

breaking
the cycle
for baby's sake



THE STEFANOU
SF
FOUNDATION



Judith Rees
Director

The Stefanou Foundation

- Philanthropically established by Stelio Stefanou
- Priority to promote wellbeing of very young and the very old, suffering or at risk, unable to tell
- Catalytic philanthropy – work with partners to address the root cause of complex challenges and disrupt cycles of disadvantage, trauma and poor outcomes – for individuals and across generations



Why For Baby's Sake?

- A priority for the Stefanou Foundation is to protect babies who are vulnerable and have no voice
- Domestic abuse in the critical first 1001 days of life profoundly affects long-term life chances – and is the biggest factor in children's social workers' caseloads
- Wanted to create a lasting solution, sensed the answer was a new whole family approach, harnessing motives of parents – breaking the cycle *For Baby's Sake*



Why For Baby's Sake?

- Unique, holistic, therapeutic support to:
end abusive & unhealthy behaviours;
- overcome unresolved childhood trauma;
- understand the importance of Attachment focused parenting and
- develop strategies to provide a safe, secure and loving home where children can flourish.



The cost to children experiencing Domestic Abuse

Around one in five children in the UK experiences domestic abuse during their childhood and this can have a profound impact on the rest of their lives.

Research has shown that exposure to domestic abuse in the critical first 1001 days of life, from conception to the age of two, is especially damaging for babies as they develop.

Scientists have identified early attachment, starting when babies are in the womb, as the foundation upon which future childhood, adolescent and adult relationships are formed.

Domestic abuse can undermine parents' ability to provide the consistent, sensitive and responsive caregiving that babies and young children need, especially where the parents did not receive it themselves when they were children.

Domestic Abuse is a Public Health Issue

Children who experience domestic abuse ...

Are more likely to have problems with social development and relationships (52%)

Are more likely to exhibit abusive behaviours themselves (at a rate of 42%)

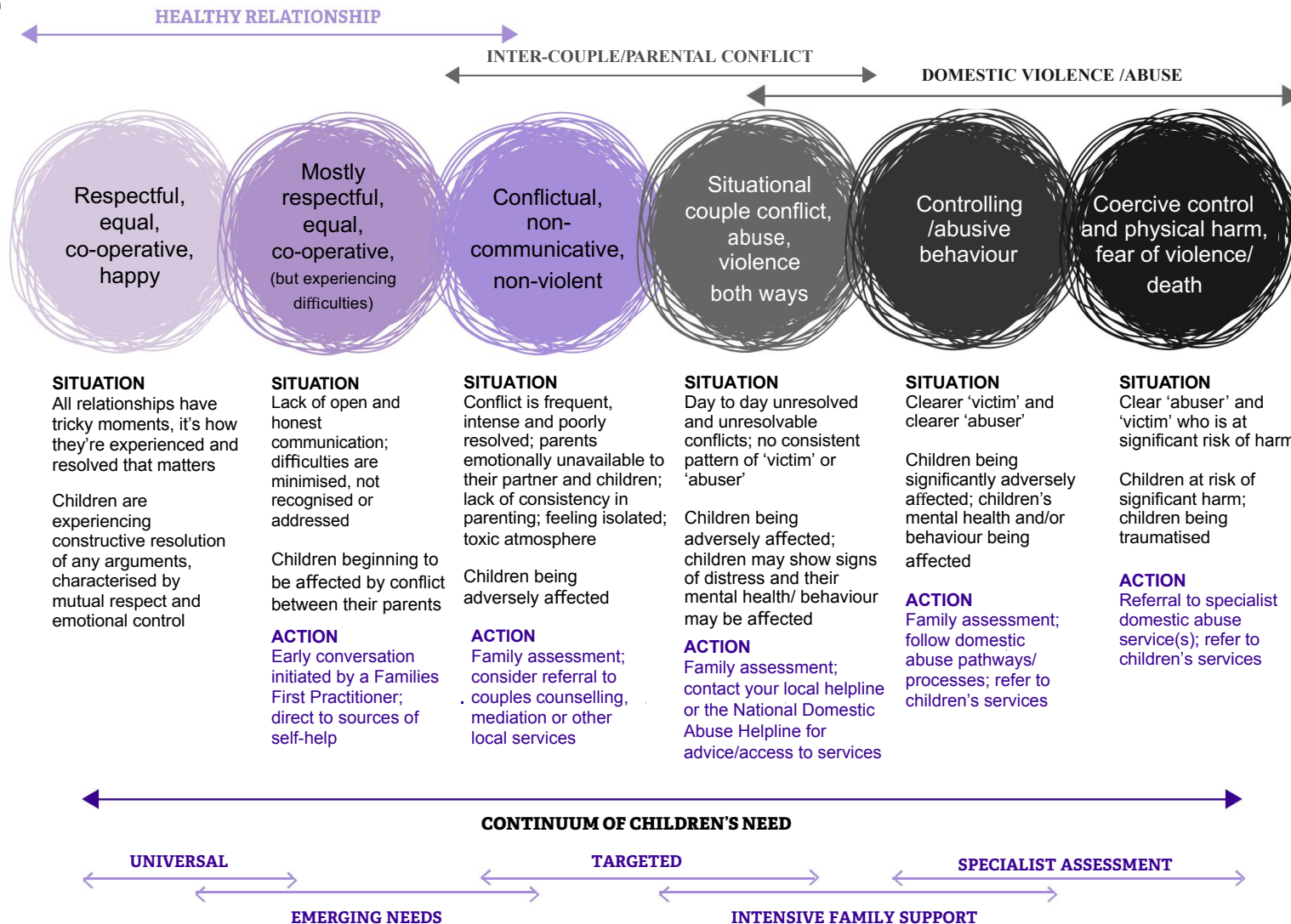
Have a lower IQ (by 8 children exposed to DA from birth to 2 have 7.25 points lower IQ on average)

Struggle at school - 40% of primary school children having lower reading abilities than those from homes without domestic violence

Are at greater risk of substance misuse, teenage pregnancy and criminal behaviour later in life

Are more likely to experience mental health problems, such as depression.

