



THE
MINISTRY OF
PARENTING

PROMOTING CREATIVITY IN PARENTING SUPPORT

A COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY



Families Learning
about *Self Harm*

The FLASH Pre-Training Managers

“What you need to know”

Guide

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The training

Who is the training for?

Participants applying for this training must have a background in working with young adolescents and their families. They also need to have had working experience with self-harm. They need to have excellent interpersonal skills and an understanding of social learning theory.

Training requirements & levels

level	Professional & background requirement	Training	Supervision requirements
1 FACILITATOR	Background in working with young adolescents and their families. Have had working experience with self-harm. Excellent interpersonal skills and an understanding of social learning theory	3 Days FLASH Training Group Skills Training or equivalent	Recommended to have at least monthly clinical supervision and peer group supervision (if available)
2 APPROVED FACILITATOR	As above	As above, as well as supervision requirements	Supervision fortnightly with FLASH author or level 3 or 4 trainer for each full group
3 TRAINER	As above, as well as qualification in teaching in adult learning i.e., PETALS	As above, as well as co leading a training alongside a FLASH author or level 4 Trainer. If level 4 trainer, then video footage of training must be sent to Jeannie Gordon before approval	On-going supervision at least monthly with FLASH author or level 4 trainer. Attendance at FLASH consultation days (Where available)
4 STRATEGIC TRAINER	As above, as well as degree level qualification or equivalent professional experience. To hold position of strategic lead for their service area	As above, as well as co training alongside one of the FLASH authors	As above, as well as regular communication with the FLASH authors

The format of the training

The FLASH group programme content is presented as a three-day course. The training examines the underlying ethos and objectives of the programmes on a week-by-week basis.

Trainees are taken through the entire programme in chronological order, to provide a basic level of knowledge and skill that they can reflect upon when facilitating their own group. This also includes possible difficulties, experiential scenarios, and the opportunity for open discussion around the minutiae of running a FLASH parenting programme in practical terms. All course attendees will be provided with their own FLASH manual and supporting handouts are available on the Ministry of parenting web site.

<https://theministryofparenting.com/professional-resources/flash/>

To deliver the FLASH programme it is highly recommended that all trainees undertake a generic group skills course to equip practitioners with the skills required to facilitate in any kind of group scenario. The group skills course undertaken by the practitioner should include basic group dynamic theory, a variety of set tasks, group discussions and individual facilitation opportunities for each participant with both written and verbal feedback from the trainers.

Standards

All FLASH facilitators need to advocate professional standards. Standards are the 'point of reference', which underpins any exercise in quality assurance. As managers/ service leads /individual workers we should encourage ours/group facilitators to take ownership of these standards and incorporate those into their own formalised group standards.

All Group Facilitators should: -

- Work within national and Local County's Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults guideline.
- Believe in positive non-violent approaches to conflict and managing behaviour.
- Use a collaborative approach both with parents, peers, and partnership services.
- Build on parent strengths, not a teacher / client deficit model.
- Seek to set a quality assurance environment for the programme.
- Identify sources of further support for parents where appropriate.
- Link into local and national parenting networks.
- Undertake regular supervision.
- To become familiar with services to which parents can be referred to if necessary.

- Reflect on practice.
- Be accountable.
- Be able to develop strategies for handling sensitive issues and managing conflict.
- To be skilled in communicating.
- To encourage the implementation of the standards of good working practice, FLASH trainers should offer mentoring, supervision and support to group facilitators who undertake the FLASH training parenting programme

General objectives

By the end of the training learners will be able to: -

- Set specific goals for the learning
- Contribute to group discussion
- Gain a greater understanding of the practical demonstration to increase learning
- To experience the evaluation process of the workshop
- Reflect on and evaluate best practice
- Identify and make use of opportunities to develop and up-date practice and learn from others
- Have a wider knowledge, awareness and understanding of self-harm behaviours in young people.
- Understand the basic approaches to implementing a FLASH parenting group programme.
- Provide practical strategies for parents.
- To understand parent's needs and engagement requirements and how they can help the learner may meet these needs
- Understand resistance to praise - the difficulties of self and others to accept praise
- Understand the theory of praise elements: labelling praise and modelling self-praise
- Promote positive self-thinking
- Use specific encouraging statements versus nonspecific
- Gain and give support through praise

- Recognise social and self-regulation behaviours that need praise
- Build teenagers self-esteem through praise and encouragement
- Understand the principles of adult learning and home practice
- Understand how to model & prompt consequence strategies
- Understand the importance of new learning trials
- Avoid power struggles and misbehaviour responses and how to avoid power struggles
- Understand how natural and logical consequences increase teenager's sense of responsibility
- Understand the importance of parenting monitoring at all ages.
- Understand the importance of consequences being reasonable, related and respectful
- Understand the importance of reinforcing/ refuelling oneself and others
- Understand the group process of maintaining and ending groups

Delivery of a FLASH group

Who is the FLASH programme designed for?

