

A Dedicated Pathway to Support Little Minds



Little Minds Matter

Bradford Infant Mental Health Service

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About the Little Minds Matter: Bradford Infant Mental Health Service

What?

A preventative service to promote healthy early attachment relationships by supporting families with a baby under the age of two and the practitioners that work with them. We want to ensure that every baby receives care that nurtures good social and emotional development.

How?

Training

Delivering infant mental health training to the workforce, helping them to better understand infant mental health and to identify difficulties in the families they support. Our core training offer is: (1) A full day training to raise awareness of infant mental health, and (2) a half day follow up training that enables attendees to put their new found knowledge into practice.

Consultation

Providing specialist advice, support and guidance to practitioners who are struggling to support families where there is a parent-infant relationship difficulty. We provide (1) telephone consultations, (2) regular group reflective discussions, (3) drop-in consultations, and (4) ongoing consultations for families with more complex needs.

Community Engagement

Sharing key messages about infant mental health and wellbeing to the diverse community of Bradford. We consider this to be our 'public health' arm, ensuring that everyone has access to information about how critical the first 1001 days are.

Direct Clinical Work

Providing support to families where there is a need of specialist therapeutic input to support early attachment relationships. Our highly trained team includes Clinical Psychology, Family Therapy, Health Visiting, Midwifery, Counselling Psychology, Community Support Working and Community Engagement.

Criteria

- Parent is pregnant or baby is under the age of 24 months.
- Caregiver is struggling to bond with their baby; this may be Mum, Dad, Grandparent, Adoptive Parent etc.
- Baby is showing signs of distress; e.g. difficult to soothe, withdrawal, overly independent, a 'good baby' etc.
- There are concerns over the quality of interactions between parents and babies.
- Baby lives in, or is registered with a GP in one of the following areas: BD1, BD2, BD3, BD5. BD7. BD8, BD9.

Our local context

Bradford District Care NHS
Foundation Trust

CAMHS

Little Minds Matter

Better Start Bradford

Funded by:

The National Lottery Community
Fund

Reducing Inequalities in City

Services for babies



Expectation



Geographical restrictions

Different thresholds

Little Minds Matter:
Bradford Infant Mental Health Service

Baby Steps

Specialist Early Attachment and Development

Early Help and Prevention

Perinatal Support Service

Specialist Mother and Baby Mental Health Service

Drift towards older children and young people

Focus on parental mental health and distress



Expectation



Reality



It's hard for practitioners to hold babies in mind

- Infant derives from the Latin “not able to speak”.
- Easy to de-prioritise those who cannot speak.
- Asking about parent-infant relationships can feel anxiety-provoking.

LITTLE MINDS MATTER

Taking action to keep the infant in mind

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It is well-established that practitioners working with children sometimes struggle to listen to and represent the voice of the child in assessments and decision-making processes (Care Quality Commission, 2016; Holland, 2004). It is often even harder for practitioners to see babies as individuals with needs and preferences. Indeed, the very word ‘infant’ derives from the Latin meaning ‘not able to speak’. This reflects some of the difficulties in working to support good mental health in infancy. How can practitioners consider social and emotional wellbeing when babies are unable to verbalise their experiences? It is easy to ignore or deprioritise those who cannot speak. This article describes a resource that helps practitioners to hold infants in mind.

Keywords: infant mental health, parent-infant relationships, supporting practitioners, supporting new parents

Experiences early in life lay the foundations for a wide range of future outcomes throughout childhood and adulthood. The first 1001 days of a baby's life represent a critical period of development with more than one million new neural connections forming every second (Center on the Developing Child, 2017). Babies need good quality and reliable relationships with

preferences. Signs of distress in infancy can be subtle. For example, a baby who consistently does not have their needs met may quickly adapt and become a ‘good baby’ who rarely cries. This baby has learned that crying will not benefit them; indeed, in some cases it may harm them.

2. Asking about how parents feel about their new baby can feel like a ‘taboo’ that

Acting as One for Babies:

A Dedicated Referral Pathway for Little Minds

Practitioner or Family Seeking Support



Single Point of Access for Infant Mental Health

Tel. 01274 251 298 (Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm) Email. LittleMindsMatter@BDCT.nhs.uk

Calls, emails, and referrals to be managed by Little Minds Matter, including liaising with other agencies for additional information to support referral decision making.



Joint Referral Team

Clinicians from Little Minds Matter and SEADs reviewing all referrals weekly to decide on outcome.



Accepted by Little Minds Matter for:
Direct Clinical Work
Consultation



Accepted by SEADs for:
Direct Clinical Work
Consultation



Signposted to alternative service
where available

Anticipated Benefits

- ✓ **Baby-centred** – a dedicated pathway for babies puts them at the centre of decision making around social and emotional development.
- ✓ **Simple but effective** – this pathway makes it easy for anyone working with people who are pregnant or families with babies under the age of 24 months to seek support, advice, and guidance from the relevant service.
- ✓ **Reducing duplication** – practitioners and families will not need to contact multiple different services to understand what support is available to them.
- ✓ **Supporting collaboration** – bringing together two key services for referrals management will afford new opportunities to work together.
- ✓ **Data informed** – by providing one point of access, we can better analyse where there are barriers to families accessing services and propose new solutions to overcome these challenges.



**Might not be perfect but connected,
collaborative, and “good enough”**

