

## **Brief practice examples: Workforce development**

### **Drama-based learning in North Somerset**

North Somerset held a safeguarding conference, looking to highlight the impact of parental mental health on children and young people. A local theatre group, Eyewitness Theatre Company, facilitated the day.

Sixty delegates from a variety of agencies attended, including schools, adult mental health services, adults' and children's social care, youth offending teams, solicitors, health services and the voluntary sector.

The theatre company performed vignettes showing a variety of scenarios, focusing on different aspects of parental mental illness, and the impact on children. Delegates found the vignettes powerful and moving, and having the scenes acted out added a new aspect to people's learning. The theatre company led group activities following each drama, asking delegates to reflect on what they had seen. The scenarios helped delegates to identify the practice issues present, and to explore how different organisations could work together more effectively to address them.

Feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive, and to try to ensure what was learnt made an ongoing difference, delegates were asked to feedback four months after the event, and all said they were able to put into practice learning from the event.

"The course really brought situations to life as you would have to deal with them at work."

"Enjoyable, useful, interactive form of learning with professionals from other agencies."

"Highlighted my awareness of the need to ensure communication between agencies."

*Delegate feedback*

### **Meriden training – Birmingham**

The Meriden Family Work Programme [\[link?\]](#), based in Birmingham, has been promoting family-sensitive mental health services since 1998. The Birmingham project team commissioned Meriden to run nine sessions of training for adult mental health and children's social care staff, looking at the practical applicability of whole-family approaches in mental health. Managers had a separate training session, to encourage their buy-in to the new ways of working. The Meriden sessions built on Think Family training for 150 duty and assessment workers in children's social care,

and the embedding of Think Family messages in children's and adults' safeguarding training.

### **Liverpool lunchtime learning sessions**

The team in Liverpool decided to raise awareness of the Think Family approach by holding 'lunchtime learning' sessions for staff from a range of agencies. The sessions were held during lunchtime at eight different locations across the city.

The aim of the sessions was to introduce staff to the 'Think child, think parent, think family' guide, and how it was going to be implemented locally. The sessions were delivered to multi-agency staff groups, meaning that they were also an opportunity for staff to meet and network.

Nine sessions were attended by a total of 252 staff from agencies including:

- the local authority
- NHS Foundation Trust
- mental health trust
- community and voluntary sector
- PCT.

*"I enjoyed the multi-disciplinary approach of the event, promoting working across boundaries."*  
(Lunchtime learning participant)

A survey sent out to participants following the sessions showed that four in five (82%) thought that attending the session had increased their understanding of Think Family concepts and messages.