

Putting Research into Practice; Assessing the Psychological Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children

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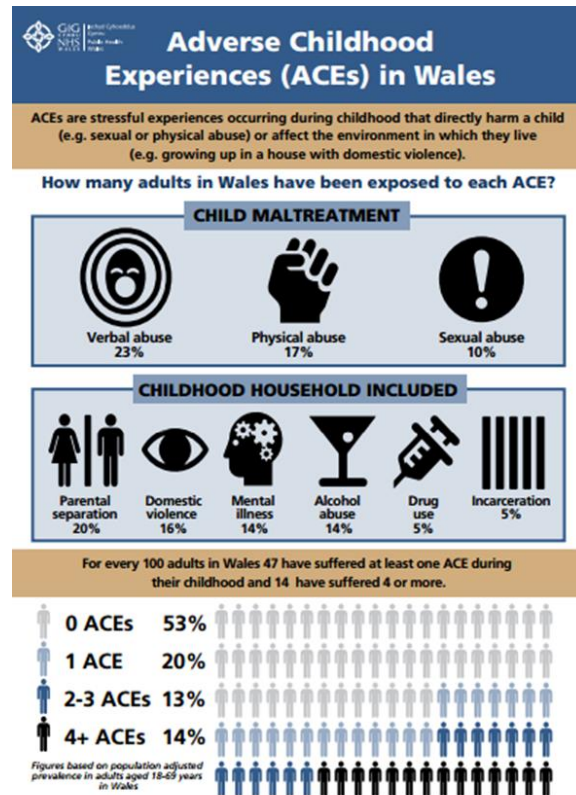
A child's experience

Amy's story



Family Factors and Child Mental Health

- Economic pressure/poverty
- Parental mental health
- Parenting behaviour/practice
- Inter-parental conflict, domestic abuse
- Parental separation-divorce

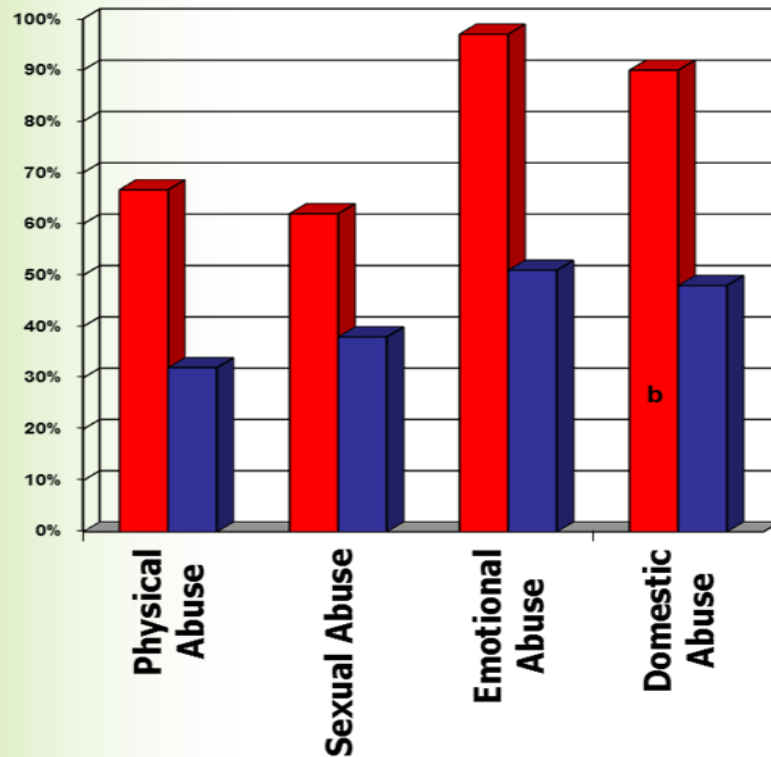


Static Factors

Trauma History	Taith (HSB)	Seraf (CSE)	Child Protection Register Wales
Exposure to domestic abuse	62%	43%	21%
Reported sexual abuse	40%	29%	7%
Reported physical abuse	38%	32%	16%
Reported emotional neglect	55%	51%	38%

Assessing the Psychological Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children

Trauma Background



■ Taith girls ■ Seraf girls

Barnardo's Background

- Recognition of the increasing levels of support provided to children and young people experiencing domestic abuse.
- Need to identify and address the short and long-term impact of domestic abuse on children's cognitive, social and emotional development.
- Evidence to inform targeted trauma informed interventions.

Effects of Witnessing Conflict on Children

- Brain development
- Emotional development
 - Anger, fear, anxiety, guilt
- Cognitive development
 - Attributions of self and others, expectations of conflict
- Social and Behavioural development
 - Aggression, interpretation of intent, expectations of others, peer/romantic relations



Assessing the Psychological Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children

ACCURATE PROVERBS #421

NIETZSCHE SAID,
"THAT WHICH DOES NOT
KILL US MAKES US
STRONGER".



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PETER F. ROY

...APART FROM A 2008 STUDY
SHOWING THAT EXPOSURE TO
TRAUMA PREDICTS LONG-TERM
PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH
ISSUES, EVEN IN THOSE WHO
APPEAR RESILIENT.



...BUT LET'S NOT ALLOW A
SMALL DETAIL LIKE "THE
TRUTH" GET IN THE WAY
OF A SNAPPY PROVERB,
SHALL WE?



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mewn pl
Believe in
children

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Professor Gordon Harold

- World expert in parental conflict and child development. Holds the Andrew & Virginia Rudd Chair in Psychology/Inaugural Director of Rudd Centre for Adoption Research and Practice at the University of Sussex.
- Primary research interests focus on the role of the family as a context for understanding children's normal & abnormal psychological development.
- Of which includes the long-term impact of domestic violence children's development, and effective intervention programmes aimed at assisting in high risk contexts.
- Developed the CAWAC Tool for CAFCASS.