Parental Relationships Spectrum*



Adapted by the Stefanou Foundation from the model* developed by Dr Mark Farrall, Ignition Creative Learning Limited

www.stefanoufoundation.org

Theories about Domestic Abuse

Biological perspective: 'That is the way men are'

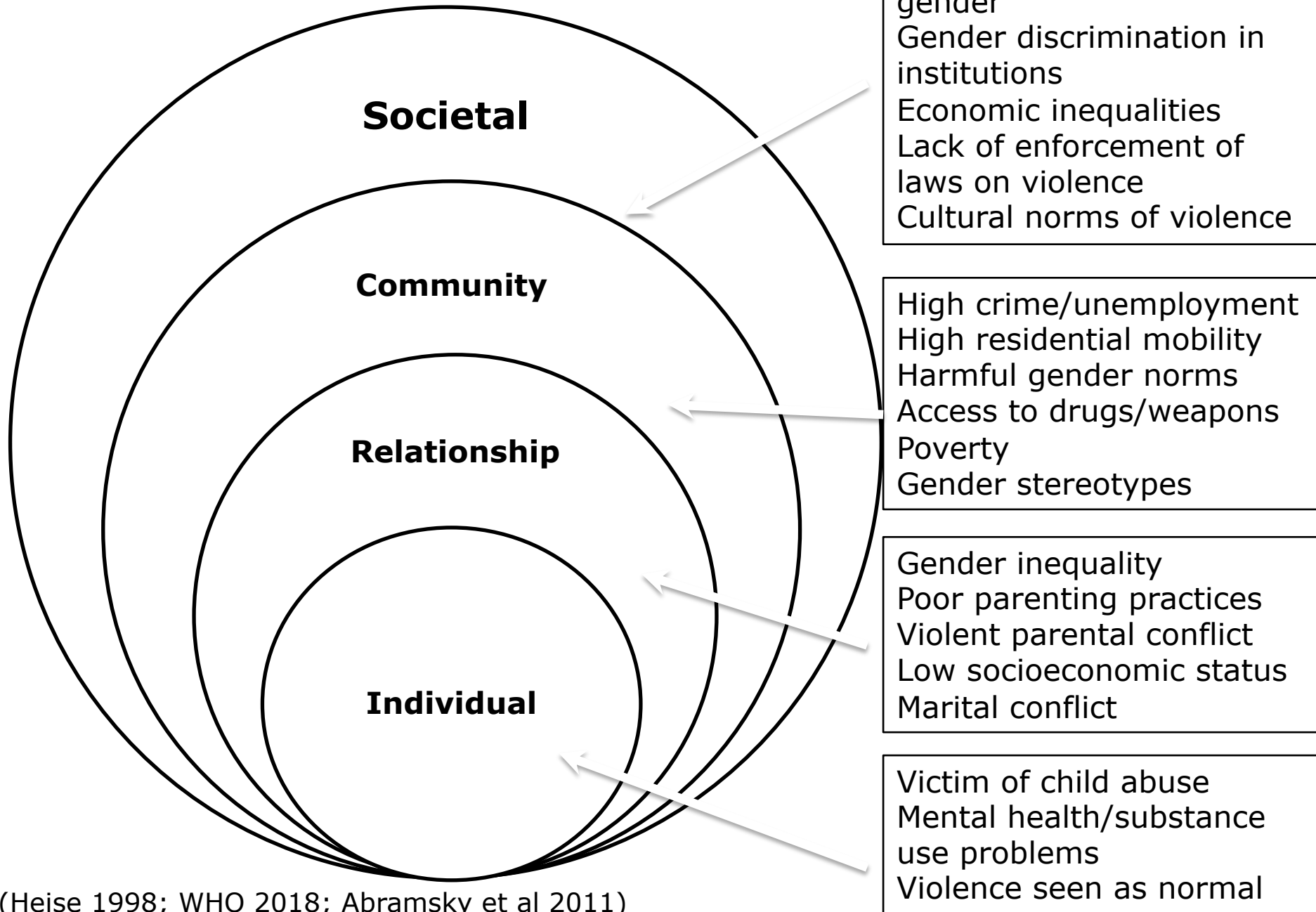
Psychodynamic: 'It's just beyond my will'

Feminist/ Socio-political: Patriarchy-
domination of women by men inc
structural/cultural

