Analysis is recognised by practitioners and researchers alike to be an element of assessment which has been found to be lacking in contemporary assessment practice.


The DoH Framework and analysis

• workers felt "anxious, ill-prepared and poorly equipped for the task of analysis"
• 38% - nothing under "Analysis"
• 43% - where recorded actually narrative
• As a consequence “social workers wanted more training on analysis”


Analysis

• The resolution or breaking up of anything complex into its various simple elements
• The opposite process to synthesis
• The exact determination of the elements or components of anything complex

Oxford English Dictionary

Analysis in child welfare and protection

“The ability to break down the different elements within the family situation and the wider community, in order to understand the relationship between the various factors that are impacting on the child, the weight to give to each factor and how they might be changed or influenced. Using information intelligently and constructing a narrative and hypotheses which can be tested and retested are a daily part of the social worker’s task.”


Why analysis?

• deliberation over different elements in a situation in a systematic / organised way
• uses selected information in a precise way
• encourages openness about reasoning therefore potentially holds any work open to scrutiny

10 pitfalls in assessment

- Verificationism
- Poor recording
- A focus on the “concrete and tangible”
- Not giving sufficient weight to info from family, friends and neighbours
- Insufficient attention paid to what children say, how they look and behave
- Insufficient engagement with parents
- Older children left at risk
- Insufficient supervision and support
- Poor communication
- Case responsibility diluted in multi-agency working


The Cyclical Process of Assessment

Gathering Information → Decision Making → Reviewing & Evaluating

Making sense of information → Moving into action

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A Continuum of judgement styles

Intuition Analysis


Matching judgement to task

Intuition Analysis

Multiple fallible indicators Fewer, more reliable indicators
Limited time for judgement More time for judgement
Unconscious thinking Awareness of thinking


Analysis = Making sense of information

• Information in child welfare and protection is likely to be complex, contested and open to many different interpretations.
• Theories used (such as attachment) are informal and therefore very malleable
• Practitioners therefore need to be conscious of their reasoning style

Barriers to analysis

• Complexity of information
• Time available
• Anxiety and risk
• Evidence base
• Serious/Significant Case Review (SCR) focus on governance

Supporting intuitive judgement

• Challenging bias
• Explicit values (child focus)
• Dialectics
• Supporting pattern recognition (Start again syndrome”)
• Learning from experience

Learning from experience

• Critical reflection
• Anxiety and learning
• Serious/Significant Case Reviews and the Systems Approach
Developing and Supporting Analysis

- Provide the tools for the job
- Support from line managers
- Developing a learning culture
- Assume nothing, believe nobody, check everything?
- The "pre mortem"
- Client-centred practice and partnership
- Methodical doubt

Dealing with uncertainty

- Respectful uncertainty
- Routine scepticism
- Methodical doubt

Making sense of information - Dialectics


Making sense of dialectics

Develop a framework for supporting analysis in practice

- Each table has paper and pens
- You have 30 minutes to discuss how best to support accurate empathic analysis in child and family assessments
- Each table will give a brief presentation (5 minutes) of their findings
- Think about what works well already and what can be developed further
- Use the ecological model to think about what supports analysis at each level

The way forward
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