

Lancashire families who trouble us. How can we know how effective we are at helping them change? Why should we be bothered? And what do they think?

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You are only allowed to pick two of the three

What do families want? Ask some experts, just don't consult with them...

“I’ll tell you what to do, just do it and then ask me what I think about that so that I have some notion of what it could be like to be helped, at the moment I’m just guessing and that’s no way to win a war.” Donald, father of 6, single parent, FIP user.



What do parents find helpful?

- Local trusted sources of help, more people ask a friend than a Health Visitor about parenting issues
- More people would read a childcare magazine to seek help than ask a professional....so just imagine how desperate they are when they do
- Flexible responses
- Local and sensible locations, “ *they expected me to meet in a building that has this bloody great big sign that said Youth Offending Team, no way.... people I know would see me.*”
- Brokerage/signposting
- Sophisticated recognition of issues
- Ability to tolerate distress
- Touchingly, usually something is better than nothing
- Positive attention is good



Services that keep their promises are like gold dust

“She said she’d phone and she did, I was astonished to be frank with you” .

What do parents find unhelpful?

- Being made to feel inadequate
- Feeling disconnected from (very) local sources of help
- A one size fits all approach
- Child focused services perceived to be at the expense of parents
- *“Why is all Toddler this and that? I want to be recognised in my own right”*
- Services that don't distinguish between mothers and fathers
- *“Bloody embarrassing, that all female world”*
- Services that do not adopt a connected approach
- Services that need you to be able to read to get

“I go there for that and here for this and then down to the Post Office. I take the kids to the doctor's, the wife to hospital and just have time to get to the Betting shop, if I'm lucky.”

Some feedback for us...

It seems like, “You’re disabled, that’s enough of a problem, you aren’t allowed another one, since when were problems rationed?.”

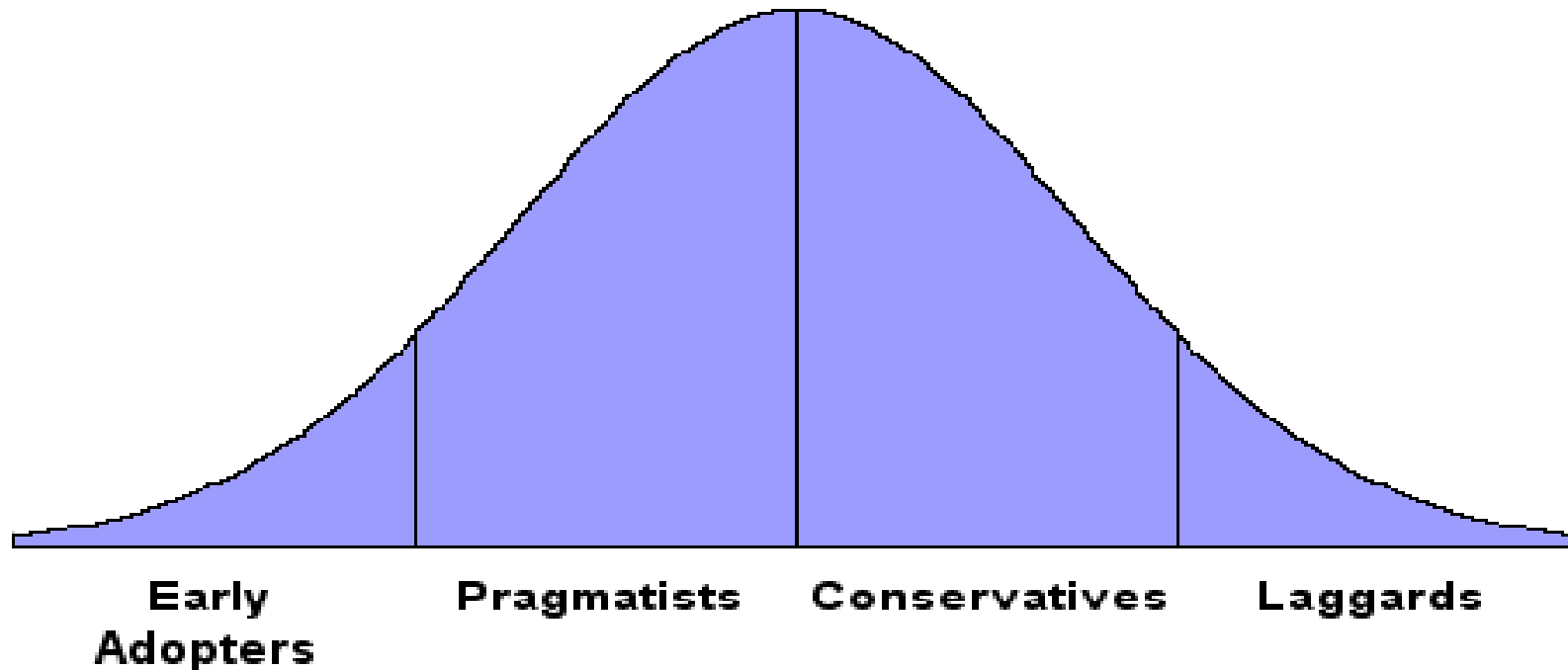
Tony, father of three children, married twice, in distress about his current relationship rather than his motor neurone syndrome diagnosis

