



Supporting children and families affected by a family member's offending – A Practitioner's Guide – (Australia)

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The guide was adapted for Australian use by

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The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO), set up in 2013 (originally as i-HOP) and initially funded by the Department for Education, aims to provide support and information to all professionals working with offenders' children and their families.

Visit www.nicco.org.uk to find out more.



Supporting all professionals to work with offenders' children and their families



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- The professionals who have attended NICCO workshops and contacted the service to share their experiences. Your questions and requests for support have shaped this guide.
- The children and families affected by family member offending without whom our services would not truly understand the lived experiences of families affected. We hope that this guide will help to support practitioners to work with you effectively.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Why publish this guide?

Barnardo's has over twenty years' experience supporting children of prisoners through direct services, regional training and national strategic work. Since 2013, the National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO, originally i-HOP) has supported thousands of professionals across England to work with offenders' children and families through a national engagement and information service. This guide brings together the learning and expertise from all this work, tailored for Australian practitioners, so that Australia may offer the same level of support to families.

Using resources and tools from Barnardo's services and the i-HOP directory, we've produced a practical guide to inform all practitioners working with children and families affected by a loved ones offending. The guide accompanies a Hiddense Sentence Training workshop. (see Appendix 3 – Training).

Why do these children and families need support?

Though the number of children estimated to be affected by a loved ones imprisonment is relatively high – two and a half times higher than the number of children in care¹ – they are often described as a “hidden” or “invisible” group. This is because they are not systematically recorded in Australia and there is no statutory response to their needs.

Approximately 5% of Australian children experience parental incarceration in their lifetime, with the risk for Indigenous children being considerably higher (Saunders 2017)

"Parental offending and imprisonment are the strongest predictor's of intergenerational offending" (Flynn, Van Dyke and Gelb 2017).

Studies have revealed some of the effects of parental imprisonment on children: negative school experiences such as truancy and bullying (Clewett & Glover 2009), involvement in anti-social behaviour (Murray & Farrington 2008), and increased risk of poverty, physical ill health and housing disruption (Smith et al. 2007).

¹ In 2012, the Ministry of Justice estimated that there were 200,000 children with a parent in prison in England and Wales, whilst NSPCC reported that there were 72,775 children in care in England and Wales the same year.

The Criminal Justice System (CJS), however, is much larger than the prison system alone and each year many more children are impacted by a family member's arrest, court appearances, community sentencing and reintegration.

Furthermore, while much of the research to date has focused on *parental* imprisonment, many relationships are important to the wellbeing of children and to their development, not solely the relationship with their parents. The offending of another loved one, such as a sibling or grandparent, can be equally disruptive. **An awareness of the range of relationships and experiences that affect children underpins this guide.**

Children and families affected by a loved ones offending are a diverse group living in varied circumstances across every community. This guide provides support and direction so all professionals can use their existing skills and expertise to provide vital direct responses to these families.

1.2 Aim of the guide

Aim

To enable practitioners to support children affected by a loved ones offending within a whole family approach.

By using this guide, practitioners will develop:

- Insight into the particular importance of children's rights, multi-agency working and safeguarding whilst delivering interventions with offenders' families
- A refreshed understanding of the impact of offending on children and families
- The ability to incorporate the needs of offenders' children and families into professional assessments and support plans

- Increased confidence, knowledge and skills to work directly with offenders' children and families
- Increased knowledge of resources and services available to support offenders' children and families

1.3 Using the guide

Who is it for?

This guide is intended for use by all practitioners with direct contact with children and families. We expect that social workers, early years practitioners, family support workers, health visitors, school nurses, pastoral workers, resettlement workers, prison-based family engagement workers and many others will find this guide useful in their practice.

How to use it

The guide combines information, tools and resources to address key issues experienced by families of offenders, as identified by NICCO and Barnardo's. Colour-coding throughout highlights the practical elements of the guide and helpfully guides practitioners to act. Comprehensive resource lists in the appendices are categorised alphabetically by issue and referred to throughout the guide in purple boxes.

Key



Practice point



Thinking point



Resource appendix



Tool



Practice example

The i–HOP Quality Statements & Toolkit

i–HOP’s Quality Statements & Toolkit (RiP 2015), developed with Research in Practice, supports all professionals to plan **service–wide improvements** to practice with offenders’ children. It is based around eight over–arching principles – the Quality Statements.

This guide is intended for use by **individual practitioners** with **direct contact** with offenders’ children and families.

However, it adheres to the same over–arching principles as i–HOP’s Quality Statements & Toolkit and you will see the Quality Statements highlighted at the beginning of the chapters where they are most relevant.



The i-HOP Quality Statements (QS)

For all services to aspire to in their work with offenders' children and families:

QS1. Awareness

We are aware of the impact that a loved ones offending can have on children, and we recognise that they are potentially vulnerable children with particular needs.

QS2. Identification

We have systems in place to identify children affected by a loved ones offending, both as individuals and as a group.

QS3. Children's Voice

We always take into account the rights, experiences and perspectives of children affected by loved ones offending in developing and delivering our services.

QS4. Multi-agency Working

We work in partnership with the wider network of professionals around children affected by loved ones offending.

QS5. Stages of the Criminal Justice System

We recognise and aim to minimise the impact of parental offending on children at all stages of the offender journey [arrest, court proceedings, imprisonment, release and resettlement].

QS6. Support and Services

We provide, or provide access to, support and services to meet the needs of children affected by parental offending.

QS7. Challenging Stigma

We actively challenge discrimination and negative stereotypes about children affected by loved ones offending.

QS8. Building the Evidence

We monitor our interventions with children affected by loved ones offending and contribute to the evidence base.



2. Building the practice foundations

2.1 Ensuring a children's rights approach

Children affected by a loved ones offending have been described as the 'forgotten victims' (Light & Campbell 2006) of the Criminal Justice System (CJS). Rights-based practice empowers children as 'human beings with a distinct set of rights instead of...passive objects of care and charity' (UNICEF CRC) as means of countering the disadvantage they experience.



The right for children to maintain a relationship with their incarcerated parent is underpinned by Article 9 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989)



**See Appendix 3:
Children's Rights**



The UNCRC and the Rights of Offenders' Children

Article 2: Non-discrimination

The Convention applies to everyone: whatever their race, religion or abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from (UNICEF Factsheet).

Offenders' families are stigmatised alongside the offender; stereotypes continue to feature in public and professional discourse.

For Indigenous and Minority Ethnic (BME) families, the effect of discrimination may be further compounded as a result of disproportionate representation in the CJS (PRT 2016).

Due to the above, families report unequal access to services and can experience discrimination when services are accessed.



i-HOP's Quality Statements & Toolkit (2015) Chapter 7 – Challenging Stigma includes practice guidance in this area.

Article 3: Best interests of the child

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children (UNICEF Factsheet).

Children's best interests are still not routinely considered in court proceedings, for example where they might be separated from a parent (Epstein 2014). Sometimes the needs and wishes of the offender and remaining family members are put before the child's.



See **Chapter 5: Supporting children and young people** for guidance on exploring feelings and opinions with children.

Article 9: Separation from parents

Children must not be separated from their parents unless it is in their best interests (for example, if a parent is hurting a child). Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child (UNICEF Factsheet).

In some cases, separation from an offending loved one may be in a child's best interests. But for many children keeping in contact is vital for their wellbeing (Jones et al. 2013).



See **Chapter 5: Supporting children and young people** for guidance on facilitating contact between children and imprisoned parents.

Article 12: Respect for the views of the child

Every child has the right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously (UNICEF Factsheet).

Though children have a right to a say in matters that affect them, they are often silent throughout criminal justice proceedings where public protection and justice take priority. Stigma further silences children in the community.



See **Chapter 5: Supporting children and young people** for guidance on keeping children's voice central in assessments and support provision.

Article 16: Right to privacy

Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child's private, family and home life (UNICEF Factsheet).

A child's private, family and home life is significantly affected when a loved one goes to prison. Some children lose contact altogether, or only see them during open prison visits where behaviour is restricted. Some have to move home to live with an alternative care giver. Media coverage of offences may also identify a child's loved one, sentencing details and home address, further compromising their privacy.



See **Chapter 5: Supporting children and young people** for guidance on facilitating contact for children and supporting them to cope with changes to home and family life.

2.2 Understanding the stages of the Criminal Justice System

‘You’re not going to be happy if they got arrested, but say they came out on bail, it’s not the same emotions...it’s different emotions through the whole thing...’

— Young person

There are **six key stages** (including pre-arrest) to an individual’s involvement in the Criminal Justice System (CJS); each has different meanings and brings new challenges to the children and families of offenders. To offer effective support, practitioners need some understanding of this system and its implications.

See the diagram – **Understanding the stages of the Criminal Justice System** – on page 15 for a brief introduction.



Attending a **Hidden Sentence training** course gives practitioners an overview of issues that affect offenders’ families at each stage of the CJS. Some are held at prisons and provide the opportunity to walk through the prison visit process.



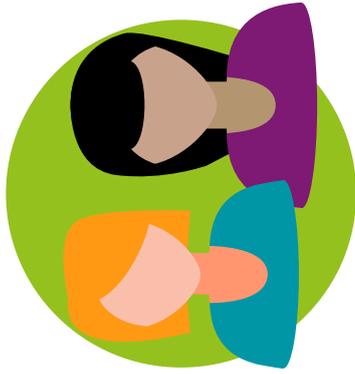
See Appendix 3: Training



The CJS is complex and often changing. As practitioners you will not always have the answers families need as and when questions arise. This is understandable, but seek advice before offering information if you are unsure.



Understanding the stages of the Criminal Justice System



1. Arrest

Agencies: Police, sometimes Social Services

Possible issues:

- Times of considerable worry for families. Some may have been expecting it; for others it could be the first time they've found out about the offences.
- Home raids can traumatise children and leave them with negative views of police.

2. Court proceedings

Agencies: Courts, solicitors, National Probation Service, Police, sometimes court support/volunteers

Possible issues:

- Confusing, intimidating processes and terminology.
- Can take considerable time and have implications for childcare and plans for the future.
- Uncertainty over what to tell people and whether to tell the children.
- The media may report on the proceedings and outcome.
- Various outcomes apart from prison with different implications, e.g. community sentences.

5. Reintegration

Agencies: Prison, and Community Corrections Services.

