

# CHILD ABUSE PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

FEEDBACK FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND



2162



Barnardos



C O N T E N T S

1. Introduction/Range of Projects' work
2. Training
3. Care for clients/practice
4. Care for staff
5. Agency role/function
6. Feedback from Question 4

**BARNARDO'S NCRC**  
**THIS ITEM MUST BE RETURNED**  
**BEFORE THE DATE STAMPED BELOW**  
**TO RENEW TEL: 4549699**

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FEEDBACK FROM QUESTIONNAIRE ON CHILD ABUSE PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT

WITHIN BARNARDOS REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

From reading the questionnaires - certain issues and areas were identified and so the feedback is outlined under the following headings

1. Training
2. Care for clients/practice
3. Care for staff
4. Agency role/function

There was a 100% response in completing and returning the questionnaire in the Republic of Ireland.

Nationally there was an 80% response. (?)

All projects have experienced some level of involvement and awareness of child abuse in their work. Many of the issues are similar and recurring throughout the projects. However, some issues and dilemmas arise out of the way in which we work i.e. direct work, indirect work, community based work and social work, procedure and codes of practice in relation to child abuse should reflect the range of the work.

RANGE OF SERVICES

Day Care

Pre-school services for the children of travellers.

Toy Libraries

After school groups

Neighbourhood youth programmes

Summer Playschemes

Day fostering

Services for single parents

Parents groups/adult education

Community work/development

Adoption service

Advisory service to parents and others setting up and running community based services for children/young people/families

National advisory service to those setting up and running day nurseries and creches

Courses, workshops and seminars on child related issues.

## TRAINING

Several projects referred directly to the need for training and highlighted several areas specifically.

### A. Identification of child abuse -

The questions posed under this heading are:-

- (i) What constitutes a real concern?
- (ii) Making a judgement of when action is really necessary.
- (iii) Abuse covers a wide range of concerns e.g. physical, sexual and emotional abuse. There is a need to understand the different types of abuse.
- (iv) Monitoring and recording.

### B. Legislation - being aware of up to date legislation in this area.

C. Working with adults who have been abused as children/teenagers. Dealing with disclosure in individual and group settings (i.e. groups not designed for abuse disclosure.)

D. Skills training in educating volunteers and others running groups, in the area of child abuse.  
Inclusion of child abuse in courses for parents.

E. Research and practice - being aware of relevant research and the provision of training on practice issues in the area of child abuse.

F. Skills development in working with abused children.

G. Team building - a strong team is a relevant factor in supporting workers through child abuse.

## IMPLICATIONS

There is a need to prioritise the training needs within and across projects.

Some training could also be undertaken with organisations involved in similar work.

Resources for training.

Much expertise and experience exists within Barnardos in terms of identification of child abuse, awareness of child abuse, communication and counselling skill, skills in relation to working with families where there is a concern, liaising with other agencies. Potentially some of these skills could be shared and used as a resource. Some thought would need to be given as to whether and how these resources could be tapped.

## PRACTICE/CARE FOR CLIENTS

### MAIN ISSUES

1. Who is the primary client? There can be conflict between parent's and child's rights.
2. Involvement in child abuse work can effect relationships/partnerships with parents.
3. There are difficulties inherent in doing community work and being overtly involved in child abuse work.
4. The loss of confidentiality and trust between parents and staff.
5. Incidents of child abuse tend to become a priority within the project - consequently other work may be neglected.
6. Child abuse work takes a considerable amount of time in terms of monitoring, recording, making contacts, meetings/case conferences, follow-up - this has implications for resources.
7. It is important to understand the norms of the family/community/environment in which we work.
8. Supervision of staff undertaking child abuse work so that practice can be challenged, supported and developed.
9. Lack of parenting skills - provision of, or access to relevant courses for parents.
10. Court appearances.
11. Poverty.
12. Difficulty in "letting go" - where a family is perceived to need on-going support after they leave a Barnardo service - conversely it is also difficult to identify that there is no longer a concern.
13. Profile of a project can be affected by involvement in child abuse work.
14. Difficulty in engaging - mistrust - fear that their child may be taken into care.
15. Balancing procedure and good practice.
16. Prevention.

