

Module 3

Children's rights and violence



This project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)

Introduction to Module 3

Throughout the Participation 4 Protection project, we have worked with children and young people in ways that respect their rights. Children and young people understand that violence against them is a violation of their rights. They also understand that their involvement in the design, delivery and evaluation of services respects and upholds their rights. As a project team, we are aware that sometimes professionals have limited opportunity to fully understand and apply children's rights in their daily practice with children and young people. In addition to the tasks in this module, a rights-respecting self-reflection tool is available on the website (add link). This has been informed by what children defined as rights-based practice, and it can be used by organisations and workers to review their own practice on the basis of what children identify as important, and rights affirming, to them. PLEASE NOTE: This Resource is Forthcoming.

Aims and purpose of Module 3

The purpose of Module 3 is to improve professionals' awareness of children's rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Participants will learn about why children's rights matter and will consider how they can respond positively and from a rights-respecting and child-centred perspective. Participants' own practice and vignettes from other anonymised cases will be used to prompt reflection and learning. Participants will also be invited to think about children's rights organisations in their area, their relevance to supporting children and young people who have experienced violence and their relevance to professionals who work with this group.

The aim of this module is to strengthen professionals' application of children's rights in their daily practice and build participants' capacity to make empowered decisions. Advice from children who have experienced violence, will inform participants on how they can best support a child and their family should they experience violence in their lives.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TRAINERS - MODULE 3, TASK 1

Module 3, Task 1

The purpose of this task is to give participants the opportunity to look at children's rights and why they matter in our work with children and young people. The aim is for professionals to gain a better working knowledge of children's rights in the context of the violence they experience.

Resources required for Module 3, Task 1

Flipchart, pens, access to the web to watch a video, information sheet on the articles of the UNCRC, definitions of human rights principles (appendix 3a). [PLEASE NOTE: Partners also need to have to hand child friendly versions of the UNCRC – such as those hosted here <https://childhub.org/en/child-friendly-materials/child-friendly-crc-convention-rights-child-summary>].

First step for Module 3, Task 1

Invite participants in pairs, to share their views about children's rights and the commonly held assumptions about children's rights. Bring the group back together to share both negative and positive views and assumptions. Explore the relevance of these attitudes and assumptions for children and young people who have experienced violence. Use the following prompt questions to guide participants' thoughts and discussions:

- What is a child? - *UNCRC definition is a person up until 18 years.*
- What are human rights? - *A set of basic entitlements that all people need to live in dignity, make sure we are treated properly and fairly, and are given the freedom to develop to our full potential.*
- Do you think children and young people should have a special set of rights? Why? - *Children and young people need extra protections that adults don't. The UNCRC lists 54 articles of all the different rights that children and young people have AND the different responsibilities that the Governments (and others) have to make sure that children and young people have these rights. Public bodies and professionals should follow it (courts, police, social workers, teachers, health care professionals etc).*

Explain that the UNCRC is an internationally ratified treaty outlining rights that are particular to children and young people and check participants' awareness of this. Tell the group that they are now going to look at a resource that considers who are the main players in relation to implementing children's rights.

Please play video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFi3w7ozlGY>

Next steps for Module 3, Task 1

Exploring attitudes: Discuss with the group, and record on flipchart paper, their understandings of the following:

- *What is your idea of a 'good' childhood?*
- *How does this fit with that of a child who has experienced violence?*
- *What assumptions are you making about family life?*

Explain to the group that our attitudes develop over time and reflect where we have come from i.e. the influence of our culture, education, family, friends and daily experiences. Attitudes also influence how we judge, understand and communicate with others - and how we will proceed with our life in the future. Discuss with participants their thoughts while they reflect on the following:

- *What did this activity tell you about your internal values and beliefs about children, young people, childhood and family?*
- *Can you identify some other external factors or other significant life experiences that have contributed in shaping your values about children, young people and family?*
- *Why have you decided to become a....(particular profession)?*
- *How do you think your values will guide/misguide your actions as a professional in this area?*

While writing on flipchart paper, ask the group to describe their understanding of the following human rights terms/concepts, and how these apply when they work with children and young people who have experienced violence.

Dignity – *to treat someone well, making them feel valued.*

Equality – *the state of being equal in value to others.*

Respect – *a positive feeling or action shown towards someone, it exhibits care, concern or consideration for their needs or feelings.*

Remind professionals that they have an obligation (*as duty-bearers*) to uphold the rights of rights-holders (*children & parents*).

Using these 4 human rights principles below, invite participants to explore how they, in their work, protect, respect and fulfil the rights of children, young people and parents (see Appendix 3a for definitions).

non-discrimination;

best interests of the child;

life survival and development;

views given due weight.

Please play video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGBTPeiNyY>

Key messages at the end of Task 1

Professionals should familiarise themselves with the articles outlined in the UNCRC.

Professionals should be aware of child friendly versions of the UNCRC – such as those hosted here <https://childhub.org/en/child-friendly-materials/child-friendly-crc-convention-rights-child-summary>

BREAK FOR 10 MINUTES.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TRAINERS - MODULE 3, TASK 2

Module 3, Task 2

The purpose of this task is to give participants the opportunity to reflect, with reference to children's rights, what they do that might help or hinder children and young people experiencing violence.

