

# Systemic Practice in Family and Childcare

Megan Quinn

BHSCT

[megan.quinn@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:megan.quinn@belfasttrust.hscni.net)



# Professional Background

Social Worker: Gateway  
SEHSCT

Family Group Conference  
Lead Coordinator SEHSCT

Senior Mental Health  
Practitioner CAIT CAMHS  
BHSCT

Systemic Practitioner  
(Foundation and  
Intermediate Level  
Systemic Practice Family  
Therapy)

Trainee Systemic  
Psychotherapist  
(Masters Level)

# SYSTEMIC PRACTICE AND ASSESSMENT

Beyond a tick box exercise

Understanding context over time

Narrative perspective of value being placed on their story being told

Consideration of the strength and complexity of relationships

Promotes a positive professional relationship

# Case Vignette

- Gateway Referral from PSNI regarding Domestic Incident
- Newborn baby at home
- Physical violence from the father to the mother
- Disclosures that this was not first incident, assaults during pregnancy
- Proceeded to Initial Child Protection Case Conference

# SYSTEMIC PRACTICE AND RISK

---

Does not negate the professional role of safeguarding or statutory responsibility

---

Views risk as interactive between parents, children and professionals

---

Supports finding language for the family to have conversations around understanding risk

---

Risk continues to be managed via social work intervention as is proportionate



# SYSTEMIC PRACTICE AND SAFETY

---

Not risk blind

---

Explicitly addresses abusive behaviour

---

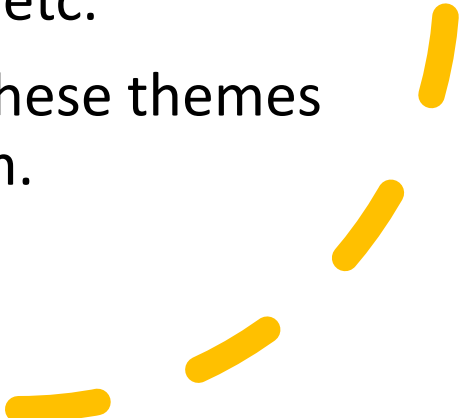
Informed by knowledge, evidence base and experience

---

Encourages co-production in a tangible way as conversations around safety are recursive

# Family Experience

*“Thank you for how I was treated, how I was listened to and how we could discuss what is best for my baby”*

- Family and Childcare social work is complex, challenging and intense
  - There are multiple ‘stakeholders’, considering the children, parents, extended family, and various professionals involved
  - Themes emerging applicable across similar referrals of intimate partner violence: blame, shame, isolation, regret, coercion, avoidance, anger, aggression, manipulation, risk, fear, worry, desperation, cautious of professionals etc.
  - How to use systemic practice to hold these themes while managing risk of significant harm.
- 

SYSTEMIC  
CONCEPTS THAT  
ENHANCED MY  
PRACTICE

