

Reframing: building a shared understanding

Reframing is our shorthand for the **shared frame of reference for thinking about young children's needs that we will build right across our workforce.**

This common understanding and language – and the shared experience of acquiring it - will act as the foundation for systems transformation across Blackpool.

The workforce will share a vision of early child development and have ways of talking to parents and carers about it in a consistent way that is easily understood.

Building this shared frame of reference will help deliver cultural change in the way we all work together. We recognise that structural and process-based changes can only do so much to deliver systems transformation. We also need cultural change in the way we work together and the way we work with the community right across the workforce. *Re-framing* aims to deliver that cultural change.

Our proposals build on the successful work of the Alberta Wellness Initiative in Canada where they have taken this approach to building the ability of the workforce and community to tackle entrenched social problems since 2007. We were also inspired by the Parent Nurturing Programme in Wales. They successfully introduced common language among childcare professionals. Evidence suggests this has been successful in supporting parents' understanding of core concepts around early child development.

Re-framing will involve bringing together selected professionals across all relevant sectors, volunteers and parents at regular events to learn about early child development and acquire the tools to talk about children's development and needs in a way that is easily understood and translated into everyday life. Critically, this will enable professionals to communicate in a consistent and meaningful way with Blackpool's families.

Learning together helps to build relationships and trust and stimulates mutual understanding and new ways of working together. As well as regular residential training, task groups will be formed to work on specific challenges or in particular areas to share and apply their learning.

Background to the Alberta Wellness Initiative

The Alberta Wellness Initiative was created by the Norlien Foundation in 2007. In June this year representatives from the Alberta Initiative (including practitioners) will be visiting Blackpool to share their learning and speak with practitioners. They have also invited representatives from Blackpool BS to attend their annual symposium in Calgary in October to deepen our knowledge of what we could learn and adapt from their experience.

The Alberta Initiative brings key stakeholders together to help inform policy and practice in Alberta to create a common framework of understanding. Based on a framework of epigenetics and developmental and behavioural neurosciences, the Initiative creates opportunities to better understand and apply scientific knowledge to factors influencing child development and its relationship to addiction and other mental health outcomes.

Its activities revolve around three core concepts:

- There is a connection between early brain development and later adult health outcomes, such as addiction.

- Addiction is more than drugs, alcohol and gambling. It can also include food, sex, work, and other human behaviours.
- Brains can change.

The Initiative hosts symposia that bring leading researchers from across North America together with Alberta researchers, policy makers, and health care professionals to facilitate knowledge translation across these communities. AlbertaFamilyWellness.org offers web-based tools and resources to help experts and lay readers alike share knowledge and make well-informed decisions in their work and daily lives.

The US-based FrameWorks Institute work with the Alberta Initiative to establish a common language across the science, policy and practice communities for the benefit of Alberta families. FrameWorks run 'Study Circles' with a diverse range of stakeholders and, through this process, participants develop fluency in a common language to move beyond their traditional silos to collaborate on sustainable solutions.

Our approach

In Blackpool we would:

- **Identify the core concepts** around which all activities would revolve. These are likely to be similar, but not the same as, the Albertan core concepts.
- **Use symposia events to bring the latest evidence on tackling our challenges to Blackpool**, maintaining our ability to continuously improve and develop (links to the Blackpool Centre for Early Child Development)
- **Use symposia and task groups (building on the idea of Study Circles) to bring together professionals, volunteers and parents** to learn together and build shared experiences, understanding and language for talking about children's needs
- Collaborate with the FrameWorks Institute to **adapt existing knowledge about how best to communicate about early child development in the UK for Blackpool** and then develop common language and tools for talking about children's needs appropriate to Blackpool. NSPCC has been working very successfully with FrameWorks since 2011.

The NSPCC has been working with the FrameWorks Institute since 2011 to build our understanding of how the British experts and the public think about child abuse, neglect and child development. We have identified ways of communicating about these issues which are more likely to improve understanding and generate support for interventions that can help. We will bring this knowledge to bear when designing the workforce learning programme for Blackpool.

To find out more here is a good summary from the Frameworks Institute.

<http://frameworksinstitute.org/pubs/mtg/childmaltreatment/>