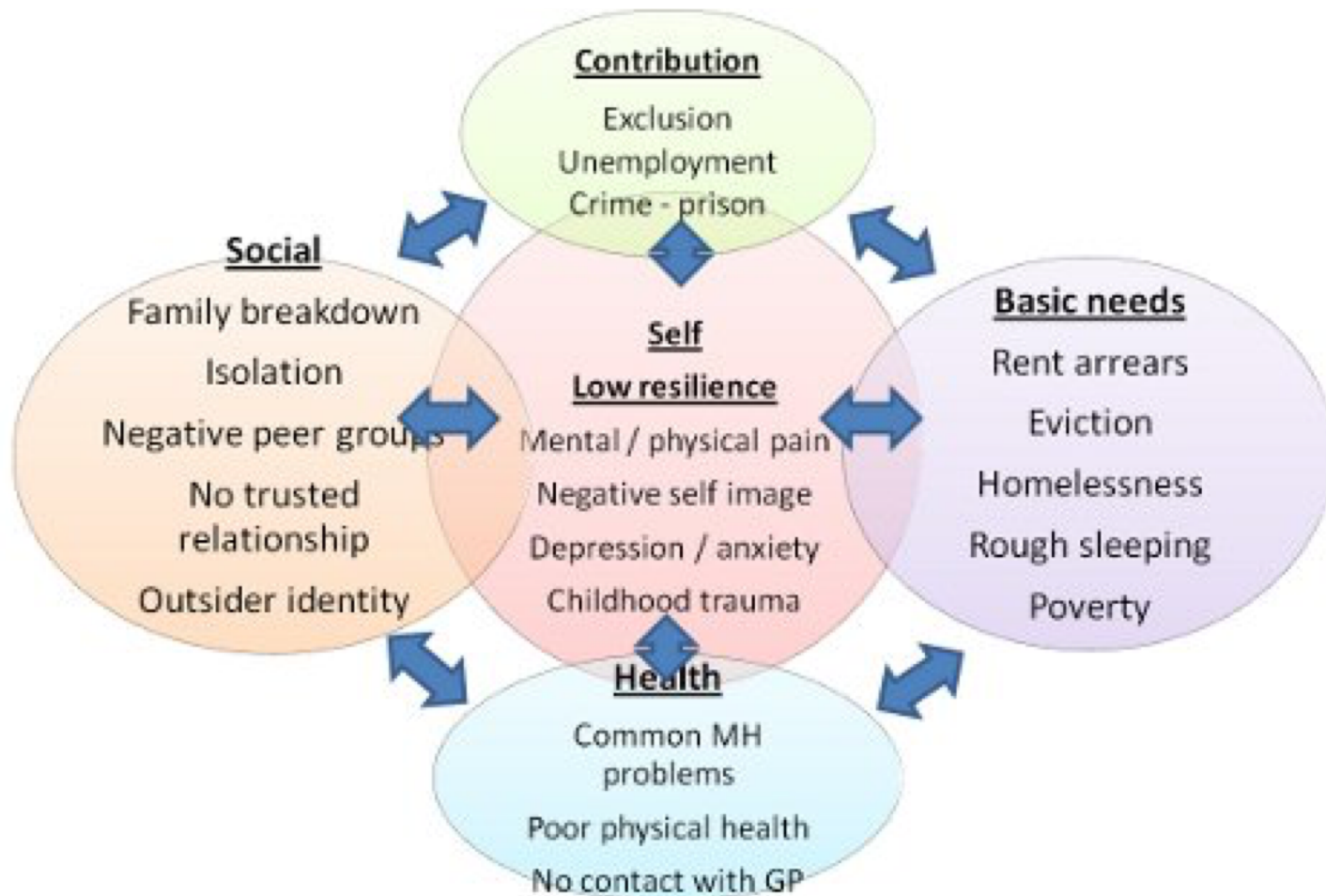
'All men around here are like that'

Ecological: combination of factors-all of the
above

Ecological model



Multiplicity of Needs



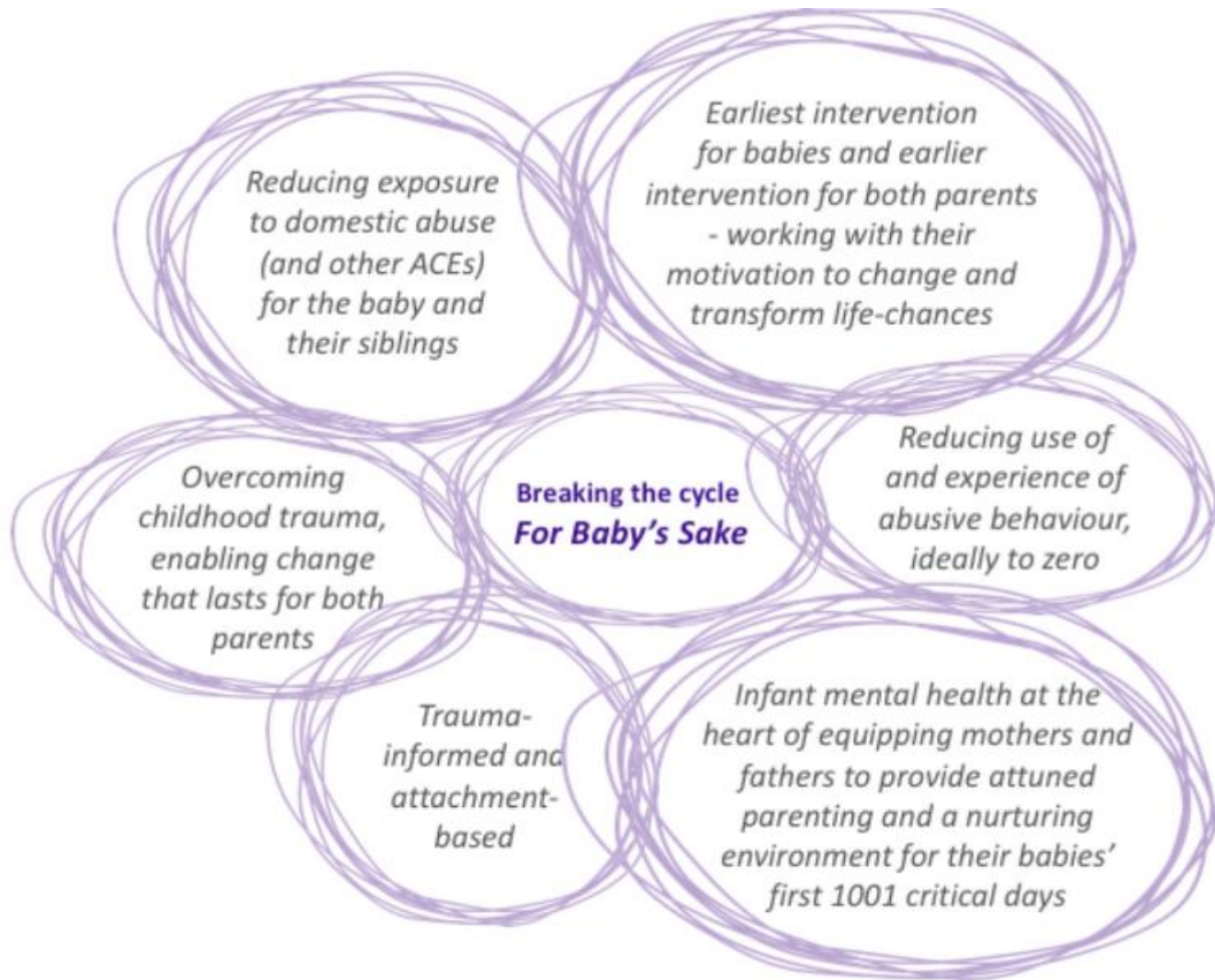
Team effort to create and refine *For Baby's Sake*