Possible issues:

- Time of readjustment for families and offenders returning home which can be challenging.
- Various terms may be applied to an offender on licence or home curfew – new meanings for families to grasp.
- Anxiety around finding employment/support for addiction etc.
- Families may worry about the likelihood of reoffending.

3. Imprisonment

Agencies: Prison, usually voluntary prison-based family engagement services

Possible issues:

- Prisons can be long distances away from the family home and journeys are costly as a result.
- Prisoners are often moved, sometimes at short notice.
- Visits can sometimes be strained and emotional.
- Phone calls and other contact is restricted and, in some cases, dependent on a prisoner's behaviour.
- Families sometimes feel under pressure to send money to prisoners causing financial strain.
- Visit provision such as 'family days' and facilities such as play areas vary from prison to prison.
- The rurality of many Australian towns can make visiting difficult.

4. Release

Agencies: Prison, and Community Corrections Services.

Possible issues:

- Often a much-anticipated time of both worry and excitement.
- Support largely focused on the offender and not on the children/family.
- Some families fear release and don't want contact at all sometimes due to abuse or being victims of offences.

Agencies potentially involved throughout: school, children's centre, health service, voluntary sector family support...

See Appendix 3: Stages of the CJS for short, accessible learning materials for practitioners about each stage

2.3 Developing a multi–agency response

There is **no single statutory body or lead agency** with responsibility for children affected by a loved ones offending, and **no national framework** for developing service provision. As you've seen, various agencies can be involved at each stage of the CJS.

Consequently, the support that is available is often disjointed, provided in the main by local voluntary and community sector organisations, with children and families vulnerable to gaps in available funding and geographical coverage. To provide a consistent and effective response to offenders' children and families, multi–agency working is essential.

PRACTICE EXAMPLES: MULTI-AGENCY WORKING

Multi-agency working/steering groups

In Tasmania Australia, local practitioners have formed a working group focused on Children Affected by Parental Offending (CAPO). The aim of the service is to improve the quality of life for children and families affected by the imprisonment of a loved one. CAPO aims to work jointly with families to explore and build on strengths and resources. By developing tailored packages of support, CAPO aims to provide families and practitioners with practical assistance and advice to meet identified needs and achieve positive outcomes.

This multi-agency group allows practitioners to better their practice through improved understanding of each agencies services, as well as their own, and by opening channels of communication across sectors.

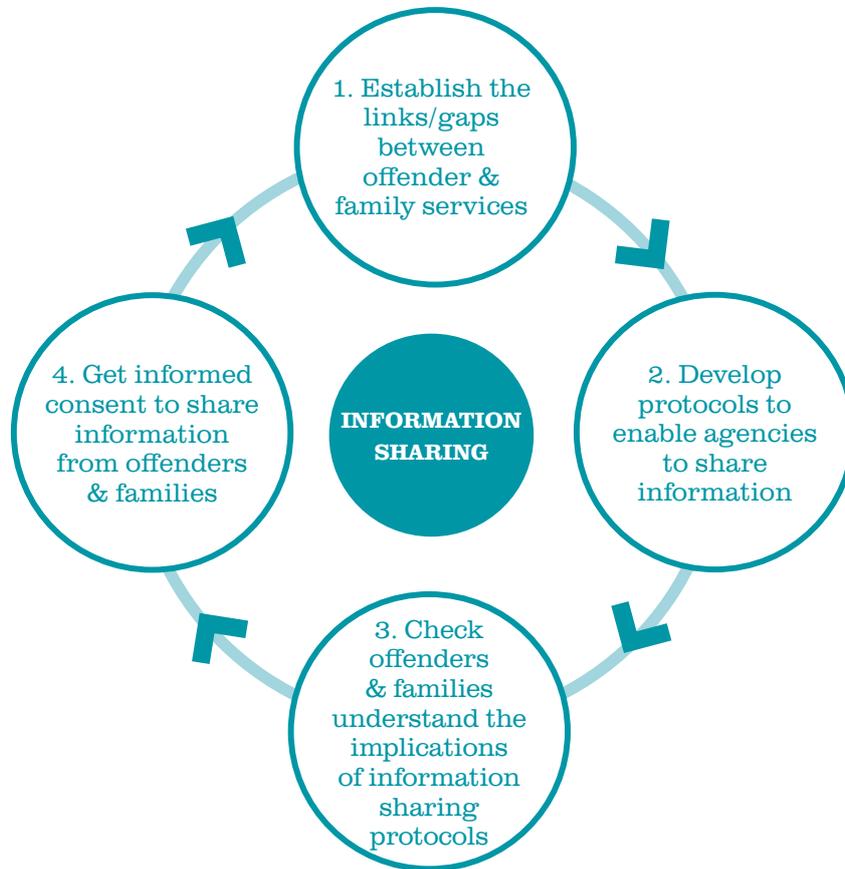
The CAPO team is made up of professionals / practitioners from the Onesimus Foundation, Tasmania Prison Service, The Salvation Army Communities for Children, Risdon Prison, Child Safety Services, Save the Children, the Department of Education JusTas, Catholic Care, Lady Gowrie, (The Australian and Tasmanian Government) Bridgewater PCYC, TAS Police, Child Health and Parenting, the Department of Human Services and The Department of Justice and Community Corrections.



You could consider co-locating services; for example, appointments with Probation (where there are no child safeguarding concerns), including community-based assessments, could be undertaken in a local Children's Centre to help families of offenders to connect with the wider services on offer.

Information sharing

In order for multi-agency responses to be possible, information sharing is crucial but must be implemented in the appropriate way.



Some benefits of information sharing for families:

- Families are **more likely to access the support and information available to them** if they inform professionals of their needs.
- If agencies like schools are aware they **may be more alert to any changes in a child's behaviour** and ensure that they are provided with the support that they need as early as possible.
- It is important to ensure that children have **access to support and information as early as possible** after having a traumatic or upsetting experience. This enables them to ask questions and share their feelings early on, alleviating some of the anxiety, anger or upset that they might be feeling.



Consider why some families might be reluctant to share information about a family member's involvement in the CJS with other agencies.

2.4 Safeguarding children and families of offenders

Safeguarding children is everybody's responsibility (DfE 2015). Offenders' children in particular can be vulnerable to poverty and physical illness (Smith et al. 2007) and mental ill health (Jones et al. 2013). See the following chapters on the **impact of offending** for a reminder of the ways it can affect children's wellbeing, health and safety and the implications this has for safeguarding.

Sometimes offenders' families' vulnerabilities are a direct result of having a family member involved in the Criminal Justice System (CJS), for example if an offence caused them direct harm, such as in cases of domestic or child sexual abuse, or where an offence leads to a backlash from other members of the community. In other cases, **pre-existing issues are intensified by the change in circumstances**.

Safeguarding and restricted contact

When working with children affected by a family member's offending, there are key safeguarding issues that could dictate whether they are able to have contact with the offender. Practitioners should consider:

- Some children are the **victims of the crimes** committed and in these cases they will not be able to have any contact with the offender.
- Where a child is **subject to a Court Order**, there may be restrictions placed on contact with an offender pending assessments by a Social Worker.

Other cases where contact could be restricted:

- Where an offence has been **committed against another minor**

- If a **serious assault against an adult** has occurred
- If a child is in care there could be logistical issues with **foster/kinship carers'** ability to take a child to prison
- If a **child is being adopted** following a parent's offending they may no longer be able to have contact with their parent
- If an individual has **adjudications while serving a sentence in prison**, there could be temporary restrictions on families visiting



See Chapter 5.4 if you are supporting a child where contact with an offending family member is restricted.

Safeguarding during imprisonment

Sometimes professionals think the imprisonment of an abusive or disruptive family member marks the end of the risk they have posed to their family but it is important to remember **that some prisoners still cause harm whilst in prison**, for example through coercive letters or pressure to send money.

For many children, it is deemed safe for them to visit a family member in prison, and for many it is important for their wellbeing and ability to cope with loss that they are able to (Jones et al. 2013). However, practitioners should still be aware of the safeguarding implications of children visiting prisons.

'For a child I think it's very intimidating and scary to have to go through'

— Parent discussing the prison search process

Children could encounter adults in prison (the person they are visiting or another visitor or prisoner) who pose a risk to them. Furthermore, visiting a prison can be an emotionally unsettling experience for children who may be searched and have to go through security processes. It is important to consider the impact of prison visits on children and check in with them about their experiences and feelings before and after the visit.



See Appendix 3: Stages of the CJS (Imprisonment)



Look out for safeguarding thinking points throughout the guide.



If you have concerns about a child who is visiting a prison, follow your usual safeguarding procedure. You should contact the child safeguarding team within your State for advice if you are unsure of any concerns.

Child Safeguarding Teams:

Tas: Child Safety Services

http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/children/child_protection_services

Vic: Child Protection

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/child-protectioncontacts>

NSW: Child Wellbeing and Child Protection

<http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/preventing-child-abuse-and-neglect/protecting-children>

WA: Child Protection

<https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/Organisation/ContactUs/Pages/ContactUs.aspx>

SA: Child Protection

<https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/>

QLD: Child Safety Services

<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/about-us/contact-us>



3. Understanding the impact of offending on the whole family

‘It’s not just the prisoner that’s punished is it? It’s the whole family.’ – Mother



Consider attending some awareness-raising training, such as a **Hidden Sentence** course, to increase your understanding of the impact of offending on families.

To provide effective, informed and empathetic support to children and families, it is important that you understand the potential impact of offending on a family and their ability to meet children’s needs

Adopting a whole-family approach recognises that an individual’s offending affects each child and family member in different ways and varies over time.

See the diagram on page 21 – **Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs** – to see how offending can affect a family’s ability to meet children’s needs.



See Appendix 3: Training



A custodial sentence can be a **positive thing** for families. It may result in the removal of a family member who has been violent, or whose behaviour has been disruptive and chaotic. This can create confused or conflicting emotions for children.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs – Impact of key attachment offending on meeting children's needs



Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs' is a motivational theory in psychology. Maslow believed that people are motivated to achieve certain needs, and that some take priority over others. Our most basic need is for physical survival which we must achieve before other needs can be met.

Consider **other needs** that could be affected by a family member's offending and how **existing problems**, such as financial hardship or mental ill health, could be aggravated.
Safeguarding: consider where some of these needs, or a combination of them, could trigger a safeguarding referral.

3.1 Impact on parents and carers

‘I really miss him. I’m always in tears. He’s missing so much of (son)...I find it really sad... (Partner) was a really good Dad. He did half of it all. I find it really hard.’