FLASH stands for 'Families Learning About Self-harm'. This programme was designed to address young people's mental health issues by supporting young people who self-harm, through offering a formal parent-based intervention in the format of a parenting programme to their parents/carers. This is to enable the parent/carer to integrate the role of a parent with how to manage and support young people who exhibit self-harming behaviours.

The FLASH Parent Training Programme is a 10-week programme for parents and carers of young people 11 to 18 years of age where there are particular difficulties in relation to their young person self-harming behaviours. Parents are referred to a FLASH group when the teenager's self-harming behaviours are impacting on the family as a whole

How many sessions?

The Parenting Programme is comprised of ten sessions. The manual is designed to guide the group facilitator through the sessions. The manual provides an outline of what should be covered in each session and suggested resources to facilitate that process. The FLASH Parenting Programme includes the following ten sessions; an overview of the programme, what is self-harm, what are parent fears, the difference between suicide and self-harm, listening skills, praise and building self-esteem, walking on eggshells, consequences, managing difficult situations, looking after the family, putting it all together, evaluation and ending. The delivery of this information however should be tailored to each individual client group.

The goal of the group facilitator is to impart clinical, relevant information to each parent within a therapeutic group context.

Timing of the sessions

The average session for the FLASH parenting groups, is approximately two hours per session. Time, however, should be allowed for the setting up of the group, welcoming the parents, allowing time for parents to leave, and clearing up after the group. A time should also be given, preferably not on the same day as the group, for a full evaluation by the group facilitators.

What the Programme does not do

It does not promise parents that the programme will stop young people from self-harming but will help them to manage the situation better through increased understanding and empathy.

The Group Programme Topic Themes are:

Session 1	Introductory session- What are the actions of self-harm and risk-taking behaviours
Session 2	Teen Development
Session 3	Self-harm, reality, and fears
Session 4	Listening skills
Session 5	Raising self esteem
Session 6	Walking on eggshells (parenting styles)
Session 7	Consequences (limit setting)
Session 8	Managing the difficult times
Session 9	The others (self-harm effect on family members)
Session 10	Putting it all together and ending

The programme methods of learning include exercises, role-plays and discussions that focus on strengthening the relationship between the parent/carer and child. These include listening skills, giving praise, boundary setting and parenting styles.

Preparation

- **FLASH is always lead by two trained FLASH group facilitators**
- In preparation of running a FLASH programme group facilitator will need to advertise the group/course out to possible parents and linked practitioners. The ideal amount of time to start advertising for any group/course is around 3 months.
- The ideal number of parents on a group /course is 10-12 (unless venue dictates otherwise).
- A confirmation letter is sent to each parent giving start time and directions to venue.
- Each parent will be asked to complete a pre and post evaluation
- Group facilitators should aim to arrive at least one hour before the start of the group, this will give them plenty of time to make the room ready and have materials set up. Room style should be horseshoe. Group facilitators to be aware of your venue's housekeeping needs i.e. fire exits, toilets etc.

Recruitment to the FLASH

This is extremely difficult. Parents must overcome their concerns of stigma and blame before they are open to the possibility of looking at their own parenting issues. Therefore, we believe advertising is crucial. In promoting the group programme, the publicity is friendly, fun, and supportive, but also has a firm objective and aim. The recruitment of the programme, however, primarily comes from others, therefore marketing the programme to your team colleagues and external agencies is just as important as marketing it to the parents.

Workshops, advertisement in the team, word of mouth through team colleagues and a general feeling of enthusiasm towards the programme supports the recruitment process.

Support from senior management is crucial and awareness to relieve any additional stress or block to a parent attending the programme needs to be considered. Examples include travel and childcare arrangements and funding for each.

Group facilitator's needs

- Group facilitator's time – to prepare, set up, deliver, clean up, evaluate, and complete service requirements re client write ups. This time is reduced as group facilitators become familiar and confident with the FLASH content.
- Ensure that the group facilitators and someone at the venue have exchanged contact details especially mobile numbers. With the best will in the world accidents happen, and if group facilitators are delayed then this needs to be conveyed to the group/course participants.
- Group facilitators be aware of their services lone working policy.

