



Recovery and Intervention Plan

Map to important information
and research.

Training Information for Pear Tree Staff

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MAP TO IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND RESEARCH.

“If I had more time, I would have written you a shorter note.” Mark Twain.

The above quote explains how having more information should result in communicating more concisely.

Introduction.

Providing care and education to children is a challenge. Looking after children in residential care and education who present safeguarding concerns to other children is perhaps the greatest of challenges.

From the beginning, Pear Tree has strived to be at the forefront of providing a service that was prepared to embrace different ideas and methodologies to ensure the children in our care had the best opportunities to help them become the best they could be. Being a good person is at the top of the agenda, to break the cycle of abuse.

Whilst this area of professional work is often complex, it can also be very simple. As I reflect on my experiences in this area since Pear Tree's formation in 1990, I find I am sending the same message but in many different ways. The Pear Tree journey can be tracked by reading the documents produced throughout its time.

In this document I intend to be as concise as possible and use this opportunity to guide any interested party to the information that I have written over time. It includes contemporary research and importantly to most it is relevant and concise in the areas discussed. As Head of Service, it is my task to find information that is helpful to our organisation and bring these different ideas and perspectives together in a process called 'theory knitting'.

Background.

The children looked after in Pear Tree have all suffered what is politely referred to as adverse childhood experiences. This means their life experiences to date have had a negative impact on their development. As such our aspiration is to give them the opportunity to encounter a positive functioning developmental pathway.

They have, in common, experienced an environment that shares the following qualities.

Inadequate boundaries in general.

Inadequate parental boundaries and a parental inability to protect.

Inadequate sexual boundaries within the family.

A combination of emotional, physical and sexual abuse, sometimes all three.

As a result, they have experienced emotional poverty. Financial poverty brings hardship, emotional poverty and the factors above bring psychological damage.

Whilst the impact of their experiences can vary significantly, the fact they have been removed from home, in many cases experiencing breakdowns of subsequent placements, means they have experienced secondary trauma on top of the initial concerns. It should therefore, be of no surprise that their behaviour reflects their experiences to date. Many children suffer anxiety that can manifest itself in many different ways, often with challenging behaviour. Many are described as having attachment issues when it is actually a desperate need to be attached to someone who is not there, which is the issue. Emotionally confused and attention needy is often a common factor. As they enter adolescence and encounter hormonal influences, again it should not be a surprise that they don't have the skill set or underpinning knowledge to manage them. This is on top of premature sexual experiences where they have been exposed to negative role models, who have at best facilitated an inappropriate imprint of sexual behaviour, as the first time you learn anything impacts on the way you perceive this and is carved into your memory.

This complex situation requires a clear and simple action plan which, in its big picture form, is the following plan.

The big picture plan – Corporate Strategy – As stated in Managing Harmful Sexual Behaviour at Home and at School.

The Recovery and Intervention Plan is at the heart of everything we do and all that we hope to achieve. It can be broken down into three stages.

Intent.

Implementation.

Impact.

It is important to recognise that this process needs to be in sequential order. It is essential to give children time to be comfortable with the stage they are at and have each stage embedded before moving on to the next stage. Consequently, it is necessary to organise lessons and activity plans having regard to this.

As many of our children come from deprived backgrounds it should not be a surprise that they have missed out on the positive functioning developmental pathway. They have been unable to meet developmental stages that are necessary for the brain to grow and have not been encouraged to learn or embrace new positive experiences.

Children who have suffered adverse childhood experiences are fearful of the unknown and resistant to learning. Subsequently they develop all kinds of avoidance strategies, many of which go unrecognised by the support teams around them. To establish a foundation to work on we find it really important to allow children the time to go back and address these issues. In particular those around avoidance strategies and sequential learning, both at home and at school. (Early Years Curriculum Published 19/01/2021 philrioizzi.co.uk)

INTENT.

It is our intention to provide a holistic package of care and education for children placed in our residential homes on a long term basis. This will allow them the opportunity to recover from their adverse childhood experiences, learn from their mistakes and reach their full potential, emotionally, practically and academically.

To achieve this, we use the following methodology.

Environment – We offer a therapeutic environment which is of great importance and is supported by the most up to date research.

These areas are explained in the following documents:

- In Search of Utopia

Values – How teachers, instructors, carers and children live together.

These areas are explained in the following documents:

- In Search of Utopia

Education - Training - Activities. These areas are explained in the following documents:

- In Search of Utopia
- Pear Tree School Prospectus
- Pear Tree School Curriculum
- Personal Holistic Competence Assessments, Assessing Soft Skill and Values

IMPLEMENTATION.

Protect- Children only make progress if they feel really safe and protected from harm. Safe from their past lives, safe from any threat including other children, their community at home or in school or in the broader community. It is often the area of protection that is misunderstood. The 'Pear Tree bubble' is a term often used by critics who feel we strive to keep children in our care, away from the 'normal kids in care' type of environment and opportunities. The Pear Tree programmes bring children and young people into a variety of environments at different stages and in contact with people from all walks of life. The methodology is based on a lifelong learning process and has embraced cognitive diversity.

Over the years we have learned at first hand, the value of an initial intense level of protection which is then reduced over time. Not dissimilar to a vaccine that presents strong protection initially then wains in efficacy over time. The art is to get the process to correlate with the individuals needs at the right time, whilst in a group living situation. Every child is different and some need protecting from harmful behaviours and influences, for longer than others. "This is our first task, caring for our children, if we don't get that right, we don't get anything right. That's how, as a society, we will be judged". - Barack Obama 16/12/2012. After the Sandy-Hook shooting.

Information on how to protect children is set out in the following documents.

- Child Protection policies within Guidance and Good Practice
- Managing Harmful Sexual Behaviour in School and at Home.

Engage - The way in which employed staff interact with the children in our care and offer role model leadership to small groups of children or on a one-to-one basis.

These areas are explained in the following documents:

- Role of Responsible Carer, Guidance and Good Practice
- In Search of Utopia.

Occupy - Providing experiences from which children can learn. These areas are explained in the following documents:

- The Value of Activities
- Pear Tree School Curriculum

Relate - As a result of the above, the development of a therapeutic relationship which then aides effective teaching and learning.

Influence - As a result of all of the above in the correct sequence, there will be a successful therapeutic relationship, the outcome will be that of a positive influence on the child and increased learning.

IMPACT.

Inspire - The need to create an environment where children are excited to be involved in their education and look forward to the next lesson or event. Where they can make a direct connection between the task or activity and their future, both immediate i.e. whilst in school as to what they can do next and their long-term aspirations. (Inspiration leads to aspiration, HM Queen Elizabeth II.)

These areas are explained in the following documents:

- In Search of Utopia
- Pear Tree School Prospectus
- Pear Tree School Curriculum

Motivate - Only if a child is inspired will they be motivated to learn more.

Educate - Only when children want to learn, do they actually make worthwhile progress. "There is no such thing as teaching, only learning. It's the job of the teacher to create an environment where learning can occur". (Monty Roberts, Horse Sense for People.)

These areas are explained in the following documents:

- In Search of Utopia
- Pear Tree School Prospectus
- Pear Tree School Curriculum

Train - Young people can be effectively trained to undertake all manner of tasks and often thrive on responsibility and the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to be responsible. At this stage, we shift the focus to establishing work ethics and working practices and protocols.

These areas are explained in the following document:

- Pear Tree School Curriculum - Career Planning and Personal Development
- Using Machinery in an Educational Context, Guidance, Risk Assessments and Over Arching Lesson Plan

Employ - As a result of all of the above, we aspire that all of our young people will be able to gain employment whether this be as a volunteer or employed in a professional capacity. It is important that we recognise that young people, with limited abilities and often poor academic functioning, can achieve gainful employment as we have proved many times. The importance of 'meaningful day time occupation' in supporting the breaking of the cycle of abuse, cannot be understated. Make them taxpayers, and everything else falls into place Professor Findlay Graham.

These areas are explained in the following document:

- Pear Tree School Development Plan.

Conclusion.

It is indeed my observed opinion that the most important thing we can do to help any client group, is to increase their personal holistic competence. This is a marginal gains approach and is significant in creating a meaningful physiological change and provide the necessary skill sets to embrace the world around them.

“Small Changes Matter! - A marginal gains approach as a methodology to evaluating outcomes in a Looked After Child population.”

“Personal Holistic Competence Curriculum and Assessments, Assessing Skills and Values.”

https://cpd.peartreeprojects.co.uk/documents/Marginal_Gains.pdf

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