

## 7.4. Ability to assess the child/young person's functioning within multiple systems

The competences in this subdomain describe basic systemic assessment skills that should be held in mind by practitioners from all therapeutic backgrounds.



A substantial body of systemic theory and research informs the practice of more specialised family therapy assessments and interventions. These are described elsewhere in this framework and in more detail in the framework for systemic psychotherapy, available at: [www.ucl.ac.uk/clinical-psychology/CORE/competence\\_frameworks.htm](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/clinical-psychology/CORE/competence_frameworks.htm).

### Knowledge of the relevance of systems and the basic principles of social constructionism

- An ability to draw on knowledge that psychological problems and emotional distress are usually better understood by taking into account the 'systems' in which the child/young person and their family/carers are located
- An ability to draw on knowledge that the patterns of relationships within systems may play a significant role in shaping and maintaining psychological problems
- An ability to draw on knowledge of the basic principles of social constructionism, i.e.:
  - that people understand themselves and the world around them through a process of social construction
  - that meaning is generated through social interactions, and through the language used in different social interactions
  - that power relationships (e.g. a person's position in a system) and different cultural contexts (e.g. gender, religion, age, ethnicity) have an important influence on the development of meaning, relationships, feelings and behaviour
- An ability to draw on knowledge that the inpatient ward itself is a system that can influence the assessment process

### Assessment

- An ability to draw on knowledge that the multiple contexts/environments in which the child/young person and their family/carers are located need to be considered in any assessment, and that these will include:
  - family, peer group, and other significant relationships
  - school or place of employment
  - social and community setting
  - professional network(s) involved with them
  - their cultural setting
  - their sociopolitical environment, and:



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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>an ability to draw on knowledge that all of these different contexts are connected and likely to interact</li></ul>  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ■ | An ability to draw on knowledge of the contexts/environments that the child/young person is part of and that may be relevant to their presentation (e.g. the beliefs and practices of a faith group, or the beliefs associated with their peer group)  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ■ | An ability to gather further information from relevant people in the system to help determine: <table><tr><td>■</td><td>whether and how to proceed with any intervention</td></tr><tr><td>■</td><td>who to involve</td></tr><tr><td>■</td><td>when and where to meet</td></tr></table>   | ■ | whether and how to proceed with any intervention  | ■ | who to involve  | ■ | when and where to meet  |   |   |
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| ■ | who to involve   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ■ | when and where to meet   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ■ | An ability to gather and clarify information from relevant members of the system, including information about the decision to seek help and any concerns/dilemmas about engaging with services   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ■ | An ability to use the assessment process to engage with relevant members of the system including, where appropriate, referring agencies, education services and support services   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ■ | An ability to identify in conjunction with the child/young person, family and the wider system: <table><tr><td>■</td><td>perceived problem areas and the beliefs concerning them</td></tr><tr><td>■</td><td>the potential strengths of the child/young person (and the wider system) that may support therapeutic change</td></tr><tr><td>■</td><td>the solutions that have been tried or have been thought about</td></tr><tr><td>■</td><td>the achievements in the child/young person's life</td></tr></table> | ■ | perceived problem areas and the beliefs concerning them                                 | ■ | the potential strengths of the child/young person (and the wider system) that may support therapeutic change        | ■ | the solutions that have been tried or have been thought about | ■ | the achievements in the child/young person's life |
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| ■ | the achievements in the child/young person's life  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ■ | An ability to draw on knowledge that different members of the system will describe the child/young person differently as: <table><tr><td>■</td><td>there are always multiple perspectives and descriptions of any interaction/relationship</td></tr><tr><td>■</td><td>the child/young person's behaviour is influenced by the different set of contextual factors present in each setting</td></tr></table>  | ■ | there are always multiple perspectives and descriptions of any interaction/relationship | ■ | the child/young person's behaviour is influenced by the different set of contextual factors present in each setting |   |   |   |   |
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