

# Helping Mothers Move Forward UK



## Type of intervention



*Book/Guide*

## Target group/s, level/s of prevention and sub-group/s:

**Communities  
/ Families**

Tertiary prevention

Young People (12-17 Years), Adults (21 Years +) | Female | Book/Guide | English

## Target population

This book is aimed for use by professionals who are working with 'principally but not exclusively' mothers of children who have been sexually abused. This includes safe carers also.

## Mode and context of delivery

Helping Mothers Move Forward is a 160 page book. "The framework described in Helping Mothers Move Forward aims to assess and offer therapy and support to mothers of children who have been sexually abused and to help them to reach a position where: they can cope with the reality of what has happened to her child and their family; they can support her child to deal with the aftermath of sexual abuse and they can become protective carers for the future. Relapse prevention planning is also part of the programme." Delivery of the framework described in Helping Mothers Move Forward could be on a 1:1 or small group basis. The educational framework described in the book can be broken down to five broad sections, which include a number of exercises/worksheets for each session broadly based on cognitive-behavioural principles:

- setting the scene
- understanding the carer's position and creating a supportive environment
- providing a framework for the carer to understand sexual abuse
- helping the carer to consider these issues in relation to their own situation
- addressing the future, including consideration of issues around safe care, especially if a family wants to consider reunification

## **Level/Nature of staff expertise required (e.g. professional background)**

Professionals involved in child protection, including those working in nursing, teaching, counselling, social work and therapeutic settings.

## **Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)**

The book is 160 pages long. The frequency of which professionals should engage with the mother/caregiver is not specified, however one might estimate weekly sessions of 1 – 1.5 hours of approximately 30 – 45 sessions. The pace at which the exercises are worked through may depend on individual factors including how quickly a user can grasp the various concepts and environmental factors for example how much time and other resources are available for the length of engagement with treatment. Professionals can choose which exercises are suitable for the carer they are working with.

## **Description of book**

The author, Lynda Regan, is a social worker and now the Manager of a Children's Service in Salford, UK.

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“Each section has some exercises that should be undertaken in all assessments, regardless of the carer's starting position, as they help to inform their thinking and provide them with useful information and a way of making some sense of what has happened. There are also additional exercises included for carers who are perhaps stuck on particular issues. Professionals can choose which exercises are suitable for the carer they are working with. Throughout, the professional is offered direct help and guidance on:

- Helping carers to work through the stages of a reaction to traumatic news, and avoid judging them.
- Providing therapeutic support to help them make some sense of the turmoil they experience and learn how to 'move forward'.
- Showing a belief in the potential of the carer's capacity to grasp the issues, to move through the stages of shock and ultimately, to prioritise the child's needs.
- Helping carers reach the position of support for their child that is crucial to their recovery process.
- Above all, engaging sensitively with the carer from the outset, in ways that reduce the risk of alienation and potential for change.
- But also, evidencing conclusions reached when the work with the carer is unsuccessful.
- Planning for relapse and involving the wider family and community networks, who are most likely both to spot the early signs of lapse, and provide the most day-to-day support.
- Giving carers time to come to terms with what has happened and their future intentions for themselves and the child in their care before any assessment is made on 'ability to protect'.

- Unlocking access to reliable sources of additional information, often by reference to Martin Calder's *Mothers of Sexually Abused Children* (RHP 2001) as the primary source.”

List of contents:

- “Introduction: Setting the scene, Understanding impacts, Reactions, The impact of sharing personal information, Identifying a framework for the assessment, A working agreement.
- Techniques to promote engagement and participation: understanding the woman's standpoint and creating a supportive environment: Introduction, Naming our fears, Baggage, Acknowledging feelings, Understanding the function of denial in relation to mothers, Support networks (eco map), Family tree (genograms), Encouraging assertiveness, Overcoming resistance, Assessment framework, Acknowledging the woman's strengths, Managing anxiety and stress, Taking care of herself, What happened and when?.
- Defining the issues: providing a framework for the woman to understand about sexual abuse: Introduction, Stereotypes 'Headline News', What knowledge the woman already has, Bodies, What sexual abuse means, Definition of sexual abuse, Caring for children - what things might be safe/unsafe, Understanding perpetrators, Understanding the process of sexual abuse, Understanding grooming strategies, Impacts on children 1, Impacts on children2, What might prevent a non-abusing carer from telling?, Why it is hard for children to tell.
- Making it personal: helping the woman to consider these issues in relation to her own situation: Introduction, Pathway to disclosure, Finding ways to communicate, Impacts on siblings, Revisiting support networks, Making links, Empathy with the child, Body safety skills for children, Measuring change.
- The future: Introduction, Family reunification, Desirable preconditions for family reunification, Understanding the adult relationship, Identifying risks, Changes in family behaviours.
- References and further reading”

## Reviews

"This workbook is to be welcomed, its A4 size photo-copiable worksheets and exercises make it a very good resource for the busy practitioner. A copy should be made available to every children and families social work team."

*Community Care.*

## Publishers

Calder, M. (2001). *Mothers of Sexually Abused Children: A framework for assessment, understanding and support.* Dorset, UK: Russell House Publishing.

Regan, L. (2006). *Helping Mothers Move Forward: A workbook to help provide assessment and support to the safe carers of children who have been sexually abused.* Dorset, UK: Russell House Publishing.

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