

From theory to practice



What kind of support do
parents need? Mary
Crowley

Practical questions



⌘ When?

⌘ What?

⌘ Who for?

⌘ Where?

⌘ Who delivers?

⌘ How to recruit

What? Menu of services



- ⌘ Parenting programmes for children
- ⌘ Preparation for baby
- ⌘ Toddler stage/transition to school
- ⌘ Secondary school/Parenting teenagers
- ⌘ Expecting a new baby - sibling concerns
- ⌘ Special circumstances e.g. crime issues; / same sex parenting/ children or parents with disabilities/divorcing or separating parents/ compulsory programmes
- ⌘ One-to-one; drop in; home based; group-based

First stage: courses for children before they are parents



- ⌘ Thinking about parenting and **relationships**
- ⌘ Harriet Heath and Dana McDermott USA
Learning How to Care: Education for Parenting
- ⌘ Mary Gordon (Toronto): **Roots of Empathy**
- ⌘ (Trained) parents and baby come into the classroom
- ⌘ Delivered by trained practitioners helped by the school teacher who also receives training.

Second stage: expectant parents



- ⌘ Peri-natal preparation for becoming a parent-for both parents-(target fathers;beware butterflies)
- ⌘ Covering the couple's own relationship
- ⌘ Their relationship with their baby
- ⌘ Baby's expectations and feelings
- ⌘ Not necessarily covering feeding or other practical issues
- ⌘ (Example of sessions in notes: Baby Dialogue)

Who delivers? Training



- ⌘ The work is demanding and challenging for the practitioner; access to training and supervision
- ⌘ Practitioners with knowledge of the target group and training in how to work with parents around the parent-child relationship; it's adult learning, not therapy
- ⌘ Practitioners trusted to go into parents' homes
- ⌘ Men. Half the world's parents are men....

Delivering how? Where?



- ⌘ Parenting services must model what they promote
- ⌘ Parents in the Ghate Hazell 2001 study reported feeling undermined rather than supported.
- ⌘ “Support means you are in charge; the parent is still in charge, and you are just asking for help or support and whatever happens, you are the one in charge”
- ⌘ “They think you don’t know anything; that you’re stupid”(Ghate Hazell “*Parenting in Poor Environments*” 2001 Kingsley)
- ⌘ Local neutral venue; consider libraries, health centres, adult education venue; early years setting; prison
- ⌘ Work-based venue; sports venue

Training



- ⌘ Generic training needed in how to work with parents around the parent-child relationship
- ⌘ National Forum on Professional Development Systems for Parenting Education, May 2011 at Oregon State University, suggested all graduate workforce; with a degree in work with parents
- ⌘ UK has pre-degree level training based on the National Occupational Standards for Work with Parents <http://www.parentinguk.org/2/standards>

Programmes should model the behaviour they seek to teach



- ⌘ "One of the emerging concerns with parenting programmes which are based on a purely behavioural approach is the extent to which behavioural strategies such as "time-out" and "ignoring" can be used in the service of abuse by parents who are unable to empathetically identify with their children. In these circumstances, the above behavioural strategies may simply be used to replace shouting and smacking as the medium of abuse"
- ⌘ *"Understanding Parenting Programmes" 2001 Jane Barlow and Sarah Stewart-Brown Health Services Research Unit, University of Oxford.*

Recruitment



- ⌘ In Naples, they paid the parents to come.....
- ⌘ Preferable to bribe the children!
- ⌘ Pay attention to location and timing
- ⌘ Provide food and drinks; transport; childcare
- ⌘ Interpreting and translation
- ⌘ Formal letter to fathers describing research findings
- ⌘ Half-day referral training for community-based colleagues who see parents every day

The slides which follow



are provided for information only
and will not feature in the
presentation

Principles from National Occupational Standards



- Parenting education and support should be based on UN Convention Rights of the Child
- Practitioners work in partnership with parents
- Parents' unique knowledge and information about their children should be respected
- Children are the responsibility of the wider society as well as of their families

Principles continued



- Anyone working with parents should have specific training for that purpose
- Work with parents should be non-judgmental and anti-discriminatory
- Cultural diversity and the different needs of men and women must be respected within the context of human rights for all
- Good practice requires reflection and a continuing search for improvement
- How we work with and relate to parents is as important as what we do when working with them.

Sample generic parenting programmes (EU Socrates Dialogue)

- ⌘ Example of a parenting course showing the topics covered: (this will not feature in the presentation: it is provided for colleagues who may be less familiar with typical content of parenting programmes)
- ⌘ Session 1: Introductions; Hopes and Fears; Ground Rules; Perfect Parent?
- ⌘ Session 2: Values; boys, girls/ men, women;
⊗ Parents' expectations
- ⌘ Session 3: Child Development; Parents' self-esteem
- ⌘ Session 4: Feelings ;Touch (boys, girls)

Created by 8 EU partners



- ⌘ Session 5: Labels; Encouragement versus praise; Children's self-esteem
- ⌘ Session 6: Whose problem is it?
- ⌘ Session 7: How to listen; How to talk
- ⌘ Session 8: Setting limits; Four part message
- ⌘ Session 9: Safety; Revision topics
- ⌘ Session 10: Revision; Goal Setting; Evaluation

The Socrates Dialogue partners



- ⌘ The London Borough of Waltham Forest Adult Education Service
- ⌘ The Mayo Vocational Education Committee Castlebar, Ireland
- ⌘ Cooperativa Sociale Socio-Sanitaria "Futura" from Ostia in Italy
- ⌘ Aghelaos - a voluntary sector training organisation from Nafpaktos in Greece
- ⌘ The Darndale Parenting Group from Dublin, Ireland
- ⌘ ABF, the Swedish Workers Education Association from Jarfalla, Northern Stockholm
- ⌘ Servicios Sociales from Roquetas de Mar, Andalucia, Spain
- ⌘ the Universitate Populare of Tirgu Jiu, Romania

“Baby Dialogue”, a programme to help new parents prepare



- ⌘ You and your new baby
- ⌘ Keeping love alive and spending time with your partner
- ⌘ Communication
- ⌘ Conflicts and forgiveness
- ⌘ Sex
- ⌘ (See also Brazelton programme)

Kahlil Gibran: About Children



⌘ Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you, And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts, For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls, For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

Gibran, Lebanese poet



⌘ You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you. For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth. The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness; For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable.