

AAIMH Workshop 2019

***For Baby's Sake*: taking a trauma-informed and attachment-based approach to breaking the cycle of domestic abuse**

Description of service development

Exposure to domestic abuse in the period from conception to the age of two is associated with long term adverse outcomes and risks. *For Baby's Sake* is an innovative programme for parents wishing to break cycles of domestic abuse and give their baby the best start in life. Practitioners work therapeutically for up to two and a half years with mothers and fathers as co-parents, starting in pregnancy, whether or not they begin or remain together as a couple.

Around 70% of the parents participating in *For Baby's Sake* experienced four or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and most suffered severe abuse and/or neglect. Their mental health and trauma histories explains their need for a trauma-informed and attachment-based intervention to end and overcome domestic abuse, enable emotional self-regulation and provide the attuned parenting that promotes secure attachment in their babies and children.

Anticipated key learning

For Baby's Sake gives parents confidence that they are not being judged for their behaviour or what they have experienced, but rather are empowered to take responsibility for their own lives and for their baby's emotional, social and physical development. Support with understanding and processing guilt, shame and dissociation enables their access to the therapeutic core of the programme, notably the Inner Child work to recover from their own childhood trauma. This is key to achieving lasting change and to building their capacity for attuned parenting.