
- Tell them specifically what to do
- Give them time to cooperate
- Praise or thank them for co-operating
- Repeat your instruction again if they haven't done it
- Back it up with a consequence if they don't cooperate

What instructions and logical consequences could you use in these situations?








Fill in the situation	Add your instruction	Choose logical consequence
Child is asked to ... (do something they are interested in – meals)		
Child is asked to stop doing ... (something irritating – kicking chair)		
Child is asked to ... (help with something – clear bedroom)		
Child is asked to ... (do something not interested in – get dressed)		

Module Four: Managing ADHD



Bedtime Routine

After completing each bedtime task mark it below

	Brush your teeth 	Use the toilet 	Wash your hands/Take a bath 	Put on pyjamas 	Read a book 	Lights out 	Stay in bed until morning 
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							

Adapted from: <https://www.rewardcharts4kids.com/bedtime-routine-chart/>

Module Four: Managing ADHD



The Visitor

This exercise helps to develop a mindful awareness of the environment, of the body, of the breath, and of thoughts and emotions. You can practice the exercise as a whole, or in parts – using any part of the exercise.



The Environment



As you're walking, or just sitting quietly somewhere, start to notice things as though you were a visitor to this place. As you look around you, notice sights, sounds and smells as though you had never seen, heard or smelled them before. You can imagine you are a visitor from another area or culture, or from a different species or even planet. Seeing or hearing things for the first time, from a completely different perspective. Spend a little time just looking and listening and noticing.

The Body

When 'Dr Who' regenerates, he immediately checks out his new body. As a newcomer or visitor, start to imagine being in your body for the first time. Notice what that feels like – what bodily sensations do you notice? How does it feel to move around, stretching those muscles, standing up or sitting down. What do those hands feel like as you move them about, stretching and wiggling those fingers, clenching those fists? As you start to walk, how is that? What do you notice about your legs – upper legs, feet and toes? Move your head around and notice what your neck and shoulders feel like. Bend, stretch and move about. What are those physical sensations? Spend a little time just noticing those bodily sensations, and imagine taking your body for its first ever walk, or any everyday activity.



The Breath



What would you, as a new awareness or visitor to this new body, notice about the sensations of breathing, as you breathe in, then out? Notice the sensations in the abdomen, the chest, the throat, the mouth and nose. You can notice how your attention wanders, as thoughts come in, sometimes crowding in, and your attention can follow those thoughts. Just notice as your attention wanders, then gently bring your focus back to your breath. Minds do wander, thoughts will come and thoughts will go, that is the nature of the human mind. As a visitor, you can stand back, notice those thoughts, feelings, sounds and sensations, and keep bringing your attention back to your breath.

Thoughts and Emotions

Then you can start to notice, as a visitor, the thoughts and images, feelings and emotions that come and go, in this your new body and mind. You're brand new to this body and mind, and there are no expectations for you to react to any thought, image or emotion – you can just notice them, and not respond. As a visitor, you can notice that they are just words and images, sensations, and feelings. Merely notice them as you would as a new visitor to this body and mind. Words and images, sensations and feelings: they come, and they go, and that's okay, because that's just what the human mind does.



www.getselfhelp.co.uk/visitor.htm

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Module Five: Getting the best out of others



Module 5. Programme for parents

	<p><i>Welcome</i></p> <p><i>Checking in</i></p> <p><i>Introduction to module</i> How to get the best out of others and me at meetings</p>	<p>■ Handout</p>
	<p><i>Listening to you</i> The Maze Game</p> <p><i>Taking a step back</i> What do you see? Joe's story Different angles</p> <p>TEA TIME</p> <p><i>Learning more</i> 3 keys to communication Communication pie So what can you do to help Joe? Getting off to a good start Preparing for meetings</p>	<p>■ Handout</p> <p>■ Handout ■ Handout</p> <p>■ Handout</p> <p>■ Handout</p>
	<p><i>Practising</i> Different slants Keep it positive?</p> <p><i>Taking care</i></p> <p><i>Checking out</i></p>	<p>■ Handout</p>

