

Emerging Minds.

Emerging Minds 'COPMI' Workshop Resource list

Jess' key messages (from workshop):

Children actually exist

They can be a source of information for the clinician about what goes on at home on a day-to-day basis. Asking about daily activities like the morning and evening routines, who makes breakfast, lunch and dinner, who cleans and shops and cooks, who is in the home, who visits. These questions can help a clinician better understand what is going on in the home and understand the functioning of the parent. Importantly, these types of conversations can also help see how/where a child can be supported.

What would be helpful when talking to children?

Include them in appointments when possible.

Information needs to be age appropriate and the child needs to be seen and treated as a valued member of the team and a person needing support, in their own right.

It can be hard to talk to children, but if they are not included then they make up their own explanations. They carry with them lots of invisible worry and concern. Much more driven by unspoken fears. It is good to help them and their parent develop a shared understanding of what is going on.

Childhood matters

Children living with parental adversity may be missing out on normal kid friendships. They might miss out on having a parent who shows up when needed. Understand that children should learn stuff over time and it's ok to make mistakes.

For the parent, the child can play an important role in harnessing the parent's motivation to engage in recovery oriented activities. It is important to distinguish between the child taking responsibility for the parent's recovery and the use of shared activities with the child as reasons to engage in helpful activities like going out, playing with their child, etc.

Two puzzles in the same box

I'd like to share this metaphor with you as it's how I have tried to make sense of my journey as a child in trying to fit together my role as a child and then my experiences of having to take on adult responsibilities.

What got missed because of having other responsibilities?

For children living with parental adversity, they may be missing out on being carefree, childhood pursuits, education (they may be in the classroom but not present, distracted by concern and worry for the parent), always feeling a sense of background worry, not being able to relax in recovery periods because of the knowledge that things will become hard again, always overthinking things, things never go back to normal and complete relaxation is never part of family life.

Parentification

Children may take on a parenting role in hard times (being in charge of things like keeping track of appointments, filling scripts and getting medication when parent can't, etc) and then need to renegotiate that during times of wellness. The child and parent are negotiating this with no roadmap or support to do so.

Parental mental illness and child-aware practice online course

This course has been designed for practitioners working in adult services with parent-clients experiencing mental illness: <https://bit.ly/3Bxh4oE>

This is one of Emerging Minds' free online courses, register here: <https://bit.ly/3fqazu6>

Children's rights and the five practice shifts support practitioners partnering with children in conversations about the important aspects of their lives, and the decisions that affect them: <https://bit.ly/4eucide>

Video of Mel Goodyear talking about tips from her research re how to work with parents (shown in workshop): <https://bit.ly/3yB6UkX>

There are studies that have identified resilience factors that support children to cope with stress or difficulties that they may experience when a parent has a mental illness. It can be useful to discuss these with parents to assist them to identify where their children may need extra support.

The resilience factors for children include:

- The parent is receiving support for their mental illness.
- The child understands their parent's mental illness.
- The child can communicate with their parents about their mental illness.
- The child knows they are not to blame or responsible for their parent's mental illness.
- The child has access to other supportive adults.
- The child participates in a range of activities outside of the home.
- The child has close friends.
- The child pursues their own interests.

- The child has a sense of hope about the future.

Source: <https://bit.ly/3fUU1cT> (this is one of Emerging Minds' free online courses, register here: <https://bit.ly/3fqazu6>)

This practice paper outlines ways in which practitioners can support **healing and recovery in families** affected by parental mental illness. In particular, it encourages practitioners to:

- understand that recovery occurs in a family context
- focus on strengthening parent-child relationships
- support families to identify what recovery means for them
- acknowledge and build on family strengths, while recognising vulnerabilities
- assist family members to better understand, and communicate about, mental illness; and,
- link families into their communities and other resources.

Source: <https://bit.ly/349rIBM>

Tipsheets for parents: talking about mental illness with your child

- With babies <https://bit.ly/3vtF8ox>
- With toddlers <https://bit.ly/3fsYu7F>
- With primary school aged kids <https://bit.ly/3utdlxy>
- With teenagers <https://bit.ly/3fsUeVH>

This article shares how a **double-storied approach** can help you to focus on the stories of both adversity and resilience that parents bring with them. <https://bit.ly/3wMKmBg>

The **PERCS Conversation Guide** is a psychosocial discussion tool for professionals working with parents. It supports collaborative,

respectful conversations around the impact of parental and family adversities on children's daily lives: <https://bit.ly/3uyw727>

This **care plan** can be completed with information to be used to help care for a child should a parent or carer become unavailable to care for them themselves: <https://bit.ly/2QZG7O5>

Baby version of the **care plan** can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3yGy8qe>

Version for young people: <https://bit.ly/3Tw43WH>

The **Keeping in Touch With Your Children (KIT) toolkit** is for use in adult-only residential and inpatient services. It contains resources which provide practical ways for promoting parent-child connectedness during periods of separation. <https://bit.ly/425yVyy>

Structural competency aims to understand how social structures impact health, and bridges research on social determinants of health with clinical intervention.

