

IASA's 10-Year Celebration

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Using the CARE-Index as an assessment and intervention tool in a Family Residential Centre, and its reception in the court arena.

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Topic: Clinical practice

The Bessborough Centre's Parent & Infant Unit offers residential-based therapeutic parenting capacity assessment to parents with co-occurring presentation of addiction, mental ill health, developmental trauma, intellectual disability or domestic violence. Over the past 4 years the CARE-Index has become a prominent feature in guiding assessment and intervention as well as educating staff on the quality of relationships and the degree of developmental risk between parent and infant.

Intervention-based residential assessment placement at the Parent & Infant Unit utilises a multidisciplinary approach to determine parenting and psychological baseline functioning before tailoring an individualised care plan based on formal/informal intervention to determine parental capacity during and at conclusion of the 12-16 week residential placement.

How it used the DMM

Usually administered at the mid-point of a residential placement, the CARE-index yields rich clinical information that provides parents with an understanding of the obvious and subtle interactional nuances within their relationship that signify an at-risk (or healthy) developmental trajectory in the context of their caregiving relationship through a formal feedback session with a clinical psychologist that is also disseminated to the wider staff team.

What it can contribute to the DMM

Whilst undoubtedly of clinical use, the CARE-Index contribution to parental capacity assessment within the Irish Child Care legal arena, has been a topic of debate. This presentation will provide an overview of its use from a clinical perspective as well as discuss the common issues that arise with clinical use of the CARE-Index in legal proceedings.