Module Five: Getting the best out of others



The Maze

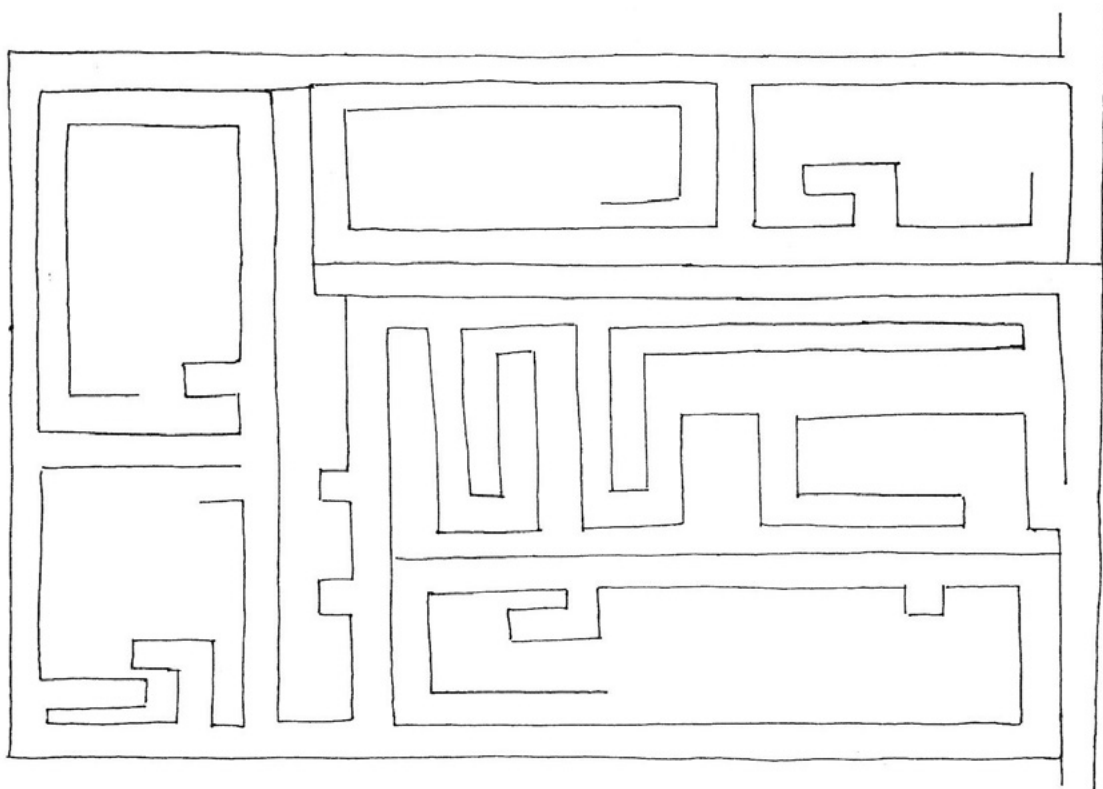


Illustration: © Alison Orphan/*Sure Start*



Handling Tricky Meetings

Joe's story

Joe Boyd is 10. He is in Year 6 at his primary school but he struggles in lots of areas at school, particularly in English, science and maths. The school is popular and has a good reputation.

Mr Boyd works as a warehouse foreman and Mrs Boyd does office work. Joe's younger brother is in Year 2 at the same school and doing fine, and his older sister is doing well at secondary school. Joe was diagnosed with ADHD 18 months ago.

Mrs Boyd is worried about Joe because he has started wetting the bed and is not sleeping well. She has talked to the GP about this. She says she has always had problems with Joe – he was an overactive toddler, always on the go, started to walk before he could crawl. She says he resists doing his homework, either denying having any at all or says he's lost the assignments. She has frequent battles with him and is really tired of yelling at him about his forgetfulness and not following through with anything. He gets distracted and needs constant reminders to complete even simple daily tasks, like getting dressed.

By the time Joe got to Year 3, the teacher would contact her at least once a week to ask that she pick him up early due to his disruptiveness. By Year 4, the school referred Joe to CAMHS but they didn't suggest he have a statement. Things got a bit better for a while but it's gone downhill in the last term. Joe is disturbing the whole class, not just others on his table, every day. He is regularly sent out of class to sit outside the head teacher's office and he has been excluded for two days for punching a boy. A number of parents have complained to the head about the effect Joe is having on the class, particularly with SATS tests coming up.

Mrs. Boyd has been called in to see the head and the class teacher and the SENCO is joining the meeting too.

- The head is concerned about the complaints from parents.
- The class teacher says that he is the most difficult boy she has taught and thinks that the SENCO should put him forward for a statement.
- The SENCO realises that the head has to deal with other parents too, but is puzzled about why things have gone wrong for Joe in Year 6 as she did not have the same level of difficulties when she was his class teacher the previous year.

