

Insiders' Guide: a parent carer support course





Carrie Britton
&
Kim Aumann

Resilience is...

- ...is the ability to withstand and recover from stressful life challenges, becoming strengthened and more resourceful.
- It's a concept and source of knowledge the course translates into practical things parents and practitioners need to make happen to make things better for children and families.

Value base

The course is based on four fundamental assertions:

- Parents are key to improving child and family outcomes.
- Parents of children with special needs travel a unique journey
- Parents enter a frequently unfamiliar world of disadvantage directly related to having a child with special needs
- That the best can be achieved for a child, when parents and practitioners work together.

Aims and objectives

IG is a manualised support course that aims to build parent's resilience so they are well placed to enjoy their journey bringing up their children with special needs.

A structure within which:

- ❖ parents can share and explore their travels so far
- ❖ take note of and celebrate the skills they have acquired along the way
- ❖ map their needs in preparation for the next adventure
- ❖ practice and rehearse possible strategies for building their skills and strengthening their resolve to journey on.

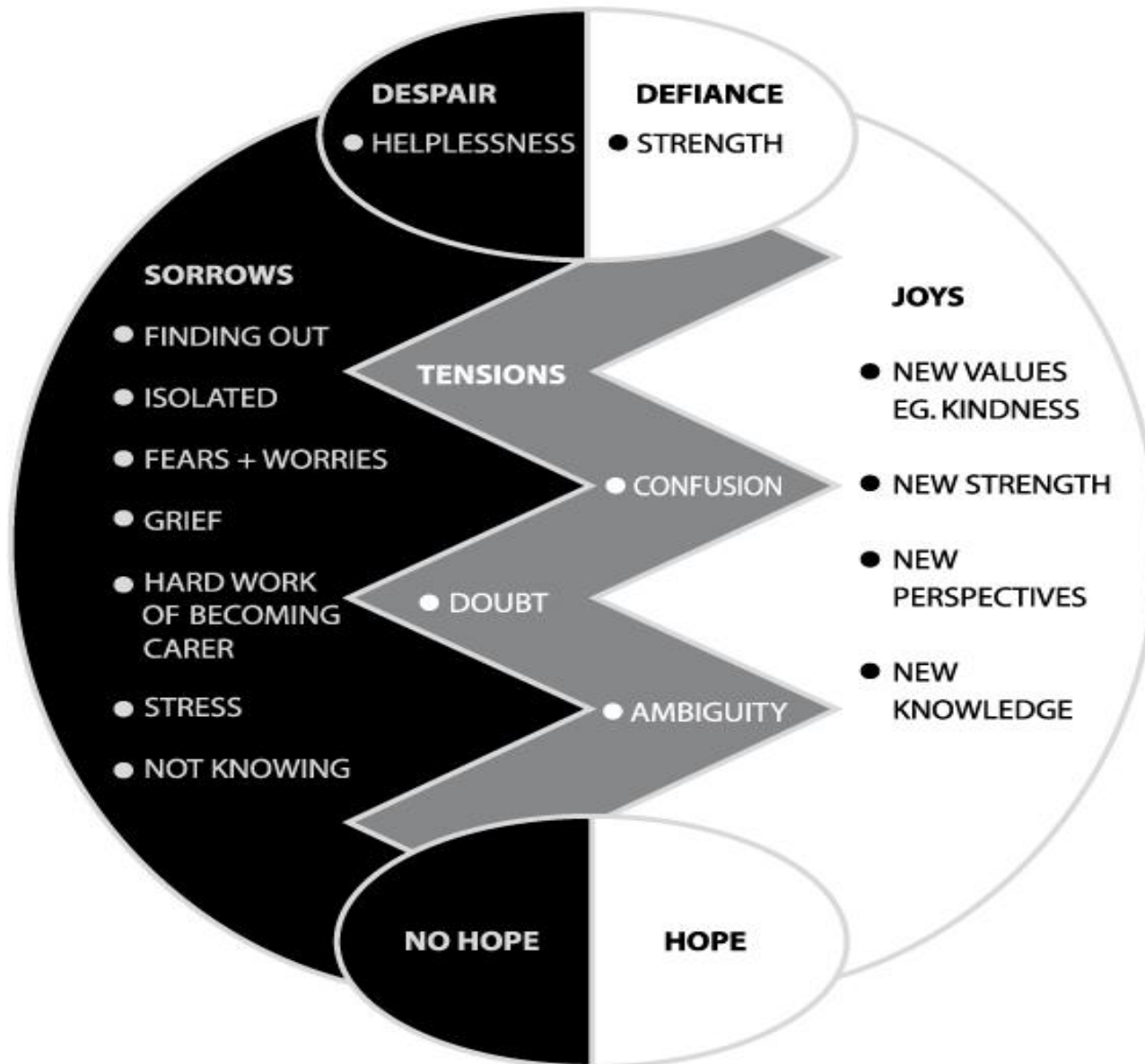
Course structure

The course is divided into 6 weekly modules:

- ▶ 4 are common to all courses
 - The journey so far
 - Travelling on
 - Getting the best out of others
 - Looking ahead

- ▶ 2 are specialist modules to meet the specific needs of different target groups
 - Under 5s; Under 12s; Teens; Complex health needs; Severe learning difficulties

Insiders' Guide model of Parental Experience



CB 2005: after "Between Joy and Sorrow", Kearney & Grafton 2001

Kearney P.M. and Griffin T., "Between Joy and Sorrow", *Journal of Advanced Nursing* Vol. 34 (5), pg 582-92

Module pattern

Maximises group development and individual learning, based on an adult learning process:

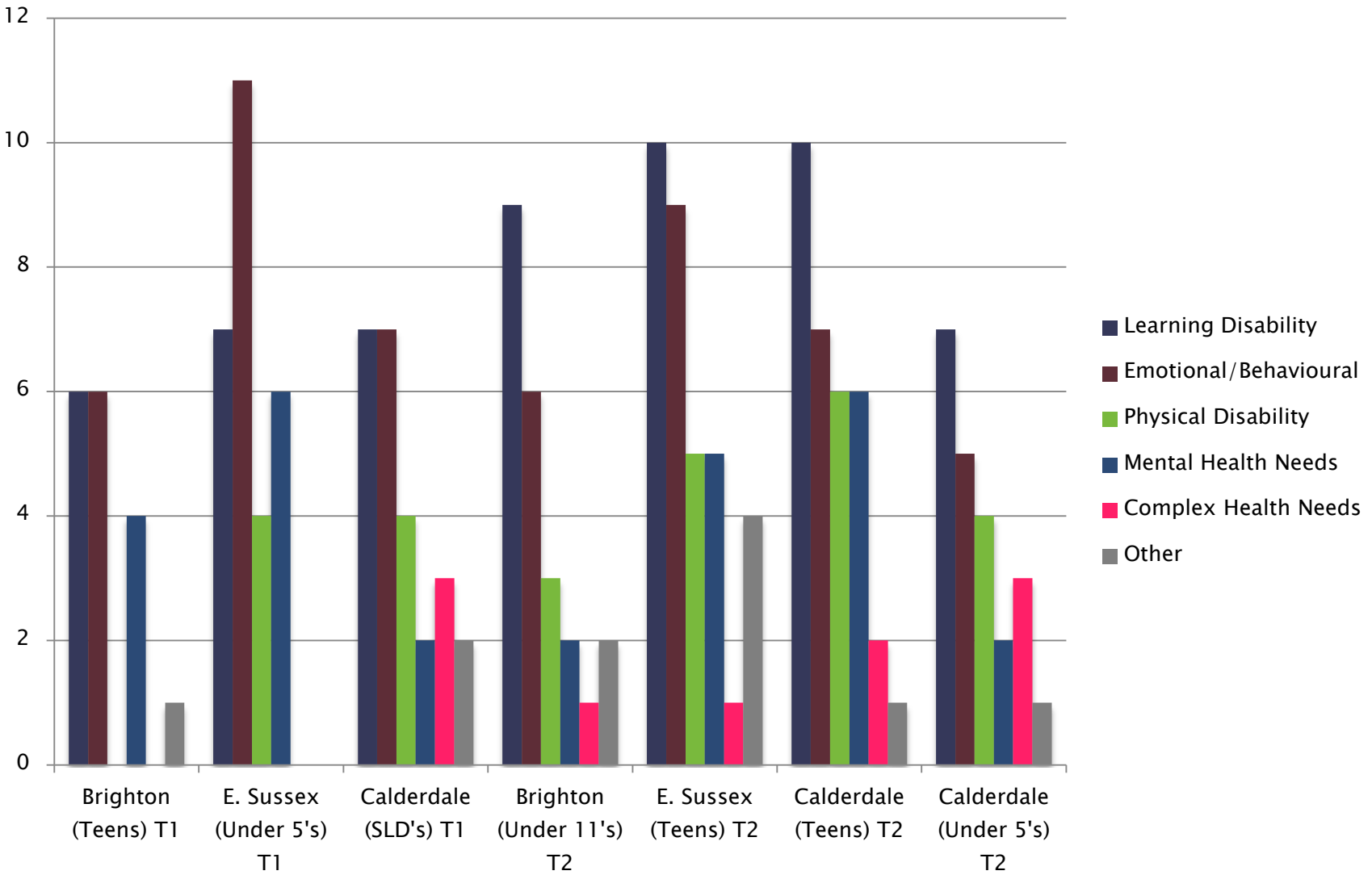
- cycle of listening to each others experience
- reflecting on the theme
- learning about the theory
- practicing a relevant strategy or skill
- looking after themselves & leaving positively and relaxed

