Solihull Approach
Early Years
The Child Psychotherapy Trust 1999 states that:

‘The first few months and years of life are a sensitive period when children develop attachments and learn about emotions and social interactions in their family. This lays the foundations for future social, emotional and cognitive development. Children who do not have secure relationships early in life are at greater risk of significant mental health problems, education difficulties or conduct disorders.’
How the Solihull Approach developed

• Motivated by health visitors reviewing practice – began in 1996
• Joint venture with psychotherapy, psychology and health visiting
• Bottom up approach with managerial support
• Developed by different professional groups working together
• Training of health visitors in Solihull
• Supported by research – specific projects
• Theoretical framework gradually developed
• Developed into open learning resource in 2001
• Evolves with professional practice
• Model used by other professional groups working with children and their families
• Requests for training from professionals nationally
Ice Breaker

• A-Z childcare

In your groups use the flipchart paper and pens to write your own A-Z of childcare! Each word must be something associated with the sector or your daily roles.
The Solihull Approach Model – Supporting Relationships to Improve Outcomes

Psychoanalytic theory (Bion)

Containment

Reciprocity

Child Development research (Brazelton)

Behaviourism (Skinner)

Behaviour management
Brain development

Develops first. Controls basic essential functions (blood pressure, temperature, heart rate)

Midbrain
Controls appetite and sleep

Develops last. Logic, planning and cognition. We edit and adapt our impulsive reactions. Cortex is connected to the limbic system by the orbitofrontal cortex, receiving information from internal bodily states and the external environment

Alarm system especially amygdala - seat of impulse and emotions
Baby brain development and emotional health

Birth

- Needs met through CONTAINING, RECIPROCAL relationship with main carer
  - NO Abusive/neglectful situation continues
  - YES Appropriate stimulation/external environmental factors
    - YES Pruning of less used pathways, voluntary control emerges. Concentration skills improve. Learning takes place.

3 years

- Hyperaroused infant
- Dissociated infant

Hyperaroused or dissociated infant

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Brain development and children’s mental health

• Early experience determines which parts of the brain grow and which parts of the brain do not

• Memories of early experiences, especially strongly emotional ones, are not dependent on conscious processes

• Early exposure to negative experiences e.g. abuse and neglect, limits long-term capacity to regulate feelings

• Good early attachment to primary caregiver serves to promote resilience to later traumatic experiences
DVD bit
The Solihull Approach
Definition of containment

Containment is where a person receives and understands the emotional communication of another without being overwhelmed by it and communicates this back to the other person. This process can restore the ability to think in the other person.
Physical containment

‘Whenever I changed her nappy she would cry and wave her arms about. The more her arms moved, the more frantic her crying became. Eventually it occurred to me that she could have no idea what arms were, that they were attached to her, and that perhaps she was terrified by the feelings of insecurity and boundlessness. I began wrapping her shawl quite tightly round her and this seemed to calm her. I suppose it felt more like being held.’

The physical holding of a baby is important and may be the precursor to the experience of being mentally held.

Emotional containment

Emotional containment is like feeling full of a problem, telling someone who listens and understands and then feeling the problem is in perspective, rather than going round and round in your head. The other person may not have said anything to help solve the problem but, by their attention and understanding, they have restored your ability to think about the problem, instead of feeling overwhelmed by it.
The Solihull Approach
Reciprocity describes the sophisticated interaction between a baby and an adult where both are involved in the initiation, regulation and termination of the interaction. Reciprocity can also be used to describe the interaction within all relationships.
The Dance of reciprocity

- Acceleration
- Peak of excitement
- Deceleration
- State of attention
- Orientation
- Initiation
- Withdrawal or turning away
Rupture and repair

• Getting out of step in the dance (RUPTURE) but adjusting to get back into step (REPAIR) = Normal
• We experience that things can still get back on track

Repeated rupture **WITH** repair

Develop hope, optimism, belief things get better, self esteem, self worth, trust in others

**Good quality relationships**

Repeated rupture **WITHOUT** repair

Don’t develop self worth, self esteem or trust in others

? Quality of relationships
Activity – parents/child perspectives

• On your table you will find a laminated card with a scenario on. Use your flipchart paper to think about how the person would feel going through this situation.

