

Parental substance use e-learning suite

The Emerging Minds: National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health has developed a suite of parental substance use* e-learning courses for practitioners working in all adult-focused services who engage with adult and family adversity. The foundation course, *The Impact of Parental Substance Use on the Child*, provides an introduction to the impact of parental substance use on children. The core course, *Parental Substance Use and Child-Aware Practice*, includes a guide for practitioners to engage with parents in conversations about their children's social and emotional wellbeing where substance use and other co-existing issues may be present.

Who are the courses for?

The courses are designed for all practitioners in adult-focused services who engage with adult and family adversity. They recognise the significant proportion of parents affected by problematic substance use who present to services, and the common co-existence with mental health, trauma, homelessness, financial pressure and child protection issues.

Why were the courses developed?

Latest studies show that around four out of 10 people in Australia either smoked daily, drank alcohol at harmful levels or used an illicit drug in the previous 12 months (AIHW, National Drug Strategy findings, 2016). These courses were developed from evidence which shows the effects of parental substance use on infants and children from conception to adolescence.

They were also developed from evidence that shows the common co-existence of parental substance use within Australia, with family and domestic violence, homelessness, trauma, mental health issues and poverty. The courses have been developed to support practitioners in the development of robust frameworks to help them identify and respond to the effects of parental substance use and other socio-political disadvantages on children.

The core course, *Parental Substance Use and Child-Aware Practice*, introduces the PERCS Conversation Guide in the AOD setting by using scenarios of practice



and inviting practitioners to reflect on how they might use the Guide in their own practice context.

How were the courses developed?

The courses were developed in collaboration with a number of stakeholders from academia, alcohol and other drug services, children and family services, child mental health experts and with parents with lived experience of problematic substance use and other co-existing issues. A comprehensive literature review was undertaken into the effects of parental substance use on Australian children and the intersection with other societal issues.

The PERCS Conversation Guide has been developed by Emerging Minds from Let's Talk, an evidence-based intervention with parents with mental health issues, as a way of thinking about their relationships with their children.

How was evidence used to inform the courses?

The evidence used in these courses has come from recent government policy on working with parents who are affected by problematic substance use, as well as other co-existing issues. It examines contemporary evidence regarding the effects of these issues on infants and children. The courses have also been informed by the lived experience of parents who have had experience in adult-focused services and who recognise the importance on practitioners asking child-aware questions.

Delivery partners:



The National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health under the National Support for Child and Youth Mental Health Program

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The Impact of Parental Substance Use on the Child

What is this course about?

The Impact of Parental Substance Use on the Child provides learners with an introduction to the impact that parental use of alcohol and other drugs has on children. It provides a definition of parental substance use, explores the impacts of substance use with other co-existing issues and highlights the impact that it can have on the child's relationships, physical health, and social and emotional wellbeing.

Learning outcomes

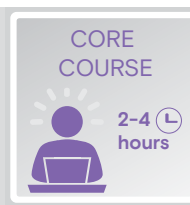
Practitioners who complete this course will begin to gain an:

- understanding of the nature and prevalence of alcohol and other drug use in Australia
- understanding of some of the risks to children's social and emotional wellbeing associated with parental substance use
- understanding of parental substance use that enables child-focused approaches
- understanding of the importance of identifying and responding to issues of parental substance use in ways that prevent immediate and long-term consequences for children's social and emotional wellbeing.

How long does this course take to complete?

This course will take approximately one hour to complete, and includes readings, videos and reflective activities. It is designed to be undertaken individually but can also be used as a prompt for conversations between colleagues.

*The language used in this suite of resources aims to be strength-based and to avoid further stigmatising an already highly stigmatised population. Therefore, the resources will refer to 'substance use' as a broad descriptor of substance misuse, harmful or problematic use of substances, or dependence or addiction to substances.



Parental Substance Use and Child-Aware Practice

What is this course about?

Parental Substance Use and Child-Aware Practice provides practitioners with a conversation guide to assist their work with parents who are affected by problematic substance use and other co-existing issues. This recognises the importance of practitioners focusing on the safety and social and emotional wellbeing of children in families where these issues are occurring.

Learning outcomes

This course will enable practitioners to support parents to:

- consider the impacts of substance use on their children
- lessen these impacts in order to support their children's safety and social and emotional wellbeing
- be curious about the social and emotional wellbeing of their children by using the PERCS Conversation Guide and parent engagement principles
- understand trauma and trauma-informed practice.

This course will also help practitioners to be mindful of conducting these conversations without reinforcing stigma in relation to engaging mothers and fathers affected by substance use or jeopardising parents' engagement with services.

How long does this course take to complete?

It is estimated that the course will take two-three hours to complete, including watching the videos and completing reflection activities and assessments.

Visit the courses at:
emergingminds.com.au/training

Delivery partners:



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