I’m not sure they talk, they were both going back to the same office and she didn’t offer the other one a lift, I thought, oh dear, this isn’t looking good for me. Selfish I know, but there you are.’

Colin, father of two and living with profound mental health problems

Family Action Consultation with parents with profound physical disabilities, mental health problems and learning difficulties

What do you remember about bell curves?



The population, its age, its intelligence, its beauty, its problems and issues are spread across a bell curve, like this one that is measuring enthusiasm...where are you on the measuring curve?

The hardest to help aren't always the hardest to measure...

- **Rubbish and smells**
- **Dogs**
- **Violence especially domestic abuse**
- **Too many children**
- **Too few parents**
- **Teenage pregnancy**
- **No sense of possible change**
- **Criminality**
- **Petitioning neighbours**
- **Wasted human potential**

This is the Wilson's 'Before' kitchen, you should see it now, I am allowed to show you as they are very proud of how far they have come

What do we know about the underlying problems? Research tells us.....(but you know this already...)

- **Severe/enduring adult mental health problems**
- **Parents with learning difficulties**
- **Long standing physical illness**
- **Domestic violence**
- **Substance misuse**
- **Lack of regulation, time, resources and energy**
- **Lack of connection to the world around them**
- **Fractured family relationships**
- **Early poor parenting across at least two generations, often more**

But how do you know that you did the BEST you could have done for them?

The measurer, you, the excellent practitioner

- The cultivation of the capacity to reflect **in** action (while doing something) and **on** action (after you have done it)
- Knowing that you have undertaken the most effective intervention possible
- Developing the capacity to look after ourselves
- And, most importantly, that you have done no harm



The measuring effect

- Observing and measuring make a difference
- Think about the live supervision experience
- A positive focus on areas of difficulty with an expectation of improvement can produce improvement
- Subtle communications

