

#LookCloser

Programme of Learning
September - December 2023

Hello!

We're delighted to invite you to join us for our latest #LookCloser programme of learning. We have developed our sessions based on learning from the work of The Children's Society and wider partners to tackle child exploitation and abuse.

All sessions are free of charge and delivered live via Microsoft Teams. The timetable below has links to the Eventbrite booking pages for each event. Feel free to join as many of these sessions as you throughout the coming months.

All our sessions have been designed to be relevant to multiple professional audiences and stakeholders, so please feel free to share with anybody you think may benefit.

Dates for sessions in 2024 – 2025 will continue to be added to our Programme of Learning in coming months.

Contact The Children's Society's Prevention team at prevention@childrenssociety.org.uk with any questions.

| Date | Session | Time |
|---|--|---------------|
| Thursday 14 th September 2023 | Disrupting Exploitation | 13:00 – 15:00 |
| Thursday 19 th October 2023 | Anti-Racist Practice to Tackle Child Exploitation: Why Anti-Racist Practice is Essential in our Fight Against Child Abuse and Exploitation | 10:00 – 11:30 |
| Tuesday 24 th October 2023 | Transitions to Adulthood: Preventing Exploitation as Children Approach and Turn 18 | 15:00 – 16:30 |
| Thursday 16 th November 2023 | Safeguarding Care Experienced Young People from Exploitation | 10:00 – 11:30 |
| Monday 11 th December 2023 | Overcoming Gender Assumptions: tackling exploitation for young people of all genders | 15:00 – 16:30 |

Session Descriptions

Disrupting Exploitation

Do you work with children and young adults (0-25 years) who are experiencing or at risk of exploitation and abuse? If the answer is yes, then you have a crucial role to play in disrupting their exploitation and stopping the perpetrators who are ultimately responsible. It is only by everyone playing their part in disruption that we will be able to keep all children and young adults safe while targeting those who cynically profit from their abuse.

This session on 'Disrupting Exploitation' is bought to you by The Children's Society and NWG. It aims to:

- Explore what disruption means, the tools available and their crucial role within safeguarding and protection plans for children and young adults
- Discuss the importance of taking a multi-agency approach to disruption
- Evidence best practice through learning from real life case studies
- Consider the application of disruption measures for those transitioning from childhood into adulthood

Why Anti-Racist Practice is Essential in our Fight Against Child Abuse and Exploitation

We are making progress in our fight against exploitation, but it is clear that responses and outcomes are often not the same for all children and young people. Racially and ethnically minoritised young people are more likely to face disadvantage because of our assumptions and biases, siloed working, exclusionary practice, and wider social inequalities which impact our ability to protect them from harm.

In this session we will explore what it means to take a proactive 'anti-racist' approach to tackling child exploitation and why this is essential to ensuring we can support and safeguard every young victim.

In this session we will:

- Consider how our assumptions and biases can influence our efforts to identify,

prevent, and disrupt the exploitation of children and young people and the impact of disproportionality and discrimination on protecting young people from these forms of harm

- Further consider how institutional racism compromises our efforts to prevent exploitation by impacting on young people and communities trust in services and their likelihood to seek help or report exploitation and abuse concerns
- Explore 'adultification' and the importance of recognising victimhood in older children and young adults
- Explore how we can improve practices to protect and respect young people, and take an intersectional and holistic approach to working with them, in order to ensure that all children and young people receive the support they need
- Demonstrate the value of anti-racist practice in the fight against child exploitation and abuse and the importance of taking a person-centred, holistic approach

Transitions to Adulthood: Preventing exploitation as children approach and turn 18

The transition to adulthood is an extremely important stage in the life of a young person, as they explore choices around identity, relationships, rights and responsibilities and navigate finding their place in the adult world. But for young people harmed through exploitation and abuse, the transitional stage from 16 to 18+ can all too often seem like a "cliff edge" (Holmes and Smith 2022), where the support and protection afforded to younger children can often disappear at the same time that risks of harm and abuse from perpetrators increases.

What can we do to make sure that we afford older children their rights as victims of exploitation? How can we work together to ensure that young victims of exploitation are effectively identified, safeguarded and supported across their transition to adulthood in a holistic, child-centered way?

In this session, we will:

- Introduce the key principles of a transitional safeguarding approach and why this is so important for preventing and tackling exploitation in older children and young adults
- Explore the exploitation risks and harms that can impact older children across the transition to adulthood
- Seek to reframe narratives and approaches to victimhood in relation to older children and young adults who experience exploitation – and to overcome bias, discrimination and siloed working to ensure all victims are recognised and receive appropriate support.
- Reflect on our own practice and experiences of working with young people transitioning from child to adult
- Share examples of promising practice in relation to transitional safeguarding for young people who have been exploited or are at risk of exploitation

Safeguarding Care Experienced Young People from Exploitation

This session is designed for safeguarding professionals working with care experienced young people and will aim to explore the specific issues they face in relation to exploitation. Incorporating learning from the practice principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm developed by The Children's Society, the University of Bedfordshire and Research in Practice; we will explore systemic challenges within the care system and how these affect young people's experience of exploitation alongside sharing promising practice from across England and Wales.

In this session we will:

- Discuss the appropriate placement of children entering, in or leaving care and the challenges for those moved 'out of area' as a response to exploitation concerns
- Explore the importance of considering disruption alongside decisions to move children 'out of area'
- Consider the specific exploitation risks for care experienced young people as they transition to adulthood and between

child and adult services and promising practice in responding to these

- Explore effective information sharing across multi-agency networks and how this can help ensure that they are safeguarded effectively against the risks of going missing and experiencing exploitation

Gender and Exploitation: Tackling Exploitation for Young People of All Genders

This session will explore how our assumptions about gender can lead to us failing to protect young people from exploitation and harm and what we can do to overcome these in our practice and in our systems. Our assumptions, stereotypes and biases on issues of gender can impact young people's experiences of exploitation, shape the way professionals perceive and interact with them, influence the support they receive and even the way we design our services. Gender is also fundamental to the way that young people think about themselves, their identities, as well as their experiences of exploitation and abuse.

This session will focus in particular on three issues where gender assumptions and practices can impact our ability to safeguard and support young people:

1. Girl's experiences of criminal exploitation
2. Boy's experiences of sexual abuse
3. Exploitation risks for transgender, non-binary and gender diverse young people

This session aims to:

- Explore how gender and gender assumptions can impact a young person's experience of exploitation
- Challenge the way gender-based assumptions can influence our ability to recognise and respond to exploitation in children and young people
- Consider gender inclusive approaches to identifying, assessing, and supporting children and young people
- Demonstrate the value of a person-centred, holistic and inclusive approach to understanding and responding to exploitation and abuse.