

9. Meta-competences for inpatient work with children/young people



Adapting practice to the needs of the child/young person

- An ability to adapt practice to the needs and presentation of each child/young person, to:
 - maximise their active involvement in the process of assessment, planning and intervention
 - address any tensions between meeting their personal needs and any organisational requirements that inform 'usual' practice (such as local protocols for assessment)

Style of interaction

- An ability to balance being 'oneself' in interactions with offering clinical expertise and holding professional boundaries

Working with children/young people and their families/carers

- An ability to ensure that the child/young person's needs remain paramount, and to judge how best to assure their involvement in the process of assessment, goal planning, intervention and evaluation
- An ability to creatively and flexibly adapt the assessment and intervention to the child/young person and family/carers' interests and abilities
- An ability to adapt communication and interventions to the child/young person's developmental stage
- When children/young people and their families/carers are seen together, an ability to maintain a balanced and non-critical focus on all parties, so that every person feel included and regarded

Team working

- An ability to recognise the value of alternative perspectives discussed by colleagues, and to integrate different explanatory models into the overall approach based on a reasoned formulation
- When sharing information with others, an ability to judge what information needs to be shared and with whom, balancing the level of confidentiality against the need for colleagues to have enough information to act in the interests of the child/young person
- When working with other agencies, an ability to make a judgment about the potential impact of factors such as differences in statutory responsibilities and the operation of service constraints, and to take these into account when planning a shared intervention



- Where colleagues identify differing priorities and aims for an intervention, an ability to come up with a collaborative treatment plan that balances the different perspectives while maintaining a focus on the child/young person's best interests

- An ability to judge when there is sufficient evidence that professional colleagues are not performing their roles appropriately, or are performing them incompetently, and to act in line with professional, organisational and legal obligations

Legal and ethical issues

- An ability to interpret legal and ethical frameworks in relation to the individual case

Assessing risk

- An ability to draw on knowledge of the difficulty of predicting risk in an child/young person and so be able to:

- synthesise information from theory and research with multiple sources of information about the person
- integrate information from questionnaire-based sources with information from discussion-based assessment
- integrate information from a range of sources

Working with the evidence base relating to children/young people

- An ability to make informed use of the current evidence base to guide decision-making about the interventions that are indicated

- Where a child/young person presents with multiple problems and conditions, an ability to adapt treatment plans so that they can be applied to the individual case in a manner that is:

- informed by the case formulation/diagnosis
- congruent with the treatment principles inherent in the protocol

- An ability to plan interventions in a manner consistent with the available evidence-base, but to judge when and how to move beyond the evidence base where there are indications that this is appropriate, e.g.:

- where the child/young person is finding it difficult to engage with the evidence-based approach
- where there is evidence of a lack of progress with a competently-delivered evidence-based intervention
- when the formulation indicates the potential benefit of an integrative approach



Working with people from a range of backgrounds

- An ability to integrate equality and diversity issues into clinical practice, so that different perspectives, practices and life styles are addressed respectfully and non-judgmentally
- An ability for practitioners to maintain an awareness of their own values about parenting and family customs, and to reflect on the ways that these assumptions impact (positively and negatively) on the people they work with
- Where people discuss parenting practices at variance with the norms and values of the practitioner, an ability to judge when this difference should be respected and when it represents a concern that should be responded to
- Where there is evidence that social and cultural difference is likely to impact on the accessibility/acceptability of an intervention, an ability to make appropriate adjustments to the intervention and/or how it is delivered, with the aim of maximising its potential benefit

Capacity to implement interventions in a flexible but coherent manner

- An ability to implement an intervention or a model of therapy in a way that is flexible and responsive to the issues children/young people raise, but which also ensures that all relevant components of an intervention are included
- An ability to judge when and how to balance adherence to a 'protocol' against the need to attend to any issues which arise in the therapeutic relationship

Capacity to adapt interventions in response to feedback

- An ability to accommodate issues that children/young people or their parents/carers raise explicitly or implicitly, or which become apparent as part of the process of the intervention, and:
 - an ability to respond to, and openly to discuss, explicit feedback that expresses concerns about important aspects of the intervention
 - an ability to detect and respond to implicit feedback that indicates concerns about important aspects of the therapy (e.g. as indicated by non-verbal behaviour, verbal comments or significant shifts in responsiveness/engagement)
 - an ability to identify when it seems difficult for children/young people to give feedback that is 'authentic' (i.e. responding in accordance with what they think the clinician wishes to hear, rather than expressing their own view) and discussing this with them
 - an ability to be aware of, and respond to, the emotional shifts in each session, with the aim of maintaining an optimal level of emotional arousal (i.e. ensuring that children/young people are neither remote from or overwhelmed by their feelings)



Safe practice, supervision and support

- An ability for practitioners to recognise the limits of their competence, and to judge when they should seek advice and/or supervision from more experienced colleagues
- An ability to be aware of the inevitable personal feelings and responses elicited by challenging behaviours (such as hostility or suspiciousness) and to judge when additional support or supervision is necessary, to:
 - continue working effectively and compassionately
 - ensure that decisions about the best way forward are taken on the basis of careful reflection (e.g. whether to persist, adapt or stop an intervention)
- An ability for the practitioner to judge when an assessment or intervention is creating unhelpful emotional demands on them, and to take steps to put in place appropriate levels of self-care
- An ability to judge when there is evidence that the actions of a colleague (or colleagues) fall below appropriate professional standards or place users at risk of harm, and to draw on knowledge of relevant organisational procedures to identify the most appropriate way to alert others to these issues