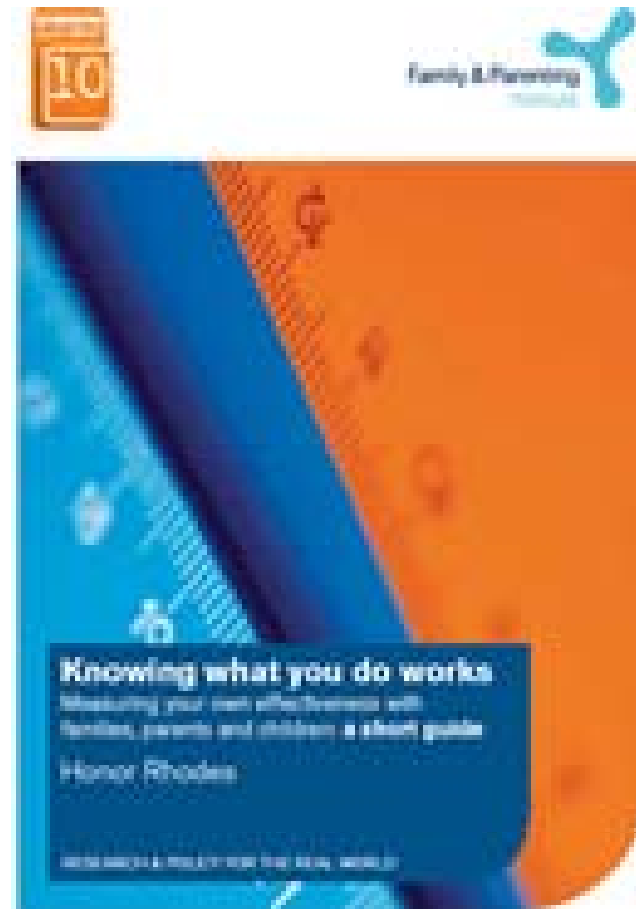
BIG BROTHER



**IS WATCHING
YOU**

Measuring things

- Why?
- What?
- How?
- When?
- Where?
- With what?



<http://www.familyandparenting.org/item/publication/76>

This is your going home present, bet you can't wait....

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

For each item, please mark the box for Not True, Somewhat True or Certainly True. It would help us if you answered all items as best you can even if you are not absolutely certain or the item seems daft! Please give your answers on the basis of how things have been for you over the last six months.

Your Name

Male/Female

Date of Birth.....

	Not True	Somewhat True	Certainly True
I try to be nice to other people. I care about their feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am restless, I cannot stay still for long	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get a lot of headaches, stomach-aches or sickness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I usually share with others (food, games, pens etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get very angry and often lose my temper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<http://www.sdqinfo.com/questionnaires/english/c3.pdf>

Or just google Goodman SDQ,

I expect you are VERY familiar with this by now....

Common tools

- **Goodman Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)**

<http://www.sdqinfo.com/b1.html>

- **The CORE System**
(Clinical Outcomes for Routine Evaluation)

<http://www.coreims.co.uk/index.php>

We wrote a Briefing sheet to help you find ones that might help you

http://www.familyandparenting.org/Filestore/Documents/PW2009/measurement_tools_briefing.pdf

- **Some Triple P tools**

Family Background Questionnaire
Parenting Scale
Parenting Experience Survey
Being A Parent Scale
Parent Daily Report Checklist
Parent Problem Checklist
Relationship Quality Index

- **Other useful ones**

The Family Assessment Device
DoH Family Hassles
DoH Family Activity Scale

- **And, sadly, ones that people have devised themselves...DON'T**

FPI Briefing Sheet: Supervisor Effectiveness Rating Scale (SERS)



Feedback tool for managers in family and parenting work

This questionnaire is designed to give supervisors clear feedback on their performance, print these sheets for each person supervised and ask them for their honest appraisal of your approach, use a specially designated session to consider their responses with them and agree any changes you would both like to make.

Supervisor's name:

Below are some statements that may describe the actions of your supervisor. Think how frequently this person engages in the behavior described by each statement.