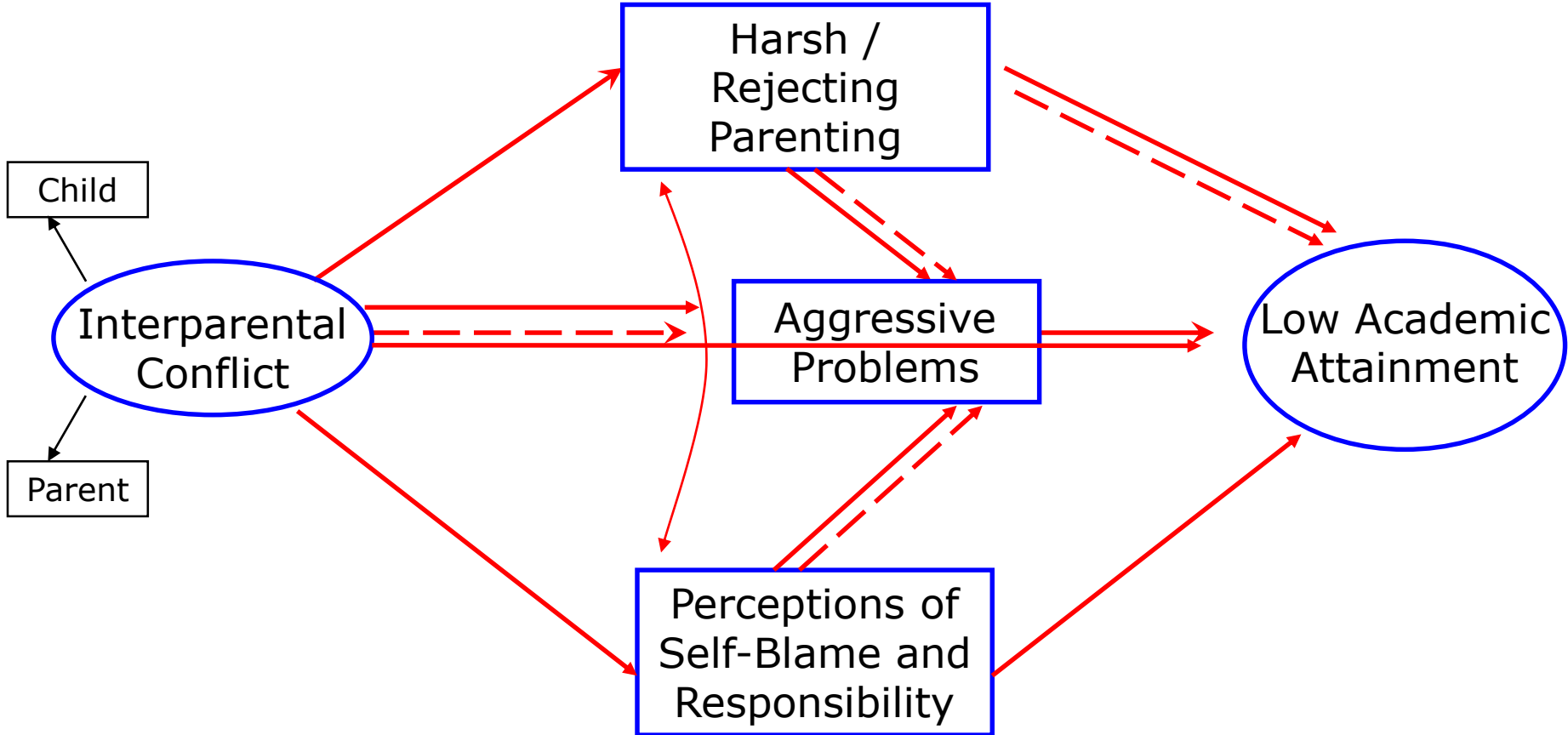
What Explains These Effects?

- **A family systems perspective**
 - Inter-parental conflict leads to disrupted parenting practices, which affects child outcomes.
- **Role of children's attributions of parental behaviour**
 - Interpret and infer the actions and intentions of others the role of children's perceptions of inter-parental conflict.
 - Interpretation of causes, course and consequences.