The need to maintain the programmes fidelity.

1) Group facilitators are expected to follow the number of FLASH session (minimum is 10 sessions) and follow the programmes weekly session plans

2) Group facilitators are expected to ensure the parents complete weekly evaluation forms

3) Supervision and consultation are highly recommended. It is highly recommended that all participants attend the consultation sessions. It should be expected when working with families, that individual and family crises will arise. Experienced professional consultation/supervision is necessary to determine the best course of action at these times

Basic requirements

Venue: They say in life that everything is location, location, location! This is true also with parenting group programmes. For most parenting programmes, you will need a comfortable large, spacious room to seat between 8 and 16 parents. The venue needs to be

free from interruptions, but also free from preconceived ideas. For example, past experience has shown that certain statutory organisation's buildings can discourage the parent from attending. Issues, such as easy access, parking and bus routes etc. are all essential when finding a venue. Seating is a priority. The chairs need to be comfortable and arranged in a circle. A flip chart TV will be required.

Group size: Ideally the group should be large enough to enable the content of the course to flow comfortably. Awareness should be given to the complex difficulties some of the families are attending the group for. Therefore, large groups can be inhibiting for parents. Ideally the group facilitators should aim to complete the recommended amount of sessions being aware of a dropout rate of approximately 30 to 40 percent. For this it is suggested that the size of the group be aimed for approximately 14- 6 parents and with a natural dropout will ensure that the group ends with a comfortable number. All, participants, including group facilitators, should be counted within this number. Meetings with less than 4 parents cannot be considered a group programme as they will inevitably lean towards a therapeutic group rather than a parenting programme, which in turn affects the whole dynamic. Therefore, it is not recommended to go this low.

Experience has shown that the programme being held in the evening is more effective in targeting the male carer/parent. Programmes held in the day can exclude working parents and fathers/male carers.

Refreshments: These are very important in any group programme. It is strongly suggested that refreshments be treated with a great deal of respect, initiative and creativity. Each week, parents should be welcomed with a selection of hot or cold drinks. During the group sessions, refreshments should be different each week, be of the highest quality and standard. The refreshment should reflect to the parents the group facilitators' desire to make each parent feel very welcome, respected, and valued.

Budgeting the FLASH group costs

- Venue room rate if no access to a suitable in-house venue room; A large, comfortable room for appropriate amount of people with space for practical activities will be required. Arrange comfortable chairs in a semi-circle / horseshoe design with access to a flip chart
- Travel mileage to venue for group facilitators
- Refreshments for the parents (£10 per session approx.) and small reward items to encourage parental engagement
- Photocopies of handouts weekly for parents
- Postage costs for letters to parents

- Certificates for parents and a small gift items for completion the group/course
- Flip chart, paper, pens

Core cost:

2 members of staff time; including time for referral filtering, parental engagement time, session delivery and session planning. Approx. 6-8 hours per week including delivery time.

The cost does not include venue, any childcare or transport provision.

Referrers

It is of vital importance that the referrer is fully aware of the aim and function of the parenting programme. It is useful to send them relevant details of the group content. Once a group facilitator has the referral form, a personal phone call made to the parents before the session to acknowledge the referral form, has in our experience been very engaging.

Home visits

If time permits, home visits are a very effective way of engaging both partners or a single mother/father and friend. It does give the group facilitator a full understanding of the home situation. However, it will not guarantee the commitment for a parent to attend a parenting session. An introduction session is more of an indication. Awareness also needs to be made of the time commitment for home visits.

Safeguarding issues

All facilitators must work clearly within the guidelines and remit of both their services and their counties Safeguarding policy. It is very important that at the beginning of the group process this is made clear to all parents. This is explained in the introduction session. Any concern a group facilitator has needs to be given the greatest consideration. Discussion with both managers and co-facilitators and in supervision needs to be sought.

The Legal Framework of Confidentiality

Mental Health Act (83) Code of Practice (99)

- “Children’s rights to confidentiality should be strictly observed” (DoH; 1999)
- All professionals must have a clear understanding of their obligation of understanding of their obligation of confidentiality to children and make clear the limits of such an obligation to a child who has the capacity to understand them (DoH 1996)

The FLASH authors Position on Confidentially

- No child or adult may be offered a confidential service

Therefore:

- No child or adult can be offered complete confidentiality – where there are concerns about abuse or concerns that a child may be at risk of significant harm, information MUST be shared
- Social care services carrying out an assessment of a child under S.47 (Children Act, 1989 - child in need of protection) requesting information from a service can expect information to be shared
- Social care services carrying out an assessment of a child under S.17 (Children Act, 1989 - child in need) requesting information from a service can only expect information to be shared with the client's consent.

