

8. Structured care



8.1. Psychoeducation

- An ability to draw on knowledge that psychoeducation aims to empower children/young people and their family/carers by providing information and resources about:

- the psychological difficulties and conditions they are experiencing
- the interventions that may help (both psychological and pharmacological) and how they might be implemented in the service

- An ability to tailor psychoeducation to the child/young person and their family/carer's needs, taking account of:

- the particular difficulties they are experiencing and the areas that concern them
- the personal and cultural explanatory models to which they ascribe, and that they use to understand their difficulties
- the extent to which their explanatory models represent flexible or fixed views
- what they already know
- their developmental stage and intellectual ability

- An ability to offer psychoeducation specific to the inpatient context (e.g. focused on common reactions to transitions such as admission to, and discharge from, the unit)

- An ability to offer psychoeducation in a way that is supportive and empathic, bearing in mind that some material maybe emotive, and:

- an ability to draw on knowledge that psychoeducation may increase distress and this needs to be monitored and addressed (e.g. feeling more pessimistic about their future or seeing themselves more negatively)

- An ability to deliver relevant information:

- in a systematic and structured way that also invites questions and comments
- using a range of user-friendly formats, adapted to the child/young person's developmental stage and capacities

- An ability to determine how much information the child/young person and family/carers can take on board in a session, and to adapt the pace and content to reflect e.g. their concentration or readiness to consider new information

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■ An ability to check the child/young person and family/carer's understanding of, and agreement with, psychoeducation materials, and:

■ to openly discuss differences between the child/young person and family/carers' understanding of the relevant issues, and that of the service

■ An ability to deliver psychoeducation individually and in groups

8.2. Problem solving

Knowledge

- An ability to draw on knowledge that problem-solving strategies assume that the child/young person has the resources, capacity and authority to make relevant changes
- An ability to draw on knowledge that where problems may not be solvable, are extremely challenging or are beyond the child/young person's control, there is a risk that problem-solving strategies become invalidating and unhelpful

Delivering problem-solving strategies

- An ability to explain the rationale for problem solving (i.e. as a strategy that can help manage specific areas of difficulty more effectively)
- An ability to identify:
 - specific problem areas that the child/young person sees as relevant and meaningful
 - links between specific difficulties and problems facing the child/young person, and hence to identify problems that may be appropriate for a problem-solving approach
- An ability to help the child/young person test beliefs/assumptions that impede problem solving (e.g. believing they have no control over their problems)
- An ability to help the child/young person to select problems, usually on the basis that problems are relevant and meaningful for them and are ones for which achievable goals can be set
- An ability to help the child/young person specify the problem(s) and to break down larger problems into smaller (more manageable) parts
- An ability to identify achievable goals with the child/young person, bearing in mind their resources and likely obstacles
- An ability to help the child/young person:
 - agree which problems to prioritise
 - brainstorm and generate possible solutions
 - choose their preferred solution
 - assess the pros and cons of possible solutions
 - plan and implement preferred solutions
 - evaluate the outcome, whether positive or negative
 - re-visit solutions, to see if they can be improved
- An ability to provide direction but also to ensure that solutions to problems are developed jointly with the child/young person

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- An ability to help the child/young person develop alternative (backup) plans that can put in place if their first plan does not work



- Where relevant, and where the child/young person consents, an ability to include family/carers in the delivery (rather than the development) of problem-solving interventions



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8.3. Articulating feelings and managing emotions

- An ability to draw in knowledge that the experience and expression of feelings may be influenced by how the unit itself is functioning (e.g. whether there is a positive therapeutic environment/milieu or high levels of disturbance)

- An ability to observe and ask about affective issues and concerns that are impacting on the child/young person

- An ability to discuss the ways that the child/young person currently recognise and manage their emotions, and help them identify the strategies they find helpful, and those they find unhelpful or unproductive

- An ability to use structured exercises and role play to help the child/young person identify, articulate (and label) emotions:

- role-playing situations that evoke feelings
- using information from a 'chain analysis' to help identify links between events and the feelings evoked
- encouraging the accurate identification and labelling of emotion
- encouraging a capacity to reflect on, rather than react to, emotions

- An ability to help the child/young person increase their capacity to tolerate emotions through:

- providing psychoeducation, including the fact that the capacity to tolerate emotions is influenced by the reactions of others to expressions of emotions (e.g. consistent disconfirmation by others leading to the inhibition of feelings), and:

- discussing the difference between primary emotions (feelings that emerge in direct response to a situation) and secondary emotions (reactions to the primary emotions, e.g. feeling angry about being hurt or shame about feeling anxious)
- recognising basic emotions related to survival (e.g. exploration/curiosity, aggression, and social emotions such as guilt and shame)