Age 11 years

Age 12 years

Age 13 years



Summary of Research and Implications

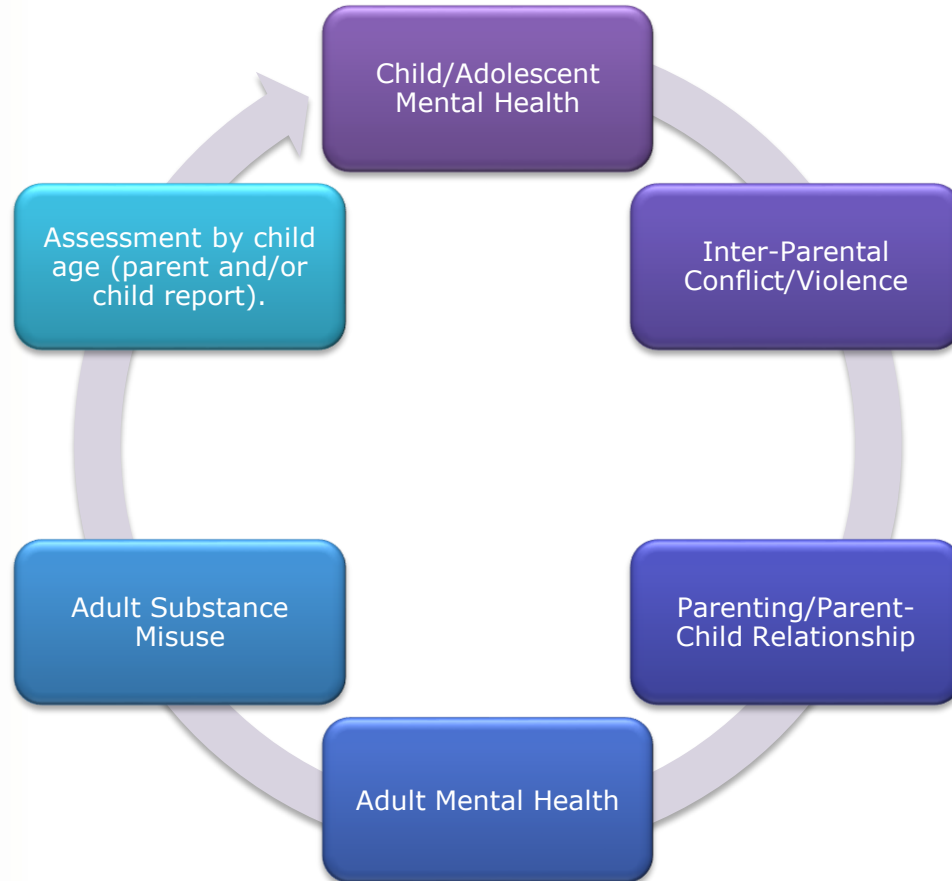
- **Children are affected by conflict across the spectrum**
Low warmth to high hostility; Depression, aggression, anxiety, low academic attainment
- **Importance of the child's perspective**
Internalisation, blame, rationalisation
- **Implications for intervention**
Site of intervention - Couple (inter-parental) versus parent-child relationship
- **Putting research into practice**
Assessing the psychological impacts of witnessing inter-parental conflict on children

B-CAWAC

Assessment Objectives

- Early identification of psychological impacts of ACE's including Domestic Abuse/Inter-Parental Conflict (between the ages of 2-18).
- Profile of children's mental health (emotional, behavioural and extended psychological welfare).
- Capture the voice and experience of the child (parent and child reporting)
- Early intervention – identify long-term developmental risks to children and align with evidenced based interventions.

