**Key questions for developing effective care plans**

**Methods**

Suitable for self–directed learning or reflection with a colleague or supervisor. You will need access to a recent care plan.

**Learning Outcome**

To review how a recent care plan addresses a child’s needs.

**Time Required**

30 minutes review and 30 minutes reflection with a colleague or supervisor.

**Process**

Review a recent case and care plan and assess the extent to which the following areas have been addressed:

* How have adverse circumstances undermined the child’s sense of self and what will be done to rebuild this for the child?
* How has the child been affected by past relationships?
* What steps will be taken to preserve and sustain positive relationships or to replace or improve less positive ones so that the child can be assured of good-quality relationships that will endure into adulthood?
* How are the parental problems that led to the child becoming looked after being addressed?
* How is the child’s connection to their birth family – parents, siblings and other family members – being nurtured and preserved?

**Key questions for including the child’s perspective in care plans**

**Methods**

Suitable for self–directed learning or reflection with a colleague or supervisor. You will need access to a recent care plan.

**Learning Outcome**

To review how a child’s perspective is included in their care plan.

**Time Required**

30 minutes review and 30 minutes reflection with a colleague or supervisor.

**Process**

Review a recent case and care plan and assess the extent to which the following areas have been addressed:

* Who is having ongoing conversations with the child to ascertain their wishes and feelings?
* How is the meaning of the child’s behaviour being understood?
* Who is trying to imagine how the world looks from the child’s perspective?
* How is the child’s perspective being included in the care plan?

**Key questions for monitoring care plans**

**Methods**

Suitable for self–directed learning or reflection with a colleague or supervisor. You will need access to a recent care plan.

**Learning Outcome**

To review how care plans are monitored.

**Time Required**

30 minutes review and 30 minutes reflection with a colleague or supervisor.

**Process**

Review a recent case and care plan and assess the extent to which the following areas have been addressed:

* To what extent does the care plan provide sufficient evidence and analysis of the child’s situation?
* What assessments/tools have been used to inform the plan?
* How effectively has the child’s perspective been included in the care plan?
* How will the plan help the child to develop and maintain safe and secure relationships?
* How does the plan aim to support the child’s connection to their birth family?
* How can social workers be supported to establish positive relationships with children and their birth families?

**Case study – Rosie**

**Methods**

Suitable for a small group discussion. Individuals will need a copy of the case study for Rosie and the handout of the framework for thinking summary.

**Learning Outcome**

To practice using the need, outcome and plan “framework for thinking”.

**Time Required**

30 minutes for discussion plus 15 minutes for feedback

**Process**

Give each group a hand-out of the case study for Rosie and the framework for thinking summary and ask each group to appoint someone to feedback their ideas.

Ask the group to read the case study and the framework for thinking summary and answer the following questions.

1. How would you describe Rosie’s needs:
* in universal terms?
* in service terms?
* in terms of need for assessment?
1. What SMART outcomes could you consider for each of these needs?
2. In order to achieve these outcomes, which professional from the team around the child is likely to be most effective in working with Rosie and her family?

**A framework for thinking summary**

A simple ‘framework for thinking’ based on the linked concepts of **need, outcome and plan** found in many assessment templates can help everyone involved in the child’s life work together to formulate, deliver and review plans that start with needs and have a clear focus on desired outcomes.

The practical needs-led and outcome-focused [Analytical Framework for Thinking](http://www.ryantunnardbrown.com/our-approach/analytical-framework/) builds on the Matching Needs and Services planning tool (designed originally by the Dartington Social Research Unit). The framework has been developed over 14 years and implemented in practice across various English and Welsh local authorities.

*Need*

The framework helps practitioners to use the concept of **need** in a very particular way. Here the Rosie case study is used to show how the framework encourages practitioners to move away from describing need:

* in universal terms – for example: ‘Rosie needs to be safe’, or
* in service terms – for example: ‘Rosie needs family therapy’, or
* in terms of need for assessment – for example: ‘Rosie needs a psychiatric assessment.’

Instead, needs are described in more specific terms, as in:

* ‘Rosie needs well-managed contact with her mother.’
* ‘Rosie needs Lena (grandmother) and Andrea (foster carer) to understand why contact is important.’

This precision in describing need increases the chances of developing interventions that will address the specific needs of each child and relevant family members.

*Outcomes*

Desired outcomes should conform to the SMART standard – that is they need to be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**greed (with families), **R**ealistic and **T**imed (SMART concept Drucker 1954; applied to social work assessment in Brown et al, 2012). They must also relate directly to decisions about the stages of work needed for addressing the particular needs identified. For example:

* ‘Andrea reports that she is less worried about the negative impact contact with her mother might have on Rosie’s behaviour.’
* ‘Lena has explained to the social worker why it is important for Rosie to establish a positive relationship with her mother and reports she is more positive about contact.’

*Plans*

Only when there is clarity about need and desired outcomes is it possible to spell out the work that is most likely to address those needs and achieve the outcomes.

At this stage, decisions can be made about which professional from the team around the child is likely to be most effective in working with this particular child and family. Desired outcomes set out in the plan for Rosie and her family might include:

* ‘The supervising social worker will work with Andrea to help her understand the connections between Rosie’s behaviour and her need to see her mother.’
* ‘The social worker will meet with Lena to talk about the importance of identity for children who are not living with their birth families.’