Scoring is on a 4 point scale:

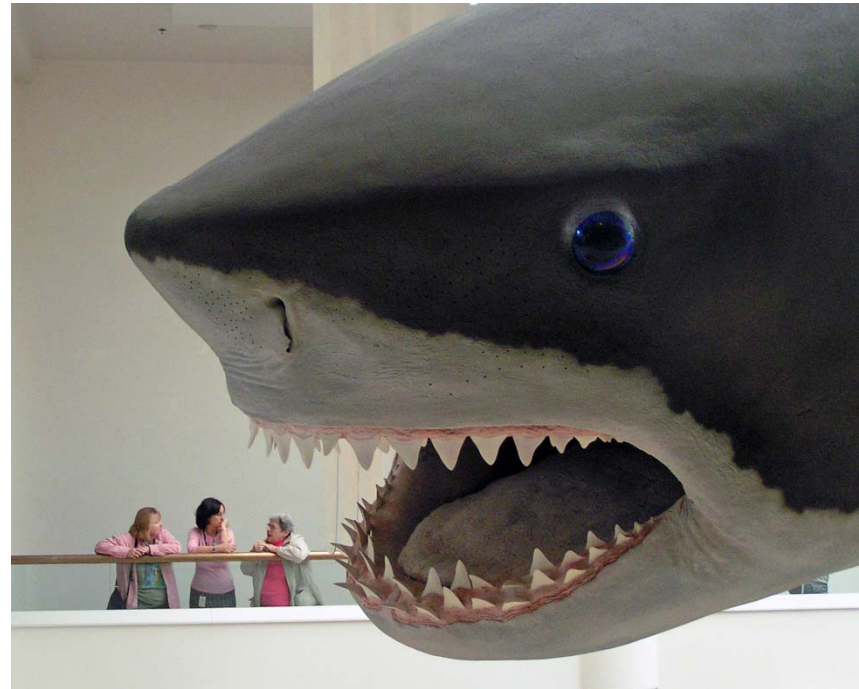
1	2	3	4
Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely

In which areas (pick up to 5) would you most like to see this person improve? Put a star or tick by these

Question area	Very Often	Often	Some-times	Rarely	Is this one of the 5 priority
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Process stuff...

- Have a good look at the Goodman SDQ or whatever other measures you might use....
- Even BEFORE thinking about what families will make of it you need to be considering what will happen when you DO start measuring.
- What do you do when you have collected information?
- Resources hungry process



Measuring is NOT doing so what works for families with this level of disorder, confusion and trouble?

- **Start in the home, don't summons to an office**
- **Build the questionnaire into the starting session**
- **Solve a problem that the family want help with, this is '*the test*'.**
- **Map other agencies involvement (or not), bring them in**
- **Use contracts early – they are very effective, and don't flinch from naming the difficult**
- **Protect workers from scabies and violence**
- **Review, reward and sanction immediately**
- **Underline change and make it very hard to retreat back to how things were**

Thinking about what does not work with most families?

Because?

- “You should...” get alongside first, get parents to want your help
- Letters or any written communications : Hidden or manifest illiteracy, letter hoarding, other ways of communicating work better (photobooks, video, pictorial representations of shopping lists, rules, what should go where, rotas for basic cleaning)
- Short term interventions: families are expert at defeating workers, prepare for the long haul
- Sanction only interventions: carrots v. sticks
- Loss of energy/enthusiasm for change: we all are reluctant to change, workers need energy to sustain the whole system



What are your carrots?

Persuasion or will parents/children/people allow you to administer a questionnaire?