- Co-designers – three national experts and innovators:
 - ❖ Roxane Agnew-Davies, Mark Coulter, Christine Puckering
- Host partners in prototype sites (launched in 2015):
 - ❖ Hertfordshire; London (Westminster; Kensington & Chelsea; Hammersmith & Fulham)
- New sites (2019): Cambridgeshire; Blackpool
- Evaluation team, led by King's College London
- Stefanou Foundation:
 - ❖ Senior Leadership Team; specialist *For Baby's Sake* Teams



For Baby's Sake: key features

- A programme for both parents, whether or not they are together as a couple
- Join during pregnancy; support may last until baby is 2
- Manualised, modular, delivered flexibly
- Unique three way support: end the abuse; process their trauma; enable both parents to support the baby's emotional development and secure attachment
- Harnessing motives of mum and dad during pregnancy
- Safety first, trauma-informed, attachment-focused



Why trauma- informed?

- Women's experiences of trauma: childhood trauma, primary experience of domestic abuse and secondary victimisation all impact on mental health

Dr Roxane Agnew-Davies

- Those with 4 or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are 8 times more likely to have been a victim of violence in past yr, or incarcerated, or 10 times more likely to have been a perpetrator of violence in past yr

Prof Mark Bellis

Ask about Adverse Childhood Experiences

“What is wrong with this parent?” is not the right question. Instead ask, “What happened to this parent?” Then, “What is the best response?”

Not talking about ACE's may send the wrong message that they should be ashamed of their childhood experiences. Shame can increase risk of intergenerational transmission because it reinforces one of the pathways for transmission- avoidance

Sharing their personal histories is part of the healing process

So the most important thing parents can do is to manage their own feelings. Self-regulation by adults is a first step to help their children self-regulate themselves

ACEs - <http://www.aces.me.uk/in-england/>



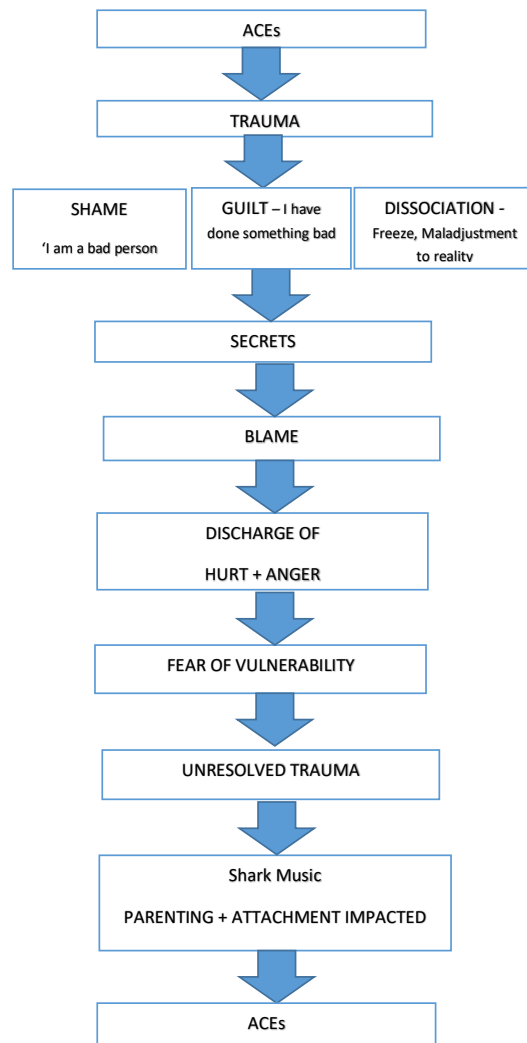
Shame Lens Presentation of *For Baby Sake*

What is needed?

- Hope
- Compassion
- Empathy
- Courage
- Ability to tell the story
- Positive Self talk
- Understanding triggers
- Resilience
- Connections

How is it delivered in *For Baby's Sake*?