- focusing on both positive and negative emotions
- increasing the child/young person's capacity to tolerate emotions by validating the strength of feeling and distress experienced when they become emotional

- An ability to help the child/young person use techniques that help them to limit or better manage their immediate response to emotions including:

- muscular relaxation, breathing techniques and meditation and yoga techniques
- distraction techniques
- identifying cognitive triggers (automatic thoughts) that link to feelings, e.g. by using a daily thought record

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■	An ability to help a child/young person increase their capacity to regulate low mood, e.g. by:
	■ identifying the relationship between periods low mood and difficulties in interpersonal relationships
	■ using chain analysis to help understand the development of the low mood
■	An ability to help a child/young person increase their capacity to control impulsive behaviour by:
	■ offering psychoeducation on the management of impulse control problems, and:
	■ drawing attention to the consequences of focusing on emotions (leading to action without reflection and lack of premeditation and planning)
	■ identifying the importance of decreasing the attention given to thoughts and emotions
	■ working with the child/young person to identify examples of impulse-control problems they have experienced
	■ considering the development of impulse control problems stage by stage, and working with the child/young person to identify alternative problem-solving strategies that could be implemented at each point in the sequence

8.4. Staying well (relapse prevention)

Inpatient units will aim for a timely discharge, avoiding both premature and delayed discharge. Nonetheless, strategies for relapse prevention need to consider the child/young person's progress while on the ward. This will include helping the child/young person (and their parents/carers) recognise that they may not be fully recovered, and identify the strategies best suited to recognising and managing areas of vulnerability.

- An ability to draw on knowledge that the meaning of recovery varies from person to person, and as such:
 - their sense of a positive outcome may not be the same as the medical/professional perspective
 - practitioners should aim to understand what recovery means for them
- An ability to help the child/young person identify early warning signs that (in the past) have signalled a decline in their mental health, including changes in their mood, behaviour and thoughts
- An ability to work with the child/young person to develop a timeline that helps to identify problematic events (and their meanings) that have led to a deterioration in mental health in the past
- An ability to enhance the child/young person's coping strategies by helping them to identify, overlearn and apply skills that foster a sense of control, and so instil hope (e.g. relaxation training, activity scheduling)
- An ability to help the child/young person evaluate the efficacy of previous interventions for staying well in order to inform (and to improve) strategies they use in the future
- An ability to identify and discuss the child/young person's thoughts and appraisals about the re-emergence of symptoms, aiming:
 - to de-catastrophise their responses to a change in mood, behaviour and thoughts)
 - to support their sense that they have a repertoire of strategies that can be employed to manage
- An ability to recognise that for some children/young people symptoms and difficulties will persist in spite of intervention, and to understand and discuss recovery and maintenance of gains from this standpoint
- An ability to apply relapse prevention strategies with parents/carers, and to engage them (as well as the child/young person) in recognising and responding constructively to indications of difficulties

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8.5. Group-based interventions

Knowledge

- An ability to draw on knowledge of the characteristics of the target group population for whom the group intervention is designed (e.g. age/ developmental stage, presenting problems etc.)
- An ability to draw on knowledge of the aims, principles or model of therapy underpinning the group intervention

Ability to plan the group

- An ability to estimate the likely demand for the group by identifying the children/young people who:
 - meet the criteria for the group (e.g. in terms of presenting difficulties or challenges)
 - are likely to be receptive to a group approach
 - would be able to attend the group at the expected frequency
- An ability to ensure that there is team support for the group (e.g. assuring appropriate accommodation, time and resources)
- An ability to plan the basic structure and content of the group, e.g.:
 - practicalities (e.g. setting, timing)
 - outline content of sessions
 - roles of staff running the group
 - any additional/specific resources required for group sessions
 - any evaluation procedures

Ability to recruit children/young people to the group

- An ability to maintain optimism and a positive attitude towards the group in the face of challenges to initiating and maintaining group membership
- An ability to specify and apply inclusion and exclusion criteria for the group
- An ability to provide participants with information on the content and purpose of the group
- An ability to explore (and where possible address) any barriers to participation in the group, e.g.:
 - practical barriers (e.g. other concurrent meetings)
 - emotional barriers (e.g. social anxiety)
 - historical factors (e.g. previous negative experiences of groups)
- An ability to help each group member identify what they would like to gain from the group



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Ability to follow the aims/model of group intervention

■	An ability to implement the components of the group intervention, including:
	■ structuring the group (e.g. ordering and timing of material, use of media, practice assignments)
	■ any specific intervention techniques
	■ management of group and change processes
■	For groups that follow a manual, an ability to adhere to the sequence of activities outlined in the manual, and:
	■ an ability to draw on knowledge of manualised activities so that they can be introduced fluently and in a timely manner