– Mother

When a family member is imprisoned, a range of new challenges arise for those caring for the children in the family. Some partners become sole-carers; often family members, such as grandparents, take on new caring responsibilities resulting in a significant change to their lifestyle. Carers have to manage the emotional and practical impact of family member offending on themselves as well as the children in their care.

On any given day in Australia, approximately 38,000 children have a parent in prison (Quilty 2005). Given the significant increase in prison populations, this number has undoubtedly grown.

PRESSURE

- Loss of income
- Rent arrears
- Media reports – everyone knows
- Children in trouble at school
- Stories of violence in prison
- Children not sleeping, anxious and clingy
- No support, coping alone
- Other family members not talking to me
- Isolated in community
- Benefit claims hard to grasp
- Long journey to visit a prison
- Pressure from prisoner to send money to them



Parents' and carers' support needs vary according to different factors:

- Emotional resilience
- Physical and emotional wellbeing
- Culture, language or ethnicity
- Relationship with children and parenting skills
- Family/community support networks
- Relationship with offending family member
- Childcare responsibilities
- Level of independence: financial and practical
- Nature of the family member's offence
- Stage at which the family member is at in the CJS
- Media coverage and community response

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners account for just over a quarter (27%) of the total Australian prisoner population (ABS 2016).

Overseas-born prisoners account for 18% of all prisoners (ABS 2014).



Consider how **culture, language, ethnicity** and **nationality status** could intensify the impact of a family member's offending on families.



Remember to think about the impact each stage of the **Criminal Justice System** can have on parents/carers. The release of a prisoner back to the family home can create anxiety for some families.



3.2 Impact on children and young people

‘I’m so angry because you promised you would come back and take us and we would live with you. You left me having nightmares. I didn’t know if you were safe, and I was really scared.’

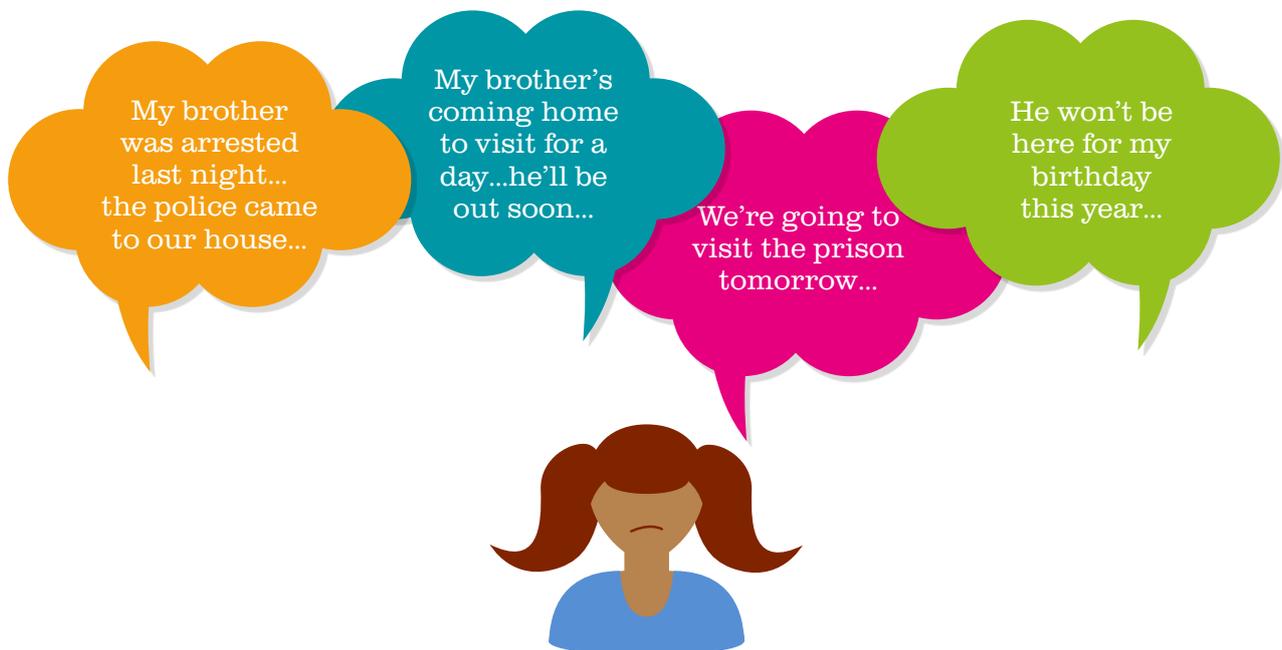
– Young person

The impact on children differs due to numerous factors including their **age**, whether the offender is a **key attachment figure**, the **nature of the offence** and a child’s **resilience**.

Children’s resilience, or their ability to cope, is again influenced by various things, including:

- Their innate qualities
- Family stability
- Quality of other close relationships, e.g. with siblings
- Ability to sustain a relationship with their family member
- Opportunities to openly discuss their situation (Jones et al 2013)

The impact of a family member’s offending is also likely to **change in intensity over time**:



Consider other **events** that could **trigger emotional or behavioural responses** in children affected by a family member’s offending, for example, parent teacher meetings at school.

‘It wasn’t our choice to be here...’

– Young person on having a parent in prison

Changes to family and home environment

A child's home environment can change in many ways as a family member moves through the stages of the CJS from imprisonment to release and resettlement. Examples of this could include:

- **a change in care giver**
- **a new house, school and/or community** (some children move house because of the offence, due to financial restraints, or to live with another care giver)
- **change in family routine** (some carers have to take up additional work to financially support the family)
- **change in relationships** (children's peers may treat them differently; relationships between siblings could be affected, particularly where children respond differently to their family member's offending)
- **change in financial wellbeing**
- **a change in role within the family** (for example, older children sometimes take on carer roles if there are younger siblings or where a parent/carer is struggling to cope)
- **change in emotions and behaviour of carers** (children may not be able to immediately interpret these changes as the result of a family member's offending)

In 2014–15, 151,980 children received child protection services. This equates to 1 in 35 Australian children aged 0–17 who had an investigation, care and protection order and/or were placed in out-of-home care (AIHW 2016).



Consider the difference in impact on a child when a **mother** or **primary care giver** is imprisoned.



**See Appendix 3:
Women Offenders**

Disrupted attachment

'Parent—child relationships are undermined, disrupted and damaged by the court and prison systems.'

(Galloway et al. 2014)

Poor or disorganised attachment occurs when babies and young children receive inconsistent or poor responses to their desire for comfort and when there is an absence of warm, responsive and stimulating care giving. This can lead to negative developmental outcomes. For young children of offenders in particular, attachment issues are a risk.

Relationships with care—givers are clearly disrupted when a parent is completely removed via imprisonment, but attachment can also be affected when offending results in inconsistent care giving, restricted

contact with family members or confused stories about their whereabouts (Murray & Murray 2010).



Consider other ways that offending could impact on attachment. Think: **pressures on lone carers** or **repeated changes in care giver** around imprisonment and release.

Imprisonment – loss and grief

Some researchers have considered the imprisonment of a family member in terms of **loss** and **grief** in order to understand its significance for children.

‘There is no closure in these cases; the challenge is in how to live with the ambiguity.’ (Jones et al. 2013)

‘Ambiguous loss’ describes a situation where a significant person is **physically absent but psychologically present** as in cases of divorce or migration. This concept of loss has been used to explain the particular experience of children with a family member in prison.

Children in this position often don’t know or understand the time period that will pass before their family member’s return from prison; circumstances are even more unclear when children are not told the truth about their whereabouts (London Bockneck et al. 2009, Jones et al. 2013).

Children who can find meaning in separation and who are able to maintain hope may be better equipped to cope with their loss; open communication about imprisonment contributes to this (Jones et al. 2013).

‘Disenfranchised grief’ describes a significant loss where **closure through mourning is not possible**. Because imprisonment is stigmatised, the process of openly coming to terms with it is not ‘socially supported’; children do not have

the chance to ‘mourn’ their loss. In this sense, the loss of a family member to prison has been compared to a death without the opportunity to mourn (Hames & Pedreira 2003).



Like bereaved children, children with family members in prison need support to:

- ▶ **accept** their loss
- ▶ **experience** the emotional pain
- ▶ **adjust** to their environment with their family member gone
- ▶ and **remember** their family member (Hames & Pedreira 2003)



See Appendix 2: Loss and Grief

Possible signs of impact on children will vary according to the various factors outlined above, but may include:

- Moodiness
- Aggression
- Chattering
- Bullying
- Difficulty with peers
- Appearing withdrawn
- Lack of concentration/tiredness
- Lack of interest in work
- Antagonism towards authority figures
- Bedwetting
- Separation anxiety
- Self-harm/suicidal ideation
- Substance misuse

4. Supporting parents and carers

‘All we want as a family is just to know what to do, how to go about things, because we don’t know. No one tells you anything.’ – Mother

4.1 Assessing needs, planning support and referrals

Parents and carers may need lots of different types of support around a family member’s offending (see diagram below for some examples). A common need is support to understand the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and this may initially be an unfamiliar area for practitioners too.



See Appendix 1 for lists of resources and services to signpost parents and carers to for each area.

Assessments – 5 dos and don'ts

1. It is important to remember that one family member's situation is wholly connected with that of the rest of their family; their needs will change as their family's do. **DO** take a **whole—family approach** to assessment and support planning to ensure the whole picture is considered.

2. Being **non—judgmental and understanding** is all the more vital to offenders' families who may have already experienced the effects of stigma as a result of their family member's offending. It may take time to build trust, so **DO** be **persistent** and listen to **their story** when they feel able to share it.

3. Depending on the stage of the CJS their family member is at, families may have different understandings to you about the significance of the offence and the likelihood of sentencing and/or release. Some families may be in a state of **disbelief or denial** so **DON'T** push them to accept a version of events they're not ready to.

4. DO recognise the difference between the information it is **essential to know** and the information you might **want to know**; many people are curious to ask about an individual's offences but this information often has little bearing on the family's needs.

5. Adding to the pressure on parents and carers is the last thing you want to do, so be sure to assist the carer and **DON'T** set **unmanageable or unrealistic goals** during support planning.



Consider any **safeguarding** issues throughout the assessment and on an ongoing basis during your intervention.



Asking the difficult questions – parents and carers

Sometimes professionals do not feel confident asking questions about offending and imprisonment. Here are some example questions to get you started approaching key areas of need.