- Underpinned by Attachment Theory
- Trauma focussed
- Through a 'shame lens'
- Motivational Interviewing
- Transactional analysis
- Gestalt theory
- C.B.T techniques
- Mindfulness
- Containment
- Circle of security
- Psychodynamic
- Therapeutic relationship
- Video Interaction Guidance

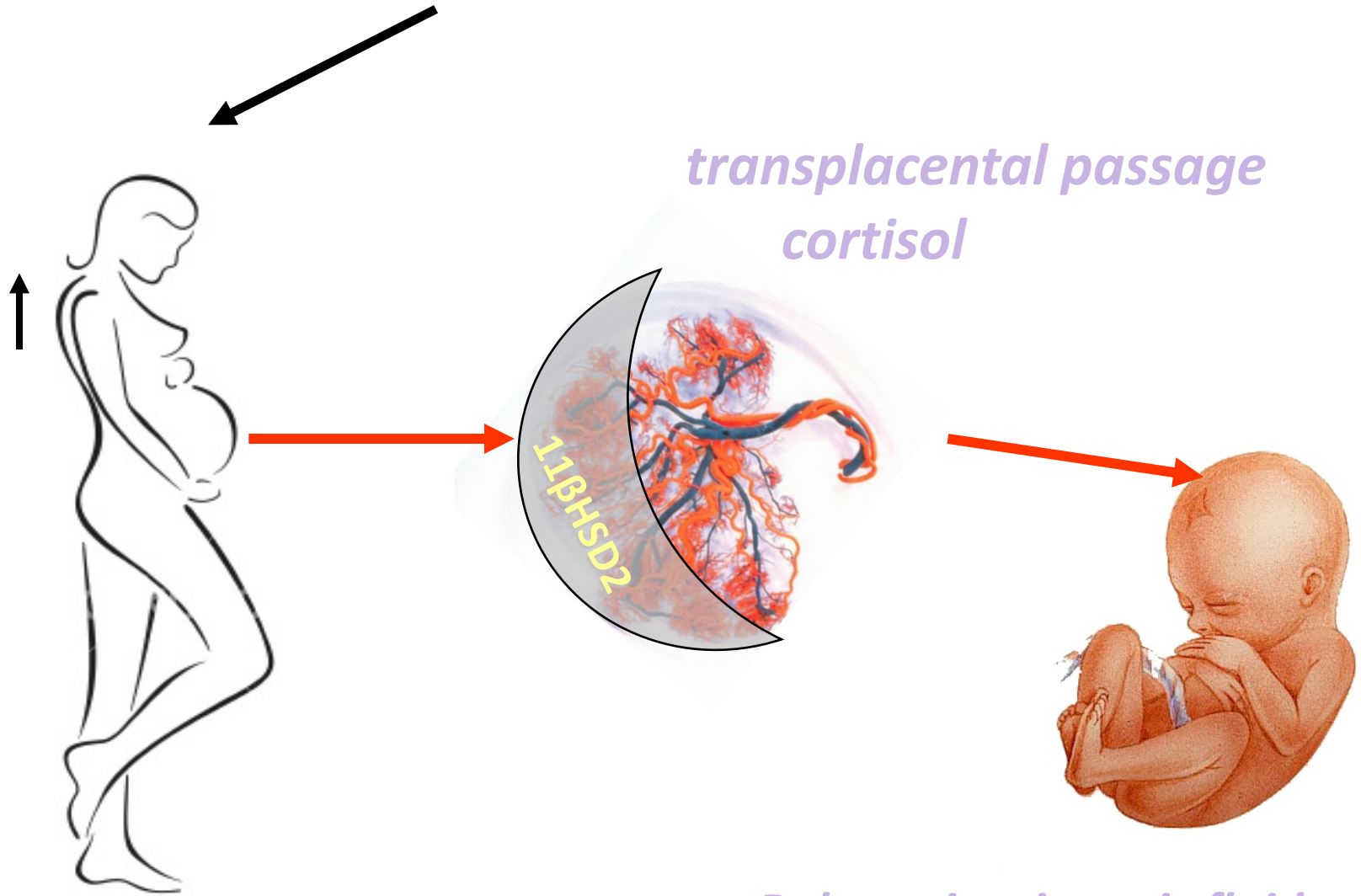


Effects of stress on the unborn baby

- Research shows that stress experienced by a woman during pregnancy may affect her unborn baby as early as 17 weeks after conception, with potentially harmful effects on brain and development.
- To remain as stress-free as possible is imperative during pregnancy. It is vital that pregnant women are given adequate support and reassurance, to ensure they have a happy and healthy pregnancy. Domestic violence during pregnancy puts a pregnant woman and her unborn child in danger. It increases the risk of miscarriage and premature birth.
- If stress becomes constant, the effects on mother and the baby could be lasting. When she's stressed, her body goes into "fight or flight" mode, sending out a burst of cortisol and other stress hormones
- Over a third of domestic violence starts or gets worse when a woman is pregnant



Maternal stress/anxiety/mental illness



*transplacental passage
cortisol*

Baby swims in toxic fluid

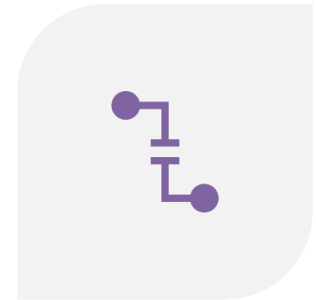
Parent-infant relationship in the face of domestic abuse & mental health



SUBSTANCE/ALCOHOL MISUSE AND
UNRESOLVED TRAUMA



INFANT'S EMOTIONAL STATES CAN
TRIGGER PROFOUND DISCOMFORT IN
PARENTS FACING THESE PROBLEMS –
GHOSTS IN THE NURSERY



INTERACTION BECOMES
CHARACTERIZED BY:
- WITHDRAWAL, DISTANCING OR
NEGLECT
- INTRUSION IN THE FORM OF
BLAMING, SHAMING, PUNISHING AND
ATTACKING

Improving outcomes for children

1

strengthen the
mother/ father-
child relationship

2

increase the self-
esteem of the
mothers/fathers
and children

3

help the
mothers/fathers
and children to deal
with their emotions

4

increase the
mothers'/fathers
confidence in their
parenting abilities.