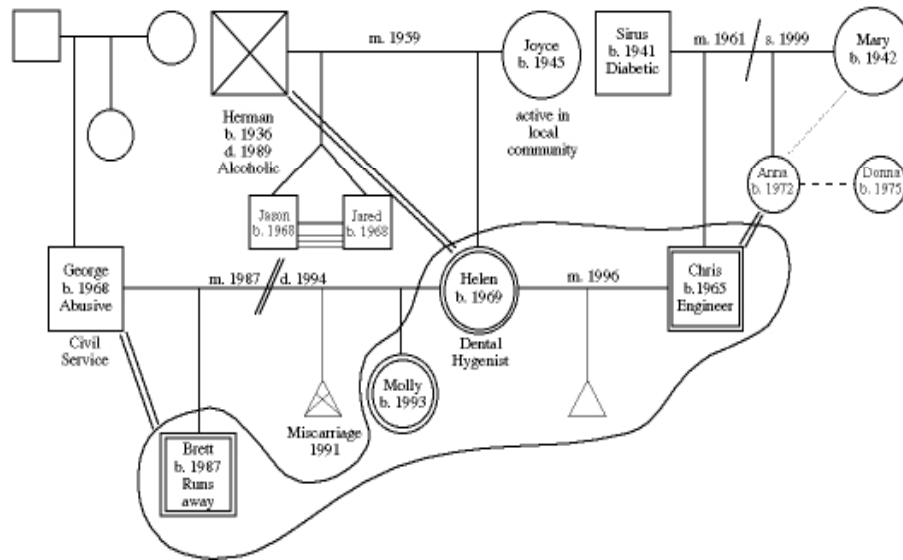
In all likelihood they will, IF:

- You are confident that it will be helpful to them and you
- You appear to know what you are doing
- You appear to believe in its efficacy
- You appear to utilise what the tool(s) tells you
- You make it seem easy and unfrighting
- You give accurate examples of questions

**What about families who don't agree to be measured?
Well, they can become your experts.**

Time of behaviour	What was happening BEFORE the behaviour ?	Who was in the room or nearby?	What started the behaviour ?	What was the behaviour ? What happened ?	What happened after the behaviour ?
Pattern?	What is normal or resting state?	Family dynamics, relationship to work on?	A What needs to change to reduce the behaviour?	B Detail about the sequence is helpful, also the extremities, small - large	C What allows and supports the behaviour to carry on?

Measuring relationships, can we help everyone to ask the right questions? What about using simple but highly effective 'Tools', ecomaps, geneograms and pictures...



Let's see who is actually 'in' your family and household...and let's hear your story

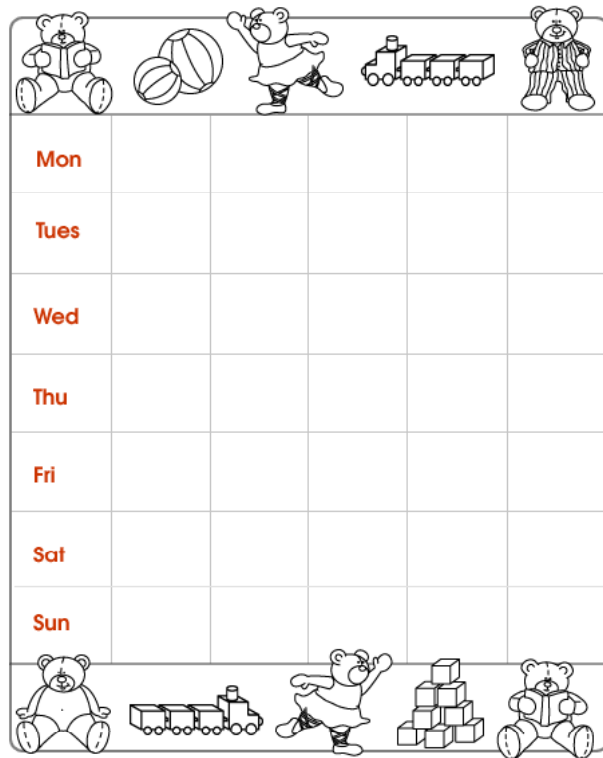
We wrote a briefing sheet on how to use these tools. Have a look.