What would make things better for you? How do things feel for you?	These questions will generate a wide range of responses from the need for emotional support through to practical and financial help. These can also be used as prompts to aid thinking about the wider impact on the family if necessary.
What do you think the children want to do?	This can be particularly significant regarding visits and understanding the parents' wishes as well as the child's. Interventions planned around this question can ensure consideration is given to the children's views and opinions.
What have the children been told? How much do you think they know?	It is important that the second question here is asked after "What have they been told?" as it allows space for the carer to think about the perceptions the child holds. The knowledge and understanding that children have is often underestimated by immediate carers trying to "protect" them from difficult situations.
What has changed since (name) went to prison?	Remember: For some families, custody has a positive impact. This can create conflicting feelings in relatives.
Have you got someone that you can talk to?	This is a good opportunity to find out what professional agencies may be involved and how the carer feels about getting others involved, sharing information etc.



See **Parent/Carer Support Wheel** on page 31 for one example of how the impact of offending on families has been addressed in assessments. You do not need to create a new assessment process in order to identify and support offenders' families. You could add a question to your existing systems.



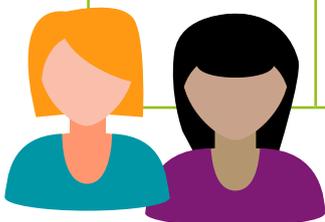
PRACTICE EXAMPLE: IDENTIFYING OFFENDERS' FAMILIES

The Tasmanian Prison Service is intentionally trying to identify the family of prisoners at the time of induction. This allows for early intervention with families who may require support. Posters displayed in local schools and services break down stigma and encourage self-identification.

- **Keep discussions open-ended** to gain individual responses from children and families.
- **Be open about sharing information** to ensure they understand the benefits of information sharing for themselves and their family.
- **Be prepared** and have a range of information to offer, or make a clear offer of support if information is lacking. Asking questions without a practical response can leave people feeling let down.
- **Ensure that you fulfil your offers of support** so you are able to develop a trusting relationship with the family and/or child.

Example support plan for a parent/carer

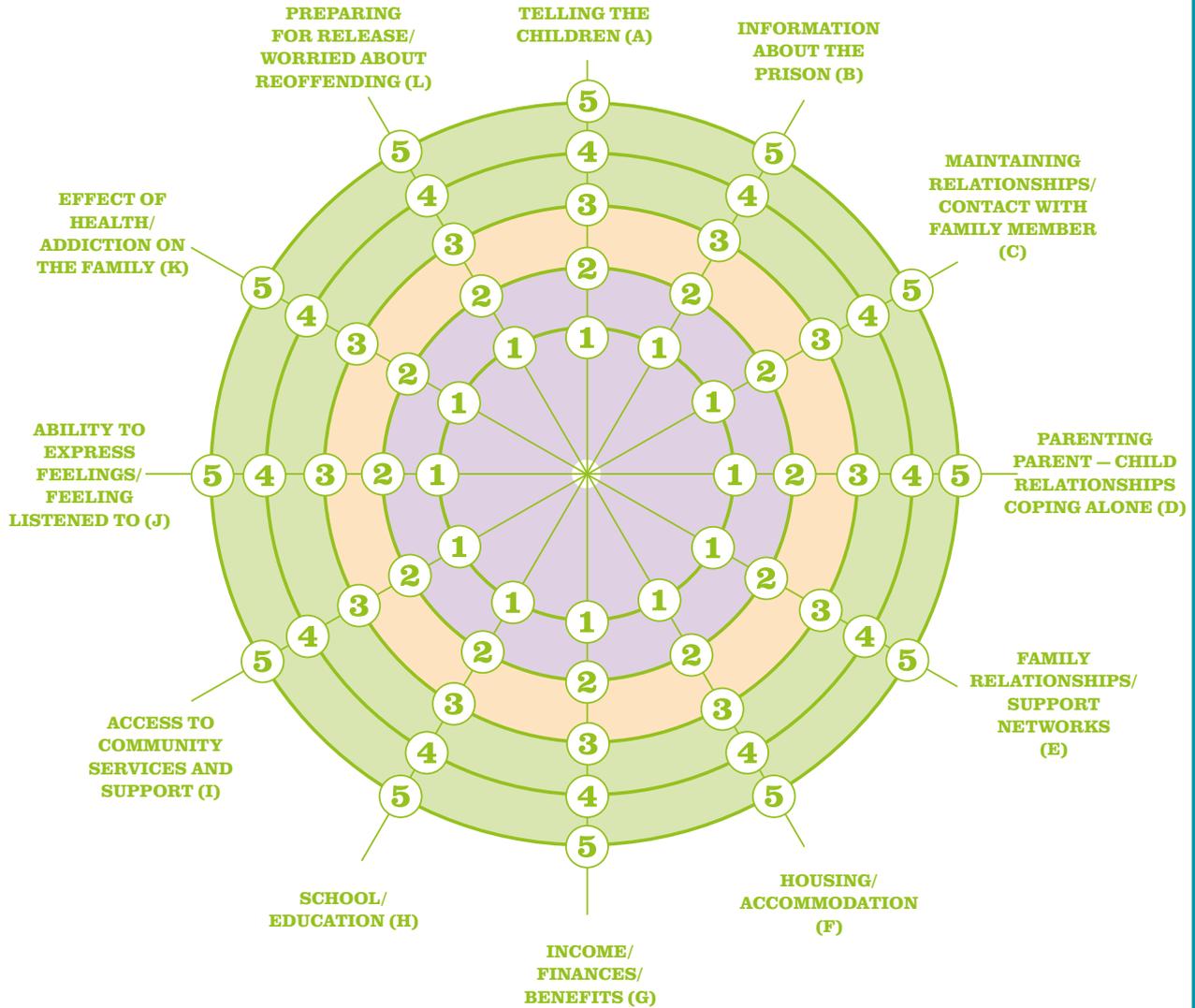
Area of support	Outcome to achieve	Action/s	By who?	When/where
Information about the prison	Feel confident about what visiting my husband in prison will be like.	Mother to read a leaflet about prison visit process and follow links provided by worker. Note down any questions that she has.	Mum	At home this week
		Worker to contact the prison and find out what they offer in terms of family support.	Worker	This week



CAPO – Support wheel Parent/Carer in the community

Name

Completed by



- 5** Crises I need help with
- 4** Problems that I need to sort out
- 3** Things I am generally not happy about
- 2** Nothing needs to be sorted out
- 1** I feel good about this

Date completed

Date of review

4.2 Telling the children

‘I didn’t know when he was going to prison. I saw it in the newspaper and came home and found out.’

– 14 year old girl

Whether to and **what to** tell the children about a family member’s offences is a very common issue that parents and carers worry about. It is vital to address children’s questions and anxieties with them quickly, especially when a family member has been arrested or imprisoned and suddenly removed from the home.



- **Parents and carers have the choice as to what they tell their children and when.**
- They may need support to understand why telling their children the truth is important.
- They might need your support to talk to their children or plan what to say.

Why tell children the truth?

- Once they have been told, they may be able to receive support and advice to cope.
- If appropriate, they could have a meaningful relationship with someone in prison.
- Knowing the truth may mitigate feelings of ambiguous loss or disenfranchised grief (see Chapter 3.2).

- They may notice that the adults around them are upset, angry or stressed, leading to confusion.
- Honesty teaches children that it is ok to be open with feelings and ask questions.
- Children might find out through playground chat, media stories, overhearing conversations, social media.
- Children may hear versions of the truth from others that are not accurate.
- Telling the truth reduces pressure on parents/carers to keep a secret and hide their feelings.
- Children may create their own stories (that could be much worse) about why a family member is no longer there.



Consider why parents and carers might find it hard to tell children the truth about a family member’s offending.



**See Appendix 1:
Telling the Children.**

Chapter 5 offers guidance on exploring feelings with and providing information to children. These approaches are relevant whether or not a child knows the whole truth about a family member’s offending.





Parents' FAQs

Just as asking the 'right' questions can feel challenging, some practitioners worry about having the necessary answers to respond. Here are some common questions you may hear.



They've been arrested...what happens now?

This can be a very tense time for families, especially if the arrest happened at home and they witnessed it. For first time offenders' families this may be the first stage of an ongoing learning process about the Criminal Justice System. See Appendix 1: Understanding the CJS for resources to direct parents to following an arrest.



What's the difference between remand and sentenced?

If a prisoner is being held on remand, they have not yet been convicted. They therefore have more privileges than convicted prisoners, such as more regular visit allowance. See Appendix 1: Understanding the CJS for resources on CJS processes.



How long will the sentence actually be?

Most prison sentences include periods of time to be served in prison and periods of time to serve in the community so a prisoner will not spend the whole of their sentence in prison. Some convictions carry minimum sentences in which case you may be able to help prepare a family for a prison sentence in advance. See Appendix 1: Understanding the CJS for resources on CJS processes.



What shall I tell the children?

This is a common dilemma for parents and carers. See Chapter 4.2 for information on why it is often helpful to tell children the truth about offending. Appendix 1: Telling the Children lists helpful resources to guide conversations about offending with young people.



What if I think they're innocent?

It's vital to respect the story of the individual you're working with, regardless of your opinion on the guilt of their family member. It can take some families time to come to terms with a family member's offences. Encourage them to focus on aspects of their situation that they can change to help them cope.



What can I send into prison?

There are many restrictions on what can be sent into prisons. You can direct a family member to the appropriate prison webpage, or contact number for the Visitors Reception.



I'm worried about the safety of someone in prison, what do I do?

There are several ways to make contact with a prison if there is a serious or immediate safety issue and it is very important that families pass on concerns. For ongoing anxiety or less immediate safety concerns, helpline support for the carer could help. See Appendix 1: Concerned about the welfare of someone in prison.



How do we keep in touch?

See Appendix 1: Keeping in Touch for resources to pass on to parents and carers trying to make or sustain contact with someone in prison.



I need support with...where can I go?

See Chapter 4.1 for suggestions on how to approach support needs with parents and carers and identify ways forward in different areas. See Appendix 1 for some ideas on where to signpost carers to for particular issues.



I don't want to see them in prison but my children do...what can I do?

It is understandable that some parents/carers do not want to visit a family member in prison, especially if they have been the victim of a crime as in cases of domestic abuse. It may still be in children's best interests to visit. Other adults, including professionals, can accompany children on prison visits. Any safeguarding concerns should be discussed with Child Safety Services, the prison, or other professionals involved first. See Chapter 5.4: Prison Visits Flowchart for guidance on facilitating visits where a parent/carer cannot go.

