



Working with University College London Keeping in touch during the Covid 19 pandemic

Issue 12, October 1st 2020

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News

Welcome back to the Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities newsletter: a collaboration by staff at the Race Equality Foundation and University College London (UCL) to help you and your family during the Coronavirus outbreak. This newsletter is here to offer some practical tips and support for you, parents and practitioners alike, direct from the SFSC team, and keep you informed of the latest advice to follow. We hope you find this helpful and you can let us know what you think and what you want more of by getting in touch (see the bottom of this newsletter for contact details). You may have noticed that we have now moved to monthly rather than twice monthly in line with the easing of lockdown and people going back to work and school.

Take care and stay safe!



Together and SFSC Event

Last month we held a webinar offering advice and guidance around the safe return to face-to-face working in research and practice with a focus on

what group delivery of SFSC will look like in the post lockdown environment.

We recorded the webinar in case anyone wants to hear what was said and you can listen [here](#).

SFSC team news

Last month our team finally began a return to in person delivery and we are now delivering SFSC in groups face to face once more in Westminster, Waltham Forest, Camden, Brent and Islington, soon to be joined by Lambeth, Hackney and Haringey! Drawing on the learning from this, one of the team provides some advice in the article below.

In addition, Bernadette is offering a **peer support session** online on Tuesday 6th October, which will also look at how we return to in person delivery. Places are free and limited and can be booked [here](#).

We are also still training SFSC facilitators in our 4 week introduction model that can be delivered via an online meeting platform. Dates for training and booking [here](#).

SFSC Can help

Supporting families in a pandemic

In considering the return of 'in person' SFSC delivery, it is important to remember that not all preparation centres around minimising the transmission risks of Covid-19. During

INFORMATION ONLY
**Guidance on
Covid-19 Safety
Measures**



Practise good hygiene



Face masks must be worn at all times, unless you are medically exempt



Social distancing of 2m (if possible) should be maintained at all times



Wash hands regularly with soap and hot water for 20 seconds and use hand sanitiser where available



Avoid touching your face and cover your coughs and sneezes



Follow signs for entering, leaving, waiting and moving around the venue building

Do not attend group if...

- You are **feeling sick**
- You have a **cold/flu** or other respiratory infection at home
- You have a **high temperature**
- You have a new and persistent cough
- You have a change in the ability to **smell and taste**



**Take care of your
emotional and
mental well-being**

Outbreaks are a stressful and uncertain time for everyone. We're here to support you! Reach out to your facilitator at any time.

the last 6 months, without the routines of work and school, many families have seen existing issues worsen and new ones develop. The aims of a violence free and healthy lifestyle that SFSC promotes have never been more important: and we should be mindful of families' mental, emotional and spiritual health as well as their physical well being.

Breaking down delivery into three stages of pre, during and after stages makes it easier to 'walk through' the risks of Covid-19 transmission. Similarly, understanding how

this virus is transmitted is equally important in planning each stage (contact, respiratory droplets and aerosol if poor ventilation).

What follows are some important considerations, however remember, this is all doable! The SFSC team have started in person delivery and it is going well. Don't be put off by a list of consideration, delivering groups always requires preparation, this is no different!:

Pre delivery

1. Preparation of Covid-19 specific (in addition to usual venue/delivery) risk assessment 'checklist'. Remember to review and amend in accordance with up to date Government guidelines as and when they change <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
2. Find larger venues suitable for groups to be delivered with 1-2m social distancing and consider proximity of venue to parents' and staff homes: walking, cycling, driving to the venue might be preferable and reduce anxieties.
3. Check if facilitators, creche staff, parents or children have additional vulnerability/anxieties to Covid-19 infection, understand risks and record how risks are minimised. Pass on written 'guidance' on group attendance. This will give reassurance that groups are 'Covid ready'
4. Purchase/prepare equipment for delivery: face coverings, visors, plastic gloves, hand sanitiser, cleaning equipment
5. Purchase/prepare delivery materials: consider 'parent packs', pre prepared pockets containing forms, hangouts, pens to minimise transmission by touch
6. Arrange and have ready to deliver alternate facilitators in the event of illness/self isolation/quarantine
7. Arrange and have ready a digital delivery platform, for example Zoom to use in the event of lockdown or stricter restrictions.

During delivery

1. Consider housekeeping issues- staggering arrivals and comfort breaks to maintain social distancing as much as possible, wearing masks, washing hands etc.

2. Include in your group agreement a commitment for parents and facilitators to self isolate in the event of symptoms (or symptoms of someone else in their household) and to contact NHS testing. Include a slide for NHS contact details, see: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>. NOTE test should be taken in the first 5 days of symptoms. Facilitators should commit to contact all parents weekly to check on the health of the household between sessions. Explain how Track and Trace works and how there might be interruptions to delivery resulting from this
3. Check with parents at the introductory session if they have access to the internet at home and have a smartphone, laptop, pc or tablet that can be used in the event of delivery being transferred to Zoom. Demonstrate access and explain when digital delivery might be used and what it might look like
4. Consider working arrangements with interpreters and how this might work with social distancing. Use earpiece technology if possible.
5. Consider facilitators modelling best practice in relation to mask wearing/hand hygiene, social distancing
6. Plan for safe delivery in relation to group work and role plays- droplet/aerosol transmission/ contact risks
7. Ensure safe delivery of food and drinks-contact risks

After delivery

1. Check in with parents midweek between sessions to check on health of household members and that parents feel safe in group
2. Check Government guidelines for any changes or developments
3. Make appropriate adjustments to delivery depending on changes or developments
4. Ensure cleaning supplies are replenished

Join the peer support next week or speak to one of the team if you want further advice.

