

Building trauma-informed responses for sexual and reproductive health.

A Community of Practice with teams supporting parents who have experienced recurrent care proceedings.



Supporting parents who have experienced recurrent care proceedings: Some things parents would like professionals to understand

The words on this leaflet are drawn from conversations and survey responses from 23 parents. Some are direct quotes, some bring similar messages together into one statement. Every parent's experiences are unique and these words don't represent everyone, but they do offer some important shared messages from parents.

We miss our children every day

No matter what happens they are still our children and we feel the heartache of losing them into care every day.

We can feel like we've failed as a parent. Every day we see other children and happy families, longing for that to be us.

We just want to hold our babies - being told to 'get over it' or 'it's in the past' won't help us to move forward.

Keep trying to help others and understand us. We miss our children and some days are worse than others but knowing we have support can make it an OK day.

Our experience of care proceedings is traumatic

It's an extremely difficult process for parents to go through. It's hard to talk about and it doesn't really get any easier. For some of us our mental health has been affected. Some of us can't get past it at all.

We need time to get our heads around what is happening or going to happen.

We need you to be understanding. But don't say 'I know how you feel' because you don't.

Care proceedings are extremely traumatic. We can feel written off by services. It will take time to trust professionals again.

For many parents the removal of their children feels wrongful

For mothers that went through domestic violence, it's not their fault. Every parent should be supported through difficulties, not criticised or judged.

I have been punished with permanent separation from my children because I did not see how unhealthy my relationship was. I have a clear insight now, however feel I will be given no opportunity to ever parent again... it is more than heart-breaking to live with.

Listen to my voice and believe my account of things and don't judge. I felt extremely disbelieved during assessment with professionals and this led them to negative, untrue, opinions of me.

What have practitioners done that's made a positive difference?

Listening

- > They listened to me and didn't judge me.
- > I got to speak and go over everything that mattered that I wanted to happen.
- > I found someone who actually listened to me, didn't judge me or blame me for past choices.
- > Because I was listened to and encouraged, I felt like I had a friend instead of just a professional.
- > I was supported in all my appointments and I was never judged for going through what I did.
- > Be truthful, upfront and straightforward. Speak on my level and be clear in what you're saying.
- > Be patient and courteous. Ask how we'd like to communicate (meeting up, texts, calls, emails etc).

Support with goals and hopes for the future

- > We want hope that we can parent without being scared of having another child removed from our care.
- > Just being around and trying to show me there was more to life than the kids.
- > They helped me talk about my goals and hopes for the future. They supported me to get into college.
- > I was supported in doing things that either helped me reach goals there and then and help me reach future goals. And it wasn't just to do with parenting, it was my life in general.

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The statements on this leaflet are from 18 parents' responses to an online survey and five parents participation in an online workshop.
Thank you to all who shared their thoughts and experiences with us.

Research in Practice is part of The Dartington Hall Trust, a registered charity.