5. Supporting children and young people

It's affecting you not them, they have to know how you feel not how they think you feel...' – Young person

- cope with **changes** to family/home environment and in relationships with peers (5.5)
- manage their own **behaviour** (5.6)

Asking the difficult questions – children

See below for some suggestions of questions you might ask children during assessments and support planning.

5.1 Assessing needs and planning support

Children may need various types of support around a family member's offending, such as support to:

- identify, share and manage their **feelings** (5.2)
- receive appropriate **information** to address their anxieties (5.3)
- maintain **contact** with imprisoned or absent family members (5.4)



Remember: children have the right to have a say in all matters affecting them (See 2.1)

See **Child/Young Person Support Wheel** on page 37 for one example of how the impact of offending has been addressed in assessments with children.



What has changed for you since Mum/Dad/name went to prison?

What would make things better for you?

How do things feel for you?

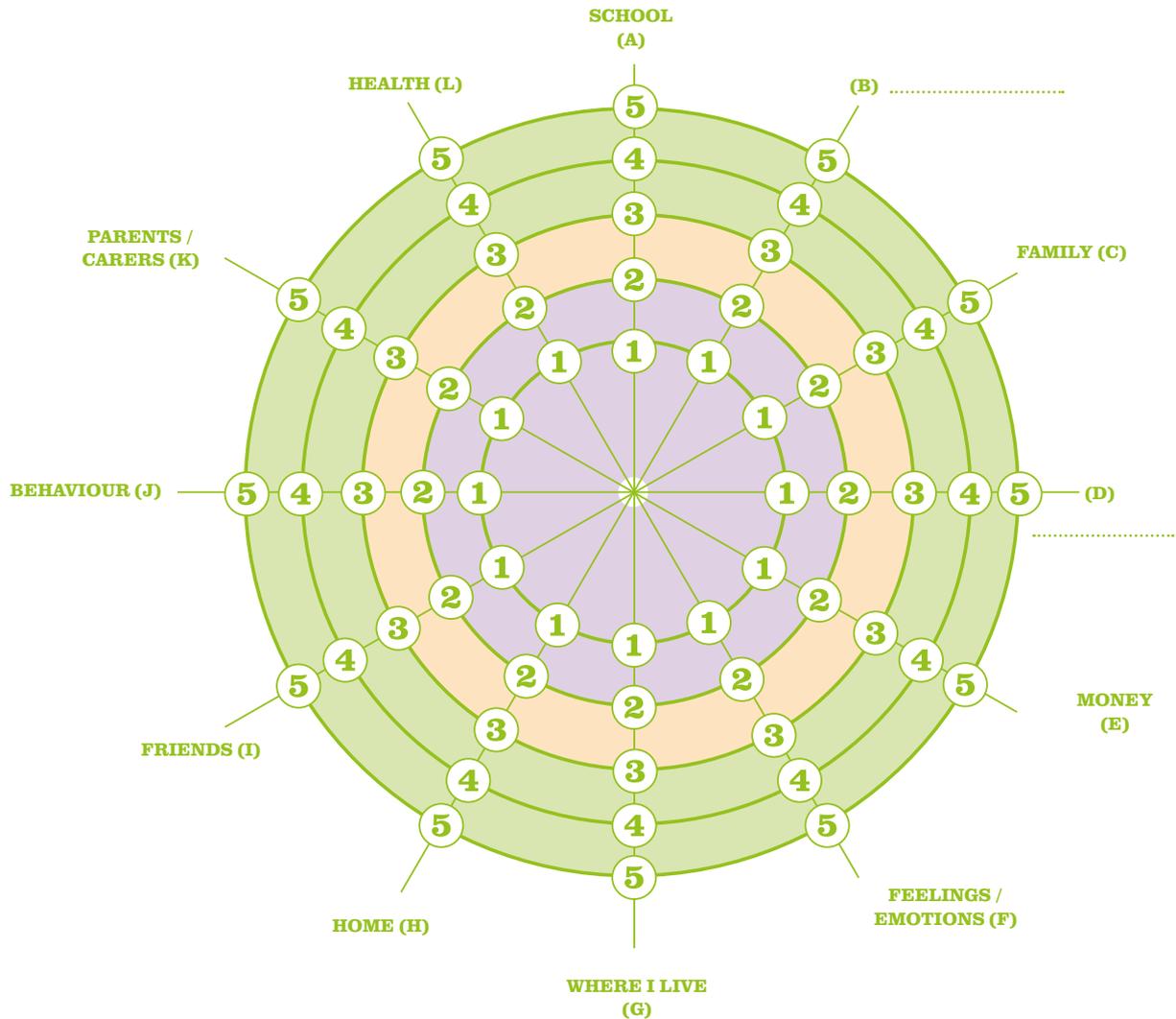


For some families, custody has a positive impact. This can create conflicting feelings in children around loyalty and guilt.

CAPO – Support wheel Child/Young person

Name

Completed by



- 5** Crises I need help with
- 4** Problems that I need to sort out
- 3** Things I am generally not happy about
- 2** Nothing needs to be sorted out
- 1** I feel good about this

Date completed

Date of review

Example support plan for a child

Area of support	Outcome to achieve	Action/s	By who?	When/ where
Remembering Dad	Have ways to think about Dad and feel happy.	Start to think about happy things I have done with Dad that I can put in my memory box	Sam	At home this week
		Find a box to bring to the next session that we can decorate as a 'memory box'	Worker	This week



5.2 Exploring feelings

‘If you do nothing but strive for the deepest possible understanding of a child and if you communicate that understanding, that experience can be life-changing’

(Kahn, 1991)

All children need support to **identify, share** and **manage** their **feelings** and this is likely to be important around a family member’s offending.

Professionals can play an important role in this by staying with and ‘holding’ a child’s distress so it can be coped with, then ‘giving back’ their feelings in bite size pieces.

This is termed **emotional containment** and can enable children to cope with feelings of upset and confusion, crucial in helping them to feel safe. Receiving this containment can help children to better tolerate difficult feelings later in life and become able to soothe themselves and regulate their feelings.

As a practitioner, you regularly draw on your communication skills as well as your training and experience to explore complex situations with children and/or families. These same skills can be used to broach the feelings associated with a family member’s offending.

See the **Dudley the Dog tool** on page 40, and several more in the appendices, for practical techniques to explore feelings with children.

See Appendix 4 Tools: Three Islands, Faces, Three Houses



**See Appendix 2:
Exploring Feelings**

5.3 Providing information

Answering children’s questions as they arise is vital to ensure they feel secure and develop positive and trusting relationships with their care givers. This can feel challenging when the topic is something as stigmatised as offending.

When it comes to imprisonment in particular, evidence suggests that children deal more effectively with ambiguous loss if communication is open and they are provided with explanations for their parent’s absence (see Chapter 3.2).

It’s important to think through the age–appropriateness of the information you provide and consider how much the child needs to know and how to phrase it in terms they can understand. There are many resources to support you in this.



**See Appendix 2:
Age-Appropriate Information**

See the diagram on page 44 – **Children’s FAQs** – for some examples of questions children are likely to ask about a family member’s offending and some pointers to assist you in planning a response, or supporting a carer to.



There are fewer resources designed specifically for pre-school children. Try using a storybook for an older child to guide you but follow the pictures, adapting and simplifying the story.

Tool: Exploring difficult thoughts and feelings with Dudley the Dog



Dudley the dog can help young children to talk about their thoughts and feelings.

All you will need is flipchart paper and pens, and a toy dog or picture.

Simply follow these 5 easy steps...

1. Introduce the child to Dudley the dog.
2. Ask them to draw Dudley nice and big in the centre of the flip chart paper.
3. Explain that Dudley's family member has gone to prison.
4. Ask the child to write down inside Dudley any feelings they think he may be experiencing.
5. Ask the child to write any questions Dudley may have in the space around Dudley.

This is a great way to get young children to talk about what's going on. By using Dudley the child will feel like 'I' is less intrusive and you are more likely to get positive engagement.

Now that you have opened up the subject of imprisonment you can ask the child if they can relate to any of these feelings and explore any questions they may have.

It's a great place to start.

5.4 Facilitating contact with someone in prison

Maintaining contact with a family member who has gone to prison is really important for many children's wellbeing; contact can remind children that they are loved and help them cope. Furthermore, it is a child's right to maintain contact with a parent they have been separated from if they wish to and it's in their best interests (see Chapter 2.1). However, contact is not always in a child's best interests and is sometimes restricted – see 'Restricted contact' later in the chapter.



**See Appendices 1 & 2:
Keeping in touch**



Phone calls

Children can't phone someone in prison; incoming calls are not allowed. Prisoners can phone people on their phone call list but the time of day may vary and there may be limited phones to use at some prisons.



Letters

Prisoners can send and receive letters. Rules regarding mail may vary from state to state, so ensure you check with your loved ones facility.



Children and young people of all ages can be supported to write a letter to someone they're close to who is in prison.

See Appendix 4 Tool: Letter Writing Template

Homework Club

A team of Family Engagement workers in Tasmania Australia support children to engage with their incarcerated parent with a focus on education. Via video, and during contact visits, children participate in the Homework Club.

During the Homework Club children are supported by their incarcerated parent to work through school assignments and homework tasks, encouraging a focus on academic achievement, school attendance and familial connection.

**See Appendices 5:
The Benefits in Education
centered contact - A Case Study**

Prison visits

Some people are apprehensive about taking children to visit someone in prison, yet it is not an uncommon occurrence:

Many prisons have play facilities for children in the visit rooms and visit centres where families are greeted and provided with information on arrival. But not all prisons have these facilities and it is worth preparing children and young people for the prison visit experience which can be challenging for some.

See our **Professionals' Flowchart** on page 46 – which outlines how to emotionally and practically prepare children and families for a visit.

Restricted contact

Having contact with a family member in prison is not always deemed to be in a child's best interests and in some cases it is restricted, for example where a sexual offence has taken place against a child (See Chapter 2.4).



**See Appendices 1 & 2:
Partners/Children of
Sex Offenders**

If a child wants to have contact with a family member in prison, it can be very challenging for them to understand and accept when it isn't possible. Depending on the offence, it can also feel difficult for carers to address. In such cases, exploring emotions with children and supporting them to cope with the loss is all the more important. **It is vital that children are told that any restrictions are not their fault.**



Families are generally not allowed to take personal items into the prison visit room with them. Children should not be encouraged to bring drawings, presents, photos, etc. for the prisoner as these may be taken off them during the entry process.