Taking action to improve the health and wellbeing of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic pregnant women

Webinar on 15 October 2020, 2pm



Did you know that BAME women are up to five times more likely to die during pregnancy and birth than white British women?

If you did, do you understand the reasons why?

Maternity Action and the Race Equality Foundation invite you to attend a webinar to explore why BAME women are at disproportionate risk in pregnancy, and how we can take action. The webinar will discuss issues including the

impact of social disadvantage on maternal health, access to appropriate healthcare, the impact of COVID, and how BAME women can be better supported.

For further information and to register, go to [Eventbrite](#)



Some Research updates from UCL

Children and chores

Last month, the BBC reported that women have taken the brunt of the household chores and childcare tasks during the lockdown. However, a recent study of 1000 families found that during the last six months children have taken up more chores around the house such as food shopping, washing dishes, walking the dog, and taking out the rubbish. The study revealed that parents reported less fighting over chores with 25% less fights over cleaning. Families came up with creative ways of working together as a team. One mother said she tells her family that they are a team and that every member is important because each responsibility is important to the overall running of the house.

Helping with household chores not only helps keeping the house cleaner it is also an important part of a child's learning. It teaches children responsibility and the value of working together. Dr Korb, author of 'Raising an Organised Child', argues that chores are essential for children to become organised independent adults. He explains that doing chores helps children develop problem solving skills and teaches them to plan by breaking down tasks into smaller steps. Some researchers go even further and claim that children who help with chores are more likely to become successful adults!

The Challenges of Parenting During COVID-19

On the 25th of September 'Psychology Today' published an interview with Dr. Marchetti on the psychology of parenting in a pandemic. Dr Marchetti is an Italian researcher who focuses on the parenting and the psychological implications of COVID-19 on parenting.

During the interview, Dr Marchetti described how lockdown has been particularly stressful for parents. The closure of schools, having to work from

home with children whilst home-schooling with no set end date in sight has been very difficult. Her research shows that parents are more anxious, report higher depressive symptoms and are exhausted. This was even stronger in families with children with special needs. Lockdown meant many families could not access their usual social support networks and health care support which added to the negative psychological consequences for parents, especially for women.

Dr Marchetti further describes that the COVID-19 pandemic was an unexpected event which can be compared to a natural disaster such as earthquakes or floods. She explains that in these catastrophic situations, people face emotional and material losses and re-build their future. Learning from these previous events, people can use similar strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic to improve resilience and promote well-being. Dr Marchetti suggests that parents should seek support from family and friends, and the community. She encourages parents to talk about their feelings and emotions and to listen to other people's needs, especially to the needs of their children. She believes that parents should explain to their children what is going on and answer their questions in an honest way. She suggests focussing on what parents can do and can control during these challenging times. She encourages parents to make new plans, create new habits, and improve personal competences and life skills to help prevent feelings of isolation and loneliness. She states that when parents feel unable to cope, they should ask for specialist help from their GP who can direct them in the right direction for support. To read more about Dr Marchetti's research please see:

Fontanesi, L., Marchetti, D., Mazza, C., Di Giandomenico, S., Roma, P., & Verrocchio, M. C. (2020). The effect of the COVID-19 lockdown on parents: A call to adopt urgent measures. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 12(S1), S79-S81. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tra0000672>

Helpful Resources

We will be sharing a few useful resources to help us get through this time of self isolation. If there are areas that would like information on, please feel free to drop us a line and we will see what is out there. Our focus is going to be on resources we can access online or via the phone as we cannot get out to get the help we might need right now. Remember that many of the telephone helplines like Samaritans and Childline are taking calls and can also be a source of someone to talk to.

Sources of good legal advice

Advicenow is an independent, not-for-profit website, run by the charity [Law for Life: the Foundation for Public Legal Education](#).

It provides accurate, practical information on rights and the law in England and Wales.



It provides clear and effective legal guidance on a range of subjects from housing and benefits, to parenting and education. [Take a look.](#)

Co parenting advice

Cafcass are putting together a new online resource to support separated parents to co-parent effectively.

All the help and advice comes from experts at charities, Cafcass, children's services providers and the Ministry of Justice.

It is a work in progress but you can take a look [here](#).



Child refugee mental health

Take a listen to this [podcast](#) where Associate Professor Mina Fazel talks child refugee mental health, the predominant symptoms seen in this group, and how these children and young people can be best supported.

This site is also a good source of mental health related information.

What is SFSC

Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities is an inclusive evidence-based parenting programme, designed to promote protective factors which are associated with good parenting and better outcomes for children. SFSC is a group based programme for parents of children from birth to 18.

Further information is available [here](#).

What is 'Together'

We are a team of academics, practitioners, policy-makers and parents who are focused on understanding the impact of Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities. In particular, we want to know how this programme might improve the mental wellbeing of parents and their children.

Further information is available [here](#).

Get in touch

We hope this information is useful and helps in this difficult time. Do let us know if you want us to cover other topics in this newsletter by emailing us at donna@racefound.org.uk, Tweeting

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