For Baby's Sake: components

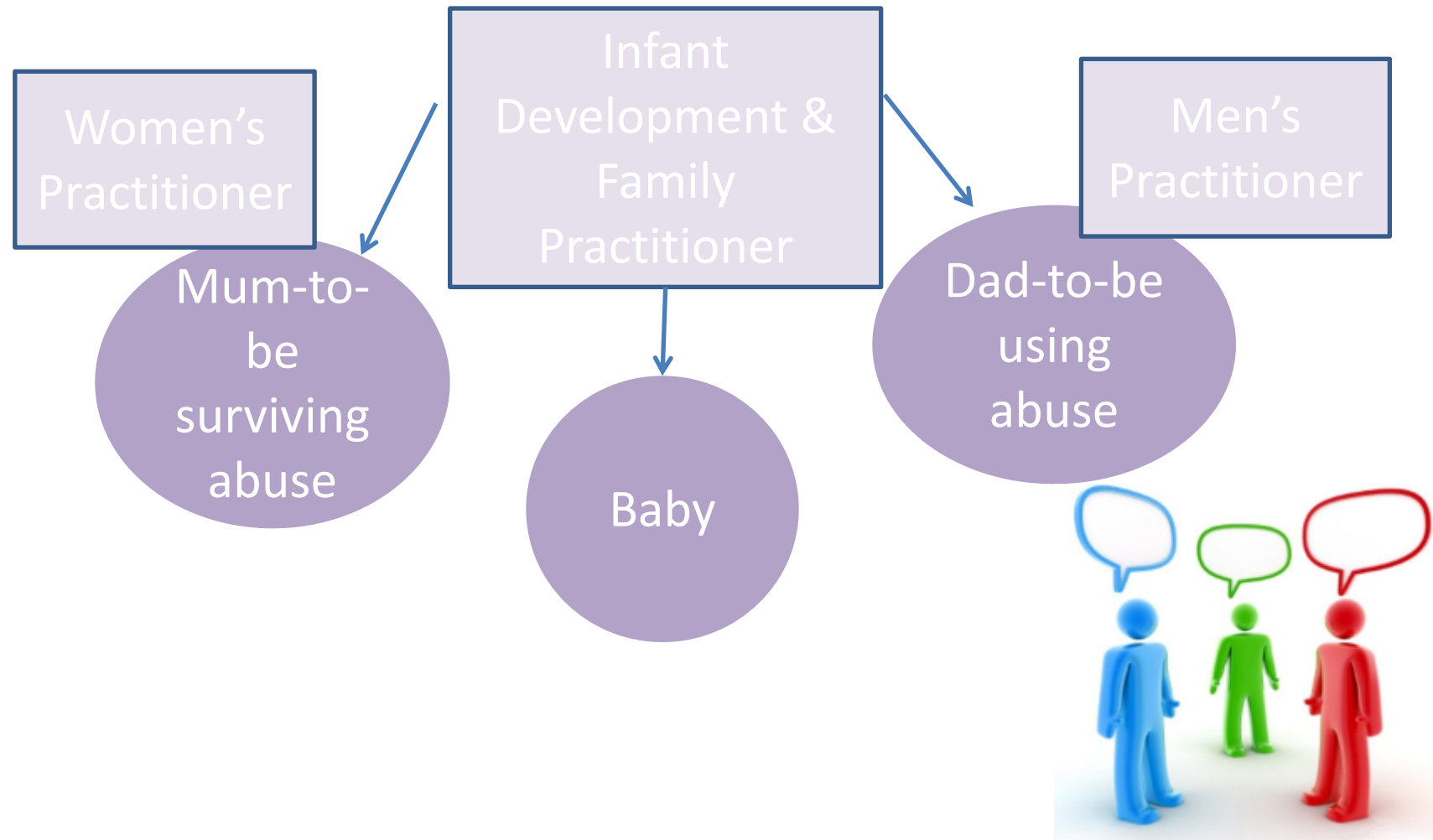
- *Getting Started*: comprehensive assessment, recognising domestic abuse, improving physical and emotional safety, reducing stress for parents and the baby
- Attachment-focused parenting, starting in pregnancy
- Healthy expression of feelings: processing guilt, shame, dissociation, recognising different feelings
- Looking after the inner child
- Building self-esteem, agency, healthy adult relationships
- Interventions to nurture sensitive, attuned parenting



Working safely with families

- Adult and children's safeguarding
- Assessment of needs, risks and progress of individuals and families throughout their journeys
- Tight individual and family case management
- Integrated and embedded within agency pathways
- Using local authority case management systems
- Using SARA-V3 as our risk assessment framework – fits with our holistic and integrated model
- Service users trust practitioners, value this relationship

Information sharing and Risk management within the Team



Why (and how to) work with perpetrators?