**See Appendix 2: Exploring
Feelings; Loss and Grief**

Where prison visits are not allowed, it may be appropriate in some cases (where rigorous safeguarding checks have been made) to explore other forms of contact.



See Appendix 2: Prison Visits



You could try phoning or writing to the Prison *if appropriate*. There may be alternatives such as video visits which run in Tasmania, Australia, or third party correspondence.





Children's FAQs



Where is Mum/Dad?

Work with the information children have been given by their carer and, where appropriate, encourage carers to consider the benefits of openness (see Chapter 4.2). Even if a child does not know the truth, e.g. thinks their family member is working away, you can still support them with their feelings around it.



Why did they do it?

A discussion with a child around this will depend very much on the circumstances of the offence. Sometimes responses such as 'good people sometimes do bad things' or 'people make mistakes' can be helpful.



What happens at court? Can I go too?

Children under 14 are not usually allowed to sit in public galleries without a Judge's permission and there are generally no child-friendly spaces or childcare facilities in court buildings. See Appendix 3: Stages of the CJS to guide your answer with age-appropriate information.



When are they coming home?

Release dates are often not set in stone and younger children may not be able to understand the periods of time involved in a prison sentence. Bear this in mind when reassuring them it's normal to miss their family member and supporting them to cope with the loss, see Chapter 5.5 and Appendix 2: Loss and Grief. NB: For some children, release is a fearful time if their family member has been abusive, for example.



How can I speak to them?

See Chapter 5.2 for information and Appendices 1&2 for resources on keeping in touch. Phone calls from prison are limited; you could offer to support the child to keep in touch by other means like writing a letter or drawing a picture for their family member. NB: pictures in wax crayon are not allowed and children can't take anything into prison with them on visits but pictures can be sent in the post.



What's it like in prison?

Children and young people often have negative ideas and fears about what life in prison will be like for their family member. Media stories about violence in prison can make this worse, causing children to wonder if their loved one is okay. See Appendix 2 for sources of age-appropriate information on prison to share with children.



What will it be like visiting prison?

Watching a short video together with a child can be a great way to help them visualise what a prison visit might be like, see Appendix 2: Prison visits. It's ok if you haven't been to a prison and do not know the exact set up but you could consider going on 'Hidden Sentence' training which is sometimes held at prisons and attendees can walk through the prison visit process (See Appendix 3: Training).



Am I bad like Dad/Mum?

Children of offenders feel the effects of stigma which can impact on their self-image. Watch the short Families Outside video, 'Reversible Writing' (Appendix 3: Awareness-raising), to think about this further. Encourage children to think about things they are good at to boost their self-esteem and confidence.



Do they still love me?

Some children worry about whether their family member loves them, and some experience feelings of self-blame and guilt. It must be made clear that the distance and restrictions on contact are not the child's fault or because they are unloved. This can be difficult if an imprisoned family member, for example, is not reciprocating efforts to keep in touch.



What will it be like when they come home? Will they leave again? Will it be different?

Release can bring new anxieties for children and families, as well as for the offender themselves. You cannot predict the future for a family, but you can support a child's ability to cope by talking through their feelings and concerns with them and exploring ways for them to cope with upcoming changes. NB: For some children, release is a fearful time if their family member has been abusive, for example.

Supporting a child to visit a prison A Professionals' Flowchart

Does the child want to visit?

Children who don't want to visit should not be forced to. Talk to the child about their wishes, feelings and any fears.

Don't make any promises at this stage if you are unsure if a visit will be possible.

NB: some children may not know the truth about prison and may think they're visiting somewhere else, e.g. a workplace.



Is other contact an option?

Children who do not want to visit, or who have no one to take them, might want to keep in touch by other means, such as letter.

If a child is **not allowed** to visit, other contact may be an option.

Children who want contact but are not allowed any will need support to cope with this (see Chapter 5.4: Restricted contact).

Is the child allowed to visit?

For safeguarding reasons, some prisoners are not allowed to have children visit them. It is likely the child's carer will know this, but if not, you could contact the prison to discuss the visit, or Child Safety Services for safeguarding advice.



Do they have an adult to take them?

Under18s must be accompanied by an adult on prison visits. Sometimes it is not appropriate for their carer to take them, e.g. domestic abuse cases. Other adult family members or friends can also take them.

Professionals are allowed to accompany children on prison visits where carers and the prisoner agree.



Discuss the visit with the prisoner

They have to agree to it and **add all potential visitors to their visit list**, including children, before you can book.

If you are making first contact with a prisoner to discuss a visit, you can write to them (see Chapter 5.4).

Book the visit

Most prisons allow you to book visits by phone or online. Different rules apply at different prisons and depending on whether the prisoner is convicted or on remand.

You must have the prisoners' details to book, including their prisoner number, and you must be on their visit list.

Organise the visit

Prisons can be difficult to reach on public transport – plan the journey in advance.

Inform the school

If the visit is in school hours, it is advisable for the family to inform the school of the absence as they can log it as authorised. However, it is important to be mindful of confidentiality as some families may not want the school to be aware of their family members incarceration.

Prepare the child for the visit

Emotional preparation is important ahead of a prison visit. Talk to children about their expectations and any worries. It would be useful to prepare them for the security process.

See Appendix 2: Prison visits for worksheets, leaflets & videos to use with children.

NB: Families usually can't bring anything into prison visits with them, e.g. drawings done by children.

During the visit

Visit centers can be challenging places for children to sit for a long time. For young children, there may be play facilities but not in every prison. Older children can't bring their phones and might find it helpful to think in advance about things they'd like to talk about.

After the visit

Children often have emotional reactions to visits and may be tired afterwards. Schools might notice a change in behaviour around the time of the visit. Children may need a 'debrief' from a professional or carer who can check in on their feelings.

5.5 Coping with changes to family/home environment

As we saw in Chapter 3.2, a child's home life can change dramatically as a result of a family member's offending. While there are several ways to maintain contact with absent family members where possible, contact is still limited in frequency, proximity and, in many ways, quality. Supporting a child to **cope** with the distance and **remember** their family member until the next possible contact is a good way of tackling this reality.



Try making a memory box with a child where they can store significant items and make notes of events to tell their family member about when they next have the opportunity.

**See Appendix 4 Tool:
Making a Memory Box**

Whether or not contact is possible, children and young people need support to cope with the possible changes to their home environment, relationships, responsibilities and routines that can arise following a family member's offending. Remember, this could be just as true when an offender is released back to the family home as it is when they are imprisoned.

As during other transitions, it may be helpful to:

- contain feelings of **loss** (see 5.2)
- **prepare** children in advance of further changes where possible
- support them to create new **routines**



**See Appendix 2:
Coping with changes to home/
family environment &
Appendix 3: Transitions**

5.6 Managing behaviour

Some research has suggested that offenders' children are more at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour and even in crime themselves (Murray 2005). This is understandably a common area of concern for carers and practitioners alike.

Identifying and exploring any feelings (5.2) behind a child's behaviour, such as anger, may help them to feel understood and could improve things. When misbehaviour becomes more serious, **early intervention** is key in preventing it from escalating.

Supporting children and young people with other needs in their life may make a difference to their behaviour, for example around their mental health, home environment, or academic life. Where behaviour is challenging, supporting parents with their parenting approaches and strategies could help them to manage it.



**See Appendix 1:
Parenting Support &
Appendix 2: Exploring Feelings**

6. Conclusion

All practitioners can make a difference to children and families affected by a family member’s offending, an often “hidden” and potentially vulnerable group. With your existing expertise and experience and, importantly, your empathy and understanding, you can provide interventions to counter some of the disadvantage this varied group faces.

We hope this guide provides a foundation for practitioners with little awareness of the impact of the Criminal Justice System on the whole family; we also hope it offers new approaches and suggestions to professionals who are more experienced in the field.

We thank you for your interest in and commitment to supporting children and families affected by a loved ones offending.



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Note:

- Quotes throughout the document have been taken from the following:
- i-HOP 'Message for Professionals' children and families blog (2016)
- Gill, O. (2010) She just cries and cries – Case studies of Devon families with a father in prison. Barnardo's.
- i-HOP 'Quality Statements & Toolkit' consultation with Bristol young people's group (2015). Unpublished.

APPENDIX 1: A-Z of resources for parents & carers

Area of support	
Care/fostering arrangements	<p>https://kidshelpline.com.au/parents/tips/foster-care-the-facts/ Information for parents, children, young adults and carers on the impact of care and foster care – The website contains FAQ as well as contacts for one on one counselling.</p> <p>https://www.shineforkids.org.au/documents/putting_your_child_first_dec13.pdf A survival guide for carers of children of prisoners, their families and practitioners.</p> <p>http://www.barnardos.org.au/get-involved/become-a-carer/types-of-foster-care/ Bernardo's offers information on the different types of foster care, the application process and anecdotes from the experiences of carers.</p>
Childcare	<p>Find a registered Child Care facility http://www.australia.gov.au/information-and-services/family-and-community/child-care</p>
Concerned about the welfare of someone in prison	<p>The following link contains information on the rights of a prisoner, note that these may vary from state to state. If you are concerned about the welfare of someone in prison, contact the relevant institution who will be able to direct your call to the appropriate individual -</p> <p>http://prisonerlaw.org/prisoner/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=80</p>
Domestic abuse	<p>National Counselling Helpline, 24/7 Information and support - 1800 737 732</p> <p>White Ribbon Support Lines - https://www.whiteribbon.org.au/find-help/domestic-violence-hotlines/</p>