Resources required for Module 3, Task 2

Flipchart, pens, access to the web to watch a video, and a list of UNCRC rights relevant to work in this area (e.g., Articles 2, 3, 7, 12, 17, 19, 20) and the reflections worksheet (Appendix 3b).

See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

OR you can provide participants with a summary version such as this:

<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/global/reports/uncrc-child-friendly-version.pdf>

And here is a child friendly version which can be used

<https://childhub.org/en/child-friendly-materials/child-friendly-crc-convention-rights-child-summary>

First step for Module 3, Task 2

Explain that to improve daily practice, participants should reflect on how and in what ways child rights principles are integrated and apply in their current work.

Please play video - 'Why it Matters'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXXQy4pay5M>

Next steps for Module 3, Task 2

Using the Rights Reflection Worksheet (Appendix 3b), invite participants in small groups to reflect on their professional status and their obligations in relation to these rights.

What do they currently do in their workplace to respect, protect and fulfil rights (see Appendix 3a for definitions)? Ask the following questions.

- *What needs to be done differently?*
- *What could you do differently?*

Regroup after 20 mins and ask participants would they like to share their thoughts with the group. This can be framed as an opportunity to share dilemmas and concerns and get advice from others in their field who may have some experience with the issues.

This is also an opportunity to reflect on general levels of understanding regarding implementing children's rights and to identify if we can make improvements in the areas of respecting, protecting and fulfilling children and young people's rights in a work context. Using the flipchart summarise the key issues and ideas emerging from the discussions.

Key messages at the end of Task 2

Professionals should understand their obligations as duty bearers and how this relates to daily practice.

BREAK FOR 10 MINUTES.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TRAINERS - MODULE 3, TASK 3

Module 3, Task 3

The purpose of this task is to give participants the opportunity to hear from some children and young people on their thoughts of what can be done to improve relationships and daily practice.

Resources required for Module 3, Task 3

Flipchart, pens, and Key messages and quotes from children and young people on 'Relationships that can help' (Appendix 3c).

First step for Module 3, Task 3

Explain to the group that having reflected on their own practices and considered how applying a children's rights perspective can enhance the ways professionals work with children and their families, there is now an opportunity to hear from some children and young people involved in the project on their thoughts of what we could do. In this way we are learning to see, hear and listen to children and young people's voices.

Next steps for Module 3, Task 2

Relationships with those who can help - During project consultations, the children and young people shared their understandings of the human rights principles in relation to how these are demonstrated by a person that could help them.

Please see Appendix 3c for key messages from the consultations with children and young people. Print this out along with a selection of the children and young people's quotes, for each participant. Ask participants to choose one or two key messages that stand out for them regarding the children and young people they work with to consider:

- the particular challenges this may create for them;
- their learning;
- how it might impact/change their practice.

Ask them to regroup and discuss their thoughts with the whole group. Prompt discussion by focusing on the following:

- The importance/value of hearing & listening to the children's voices
- Are they able to do this in their professional capacity? If not, why?
- What current supports and systems need rethought to enhance opportunities to incorporate children's views?

Overall Key Messages from Module 3

By being aware of children's rights and implementing them in practice, you can make a big difference in the lives of children and young people.

Violence is the result of the violation of children's rights.

Violence experienced by children and young people presents risks that need to be reported and action taken to prevent further harm.

Appendix 3

Instructions for the Trainers

PRINT UP PACK

Appendix 3 Contains 3a, 3b, 3c

These resources are for use with Module 3, Tasks 1, 2 and 3

Appendix 3a

Definitions

At the overarching level, constitutions and laws protect against violations of children's rights. In addition, professional bodies' Codes of Conduct and other guidelines and principles formally contribute to professionals' understanding and implementation of their daily practice.

RESPECT: The obligation to respect means that States (and their representatives – a professional) must refrain from interfering with or curtailing the enjoyment of children's rights.

PROTECT: The obligation to protect requires States (and their representatives – a professional) to guard individuals and groups against children's rights abuses.

FULFILL: The obligation to fulfil means that States (and their representatives – a professional) must take positive action to facilitate children's enjoyment of their rights.

Appendix 3b: For Module 3, Task 2 - Rights Reflection Sheet

| Article | Respect | Protect | Fulfil |
|--|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 2 Non-discrimination | | | |
| 3 Best interests of the child | | | |
| 6 Right to life, survival and development | | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| 12 Right to be heard/ participate | | | |
| 17 Right to information | | | |
| 19 Right to protection from harm/violence | | | |
| 20 Right to support/protection if unable to live with parents | | | |

Appendix 3c: For Module 3, Task 3

Relationships with those who can help: Key Messages drawn from the P4P consultations with children and young people