Module Five: Getting the best out of others



Negotiating at meetings

When attending meetings to negotiate support for your children, we can often be approaching the same meeting or discussion differently – which might explain why some meetings are difficult. Taking account of what others might be thinking and the different angles, can offer us insights into ways of working well with others, so that everyone does their best to support children. Consider:

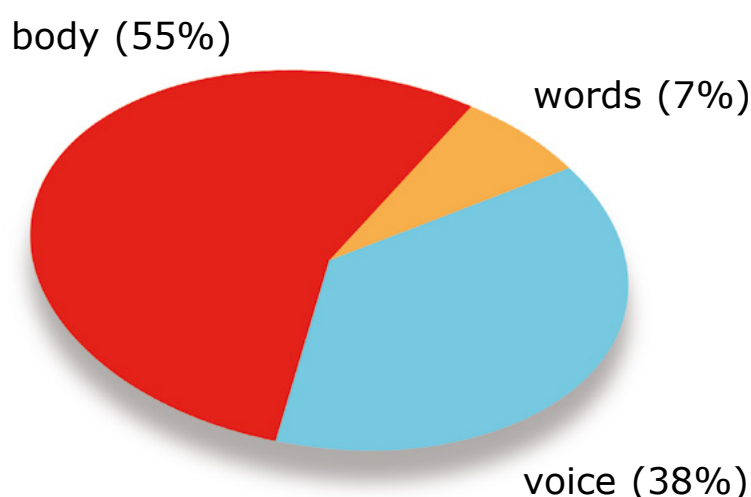
- **What do you (and they) want to get out of the meeting?**
- **What concerns or fears do you (and they) have?**
- **How might you (and they) be feeling?**

We know from the world of conciliation and conflict resolution, that there are three keys to excellent communication and negotiation. It's worth holding these in mind when you are negotiating on behalf of your child:

- 1. Build an understanding dialogue**
- 2. Know what you want**
- 3. Be prepared to be flexible.**

Don't underestimate how important body language can be to getting your message across and keeping the dialogue going when you find yourself disagreeing. Using open body language and a positive tone of voice can help you to stay curious and keep the conversation going, rather than people getting into closed positions or not listening.

Take a look at the factsheets written especially for and by parent carers as they are full of tips and ideas to help with caring for children with extra needs.



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<http://amazebrighton.org.uk/resources/publications/fact-sheets/>

Module Five: Getting the best out of others



Preparing for meetings

This handout includes information that can be out of date as the special educational needs law and regulations change, so please check and download the latest version. It also includes information about independent support that is specific to Brighton, Hove and Sussex, so please adapt the detail for your own area.

■ **Handout:** download the latest from:

<https://amazesussex.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Meetings-and-paperwork-1.pdf>

Amaze & Reaching Families FACT SHEET Updated July 2016

MEETINGS AND PAPERWORK

This fact sheet has been written by parent carers for parent carers

When you have a child with additional needs, just managing their medical appointments, school meetings and disability benefits can seem like a full time job and a very stressful one at that. Here are some tips to help you keep on top of managing your child's support and hopefully make the process less stressful and more effective for you and your family.

Good habits to develop

- **Keep a 'contacts' diary** – note down the names of any professionals you've had contact with and the department they work in. Make a brief note of any conversations so you can refresh your memory if need be.
- **Keep copies of everything you send** and ask for copies of any paperwork made by others
- **Keep all paperwork about your child in one place** – buy a box file (or a set of box files) and as soon as you get any paperwork store it in there.
- **Always be polite to receptionists and secretaries** – they are the gatekeepers and can smooth contacts or speed up waiting times.
- **Make sure you meet deadlines:** it's in your interest to complete forms and attend appointments on time. And if you can't, or you do miss them, contact people as soon as possible.

Before meetings

- **Try and arrange appointments that suit you and your child.** For example, if they're really tired in the afternoons and will struggle to wait, try to book a morning appointment.
- **Gather relevant paperwork together so you can go through it beforehand.** For example, before an Annual Review, make sure you've read over your child's Education, Health and Care Plan. Or ask to see copies of SEN Support records.
- **Think about what you want to get out of the meeting.** Perhaps you want speech and language therapy or extra support in the classroom. This will help you to keep focused if the meeting seems to drift.
- **Prepare a list of questions you want to ask.** That way if you get stuck, you'll have something to jog your memory.
- **If English isn't your first language, ask for an interpreter.**
- **Ask a friend to go with you.** Show them what you need to do and tell them what you want to achieve.