Evaluation Project

- 8 months - ended March 2012
 - 7 courses delivered to 69 parent carers
 - 3 localities - Brighton, Yorkshire, East Sussex
- SROI process - to develop an evidence base about the delivery of the course
- Seeking to evidence the changes and impacts for stakeholders when different organisations delivered IG

Adult and Community Learning Fund project funded by the Skills Funding Agency and supported by NIACE and The SROI Network.

Children: Disability



Unique journey

- Early Stage: anxiety and effort to secure diagnosis; shock, denial, guilt and feelings of helplessness; crisis as life will now be different; eagerness to put child in hands of expert; isolation.
- Middle Stage: coping with conflicting advice; realising things cannot always be fixed; noticing unsustainable physical and emotional effort; ; emergence of chronic sorrow; navigating service systems; exposure to disability discrimination and lack of opportunities.
- Later Stage: reframing 'normality'; drawing on range of expertise; developing confidence; connecting with other families; advocating for services.

Outcomes

- For parent carer learners
- For family members
- For parent carer facilitators
- For worker facilitators
- For organisations
- For communities

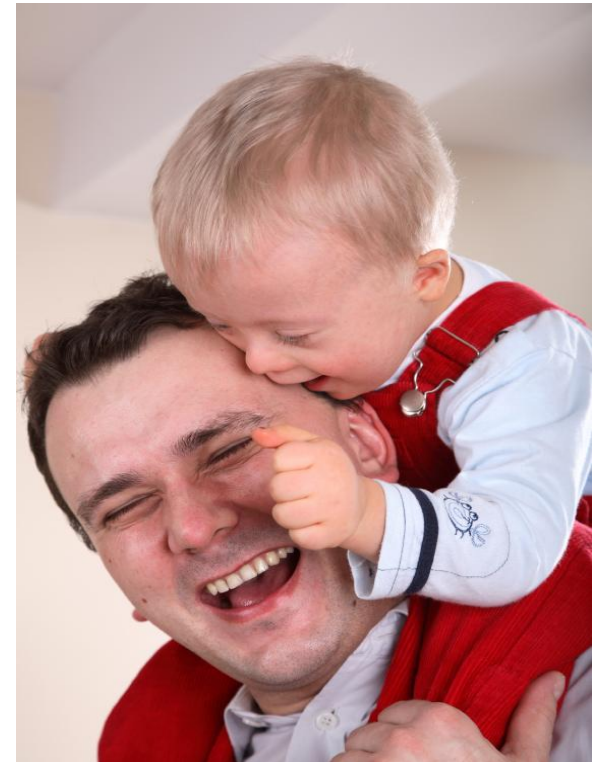


Parent carer learner outcomes

- Reduced isolation and builds connectedness
- Built confidence and use of wider strategies
- Accessed more help, advice and support
- Reduction depression, stress & anxiety
- Increase health and wellbeing
- Route to further learning
- Built positive outlook and resilience
- Improved family relationships
- ... Processing your own journey...

Examples of cultural change

- Models joint creative problem solving
- Models starting from families' perspective and resources
- Across and between agencies, attitude and practice change
- Longer term outcomes



SROI analysis estimates

- Provides value for money
 - For every £1 invested in delivery, an estimated social value between £25-£38 is created
- Attendees reported significant changes for themselves and their families as they became equipped, informed, confident and connected.

Explicit resilient moves promoted eg:

Key element highlighted is how the course supports parent carers to build their own resilience and skills.

- Basics – exercise, increasing income, social context
- Belonging – networking, mapping relationships
- Learning – meeting skills
- Coping – ways to self care
- Core Self – recognising strengths