• We will feed back after 5 minutes.
The Solihull Approach
Definition of behaviour management

Behaviour management is part of the ordinary process of normal development whereby parents teach their child self-control, thus enabling the child to participate in society. Parents in well-functioning families work together to place reasonable boundaries on the child’s behaviour. They encourage the child with attention and other rewards. Gradually, the child becomes able to internalise both the restraints and the satisfactions for himself. It also facilitates learning and development.
• Sensitive and effective behaviour management is a product of containment and reciprocity therefore placed at the end of the process

• Customised to parent child relationship
Behaviour management and containment

Behaviour management can be considered as another form of containment. Through the setting of clear boundaries, the parent is helping the infant to:

• Tolerate frustration
• To wait
• To learn that the child may not always be able to have what they want
• To share and not have sole possession of something
Reciprocity is also part of behaviour management, in that different children will respond to different ways of being managed. The parents’ understanding of their child and the child’s interaction with them is important in successful behaviour management - thus it is important for the parents to be in tune with their child. So behaviour management is best done in the context of containing and reciprocal relationship.
Case Study – Mrs Perry

• On your tables you will find a case study entitled ‘Mrs Perry’. Take some time to read through this case study and discuss how containment and reciprocity might affect the behaviour and the subsequent strategies used by a parent to deal with the behaviour.
Solihull Approach: Aim

- Increased quality of relationships
- Increased brain development
- Increased social skills
- Increased emotional regulation
- Decreased behaviour difficulties

Leading to increased emotional health and well being
How does the model provide a way of supporting relationships from conception onwards?

• Relationships are at the heart of the model
• It is low cost so it can be used in times of austerity!
• It builds on people’s current skills
• It is extending to cover all professional groups that work with children
How does the model provide a way of supporting relationships from conception onwards?

- It covers both practitioners and parents
- It covers all age groups from antenatally to late adolescence
- The antenatal programme introduces the parents to their baby as well as covering pain and birth positions
- The face to face antenatal and parenting programme has been translated into an online course
Solihull Approach in different areas

• Training has been carried out in hundreds of areas of the UK, including Solihull, England, Scotland, Wales and N Ireland
• Large organised programme in Scotland
• All N Ireland health visitors being trained
• Small pilots internationally: Iceland, New York, Islamabad, Portugal, Turkey, Peru, Barbados, Gibraltar, Ghana
Across the workforce

• Solihull 2 day Foundation training for practitioners:
  – for midwives and antenatal practitioners, health visitors, nursery nurses, school nurses, Children’s Centres, teachers,
  – for social work teams and fostering and adoption social workers, firefighters, prison staff
Across the workforce

• Group facilitation 1 day training
  - Antenatal parenting group
  - Postnatal group
  - Postnatal plus group
  - Parenting group

• Refresher 1 day training

• Seminars
  - Brain Development
  - Attachment
  - Understanding Trauma

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Range of Resource Packs and Group Facilitation Manuals

**Resource Packs**
Prerequisites: None

**Group Facilitators’ Manuals**
Prerequisites: 2 Day Foundation Training and group facilitator training
Range of Training Manuals

Training Manuals
2-Day Foundation Training Manuals
Prerequisites: 2 Day Foundation Training and Train the Trainer
- 2 Day Foundation Trainers’ Manual
- Fostering & Adoption Foundation Trainers’
- Antenatal 2 Day Trainers’

Train Others to Facilitate Groups Manuals
Prerequisites: 2 Day Foundation Training, group facilitator training and Train the Trainer
- Antenatal Parenting Group Facilitator Training Trainers’
- Foster Carer Course Facilitator Training Trainers’
- Parenting Group Facilitator Training Trainers’

Solihull Approach Plus Manuals
Prerequisites: 2 Day Foundation Training (plus persc)
- Attachment Seminar Trainers’ Manual
- Brain Development Seminar Trainers’

Whole School Training Manuals
Prerequisites: 2 Day Foundation Training or Whole School Training and Train the Trainer
- Whole School Training Trainers’ Manual

Workshop for Parents
Prerequisites: 2 Day Foundation Training
- Workshop for Parents of Adolescents Trainers’ Manual
- Workshop for Parents of Young Schoolchildren Trainers’ Manual

Peer Breastfeeding Supporter Training
Prerequisites: 2 Day Foundation Training
- Peer Breastfeeding Supporter Training Trainers’ Manual
Website for practitioners

www.solihullapproachparenting.com
Contact details

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Group Training in the Solihull Approach:
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Bringing staff together

• Solihull Approach provides a shared model
• Provides a shared language
• Builds on the current skills and experience of staff
• Brings staff together
• With the parenting programmes, brings staff together with parents
• With the whole school training brings teachers together with parents

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