

'Think family' family focused pilot – Down sector South Eastern health and Social Care Trust.

Following several months of preparation, the Think Family Pilot, commenced at the beginning of September 2014. The Pilot is operational in the Down sector and involves the Community Mental Health Team, the Acute Mental Health In-Patient Unit and the Addictions Service, both community and in-patient.

A multi-agency approach has been adopted to assist with the implementation of this pilot to include the HSCB, Action for Children, Mindwise, Cause, SBNI and Family and Childcare services.

To prepare staff for the commencement of the pilot, awareness sessions were arranged and attended by all organisations involved. These sessions focussed on the objectives and proposed outcomes of the pilot and enabled staff to be at ease in asking more specific questions relating to childcare issues and caring roles as part of the mental health assessment. Current documentation was amended based on the 'Family Model' (Falkov 2012) which helped prompt staff to identify areas of concern regarding the family composition and/or child concerns. Whilst staff initially were somewhat apprehensive to this relatively new approach and to what appeared to be a more involved role with young children, they gradually felt prepared for this extended function within their current role.

A briefing paper has been written to assist staff with the implementation of the 'Caring For Parents With Mental Illness' model (COPMI, Falkov 2012) and to help them with a Family Focused Assessment (FFA).

A think family pilot project team was established chaired by Mary Donaghy – 'Think family' lead – CYPSP on a two weekly basis. Representation on the project team include lead Nurse, Senior management from mental health, addictions and children's service, Teams leader from all 3 services attend. Representation from SBNI, Psychology is also represented. There is representation from social work training team and safeguarding specialist. There is also representation from and voluntary organisations such as Mindwise, Action for children and cause.

Work completed to date

Since commencement of pilot all assessment documentation used by stakeholders has been amended to reflect COPMI

Workshops have been facilitated by Dr Falkov. A guidance document has been developed for Mental Health staff.

Training has been co facilitated for staff with in mental, addictions and children's service by Social work training team, safe guarding and Consultant Psychiatrist – Dr Paddy Moynihan

A5 cards have been produced that are visual prompts representation of the 'Think family' model for use during everyday practice.

Information packs are in the process of being developed that will include pertinent information that will support parents and families.

In February 2015 a 'Think family' practitioner was appointed for 1 year to work alongside staff in mental health team both community and in patients unit , addiction and children's services. This has been a very exciting development for the pilot for both the new practitioner and staff from all services

Since Emma took up post, Emma has met all local teams in the Down sector area which include CMHT staff, Mental health centre staff, day hospital staff and home treatment team, Staff in hospital and community in addictions and She has shadowed staff during the assessment process in mental health and has a better understanding of the referral process and the patients journey through the various teams. Emma will base herself in mental health assessment centre and will be accessible to staff, this already has generated staff discussion and onward referral to Emma.

Emma would report that her engagement with staff has been very positive to date and is really excited about the work that the pilot will generate and the potential for the pilot.

Staff would report that they see Emma as an excellent resource to support their work with families and supporting this family focused approach

Further training is planned for staff in April 2015 – under the headings

- Infant mental
- Helping parents parent
- Communication with children

This will be facilitated by 'Think family practitioner' and Staff from knocknashina family centre and Anne Grant. Lecturer School of Nursing and Midwifery team, Queens University Belfast.

On speaking to staff now almost 6 months into the pilot mental health staff would report that the COPMI changes to the assessment documentation has supported their practice, which has a family focused approach.

There is excellent evidence of interagency working also and it is acknowledged that co-location of mental health team, family intervention team and health visitors especially in the Newcastle health centre which is a good working model that supports effective team working and has a positive impact on parents and families .

'I feel the CMHT in Newcastle have a working excellent relationship with the Newcastle Family Intervention Team. We share a large office and this means communication is very good. We are able to have frequent face to face discussions about clients and any queries can be resolved quickly. If the FIT are looking some information on a client attending appointments or what risks are involved CMHT are able to check Maxims and get them this information quickly. the FIT are also an excellent source of information if the CMHT need clarification about a case and discussions can be held about the best way forward.' **John McNally CPN CMHT Newcastle**

It is my opinion as well as my team's opinion that the working relationship between Newcastle FIT and Newcastle CMHT is excellent. As we are based within the same office within Newcastle Community Services I find our information sharing is of a high standard due to on-going effective communication and is also very valuable to the service we offer to our clients. Through working very closely with CMHT I find that the service that is offered to our clients is holistic and should we have any queries regarding our clients care we can have direct conversations with CMHT and issues are resolved easily. **Laura Lurring Social worker FIT Newcastle**

Donna Mills

Team leader