



# One minute guide

## Outcomes Focused Practice

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### What is Outcomes Focused Practice?

Good practice will always focus on the outcomes that we're working to achieve with children, young people and their families. Outcomes are about the things that matter to children, young people, families and practitioners. Sometimes the outcomes we want may be different. But if we are clear about what each of us wants then we have the basis of a restorative working relationship.

At times, our efforts to achieve better outcomes are not helped by our processes and systems. That's why it is important that outcomes are at the heart of our practice. This helps us to keep sight of where it is we're trying to get to or what we're trying to do.

Assessment, planning and reviewing should revolve around achieving the outcomes that we've developed and agreed with the family. This means that in our practice, these desired (or hoped for) outcomes need to be clear, constant and consensual.

Outcomes focused practice is where we take all of this into account.

### What are the benefits of Outcomes Focused Practice?

The main benefits of Outcomes Focused Practice are that it:

- Puts the futures that children and family want for themselves at the centre of our practice;
- Requires us all to be clear about the purpose of our involvement and realistic about timescales;
- Promotes evidence-informed practice by expecting clarity about what interventions will make a difference;
- Uses a solution-focused approach that recognises family strengths and resources;
- Makes clear the responsibilities of all those involved with the child or young person themselves including parents, wider family and practitioners;
- Helps us demonstrate to external bodies such as funders and inspectors that we are making a difference to the lives of children, young people and families.
- Shifts us away from compliance with processes as a measure of successful interventions, and more towards impact on children and families.

## Outcomes in our practice

By describing the goals of our direct practice in terms of desired outcomes, we're clarifying where it is that the child and family have agreed they want to get to – and **the difference** we all hope our intervention will make. We can use the following questions as a checklist:

- Are our efforts directed towards a clear set of desired outcomes which describe what that difference looks like?
- Are we using an evidence-informed approach to choose the approaches and interventions that are likely to make that difference?
- Have we agreed with the family what success will look like?
- Have we got the right people together to help us make the difference? Should anyone else be involved?

## How do we do this in our day-to-day practice?

We do this at every stage when working with a child, young person and their family. Colleagues in children's services have already been looking at ways of strengthening the outcome focus of our practice. Examples of this include:

- Using meetings like family group conferences, and other family based decision meetings, looked after child reviews, child protection conferences, and core groups to work with children, young people and families to identify desired outcomes;
- Ensuring our assessment and planning work includes conversations to agree outcomes and clarifies how these will be achieved;
- Adapting our templates, forms and other documents, to make the recording of outcomes easier;
- Including outcomes focused practice throughout our professional development and training programme. This includes assessment, case planning and review training on our electronic case recording system Mosaic;
- Using conversations in Supervision and Appraisal to discuss, challenge and confirm desired outcomes and how these will be achieved; and
- Developing our audit and quality assurance processes so they measure whether good outcomes are being achieved and evidenced, rather than whether processes are being followed.

## Key contacts and for more information

The key contacts for more information are:

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