Module Five: Getting the best out of others



Leepers' portrait of two women.
Cited in A.Sturgis' 1994 Magic Art, Belitha Press, London



Module 6. Looking Ahead

	<p><i>Welcome</i> <i>Checking in</i></p> <p><i>Introduction to today's final module</i> Reviewing the course Being equipped</p>	<p>■ Handout</p>
	<p><i>Listening to you</i> Making a visual map of the whole group's journey together</p> <p><i>Taking a step back</i> Reflecting on what we have felt and learnt on the course</p> <p><i>Learning more</i> Relating course learning to our resilience</p>	<p>■ Handout</p>
	<p><i>Practising</i> Making a plan</p> <p><i>Taking care</i></p> <p><i>Evaluating the course</i> Feedback for future course development</p> <p><i>Checking out</i> Saying final goodbyes</p>	<p>■ Handout</p>

Module Six: Looking ahead



Taking stock

	Words or phrases that describe your experience during this course
Things I have felt during the course	
Things I have learnt	
Things I will leave behind or let go of	
Things I will take with me	



Parent Evaluation Sheet

Dear Parents and Carers,

We would really appreciate your help in completing this feedback form. This will help us provide evidence about the experience and impact of this course.

Thinking back over this course, do you think it has helped you to be:

	DON'T AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
More knowledgeable and informed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More confident	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More skilled and able	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More resilient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less anxious	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Would you recommend it to another parent? Yes/No

Can you describe things you are going to do or try having attended the course?

.....

.....

.....

What the most useful part of the course for you?

.....

.....

.....

What the least useful part of the course for you?

.....

.....

Name

Date

Thank you for completing this form

Insiders' Guide ...

to bringing up children with special needs

Course for parent carers of children with ADHD

who

A course for dads, mums and anyone who cares for a child with an ADHD diagnosis

"I wish I'd had information like this at the start and finding out I wasn't the only one having a problem really helped"

what

This course will cover things like understanding and managing ADHD, school issues and tips to handle tricky meetings, survival strategies and lots more

It will be run by a parent who knows what it's like, and a worker who has loads of extra information

when

add weekday and time
add start date
6 sessions

where

add venue

why

Because parent carers getting together can make a difference

To book a place contact: 01273 772289

Creche facilities are available and we can help sort a lift and arrange interpreters if needed

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Evaluating the Insiders' Guide Course

The following evaluation reports are available from www.amazesussex.org.uk

→ **2006:** the first pilot course was independently evaluated by the University of Brighton: "Insiders' Guide... to bringing up children with special needs: Evaluation findings of the Amaze parent support course". The following impact for parents included:

- Specialist nature of the course offers more effective support than general support groups
- Increased confidence and self-esteem gained by sharing experiences and strategies with others
- Greater personal confidence and self-esteem for those who felt more vulnerable beforehand
- Benefits and education advice provided highly valued
- Reduced feelings of vulnerability when noticing needs, and asking for support
- Increased confidence working with professionals and more empowered to advocate for services

The evaluation also highlighted:

- Success attracting and engaging families living in particularly disadvantaged circumstances
- Significance of including parents in the facilitation team and finding professional facilitators with good presentation skills and the capacity to empathise with parents.

→ **2012:** the Skills Funding Agency enabled a Social Return on Investment evaluation to be completed across 3 sites in England: "Insiders' Guide Journeys for Living and Learning".

- Parent carers reported significant changes for themselves and their families as they became equipped, informed, confident and connected. The key element highlighted is how the course supports parent carers to build their own resilience and skills.
- The course is an evidenced based, low cost, high impact intervention tool that helps to: strengthen parent carers and their families; aids the building of positive and problem-solving communities; encourages cultural changes, modelling partnership working that builds relationships and trust; provides value for money (for every £1 invested in delivery, an estimated social value of between £28-£35 is created).

→ **2016 and 2017:** funds from the University of Brighton's On Our Doorstep Programme, and then the Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group, enabled Kim Aumann and Karin Anjos (parent carer and support worker with the Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) to design and pilot three new courses to add to the suite. The evaluations found that the importance and impact of the course was overwhelmingly positive and led to a profound positive impact on the day to day lived experience as a parent carer.

- Quantitative findings suggest pre-course vs post-course improvement on all measures, with statistically significant improvements on 'parent self-esteem and wellbeing' and 'overall parent functioning' scores.
- The peer-supported practice orientation of the activities moved away from a passive, deficit model of care to an active and pragmatic model which suited perfectly the disparate care needs of the parent group. The nature of the setting and parent friendly atmosphere of the space had an impact on the way in which groups bond and work together, allowing for the emergence of solidarity and care that had an impact not only on the confidence and wellbeing of parent carers but on their children too.

The Insiders' Guide

A suite of support courses for parent carers of children and young people with special needs

Under 5s

Under 12s

Teens

Complex health needs

Severe learning difficulties

ADHD

Anxiety Under 12s

ASC Moving On to secondary school

Insider's Guide is designed to be co-delivered by parent carer/practitioner duos. Information about "Facilitating Together – the art of co-delivering the Insiders' Guide course" which is delivered by Kim Aumann and parent carer trainers, is downloadable from www.amazesussex.org.uk and www.boingboing.org.uk



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