Prof. Johnson's Typology of domestic violence

- Intimate Partner Terrorism (Violent Coercive Control) vs Violent Resistance vs Situational Couple Violence
- Positive that emotionally dependent perpetrators of Intimate Partner Terrorism can change, with the right support
- Need help to overcome their emotional dependency, often stemming from insecure / disorganised attachment and traumatic early childhood

One size does not fit all

Recognise that one size will not fit all, in terms of perpetrator provision. Different approaches will be required, taking into account the different kinds and levels of need, trauma history (particularly stemming from childhood adversities), risk and motivation, in order to succeed as widely as possible in supporting behaviour change and emotional regulation across the intended cohort.

Recognise that trauma-informed, non-judgmental and motivational provision is crucial to supporting sustained behaviour change, remembering that this is in the best interest both of the perpetrators seeking to change their behaviour and also of the survivors, who want perpetrators to have the kind of support most likely to enable lasting change

Father's get post- natal depression too

Recent research shows that paternal postnatal depression can have an effect that is similar in magnitude to that of maternal depression

One study showed that boys of fathers who were depressed during the postnatal period had an increased risk of conduct problems at age 3.5 years, and that boys of fathers who were depressed during both the prenatal and postnatal periods had the highest risks of subsequent psychopathology at 3.5 years and psychiatric diagnosis at seven years of age (Ramchandani 2008)



What we don't do

Judge

Shame

Collude



*It is easier to build strong children
than to repair broken men.*

Frederick Douglass



Photo by Manfred Antranias Zimmer
Symphony of Love

Treat a man as he appears to be, and you make him
worse.

But treat a man as if he were what he
potentially could be, and you make him what he should
be. (Goethe)

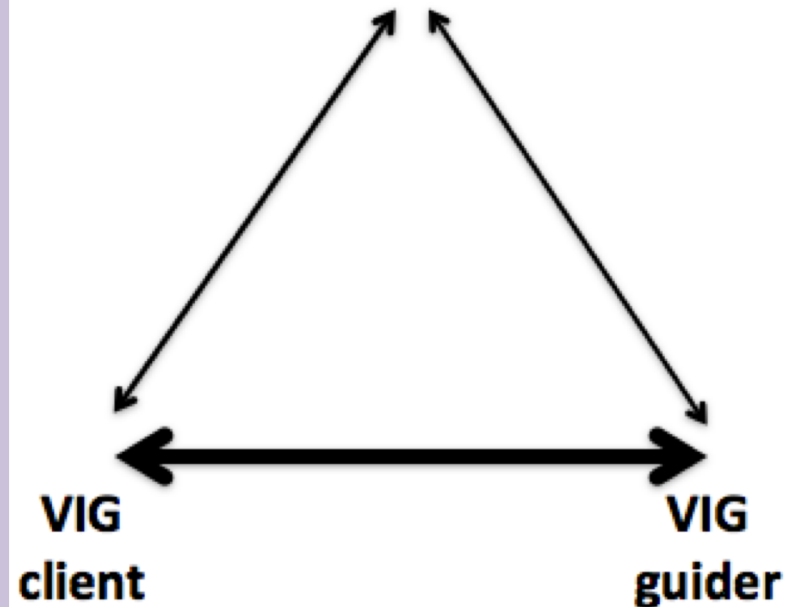
Using VIG in *For Baby's Sake*

Why does VIG work?

Sharing moments of attunement
while experiencing attuned dialogue
Encourages sensitivity to child
And opens the client to start thinking
about themselves, their child,
Their relationship and the possibilities
for change
(enhances Reflective function
and mind-mindedness)



VIG video





Who we are

The Stefanou Foundation was established by Stelio Stefanou in 2007. The Foundation is using its own model of catalytic philanthropy, working in partnership with existing agencies to address the root causes of complex challenges. The work aims to disrupt cycles of disadvantage, trauma and poor outcomes for individuals and families and across generations.

What is *For Baby's Sake*?

For Baby's Sake works in an integrated way with the expectant mother and father as co-parents, whether or not they are a couple, from pregnancy until their baby is two. The programme aims to break the cycle of domestic abuse and create the conditions for change and resilience, in order to give babies the best start in life, by providing the stability, support and nurturing conditions to allow the baby to flourish. The strengths-based programme uses a unique, three-way approach, delivered by practitioners working closely together to manage risks within each family member's journey. *For Baby's Sake* helps both parents to make lasting changes in their behaviours and overcome the impact of trauma, shame and painful experiences in their own childhood. It also equips both parents to support the mental health and emotional development of their baby.

The Stefanou Foundation is a registered charity (1126459) and company limited by guarantee (6713945)



VIG INTERVENTION

Judith Rees; Lee Cooper

How we deliver Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)

- Delivered by our Infant Development and Family Practitioners
- Working with both co-parents - consistent approach
- Three cycles carried out with most parents
- Starting early in post-natal period, and where possible in the antenatal period
- Follows New Born Baby Observation (NBO)
- Followed by the *For Baby's Sake* Inner Child module

The impact of VIG

- Builds confidence
- Improves self-esteem
- Promotes bonding and sensitive parenting
- Reduces anxiety
- Helps to create cognitive dissonance
- Confronts fear of nurturing baby especially with fathers
- Reveals and explores Angels and Ghosts in the nursery



Data

- Over 50% of *For Baby's Sake* parents experienced 4 or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- 69% of babies are known to social care at referral
- Over 50% of parents report anxiety or depression at the start of the programme

Parents' feedback

- "I felt like I was babysitting my baby but now I feel like a mum"
- "My baby's not scared of me!"
- "My baby trusts me, she smiles at me now even when she's with her mum"
- "I have really slowed down and am now enjoying and noticing my baby's development"
- "It's amazing, I never knew my baby could copy me!"

