

Managing Dilemmas

Full title: Performing child protection practice and managing dilemma. Managing and supervising social workers' planning and preparation for work with children.

Course Description

Social work and child protection literature, policy and practice discussions largely ignore the core experience of doing the work. Little attention is given to where it is performed or the detail of what is and is not done when face to face with children and families. For instance, although it is the methodology through which most child protection goes on, the home visit is virtually ignored, as the emphasis in policy and practice texts is increasingly on what happens in the office, at the computer and in inter-agency collaboration. This seminar will focus on participants' experiences of what happens when social workers leave their desks and go on the move to protect children. We shall explore core questions such as where is the best place to see children on their own. What sort of contact should social workers be having with children in order to enter their worlds and get to know their experience? What role does touch play in keeping children safe? How can resistant and hostile parents and carers be effectively worked with? The focus will be on face to face working with children and parents and how at least some of the many personal and professional challenges can be acknowledged and overcome. This will include reflection on the kinds of organizational supports workers' need to promote their resilience, insight and capacities to keep children safe. The session will draw on my research into how social workers perform actual child protection work, on home visits and in other places, and on themes and concepts addressed in my new book *Child Protection Practice* (Palgrave, 2011).