<http://www.familyandparenting.org/Filestore//Documents/publications/Families in trouble assessment factsheet.pdf>



Help in understanding family life cycles

Rewards come in many forms and only need thought and dedicated application

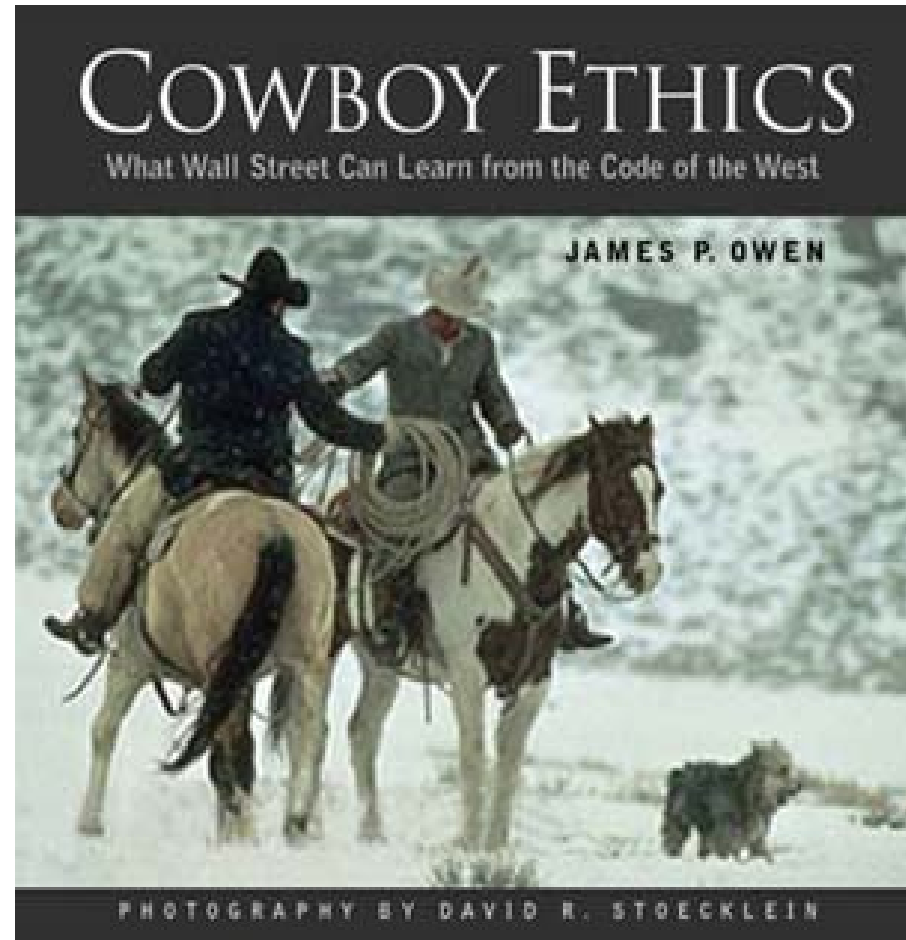


Do you know how to use a star chart for maximum effect? We wrote a Briefing Sheet to help,

http://www.familyandparenting.org/Filestore//Documents/publications/Families_in_trouble_helping_parents_factsheet.pdf

Our responsibility and ethical dilemmas

- Do no harm (again)
- Choose the least intrusive balanced against the most efficacious
- Stop when asked and understand why it was not bearable
- Learn all the time and remain curious
- Accept all information even when it tells us difficult things



Get the help you deserve...



- A place to talk it all through is VITAL wherever you are in the system
- These guides was written for people just like you in mind
- Briefing sheets and guide references are on your handout
- All there for you to use so try it and see...and then tell me whether it helped and what more you need
- Thinking about one on working with the parental couple, and another on direct work with children, what would you want?

www.familyandparenting.org

What next in a cold financial climate?

- **Do more measuring**
- **Cleverly**
- **Persuade your WHOLE agency to do it too**
- **Gather the data and report on it**
- **Make it 'currency', you will be able to show how very good you are and why your service must be funded**
- **Be an even more reflective, evidence based and, simply, a better practitioner/manager**
- **This matters now more than ever as more families need our effective, intelligent, respectful and good hearted help and support for change**



And finally.....

**You deserve a firmament of stars for having
the only public art that represents the
transitional object, just one of the reasons I
love Lancashire**