Basic Rule The interests of the child are paramount even where you have never met the child and the adult is your client

Practical factors

- Provision of paid-for transport to and from the service site (where not a home-based intervention), especially where low-income or rural families are the users
- Selection of a convenient location (e.g., a place where parents might want to go for other purposes)
- Non-stigmatising, comfortable and welcoming venues
- Delivery at convenient times (including evenings where there is a demand)
- Ensuring that the service is properly advertised and marketed, so that parents and agencies on whom referrals may depend on know about it

This table may be useful in considering FLASH group delivery requirements

	Own Service funded	Other funding source	No funding provided
Staff time lead facilitator			
Staff time Co- facilitator			
facilitator materials i.e., Lego pieces, Donuts, laminated sheets for group activities and flip chart notes			
Venue			
Evaluation forms			
Administration support			
Refreshments			
Handouts			
Small reward items			
Gifts & certificates for parents			
Flip chart stand, paper, and pens			
Transport			
Car parking arrangements			
Folders/paper/ pens etc.			

Insurance

If you are an employee, you should be covered by your services insurance

Insurance should include the staff, building, and parents and children (accidental damage, etc.). Most venues will have this built in but please check.

If you are not employed directly and implementing a group, you should have

- **Professional Indemnity Insurance;** professional malpractice
- **Public Liability Insurance:** protects you from your actions at work and covers you for any damages that a member of the public may be awarded as a result of injury or damages to them and their property (tripping, slipping etc)
- **Contents Insurance:** covers business items and therefore any personal possessions you require should be arranged by you under separate cover

Records

Maintain records of the parent names and contact details.

Health and safety requirements; First aid box, awareness of fire exits, etc. to ensure the safety of both staff and parents.

FLASH Programme outcome

improved child behaviour	Enabling parents to "Break the Cycle" of negative communication, through supporting parents to commit to learning about the emotional and development changes in adolescent, assessing and reducing their own negative responses to their adolescents and learn skills to know how to communicate effectively; set fair limits, recognition, and praise positive behaviour and how to make and maintain a healthy relationship with their adolescent.
improved parent/carer wellbeing	Parents who know about and are involved in their children's lives are less likely to have problem adolescents By supporting parents and significant others in the adolescent's life we aim to increase adult resilience skills and improved relationships which will then be transferred to the adolescent. The learning model is aimed at supporting the long-term understanding of the rationale for change.
reduced stress on families	Enabling family members to explore family functions, examine the processes by which the family operates as a whole, including communication and gain problem solving skills to address current adolescent and parent conflict. Content subjects to include listening skills, praise and encouragement, limit setting, and personal stress managing.

	By supporting the parent's families in the group sessions, parents will be empowered to identify their own problems, needs and solutions. In most cases, outcomes for adolescents will only be improved by supporting and assisting parents/significant others to make changes
improved child resilience, emotional wellbeing and mental health	Adolescents who feel connected to their family smoke fewer cigarettes, drink less alcohol, use less marijuana, start sex later and are less likely to be involved in violence. Providing interventions and information on subjects which impact on both adolescents' issues and family functioning, such as adolescent health, wellbeing, how families converse and how close the family members are. Family functioning is defined as the way in which the family members interact, react to, and treat other family members; it includes variables within the family such as communication styles, traditions, clear roles and boundaries, and the degree of fusion, flexibility, adaptation, and resilience. Resilience can be defined as "the ability and capability of individuals or families to display positive consequences given the stress and hardship associated with adverse and distressing situations". For adolescents this is not an individual process, but a family system process therefore family functioning and relationships plays an important role in family resilience.

Learning Methods

<u>Learning models</u>	<u>increased</u>
Tactile (discussion)	awareness on how the theory learnt can be transferred into practice
Kinaesthetic (role-play/games)	practice solutions to very realistic problems
Visual	learner involvement and intrinsic motivation
Homework tasks	Increased positive family time with adolescent

How is the FLASH programme evidence based?

The FLASH programme is eclectic in its approach and is underpinned by a range of theoretical teachings.