## CARE FOR STAFF

Stress for staff is a major issue in child abuse work - Feelings such as helplessness, powerlessness, frustration, anger, responsibility, anxiety were reflected throughout the questionnaire. Support for staff both individually and at team level is a significant factor. Time/time out is sometimes needed by staff to work through the stress. The emotional input is quite significant and staff's personal resources are stretched.

A strong team can have a significant positive effect on staff's ability to deal with child abuse.

Time is required to work through feelings especially around sexual abuse.

Clarity of role - staff need to be clear about their role in relation to their work with children and families.

## IMPLICATIONS

Management acknowledgement of the stress factor for staff.

Resource implications around time factor and team building.

Support by the agency.

AGENCY ROLE AND FUNCTION

1. Barnardos policy and procedure should reflect the climate in which we work.
2. Barnardos own guidelines are important in deciding a code of practice in relation to child abuse.
3. Barnardos should recognise that different codes of practice apply when working directly with children at risk and when working in a supportive and advisory capacity with families.
4. Roles for workers within the agency need to be clarified vis a vis roles of workers in other agencies - especially community care.
5. There should be easy access to line management - liasing within Barnardos.
6. Liasing and sharing with other agencies/community care. Follow up with other agencies in relation to child abuse.

*Grainne Burke*

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GRAINNE BURKE  
PROJECT LEADER

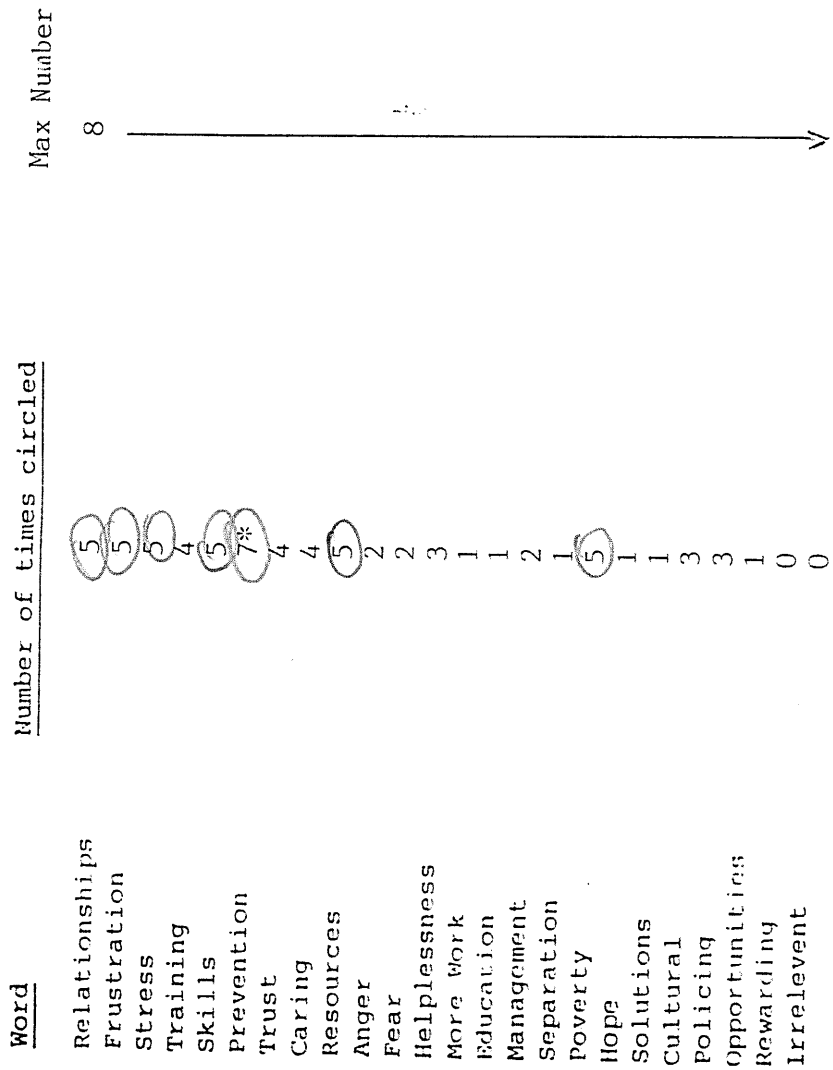
2nd April, 1990

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ANALYSIS OF QUESTION 4

Q. Ring 10 words which best describes your involvement with child abuse work?

N = 98



(NB Some projects circled more than 10 words, others less than 10 words)