

Assessing protectiveness in families living with sexual and domestic violence – Introducing the CASP-R©

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In families where there are concerns in relation to a risk of child sexual abuse or the impact of domestic violence on children well-informed assessments concerning the ability of a non-abusing parent or a Proposed Carer (PC) to keep a child or children safe from a Person of Concern (POC) are essential to making appropriate decisions about whether children can be safely supported at home; whether they should be looked after while the PC increases their ability to supervise the person of concern's interactions with the child; or whether they should be permanently placed away from home because the risk is unmanageable.

Accuracy is the goal. Yet, the reality remains that assessments often fall short of such aspirations because of limited knowledge and the need to work with probabilities rather than certainties. There is increasing recognition of the need for 'structured professional decision-making' which utilises data collected through evidence-based tools in addition, but not instead of, judgments that can be over-reliant on social workers' intuition and experience.

The Capacity & Ability to Supervise and Protect-Risk (CASP-R) framework has been developed by drawing upon relevant international research and best practice decision making in cases of family constitution when concerns exist in relation to either sexual or domestic violence.

The CASP-R is a structured approach to assess the non-abusing mother's or PC's capacity and ability to supervise a person of concern's interaction with a child at risk, her resilience to manipulation of potential vulnerabilities and her ability to meet the child's needs for safety, security and appropriate development in order to determine her capability to apply multiple roles (i.e. parent, partner, protector and supervisor) within the family system.

'Grounded in significant experience of direct practice with families who have experienced the sexual abuse of a child and supplemented by considerable knowledge and skills in supervising, training and mentoring professionals from a range of disciplines in this specialist area of practice, Gareth McGibbon and Marcella Leonard have distilled their expertise into this framework. Clearly written and underpinned by the latest thinking and research in relation to sexual offending, child protection, domestic violence and multi-disciplinary working, this framework is an essential and ground breaking piece of work. It seeks to empower a safe carer's capacity and ability to supervise and protect a child at risk of sexual or domestic violence, while recognising that the carer needs support and direction based on a comprehensive and dynamic assessment of the risk a child and their carer may be at, the carers ability to acknowledge and understand this and their receptiveness to advice and direction.'

Joint Event

34th International Conference on
Adolescent Medicine and Child Psychology

10th International Conference on
Pediatrics Research and Adolescent Medicine

March 20-21, 2023

Webinar

Biography

Marcella Leonard is Director of Leonard Consultancy and qualified as a social worker in 1989. She has specialised in assessment and treatment in the fields of sexuality, sexual deviancy and trauma with both victims and perpetrators. She coordinated the management of sex and violent offenders in Northern Ireland and has worked with several jurisdictions to establish their statutory management of sex and violent offenders. As Director of Leonard Consultancy, she works internationally including Abu Dhabi, Gibraltar, Australia, New Zealand, Norway as well as throughout UK and Ireland. She delivers specialist safeguarding training to sports, criminal justice, religious, educational, social care, voluntary and statutory organisations which includes assessing and managing sexual and violent risk, consultancy, strategic and safeguarding policy development. She undertakes Case Management Reviews for organisations, training safeguarding officers and assisting organisations strategically and operationally to have robust safeguarding for children and adults at risk. Her practice, as a therapist with victims and survivors, is grounded in a trauma informed humanistic approach which is also embedded in her training and consultancy work.

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