- 1) The Social Learning Theory underpins everything in FLASH. Role-modelling is absolutely key to what we ask facilitators to do, and every session has this essential factor i.e. if we praise the parents they will in turn praise their children, if we reward them they will then reward their children. Social learning theory is derived from the work of Albert Bandura that proposes that social learning occurred through four main stages of imitation: close contact, imitation of superiors, understanding of concepts, role-model behaviour.
- 2) The FLASH programme is also underpinned by Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) as a thread in its theoretical basis (it is what we think that effects how we feel which effects how we behave). By helping parents change their thinking (e.g. Through the FLASH content: Road to Independence, Types of Parents) we are changing their behaviours.
- 3) The FLASH programme has considerations also from the behaviourist school of thought i.e., Pavlov in that we are proposing rewards via praise in order to increase the behaviours we want to see more of.
- 4) Solution Focussed Therapy (Kim Berg & Steve De Shazer ,1978), Structural Family Therapy (Minuchin,1974) and Systemic Family Therapy (Gregory Bateson, Milan Team) i.e., in the FLASH feedback and discussion sections we are asking parents to identify what worked before and see that they already have the solutions to what they are facing and this fits with the solution focussed school. Minuchin spoke a lot about the importance of the structural hierarchy in the home and we are reinforcing this by putting the parents in charge. The Milan team looked at the family as a system and how by making changes in one part of the system you in turn instigate change in the whole system. Teenage challenging behaviours are systemic issues and will not be effectively dealt with by focussing on just the presenting problem. In FLASH we are seeking to bring about a first order change by changing the way the parents think and act which will have a systemic knock-on effect to the whole system.
- 5) The philosophy of the FLASH Programme was influenced by Carolyn Webster-Stratton's principles and The Incredible Years Series. The content of this curriculum is based on the experiences of the clinical and research efforts by numerous therapists and colleagues in Essex, the United Kingdom and Worldwide. The philosophy advocates a collaborative approach to training, and this relationship is the underlying structure for the training/teaching intervention. The model's foundational base is on interacting with attendees (parents). This requires the facilitator (trainer) to be open in their communication pattern and accepting differences. By building a relationship not based on authority but on a rapport with each person, the facilitator is able to build an environment of trust; thus, making the attendee (parent) feel safe and able to experiment with the strategies offered. Emphasis is placed on what the parent is doing well and empowering the parent to then take the next step in improving what they feel they are not doing as well on.
- 6) To cultivate this within a learning model for the FLASH programme the authors promote the notion of constructive learning. The constructivist approach developed by Shuell (1992) is a framework to teaching and learning based on the premise that cognition (learning) is the result of "mental construction." In other words, attendees (parents) learn by fitting new information

together with what they already know. Constructivists believe that learning is affected by the context in which an idea is taught as well as by attendee's beliefs and attitudes. Bostock (1999) describes the ideology of this model as "This learning requires psychological processes which link theory and practice". This model coincides with the internalization of the learning principle which attendees are encouraged to adopt in parent groups settings. This is supported by Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) who note that to obtain the most effective learning; you have to be in the milieu of the learning object.

7) In the process of the implementation of FLASH, the theory base of Kolb (1984) in learning styles is reflected in the range of activities and homework tasks i.e., in the listening skills session, parents are put in pairs and given an exercise of listening to your partner, this is an example of experiential Learning. There is also an understanding of Group Development which is based on the work of Tuckman (1965).

The course programme aims, and content does not focus specifically on a set behaviour but rather on the relationships and behaviours within the home and family. This is implemented by supporting the parent to have greater empathy with their young person. The content sessions i.e., making the change listening skills, praise and raising self-esteem aid this in the earlier stages of the programme.

The middle content sessions (walking on eggshells, logical consequences) support the parent to make effect limits (again with empathy and awareness). The later sessions (managing the difficult times, the others) provide practical information so the parent can make limits/ choices and networks based on their personal value system and within sound and safe limits. The "group process" and the "environment" in which the parents learn are relevant to the effectiveness of the change in the parents learning. Maslow (1965, 1998) developed a hierarchy of human needs in which he argued that humans need to have a sense of belonging before learning to understand. To belong we need to feel part of a community (McMillan and Chavis, 1986, cited in Rovai 2002, pg. 3). The definition of community; "Feeling that members have a belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group and shared faith that member needs will be met through their commitment to being together".

The FLASH authors have been influenced by the work of Rovai (2002), who describes the essential element of community as being mutual interdependence among members, sense of belonging, connectedness and overlapping histories among members. Therefore, the group leader scaffolds knowledge and understanding to encourage the parents learning i.e., provide guidelines (ground rules) at the start of the group, awareness of group dynamics and emotional wellbeing etc. During the feedback sessions the parents have time to share, question and debate with each other their experiences, views and understanding of the FLASH content and are able to reflect on how the theory learnt can be transferred into practice.

For further information please contact administration@theministryofparenting.com