Evaluation

For Baby's Sake is currently being evaluated by independent research commissioned from King's College London.



Giving babies the best start in life

www.stefanoufoundation.org

Promising early evidence



- Both parents are able to engage in the VIG progress
- Trusting relationship is key in order to overcome parents feeling judged or being assessed
- Confronts fear of nurturing their baby
- Caution is taken to ensure father's do not misuse their own positive interactions and attunement with the baby to undermine their co-parents own confidence and parenting skills

Looking after the Inner Child



Linking the past
to the present

Andy*

*It's been positive
over the past couple of years.*

*It takes on board - yep - these are
the facts but there is no judgment
within that...*

*learning to look at other people's
viewpoints... it does
help to make some of those
changes*

AIMS OF EVALUATION

Process data

To assess whether the programme operates as anticipated

Outcome data

To examine whether the programme delivers a range of positive short-term outcomes

Economic data

To examine evidence that the benefits delivered would outweigh the costs

Domoney et al. (2019). For Baby's Sake: Intervention Development and Evaluation Design of a Whole-Family Perinatal Intervention to Break the Cycle of Domestic Abuse. *Journal of Family Violence*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-019-00037-3>

The challenge of becoming a father

Relationships

Like, if you have struggles in your relationship, and your relationship ends, you don't have to see each other ever again if you don't want to. When you've got children, you do, so you have to put all your feelings aside and you have to come back and still be a dad

Impact of past experiences

It is like, "Okay, I am a dad now. I want to do this, this and this. Why do I feel like that was never done for me when I was younger?"

I know you get a chance to change. Everyone says, "Well, he was like that so you should be the opposite." I think in your mindset sometimes you just can't control the way you are because of what you've seen in the past or whatever.

Mental health

I know that I can do everything, but I panic, like, what if he falls? 101 different things going through my mind, knowing full well that I know that I can do it, but in the back of my mind, just, "What if he starts crying? You're just going to panic," and that's what I do.

Being a dad, trying to teach a child not to be angry and not to swear and not to lash out, while you don't understand it yourself, it sounds impossible.

Breaking the cycle
‘I’m proof people can change’



Experience of



Stakeholders

They've got a good couple of years to work with the client, whereas if you're in a social work role you've got that six weeks...from that point of view, it's wonderful.

Staff

I really enjoy this model of working. I think this is the way forward...because you get so much more of a rounded picture of what's going on. It's not one-sided.

Service users

I think because I've seen it growing up, I've come to realise...that maybe I thought it was normal.

So I can learn to be a better father, really. Better than my dad was.

Just recognising triggers, things like this, whenever things ever start getting out of hand.

CONCLUSION

- Numerous challenges in the transition to fatherhood
 - Mental illness, traumatic histories, poor emotional regulation
- Baby is motivator to change
- Trauma-informed, therapeutic interventions have potential to support change



Promising early evidence

From research evaluation led by King's College London

- Service users value the relationship and the tools
- Strong engagement with service users and stakeholders

From social marketing and branding research

- Empathic; harnessing the motives of parents
- We are breaking the cycle – *for Baby's Sake*



Quotes from female Service Users

"My partner is happier and calmer after he's met with the male practitioner"

"I feel empowered... it's spurred me on to be more confident"

"I've gained me back again, but stronger"

"My self esteem didn't exist before the programme and I can now say to men I'm not happy with that, without being passive or aggressive."

Quotes from male service users

*"I've got
negative self-talk,
I'm self-centred,
feeling entitled sometimes.
I would like to know
where it comes from"*

*"If I'm honest if
I wasn't on this programme
I would probably be in prison
by now. I certainly wouldn't
be in a relationship
with my partner and
I probably wouldn't have a
relationship with
my daughter"*

*"Working together,
I know how to
know my symptoms
when I get angry
and how to keep
myself and others
safe"*

Quotes from mothers and fathers about parenting

*"I felt like I was
babysitting my baby,
now I feel like a mum"*

*"It's amazing – I never
knew my baby could
copy me"*

*"My baby trusts me,
she smiles at me now,
even when she is with
her mum"*

*"[Learning about] stress
on baby's brain and how it
affects my baby. I knew I had to
make a change. I had to do better
for myself and my baby."*

I was 6months pregnant, sitting in a clinic waiting for a midwife appointment when I saw the 'FBS' flyer. I had no idea I was the victim of domestic abuse but I knew something was not right in this new relationship I had started 7months previously and I knew I needed help. I'd already tried relationship counselling and failed.

I was embarrassed and ashamed when I made the call. Ashamed that someone like me, someone bright and well read and well not the 'push over' type could possibly be in an abusive relationship. What I was, was a mother that would put her children first and it took me two years of intensive training from FBS to see that. It took two years to unravel my thought process where I was not the one at fault for my abusers behaviour towards me. It took two years for me to find the courage and strength to walk out the door, with my kids and never look back. Without FBS's help I would never have accessed a refuge and been safe. I was assessed as high risk, my life was in danger. I was a wreck but I had broken free and now I had all the tools to rebuild my life and with FBS's support I did just that. What they taught me, I teach my children and pass on to my friends and family. The knock on effect of their work is far reaching and I know that without it children and many many families will suffer needlessly. I thank them with all my heart.....

Ps feel free to use my name

Jane

Key References

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To find out more,
read our paper in
the Journal of
Family Violence
and stay in touch
for news of the
final evaluation
report by King's
College London

*For Baby's Sake: Intervention Development
and Evaluation Design of a Whole-Family
Perinatal Intervention to Break the Cycle of
Domestic Abuse*

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Any Questions

