4.4. Ability to understand and respond appropriately to people in distress

Throughout this set (subdomain) of competences, 'person'/'people' refers to children/young people, parents/carers, family members and significant others

- An ability to draw on knowledge that children/young people and families/carers will often experience high levels of emotional arousal and distress, and that acknowledging and addressing this should be a primary goal, and:
  - an ability to listen to, maintain contact with and respond to people who are expressing strong emotions

- An ability to help people access, differentiate and experience their emotions in a way that best facilitates change
- An ability to help people express their emotions while also monitoring their capacity to tolerate emotional expression and to deploy strategies that help to manage any difficulties that emerge, e.g. by:
  - ensuring that discussion moves at their pace (i.e. their readiness and capacity to discuss an issue)
  - 'pulling back' if areas appear to be too difficult and returning to them at a later stage
  - helping them stay with the emotion without escalating it
  - helping them recognise and accurately label emotions
- An ability to introduce techniques designed to manage unhelpfully strong emotions (e.g. aggressive behaviour or extreme fear and withdrawal), e.g.:
  - helping the person to name emotions and the 'messages' that they convey
  - indicating what behaviour is appropriate (setting limits)

- When sessions include the child/young person and their family/carers, an ability to help the adults:
  - support the child/young person's capacity to express emotion in an appropriate way (in the session)
  - express their emotions in an appropriate way

Ability to reflect on the expression of behaviours and strong emotions

- An ability to understand that the person's emotional expression (including behaviour that challenges) is a form of communication
- An ability to reflect on the meaning of the behaviour/emotional expression and how it relates to the past and present
- An ability to describe the emotion/behaviour and identify the person's own interpretation of its meaning, and:
  - an ability to discuss the interpretations with the person

An ability for the practitioner to reflect on their own reaction to the emotional/behavioural expression and their influence on the person's behaviour, and:	
	an ability for the practitioner to make use of supervision to reflect (and, if necessary, act) on these issues