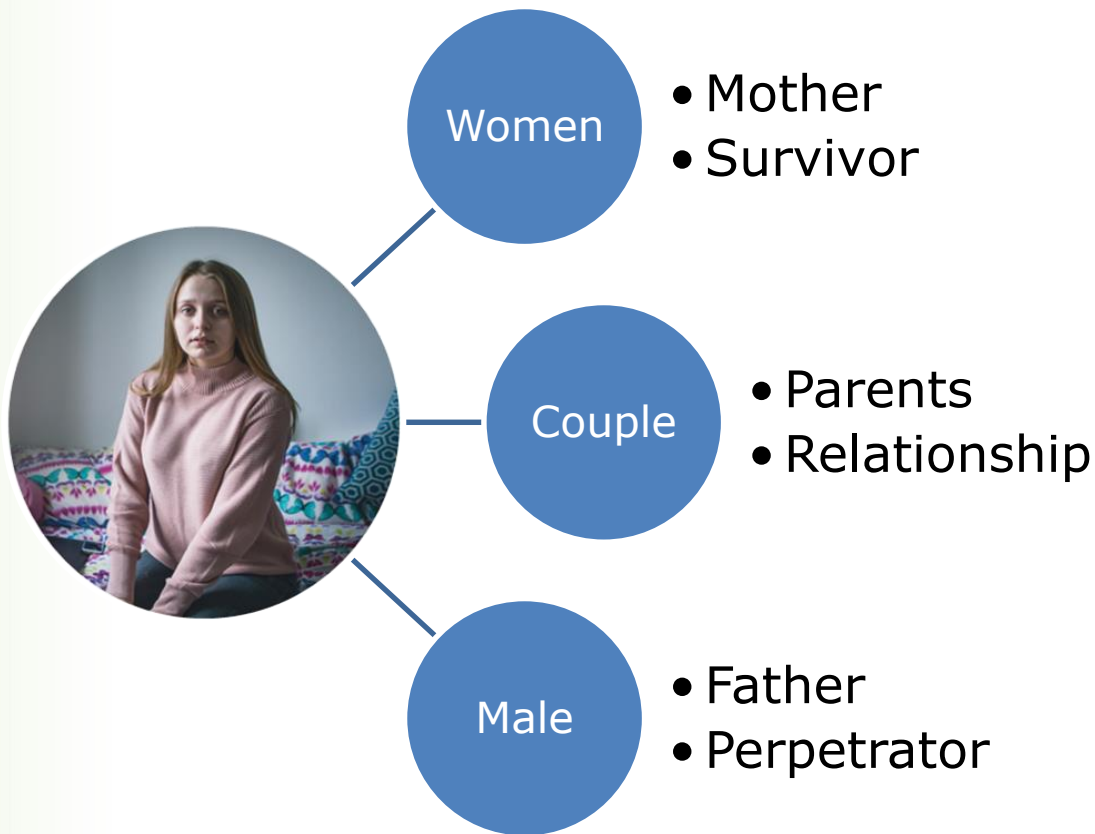
Primary Assessment Domains



Benefits

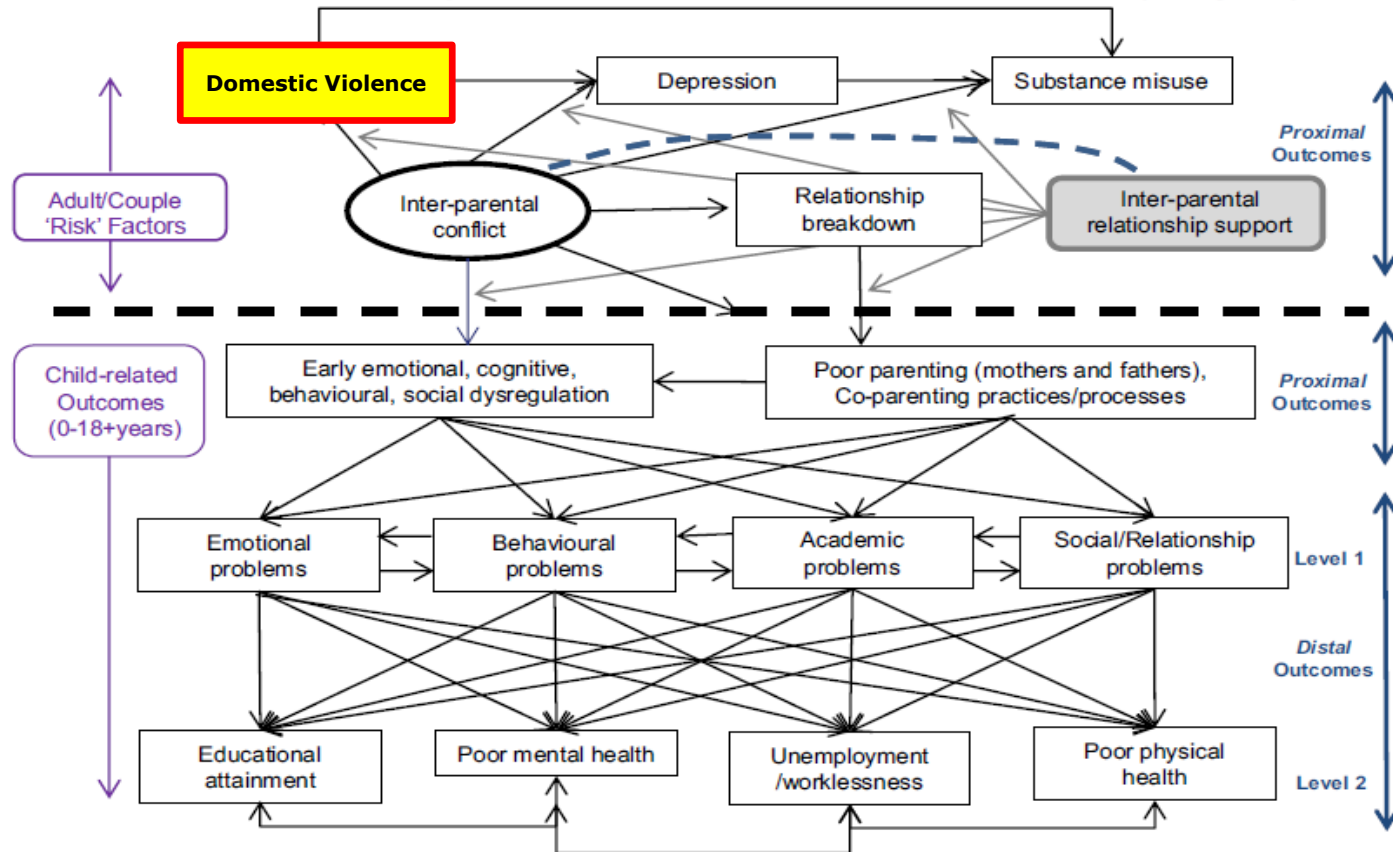
- Profile children and young people's emotional, social and behavioural development.
- Contribute to assessment planning/evidence.
- Evaluated tool –withstand scrutiny & provide a robust evidence-base
- Targeting intervention relative to “causal” context.
- Resources to those most at need: resilience
- Delivery of programmes with positive outcomes for children evidence based interventions