- Friends and parents were the number one source for help and advice for children, however, if these were the perpetrators of the violence children knew who to go to for help, but they may not, as they did not wish to disrupt or be removed from their family.
- While some children expressed trust in their countries systems, not all the children shared the same view. For them, professionals can sometimes get it wrong or were just not able to offer any help.
- Some had very little faith in any of their countries systems, particularly, their policing, health and social care services and the education services. These children had been let down on numerous occasions by each of these system when they had tried to seek help for their problems. Being 'let down' at a young age impacted children's likelihood to seek support as they got older.
- Many children thought that youth workers were more helpful for them as they were usually from similar community backgrounds and therefore understood their issues and lifestyles. This made it easier to get along with this person and strike up a supportive relationship, which makes it easier to disclose any information. Youth workers did not probe and ask questions but let children talk at their own pace, and dictate the agenda.
- They thought that babies, who suffered from neglect, might be better able to get help from the health and social care services, and that these systems are less likely to be able to help older children.
- Their ability to seek help was due to i) an adult having already established a long term trusting relationship with the child, or ii) an adult entrusted with providing practical help in a time of need.
- The children appreciated practical help and immediate action from adults.
- To qualify as a trusted adult required showing patience and an ability to sooth and calm a child who was distressed. Related to this was a trusted adult's ability to a) listen attentively to the children's stories, and importantly b) ask the right questions, as they might be traumatised and find it difficult to talk about the experience.
- These qualities were considered by the children to be invaluable enablers to help them disclose experiences of violence; otherwise they may not be able to effectively express their feelings and accurately articulate what had happened.
- The principles of respect and best interests were apparent when a trusted adult would ask the children what they wanted to happen in the situation, allow them space to reflect on this, and respected their wishes whatever they decided.
- Many of the children said that professionals do not listen to them and do not seek their views.

- The children thought their offenses did not always justify punishment and committal. Detention may not be helpful and they would be forced to miss their childhood experience.
- Systems put in place, to supposedly help them, actually create barriers that make it very difficult for them to keep up essential supportive contact with their family.

Quotes from Consultations with Children and Young People

Relationships with those who can help:

'Police and youth office just bring to children's home. Police should ask the child what they want'. (Germany).

'I think that social workers blab too much, sometimes you can't say nothing to them and they are on the phone.' (Children in care: UK)

'You'd feel like a tout. You wouldn't want anything being reported or made a big fuss out of.' (Children in care: UK)

'Police can't always do something about it' (get help for a problem). (Children in detention: Belgium)

'They genuinely won't do nothing. There's nothing they can do. And you're just going to make things ten times worse on top of yourself. That's why I think brothers or cousins, be smart about it but do it your own way.' (Conflict with the law: UK)

'People can't help you unless they know what it's like to have been through something. Youth workers would know way more, they have been through it.' (Conflict with the law: UK)

'I went to the police and they didn't do anything (when in Afghanistan)'. (Refugee/unaccompanied minors; Austria)

'Taking tablets will not fucking help you. Only makes it worse. (Children living in areas of political conflict: UK)

'I hadn't experienced youth workers until I came here and it's like, you can tell people stuff you wouldn't tell people otherwise. Just tell them stuff and they have your back.' (Children living in areas of political conflict: UK)

'That doesn't exist – only you can help yourself'. (Children in detention: Belgium)

'only you can help yourself'....'No one can really help you – you are alone and you must look after yourself'. (Children in care: Belgium)

'You fall alone, then in the end you must stand up alone'. (Children in detention; Belgium)

'My family helped me come here to Austria'. ...'Care givers helped me find house, school, food, teacher helped me learn'....'Police helped me when I came to Austria, brought me to an institute for unaccompanied minors'. (Refugee/unaccompanied minors: Austria)

'Belief that police can enforce the law'....'Family is important to give hope and support'. (Child migrants and refugees: Belgium)

'Police don't want to be involved, they abuse people- police are the ones inflicting the violence- can't and won't turn to them for help'. (Children living in areas of political conflict: UK)

'He can listen and can help me to be safe' (Children in Care; Romania)

'Pain is a reason to remain silent, not wanting to repeat it over and over again, if the trauma is so bad you wouldn't want to think or talk about it again.' (Children in residential care: Belgium)

'She doesn't want to talk, she is too ashamed to talk' (Children in detention; Belgium)

'It's hard to find someone you trust'. (Children in detention: Belgium)

'No one understands'. (Children in detention: Belgium)

'I didn't want to tell him my life story when I had only met him'. (Children in Care: Romania)

I don't trust much people. Trust is a huge thing, it takes years to get it but seconds to lose it. (Conflict with the law: UK)

*'Teachers can't do anything- not their job...' Juvenile judges have no feelings'.
(Children in detention: Belgium)*

'By at least letting you know what decisions they are making.' (Children from travelling community: Ireland)

'And why they're making that decision" (Children from travelling community: Ireland)

*'They need to give us a choice, it's us that has to live with the decision, not them.'
(Children from travelling community: Ireland)*

*'You are living here with a group of persons, you don't know with whom you are living, you don't know these people and you don't know what they are capable of'.
(Children in detention: Belgium)*

'Don't lock me up here because I haven't committed a murder'. (Children in detention: Belgium)

'We cannot be a child, we must grow up too quickly'. (Children in detention: Belgium)

'Justice, juvenile courts, counsellors, lawyers, they all destroy that connection. They literally build a wall between them'. (Children in detention: Belgium)