This article gives an academic rationale: <http://bit.ly/40qPISy>

And this article offers a process you may experiment with: <http://bit.ly/3DqurJj>

The concept of family resilience refers to the capacity of the family as a functional system in overcoming significant life challenges. The article Family Resilience: A Dynamic Systemic Framework presents an overview of the concept of family resilience: <https://bit.ly/3uyxkGH>

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The **PERCS Conversation Guide** is a psychosocial discussion tool for professionals working with parents. It supports collaborative, respectful conversations around the impact of parental and family adversities, such as mental and physical health issues, substance use issues, and family and domestic violence on children's daily lives.

The guide provides example questions to help you explore five important domains in a child's life. It is designed to help you to recognise parents' strengths and hopes for their family, and opportunities to support and improve children's mental and physical health, resilience and wellbeing.

There are four broad stages to the guide:

1 What is the entry point?



Look for opportunities, or 'entry points' to engage the parent in conversations about their child. Potential entry points include:

- The parent presents with an issue or circumstances that might impact on the child.
- The parent expresses concerns about the child's behaviour or circumstances.
- The professional explores the child's mental health and wellbeing through:
 - open enquiry
 - concerns around parental, family, or social adversity.

2 What are you curious about?



Consider the five PERCS domains:

- P** Parent-child relationships
- E** Emotions and behaviours
- R** Routines
- C** Communication and meaning-making
- S** Support networks

This guide contains example questions to assist professionals in their conversations with parents.

3 Conversation with the parent



Conduct a collaborative and respectful conversation with the parent to arrive at shared understandings and decisions, using the six principles of parent engagement:

- Child-aware and parent-sensitive
- Curiosity
- Collaboration
- Strengths and hopes
- Context
- Respect

These principles will support the development of the trusting therapeutic relationship.






4 Provide support



Provide support to parents to lessen the impacts of adversity on their children:

- Use a strengths-based approach to support a positive parent-child relationship and improved social and emotional wellbeing for children.
- Provide resources to parents regarding child development and parenting practices.
- Practice integrated care and make warm referrals to other community supports or specialist services.
- Continue to work with the parent around their initial presenting issue.

This guide provides a pathway and example questions for exploring the five domains of a child's life.

P	 <h3>Parent-child relationship</h3> <p>A safe, secure, responsive and nurturing relationship between a child and their parent/caregiver is key to building resilience.</p>	Professional's role <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify if/how parents feel/ stay connected to their child in the face of challenges.• Promote parents' confidence and a positive parent-child relationship (warmth, acceptance, stability).	ASK Example question <p>What's it like being a parent to (child's name?)</p>
E	 <h3>Emotions and behaviours</h3> <p>Children need to feel loved, safe and confident that their emotions will be listened to and responded to in a nurturing way.</p>	Professional's role <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help parents to understand and be responsive to their child's emotions and behaviours.• Help to develop a shared language around emotions.	ASK Example question <p>Has your child or family lived through a traumatic event or period of time?</p>
R	 <h3>Routines</h3> <p>Routines and rituals provide children with a stable base, especially in times of stress.</p>	Professional's role <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage parents to create routines and predictability in their children's lives.	ASK Example question <p>Are you able to make time to read or play games with (child's name)?</p>
C	 <h3>Communication and meaning-making</h3> <p>Through respectful and effective communication, children can express emotions, make meaning from experiences of adversity, and develop their resilience.</p>	Professional's role <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support parents in understanding the impact of adult issues on their child.• Guide parents in helping their children make sense of life events through questions and conversation.	ASK Example question <p>Is (child's name) able to share their thoughts and feelings with you?</p>
S	 <h3>Support networks</h3> <p>Safe and supportive networks outside the family can be key to a child's social and emotional wellbeing.</p>	Professional's role <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help parents to identify and develop a consistent, positive support network for their child outside of their immediate family.	ASK Example question <p>Who do you think would notice if (child's name) was struggling?</p>