Site of Intervention



DWP–Improving Lives Strategy

A cascade model of inter-parental conflict effects on outcomes for children (0-18 years)



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WHAT WORKS TO ENHANCE INTER-PARENTAL RELATIONSHIPS AND IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN?

Our assessment of programmes that aim to enhance the inter-parental relationship and improve outcomes for children shows that many of these need more testing

PROGRAMMES WITH EVIDENCE OF A POSITIVE IMPACT ON CHILD OUTCOMES



PROGRAMMES WITH EVIDENCE OF A POSITIVE IMPACT ON INTER-PARENTAL OUTCOMES

The Early Intervention Foundation have carried out a review of 'What works to enhance inter-parental relationships and improve outcomes for children' for the Department for Work and Pensions.

The review has been led by Professor Gordon Harold, an expert on the role of the family in children's psychological development, and Dr. Ruth Sellers from the Andrew and Virginia Rudd Centre for Adoption Research and Practice at the University of Sussex.

Key findings include:

- » The quality of the inter-parental relationship, specifically how parents communicate and relate to each other, is increasingly recognised as a *primary* influence on effective parenting practices and children's long-term mental health and future life chances.
- » Parents/couples who engage in frequent, intense and poorly resolved inter-parental conflicts put children's mental health and long-term life chances at risk.
- » Children of all ages can be affected by destructive inter-parental conflict, with effects evidenced across infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood.
- » The context of the wider family environment is an important factor that can protect or exacerbate child outcomes in response to exposure to inter-parental conflict. In particular, levels of negativity and parenting practices can exacerbate or moderate the impact of inter-parental conflict on children.
- » Inter-parental conflict can adversely affect both the mother-child and father-child relationship, with evidence suggesting that the association between inter-parental conflict and negative parenting practices may be stronger for the father-child relationship compared to the mother-child relationship.

This indicates that the couple relationship is an important site for early intervention. It has implications for a wide range of policy areas from effective approaches to child mental health to managing child behaviours. In particular, it is important that policy makers and commissioners consider interventions and support for both the couple and the parenting relationship (both the mother-child and the father-child relationship). Just targeting the parental-child relationship in the context of ongoing inter-parental conflict does not lead to sustained positive

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Department
for Work &
Pensions



Full Report

DOWNLOAD



Executive Summary

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We would like to

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