

Assessment and Care Planning: What is important?

There is evidence to support the link that good assessments lead to good outcomes for children and young people. (Social work assessment of children in need: what do we know? Department for Education 2011ⁱ)

Child centred. Keeping the child or young person 'in view' is fundamental to good assessment practice. Good practice with children and young people includes taking time to build relationships, listening to, respecting them and representing the child's voice in assessments. Research continues to indicate that there are difficulties for many workers in this area. A number of factors contribute to this including time constraints, insufficient skill or confidence and when children are seen, they do not always feel they can be open.

A conceptual framework. The Looking After Children Framework requires that each child's needs are individually assessed. It provides a 'scaffold' for practice and its use needs to be supported by appropriate practice, knowledge and tools.

Measures and scales. Good assessment will use a range of methods, other than just interviewing. Validated questionnaires and scales can help inform and support the use of clinical judgements. The report comments 'it is not an option simply to ignore the various instruments available. Judicious use of tools and measures can contribute to improved assessments, and inform and support the exercise of professional judgment'

Knowledge of child development is vital for good assessments

Reflective practice and supervision The report emphasises the importance of reflective thinking by practitioners and the need for them to think analytically, critically and reflectively about all the information available to them. Building reflection into practice allows for regular reviews of assessments and intervention plans. Good access to reflective supervision also helps to review their understanding of particular situations. The experience of reflective supervision encourages reflective practice with children and young people helping them to develop their understanding of their experiences and circumstances.

General Self Esteem Scale. A higher score indicates more positive self esteem. Percentile scores included

General Self Esteem 50th (11) 75th (12)

25 For each of the following statements, choose the answer that best describes how you feel.

26 ... I have a lot to be proud of.

27 ... I can do things as well as most people.

28 ... I am as good as most other people.

29 ... Other people think I am a good person.

30 ... When I do something, I do well.

31 ... A lot of things about me are good.

1 Sometimes

1 Sometimes

1 Sometimes

2 Most of the time / Always

2 Most of the time / Always

2 Most of the time / Always

General Self Esteem 50th (11) 75th (12) totals

9 of 12 : 75.00%

Ontario, Canada, Practice Model

Viewpoint has been introduced into Ontario to support the Assessment and Action Record process for children in out of home care. In preparation for Plan of Care meetings young people complete Viewpoint questionnaires which include standard measures for each of the dimensions of the AAR. Young people are immediately central to the assessment process. Child Welfare Workers have immediate access through Viewpoint Analysis to individual reports on measures and use these and other responses to help young people reflect and develop more understanding of their circumstances and needs. Caregivers also complete Viewpoint questionnaires which incorporate measures such as Strengths and Difficulties and which are available as scored reports to child welfare workers. Child Welfare Workers have the opportunity to think reflectively about information and to review the conclusions of assessments in supervision.

ⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-work-assessment-of-children-in-need-what-do-we-know-messages-from-research> A review of research over the past 10 years carried out by University of Bristol to get a better understanding of the links between the quality of assessments and outcomes for children