<p>Financial/ Employment</p>	<p>Financial Counselling Helpline: 1800 007 007</p> <p>Financial counsellors are available 9:30am - 4:30pm weekdays, providing information on dealing with financial hardship -</p> <p>www.anglicare-tas.org.au/Supportandcounselling/FinancialCounselling.aspx</p> <p>Job Services Australia provides support for job seekers and employers -</p> <p>https://www.employment.gov.au/news/job-services-australia-support-jobseekers-and-employers</p>
<p>Finding out where a family member is in custody</p>	<p>The process of locating a prisoner is different for each State, please refer to the links below.</p> <p>WA: http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/about-us/access-prisoner-information/default.aspx</p> <p>NSW: Telephone the Sentence Administration Branch from 8.30am to 4.30 pm - Monday to Friday on (02) 8346 1000. You can also email them at alsosentence.admin@dcs.nsw.gov.au</p> <p>SA: http://www.corrections.sa.gov.au/sa-prisons</p> <p>QLD: An email address PrisonerLocations@dcs.qld.gov.au has been established to receive requests from interested parties as to the current status and/or location of offenders, a phone line has also been set up for the same purposes which can be contacted on (07) 3227 6055</p> <p>VIC: http://www.corrections.vic.gov.au/home/prison/contacting+a+prisoner/</p> <p>TAS: Risdon Prison Complex, Ron Barwick Minimum Security and Mary Hutchinson</p> <p>Risdon Prison - (03) 616 57400</p> <p>Hobart Reception Prison - (03) 616 57622</p> <p>Launceston Reception Prison - (03) 677 72963</p>
<p>Foreign National Offenders</p>	<p>Information for those arrested outside of Australia</p> <p>http://smartraveller.gov.au/guide/all-travellers/when-things-go-wrong/pages/arrested-or-in-prison.aspx</p>

<p>Parenting support/ guidance</p>	<p>Parenting help and resources for families affected by imprisonment:</p> <p>http://www.incredibleyears.com/parents-teachers/articles-for-parents/</p> <p>http://www.familylives.org.uk/about/our-services/action-for-prisoners-andoffenders-families/leaflets-for-families-affected-by-imprisonment/</p> <p>Shine for Kids:</p> <p>Assisting children and young people with a loved one in the criminal justice system through services inside the prison, the community, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, children and young people, online resources and publications can be found at -</p> <p>http://shineforkids.org.au/support-for-children-and-families/</p> <p>Sesame Street Little children big challenges:</p> <p>Resources, information and help for supporting children who have an incarcerated loved one -</p> <p>http://www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits/incarceration</p> <p>Communities for Children Tasmania:</p> <p>Communities for Children aims to improve the development, health and wellbeing of children aged 0-12 and their families through innovative early intervention and prevention programs. On their site you can find services, publications, resources and events - including their publication 'Waiting for Dad', a children's picture book about supporting a friend affected by parental incarceration.</p> <p>http://www.salvationarmy.org.au/en/Find-Us/Tasmania/c4c/Publications/</p>
<p>Relationship support/ guidance</p>	<p>Relationship Australia is a leading provider of relationship support services for individuals, families and communities. They aim to support all people in Australia to achieve positive and respectful relationships</p> <p>https://www.relationships.org.au/</p> <p>Family Relationship Advice Line - 1800 050 321</p>
<p>Release & resettlement</p>	<p>VACRO's Transition Toolkit has been prepared to assist families who are soon to be reunited with a family member being released from prison, and who may be feeling anxious about what might happen when their family member comes home. It has also been developed as a tool for professional workers to provide relevant support and guidance for these families</p> <p>http://www.vacro.org.au/Portals/0/The%20Transition%20Toolkit.pdf</p>

<p>Partners of sex offenders</p>	<p>This information and advice booklet is for families of people convicted of sexual offences. The booklet is based on real-life experiences of families and is filled with direct quotes throughout</p> <p>https://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/content/uploads/2016/08/Pickingup-the-Pieces.pdf</p>
<p>Telling the children</p>	<p>This article by the Prison Fellowship offers some tips and advice on communicating with children and young people about the incarceration of a loved one</p> <p>https://www.prisonfellowship.org/2017/06/how-to-tell-kids-parentincarcerated/</p> <p>Sesame Streets incarceration toolkit offers activities, tips and storybooks to help explore the meaning of incarceration and the appropriate way to tell children</p> <p>https://www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits/incarceration</p> <p>Offenders Family Helpline offers advice on telling children about the incarceration of a loved one</p> <p>http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/index.php/telling-the-children/</p>
<p>Understanding the Criminal Justice System</p>	<p>The Prison Fellowship has easy to follow flow charts and descriptions on each stage of the Justice System</p> <p>https://www.prisonfellowship.org/resources/training-resources/in-prison/prison-culture/understanding-thecriminal-justice-system/</p> <p>A collection of information on the Australian Criminal Justice System</p> <p>http://www.aic.gov.au/criminal_justice_system.html</p> <p>Information on the operation of the Australian Criminal Justice System</p> <p>http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/2f762f95845417aeca25706c00834efa/a4d719473be50fdfca2570ec001b2c95!OpenDocument</p>

APPENDIX 2: A-Z of resources for and to use in direct work with children and young people

Area of support	
<p>Age-appropriate information re. prison</p>	
Ages 3-8	<p>The Sesame Street Incarceration Toolkit contains resources for children ages 3-8 https://www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits/incarceration</p> <p>A short cartoon of a child's diary as he talks about his experiences of having a loved on go to prison. https://vimeo.com/184659022</p>
Ages 4-10	<p>A booklet for an adult to read with children about their emotions when a Father goes to prison https://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/content/uploads/2011/02/honest-emmas-story.pdf</p>
10 years +	<p>The Prison Fellowship offers resource for children ages 3-7 7-10 and 10+ https://www.prisonfellowship.org/resources/support-friends-family-of-prisoners/resources-for-children-of-prisoners/</p>
12-16 years	<p>My Own Prison (Fixers) - A short film about a 17 year old whose parent is repeatedly in prison http://www.fixers.org.uk/news/10865-11208/parents-in-prison-fix-onitv.php</p>
Children of sex offenders	<p>Someone in my family has sexually abused children (Action for Prisoners' Families) - Booklet for adults to read with children to answer their questions about sexual abuse https://www.nicco.org.uk/directory-of-resources/someone-in-my-family-hassexually-abused-children</p>

<p>Coping with changes to home/ family environment</p>	<p>Change and loss activities (Partnership for Children) - Printable activities and resources to help children cope with change and loss and to deal with new circumstances. These can be adapted for situations where a family member's offending results in changes to home and family environment</p> <p>http://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk/resources/resilience-buildingactivities/change-and-loss.html</p>
<p>Domestic abuse</p>	<p>1800RESPECT is a 24/7 helpline offering support, counselling and information to those experiencing domestic violence, sexual assault and family violence - 1800 737 732</p> <p>https://www.1800respect.org.au/</p>
<p>Exploring / managing feelings</p>	<p>Shine for Kids offers a range of worksheets and activities that help children explore their feelings with the guidance of an adult</p> <p>https://shineforkids.org.au/</p> <p>Childhood 101 walks children and carers through 5 steps towards managing big emotions, including how to express them. It offers a range of practical resources</p> <p>http://childhood101.com/helping-children-manage-bigemotions/</p> <p>Therapist Aid offers a range of free printable worksheets to help children identify and express their emotions, as well as ways to work through them</p> <p>http://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheets/emotions/children</p>
<p>Keeping in Touch</p>	<p>Doodle Cards (Sussex Prisoners' Families) - Illustrated postcards specially designed to help children stay connected with a family member in a fun and visual way. Created by children's illustrator Guy Parker-Rees</p> <p>http://www.sussexprisonersfamilies.org.uk/product/doodle-cards/</p>

<p>Loss and grief</p>	<p>There are a range of resources designed to support children dealing with feelings of loss and grief. Some can be adapted to support children who have lost a loved one to prison:</p> <p>Cruse is a leading bereavement charity in England, Wales and N.Ireland with great online tools</p> <p>https://www.cruse.org.uk/children</p> <p>Kids Helpline offers information on the way children experience grief and loss differently to adults. It offers advice on how to support children through these feelings</p> <p>https://kidshelpline.com.au/parents/tips/understandinggrief-and-loss/</p> <p>Lifeline’s Coping with sorrow, loss and grief tool kit provides information about: Understanding what grief is, developing strategies to help cope with sorrow, loss and grief, understanding what friends and family can do and where to go for help</p> <p>https://www.lifeline.org.au/static/uploads/files/coping-with-sorrow-loss-and-grief-wfcexsgmkxay.pdf</p>
<p>Mental health</p>	<p>Kids Helpline: Available for individuals aged 5-25 (Free call, email and WebChat)1800 55 1800</p> <p>https://kidshelpline.com.au/</p> <p>Headspace is a national youth mental health foundation dedicated to improving the wellbeing of young Australians</p> <p>https://www.headspace.org.au/</p> <p>Youth Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636</p> <p>https://www.youthbeyondblue.com/</p> <p>beyondblue's dedicated site for youth. Information, resources and support for young people dealing with depression and/or anxiety.</p>
<p>Prison visits</p>	<p>Visiting Dad book</p>

APPENDIX 3: A-Z of resources for practitioners

Area of support	
Awareness-raising	<p>It's no holiday (Families Outside) – Short film featuring the voices of young people with experience of a family member going to prison: http://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/itsnoholiday/</p> <p>Reversible Writing (Families Outside) – Video/poem from a young person's perspective about stigma and how having a parent in prison impacts on self-esteem and life chances: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGOB3QhGqtA</p>
Children's rights	<p>i-HOP briefing for advocates (i-HOP) – Briefing introducing offenders' children's rights, suitable for all professionals: https://www.nicco.org.uk/directory-of-resources/barnardos-i-hop-assistingchildrens-rights-advocates-to-support-children-of-offenders</p> <p>“Because it's our right” (Children of Prisoners Europe)– Awareness-raising video for professionals on children's right to have contact with imprisoned parents: http://childrenofprisoners.eu/awareness-raising-videos/</p> <p>Bristol Charter for Children of Prisoners (Barnardo's & Bristol City Council) – Charter of rights written by young people with experience of a family member going to prison: https://www.nicco.org.uk/directory-of-resources/bristol-charter-for-children-of-prisoners</p>
Education	<p>Children affected by the imprisonment of a family member: A handbook for schools developing good practice (Barnardo's): https://www.nicco.org.uk/directory-of-resources/children-affected-by-theimprisonment-of-a-family-member-a-handbook-for-schools-developing-goodpractice</p>
Health	<p>Children of Prisoners – Guide for Community Health Practitioners (Barnardo's) – Practical handbook for health visitors, community nurses, midwives and school nurses working with offenders' children and families: https://www.nicco.org.uk/directory-of-resources/cildren-of-prisoners-a-guide-forcommunity-health-professionals</p>