Ability to manage group process

Establishing the group

■	An ability to establish an environment that is physically and emotionally safe, by:
	■ discussing the ground rules of the group (e.g. taking turns to speak, starting and ending the group on time) in a way that is appropriate to the developmental stage of group members
	■ discussing boundaries (e.g. whether and how information discussed in the group is shared outside the group)
	■ safeguarding the ground rules by drawing attention to any occasions when they are breached, in a way that is sensitive to the developmental stage of group members
	■ helping all group members participate by monitoring and attending to their emotional state
	■ monitoring and regulating self-disclosure by members and group leaders, to maintain an environment where members can share
■	An ability to identify and manage any emotional or physical risk to group leaders and group participants

Engaging group members

■	An ability to engage group members in a way that is appropriate to their developmental stage and congruent with the therapeutic model being employed
■	An ability to match the content and pacing of group sessions, presentations and discussions to the characteristics of group members (e.g. in terms of age range, ability levels, attention span, cultural characteristics)
■	An ability to build positive rapport with individual members of the group, and:
	■ an ability to monitor the impact of these individual relationships on other members of the group, and, if necessary, address and manage any tensions
■	An ability to manage the group environment in a way that helps all members to participate on a level they feel comfortable with



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- When appropriate to the model of therapy, an ability to use modelling and explicit social reinforcement to encourage the participation of group members

Managing potential challenges to group engagement

- An ability to recognise when individuals form subgroups, and to manage the impact of these relationships on overall group dynamics
- An ability to plan for, reflect on and manage potential challenges to the group, including:
 - disruptive behaviour
 - persistent lateness/absence, or non-engagement in sessions
 - anyone leaving the group early
 - members who are over talkative or dominate the group
 - high levels of distress displayed by a group member:
 - if a group member's emotional state impacts on the other group members, an ability to attend to this to ensure others do not become overwhelmed or disengaged

Ability to manage the ending of the group

- An ability to prepare group members for the ending of the group by signalling the ending of the intervention at the outset and throughout group sessions, as appropriate
- An ability to draw on knowledge that the ending of the group may elicit feelings in group members connected to other personal experiences of loss/separation
- An ability to help the group member express any feelings of anxiety, anger or disappointment that they may have about ending the group
- An ability to review the themes covered in the group, in a way that is appropriate to the developmental stage of the participants and the model being applied
- An ability to reflect on progress made because of participation, and to celebrate it in a way that is appropriate to the developmental stage of the group members and the model being applied

Ability to evaluate the group

- An ability to review the child/young person's goals for the group
- An ability to draw on knowledge of appropriate strategies and tools for evaluation, based on the resources available, and:
 - to provide a rationale for the evaluation strategy to children/young people
 - to feedback evaluation in a sensitive and meaningful way

Ability to use supervision

- An ability to use supervision to reflect on group processes
- An ability for group leaders to reflect on their own impact on group processes

8.6. Promoting valued activities

Knowledge

- An ability to draw on knowledge that a lack of regular ward activities can result in boredom, frustration and a focus on symptoms (e.g. low mood and anxiety), which can be a threat to individual wellbeing and the development of a therapeutic milieu
- An ability to draw on knowledge of the potential benefits of ward activities on wellbeing, a sense of social connectedness and physical health
- An ability to draw on knowledge of the importance of trying to maintain activities that the child/young person values, particularly those they engage in on a regular basis when in the community
- An ability to draw on knowledge of the adverse impact of:
 - being unable to maintain valued activities
 - losing contact with peers associated with these activities

Application

- An ability to help each young person (and where appropriate their parents/carers) identify activities that they value,
- An ability to identify whether and how valued activities can be maintained while on the ward, in the context of the resources available to the unit and the care plan for that child/young person, e.g.:
 - activities that can be carried out on the ward
 - activities that can only be accessed in the community, and for which leave might need to be arranged
- An ability to identify and contribute towards a programme of scheduled ward-based activities e.g.:
 - self-care and daily living skills
 - creative groups (e.g. art or music groups)
 - exercise groups
- An ability to offer children/young people choice over whether to participate in ward activities and to review this choice over the course of an admission (to reflect their changing needs)
- An ability to help the child/young person plan how they can generalise a programme of ward-based activities post-discharge, and:
 - an ability to help parents/carers become aware of the therapeutic benefits of planned and valued activities, and help the child/young person maintain these after discharge

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8.7. Managing interpersonal relationships

■ An ability to draw on a developmental perspective to understand the varied friendship needs of children/young people

■ An ability to draw on knowledge of the impact of admission on pre-existing peer and family/carer relationships

■ An ability to help a child/young person increase their capacity to engage in and develop more stable and rewarding relationships through:

■ psychoeducation that includes discussion of the links between interpersonal sensitivity and problems they may have experienced in the past with their family/carers and peers

■ helping them review problems in relationships by using role play and discussion, to reflect on the perspectives of others with whom they are interacting (e.g. on their internal experience and/or the meaning and purpose of their external behaviour), to:

■ increase their capacity to be aware of another's internal emotional or cognitive state

■ reducing their sensitivity to external cues (e.g. facial expression or body language)


■ An ability to help the child/young person transfer and generalise interpersonal relationship skills outside the inpatient unit to their family/carers, peers and community


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8.8. Motivational strategies

This section describes strategies that can be used when there are opportunities to discuss motivation to make changes in behaviour. They promote hope for change, and so contribute towards establishing the therapeutic milieu 

While some behavioural changes lie with the child/young person, it is important not to make them responsible for changes that others need to make, and to explicitly recognise this in any intervention. As such, the strategies in this section can also be employed with family/carers where appropriate. 

Practitioner stance

- An ability to maintain an empathic, non-confrontational, collaborative and non-judgmental stance
- An ability to convey genuine acceptance of the child/young person's position and avoid the use of persuasion, and:
 - to 'roll with the resistance' and so avoid direct confrontation
- An ability to work from a position that respects the child/young person's autonomy and their responsibility for change

Knowledge

- An ability to draw on knowledge of the psychology of behaviour change and motivation, i.e.:
 - motivation is shaped by an individual's perception of their ability to carry out a behaviour and the opportunity for them to do so
 - motivation to engage in a particular behaviour will typically fluctuate in response to competing internal (psychological) and external demands
 - ambivalence about behaviour change is not a pathological trait, but rather a common precursor to making a change
 - psychological reactance (defending a status quo) is a typical response to confrontation aimed at forcing behaviour change
 - practitioner empathy is a good predictor of successful behaviour change

Motivational strategies

Identifying discrepancies

- An ability to draw out the child/young person's ideas, feeling and wants, and their intrinsic motivation for change



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■	An ability to help the child/young person discuss any distinction (and discrepancy) between their current situation and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how far it matches living according to their values ■ their goals for the future
■	An ability to help the child/young person explore and resolve their ambivalence in favour of change
■	An ability to encourage exploration of ambivalence by using open questions to help the child/young person identify the pros of change and barriers to achieving this change
■	An ability to enhance the child/young person's perception of the importance of change and their confidence and readiness to make this change, by discussing ambivalence and highlighting reasons for change

Style of interaction

■	An ability to use affirmative statements that acknowledge the child/young person's efforts and strengths
■	An ability to use open-ended questions to encourage reflection on behaviour change
■	An ability for the practitioner to avoid the use of 'traps', e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ question/answer traps (e.g. repeatedly asking questions that elicit mono-syllabic responses) ■ premature focus traps (focusing on a problem area without fully exploring other areas of concern to the child/young person and identifying their priorities) ■ taking-side traps (arguing against the child/young person's view of the problem) ■ blaming traps (seeking to blame others or the child/young person for the current situation) ■ expert traps (overruling the child/young person's perspective by asserting professional authority)
■	An ability to consistently maintain a reflective listening style by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ forming hypotheses about the meaning of the child/young person's statements ■ testing hypotheses by making reflective statements ■ paying attention to statements that indicate a desire or ability to change, and reflecting them back to the child/young person in summary statements
■	An ability to elicit 'change talk' in a collaborative way by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ recognising and reflecting on different levels of motivation when the child/young person talks about their desire to change, their ability to change, and their reasons for change ■ recognising and strengthening language that indicates a commitment to making a positive behaviour change
■	An ability to offer summaries, to demonstrate understanding of the child/young person's difficulties and structure the intervention
■	An ability to reframe discussion positively, with a focus on behaviour change



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- An ability to help the child/young person consider new perspectives, in a non-confrontational way
- An ability to only offer specific information and advice when it is asked for
- An ability to help the child/young person discuss the benefits and barriers to changing problem behaviour
- An ability to develop, in collaboration with the child/young person, plans for behaviour change

- An ability to summarise any decisions that have agreed about behaviour change

Monitoring

- An ability to identify the child/young person's readiness for change, through open-ended discussion
- An ability to give positive and constructive feedback on behaviour change
- An ability to help the child/young person use self-monitoring tools to reflect on progress

Meta-competences in motivational interviewing

- An ability to adapt the pace of discussions in relation to the child/young person's needs and capacity
- An ability to judge when and how to introduce motivational strategies so as to deliver them 'opportunistically' (so that it is relevant to discussion and integrated into the session, and targeted at resolving ambivalence about behaviour change)
- An ability to elicit and be responsive to young person's feedback
- An ability to integrate motivational strategies into the work of the ward