

**Audience** Groups 1-8 (Working Together 2010)

**Methods** Small group activity; large group discussion

### Preparation

Ensure that you have handouts of the Evans and Henderson/Miller/Taylor family case studies and the associated family member's stories:

- F1.0 Evans family case study
- F1.1 Fiona's story
- F1.2 Steve's story
- F1.3 Liam's story
- F1.4 Shirene's story
- F1.5 Lewis' story
- F2.0 Henderson/Miller/Taylor family case study
- F2.1 Claire's story
- F2.2 Darren's story
- F2.3 Michelle's story
- F2.4 Troy's story
- F2.5 Susan's story

You may want to use the audio of the stories:

- M1.1 Fiona's story
- M1.2 Steve's story
- M1.3 Liam's story
- M1.4 Shirene's story
- M1.5 Lewis's story
- M2.1 Claire's story
- M2.2 Darren's story
- M2.3 Michelle's story
- M2.4 Troy's story
- M2.5 Susan's story

### Links to Common Core

Common Core 1 Effective communication and engagement with children, young people, their families and carers (skills: consultation and negotiation). Identify what each party hopes to achieve in order to reach the best possible and fair conclusion for the child or young person.

### Learning Outcomes

To address factors affecting parenting capacity.

### Process

The aim of this exercise is to ensure that participants understand the importance of reviewing and maintaining change for the better. One of the most common features of service provision in relation to neglect is known colloquially as the 'revolving door' syndrome.

This syndrome is characterised by a series of episodes of intervention – often on a statutory basis – separated by periods of case closure and withdrawal of services. Improvements that occur while services are involved are not maintained on case closure, leading to re-referral in due course.

The research evidence points, however, very clearly towards the benefits of longer-term support. Keeping cases open on a long term basis is not sufficient, however, as there is the danger of the equally damaging syndrome of 'drift' where intervention is unfocused. Instead there is the need for sustained and authoritative intervention, based upon a good working relationship, with a clear focus on maintaining improved day to day circumstances for the children.

Participants should be asked to read the Evans' or Henderson/Miller/Taylor family case studies and associated family stories.

Continued ↘

### Time

Total : 45 minutes

Small group discussion 25 mins

Group feedback 20 mins

Reviewing and  
sustaining change

G26<sup>1</sup>

## Process Continued ↘

In small groups they should be asked to:

- **list all the issues that still need to be addressed in relation to each member of the family**
- **consider what could be done differently with a new 'episode' of intervention**
- **compare this case study with their own practice experience and discuss what they can do in their own roles to reduce the 'revolving door' syndrome.**

The small groups should then bring their flip charts back to the large group to compare their notes and reflections. They should be asked to focus specifically on what they can do within the context of their own roles to limit the tendency towards the 'revolving door' syndrome.

It is likely that participants will pick up many of the key issues in the case study, and they will also have many examples of similar issues from their own experience. In relation to the parents it is clear that neither Claire nor Darren's drug and alcohol use has been tackled effectively; that the undercurrent of violence in Darren's narrative is still present and that neither parent accepts the basis for professional concern. There are some hints that there was a willingness to accept some practical help, which could form the basis for a bridge to more effective intervention. For all children there are clearly outstanding issues in relation to health, education and general wellbeing that still need proper attention. The indications are that the Susan and Troy would be highly receptive to external support; whereas Michelle has adopted a similar view to her mother about 'interference' from those in authority. There could be still be an opportunity to develop an effective working relationship with Michelle before her child is born, but she is likely to become increasingly cynical about the capacity of practitioners to improve her life.