<p>Stages of the Criminal Justice System</p> <p>Arrest</p> <p>Court proceedings</p> <p>Imprisonment</p>	<p>Glossary of Legal Terminology (Offenders’ Families Helpline) http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/index.php/information-sheets/</p> <p>Collateral Damage (Jo Tilley-Riley, Clore Social Leadership Programme) – Report on the impact of arrests and home raids on children: http://www.cloresocialleadership.org.uk/Collateral-damage</p> <p>Court to Custody (Prisoners' Friends and Families Service) - Helpful leaflet designed to help defendants and their families prepare for the possibility of custody https://www.nicco.org.uk/directory-of-resources/court-to-custody</p> <p>Prison Sentences (Offenders’ Families Helpline) – Information sheet: http://www.offendersfamilieshelpline.org/index.php/sentence/</p> <p>Locked Out – Children’s experiences of visiting prisons (Jane Evans, Barnardo’s) – Accessible research with clear recommendations: https://www.barnardos.org.uk/locked-out-report.pdf</p> <p>i-Hop: Assisting prisoners to safeguard children with a key attachment figure in custody (i-Hop) - Briefing highlighting safeguarding implications of children visiting prisons and how to mitigate risk, particularly useful for prison staff or anyone facilitating prison visits with children https://www.nicco.org.uk/directory-of-resources/barnardos-i-hop-assisting-prisonsto-be-safeguard-children-with-a-key-attachement-figure-in-custody</p>
<p>Release</p> <p>Resettlement</p>	<p>The Outsiders: Preparing for Release (Action for Prisoners' Families) - Booklet helpful for understanding the emotions and challenges involved when a family member is released from prison http://www.familylives.org.uk/about/our-services/action-for-prisoners-andoffenders-families/leaflets-for-families-affected-by-imprisonment/</p> <p>Risk and protective factors in the resettlement of imprisoned fathers with their families (Friedrich Losel, Cambridge Journal of Criminology and Ormiston Children’s Trust) – Research article considering different factors involved in positive and negative resettlement outcomes: http://www.crim.cam.ac.uk/research/fathers_in_prison/</p>

<p>Transitions</p>	<p>Wellbeing Resources – Transitions (Young Minds) – Information from leading children’s wellbeing charity, Young Minds, aimed at schools but relevant for all practitioners looking to support children going through changes:</p> <p>http://www.youngminds.org.uk/training_services/training_and_consultancy/for_schools/wellbeing/transitions</p>
<p>Training</p>	<p>Hidden Sentence training (Action for Prisoners’ & Offenders’ Families) – Awareness-raising training for all professionals on the impact of a family member’s involvement in the CJS on families. Delivered by Onesimus Foundation in Hobart Tasmania</p> <p>https://www.onesimus.org.au/</p>
<p>Women Offenders</p>	<p>i-HOP briefing on children of female offenders (i-HOP) – Briefing covering issues relevant to supporting female offenders and their children:</p> <p>https://www.nicco.org.uk/directory-of-resources/barnardos-i-hop-assistingprofessionals-to-work-with-the-children-of-female-offenders</p> <p>Women’s breakout – National umbrella organisation for professionals working with vulnerable women in contact with the Criminal Justice System. Website includes a directory of services for female offenders:</p> <p>http://www.womensbreakout.org.uk/</p>

APPENDIX 4: Tools for working with children to explore feelings, maintain contact and secure memories

Three Islands



The Three Islands technique helps gain an insight into a child's life without having to rely on question and answer interviews which can be intimidating for some children.

The technique was developed by Kate Iwi, young people's services officer at charity RESPECT, UK. We are grateful to Kate for giving us permission to use the example.

What resources do I need?

A large piece of paper (A3 or bigger) and some pens, crayons or pencils. For children unable or unwilling to draw, you can use toys and models instead.

How do I do it?

Draw two islands near the top of the piece of paper and a third island towards the bottom. Draw a bridge between the first two islands and a gate in the middle of it. If it helps, name the islands i.e. the 'Island of Always', 'The Island of Sometimes' and the 'Island of Far-Away'.

Three Islands (cont.)

Explain to the child that this is a game and that they live on the first island. Ask them to draw themselves or use one of the toys to represent them. They can then draw anything else they want to be on this island with them (which could include people, animals, activities, objects).

If you do not have the exact toys / models to represent what a child wants to show, just pretend (for example, a toy plane could represent going on holiday).

On the second island, ask the child to draw or put anything that they want to see but not all the time. Explain they have the only key to the gate on the bridge, so anything on the second island can only cross when the child lets them.

On the third island, ask the child to draw or put anything that they want to be far away from them or never see again.

As the child is drawing or putting toys on the islands, make sure you ask them who or what they are and why they have put something on a particular island

What am I looking for?

Anything in the drawing or model that seems odd or worrying, as well as anything that makes the child happy.

Warnings

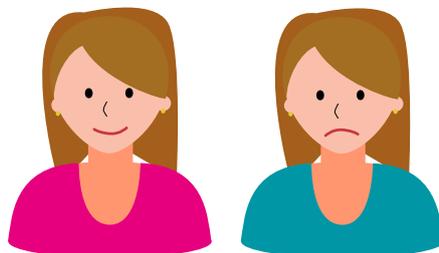
You should be careful about interpreting what is drawn or shown too literally. For example, if they draw a picture of a man and a women fighting, this would not necessarily mean they have experienced domestic violence. Drawings / modelling are a way for the child to express an emotional state or process something they have seen or experienced.

You should avoid questioning where the child places things. For example, you can ask why they have put their mother on the second island but you should not say: 'Oh, but I would have thought your mummy should be on island one?' The child may end up trying to please you (or displease you.)

There may also be immediate reasons why a child has put something on either the second or third islands – for example, they may put their pet cat on island two because the cat scratched them earlier in the day.

As you can see from the picture above, the child has drawn things such as brothers, sister, my heart and love, my brain, godfather, friends, a peace sign and a baby blanket on island one. On island two, they have drawn their cat, cousins, aunt and uncle and some other children. On island three, they have drawn sadness and their father being handcuffed by two police officers (this may not be immediately obvious from the actual drawing- it came through discussion with the child of what she was drawing). They have also decorated the islands by drawing the sea and some jagged rocks around the third island.

Faces



What is this technique?

The faces technique consists of asking a child to pick from a range of different facial expressions and assigning them to members of their family. It is a useful method for discovering how a child perceives their family. It is more likely to appeal to younger children or those at an earlier stage of development.

What do I need?

A large piece of paper, pens, crayons or pencils. For children unable or unwilling to draw, it is useful to have some pre-prepared facial expressions such as happy, laughing, angry, hatred, sad, bored, aggressive, relaxed faces etc.

What do I do?

Explain to the child that you want to know more about their family. Show them or draw some pictures of different facial expressions and make sure they understand each expression and the emotion it relates to. For more developed children, you might use a wide range of expressions; for those at earlier stages of development, you might decide just to use two or three (i.e. happy, sad and angry).

Ask the child to draw you pictures of everyone in their family or the people they live with and then explain to the child that each family member needs to have one of the facial expressions. If they say something like 'mummy is sad and happy' ask if they can pick which one she is most like. Some children cannot choose and may decide to draw more than one head. This is OK and still helpful.

What am I looking for?

You are not only looking for which expressions the child draws but their explanation as to why – what is their thought process behind picking a particular face for one person and another face for someone else?

Three Houses (sourced from Community Care)



What resources do I need?

You need three large pieces of paper (A3 or bigger), one for each house, and pens, crayons or pencils.

What do I do?

You, or the child, should draw three houses on each sheet of paper (one house on each piece of paper)

Label the houses:

- House of vulnerabilities (for younger children it could be house of worries or fears)
- House of strengths
- House of hopes and dreams

1. Start inside the houses. Inside the first house, the child or family should write down anything internal that worries them such as self-perceptions, values, beliefs, thoughts and feelings. Inside the second house write down anything internal that makes them feel positive and happy.

2. Continue outside the houses. Around the outside of the first two houses the child or family should write anything external that makes them scared or makes them happy and positive such as wider family members, peers, school...

3. For the house of hopes and dreams, you could ask the miracle question – what would life be like if there was a miracle overnight and you woke up in a perfect world?

4. When the drawings are finished, talk about what is needed to address the fears, bolster the strengths and achieve the hopes and dreams. Start with resources available within the family, as this will increase their motivation

Letter Writing Template

Dear

Last weekend I...

This weekend I hope to...

My favourite thing in school this week was...

My least favourite thing was...

I felt happy about...

I didn't feel happy about...

I'm looking forward to...

I would like to ask you...

Look forward to hearing from you soon

From

Making a Memory Box

Making a memory box can be a useful way for a child to record memorable things that happen in their daily life. Items placed in the memory box can then be shared / discussed later with an imprisoned family member. This can help both the child and family member to feel part of each other's lives.

Step 1 – Find a box

Find an empty box. You can decorate this box if you like.



Step 2 – Collect your memories

If something has happened during the day that you want to share with your family member, just pop a reminder in the box. This could be a receipt from something you bought, a joke you heard, a photo of you and your friends, a note or a toy.



Step 3 - Share with family member

When you next have telephone, letter or email contact with your family member then you can look in your memory box to remind you about what you want to share with them.

APPENDIX 5: Benefits of Education Focused Contact

The following is a letter from a Grandmother caring for her Grandchild during her Sons incarceration, names have been changed for confidentiality.

"I would just like to let you know that Judy's grades have improved at school since she has had the opportunity to spend time studying with her father Peter. Judy's last two maths quizzes have her getting 40/40 when she used to struggle to pass these quizzes. Judy is also more positive in herself now, realising she can improve her grades if she works harder and puts in extra time with her homework. Judy is seeing her father in a positive light with her now saying 'I'll ask dad when he rings' if she is struggling with her homework when she would usually hide her homework book and told us she did not have any homework. Thanks for making this possible for Judy."

"I am pleased to advise you that the tutorial sessions Judy has with her father continue to be a success. Judy has completed her latest project at school with the result being 27/28 or 96% (the highest marks in the class). The teacher's comments indicated that the content of the project covered all of the marking criteria and that the point lost was related to punctuation. Judy has also changed in that she now looks forward to going to school and is confident in completing her school work or talking about what she has studied. Judy and her father also enjoy spending time one to one discussing different topics which has given them a more normal relationship. Please thank everyone involved in organizing these tutorials and let them know that I feel Judy is now going to enter high school in 2016 as someone who looks forward to learning and that she now knows if she puts in the extra time to study she is capable of getting good results."

The following week Judy was called out in the school assembly and given a certificate for the most improved student in the school.



Supporting all professionals to work with offenders' children and their families



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