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NICE National Institute for
Health and Care Excellence

QUICK GUIDE

Therapeutic interventions after abuse and neglect

A quick guide for practitioners and managers
supporting children, young people and families



*You can help and support abused
and neglected children, young
people and their families –
but only if you know what works*



Abuse and neglect can have a long-lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

It is important to know how to respond, and the evidence suggests that the following interventions may be effective for children and young people. If possible, offer a choice and explain what each intervention will involve and how you think it may help. Not all interventions will suit everyone, and the choice should be informed by a detailed assessment.

Interventions after physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect



Multi-systemic therapy for child abuse and neglect:

- After abuse or neglect
- For the whole family, including the parent or carer
- 4–6 months duration

Aims to:

Address multiple factors contributing to the problem; include round-the-clock on-call service to provide support in crises

Trauma-informed group parenting intervention:

- After abuse or neglect
- For foster carers, adoptive parents and those providing permanence for children and young people aged 5–17 (parents only)
- At least 4 day-long sessions

Aims to:

Help foster carers to develop the child/young person's capacity for self-regulation; build trusting relationships; develop proactive and reactive strategies for managing behaviour

Age 10–17

Interventions after sexual abuse

Trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy:

- For children and young people showing symptoms of anxiety, sexualised behaviour or post-traumatic stress disorder
- 12–16 sessions
- Separate sessions for the non-abusing parent or carer

Discuss fully with child or young person; be clear that there are other options if they prefer

Provide separate sessions for non-abusing parent or carer

Up to age 17

Therapeutic programme e.g. Letting the Future In:

- For children and young people
- Up to 20 sessions, extending to 30 as needed
- Up to 8 parallel sessions for non-abusing parent or carer

Therapeutic relationship crucial
Tailored support; range of approaches including counselling, socio-educative and creative (e.g. drama or art)

Age 8–17

Group psychotherapeutic and psychoeducational sessions or individual psychoanalytic therapy:

- For girls showing emotional or behavioural disturbance
- Up to 18 group sessions or 30 individual sessions
- Separate support sessions for non-abusing parent or carer

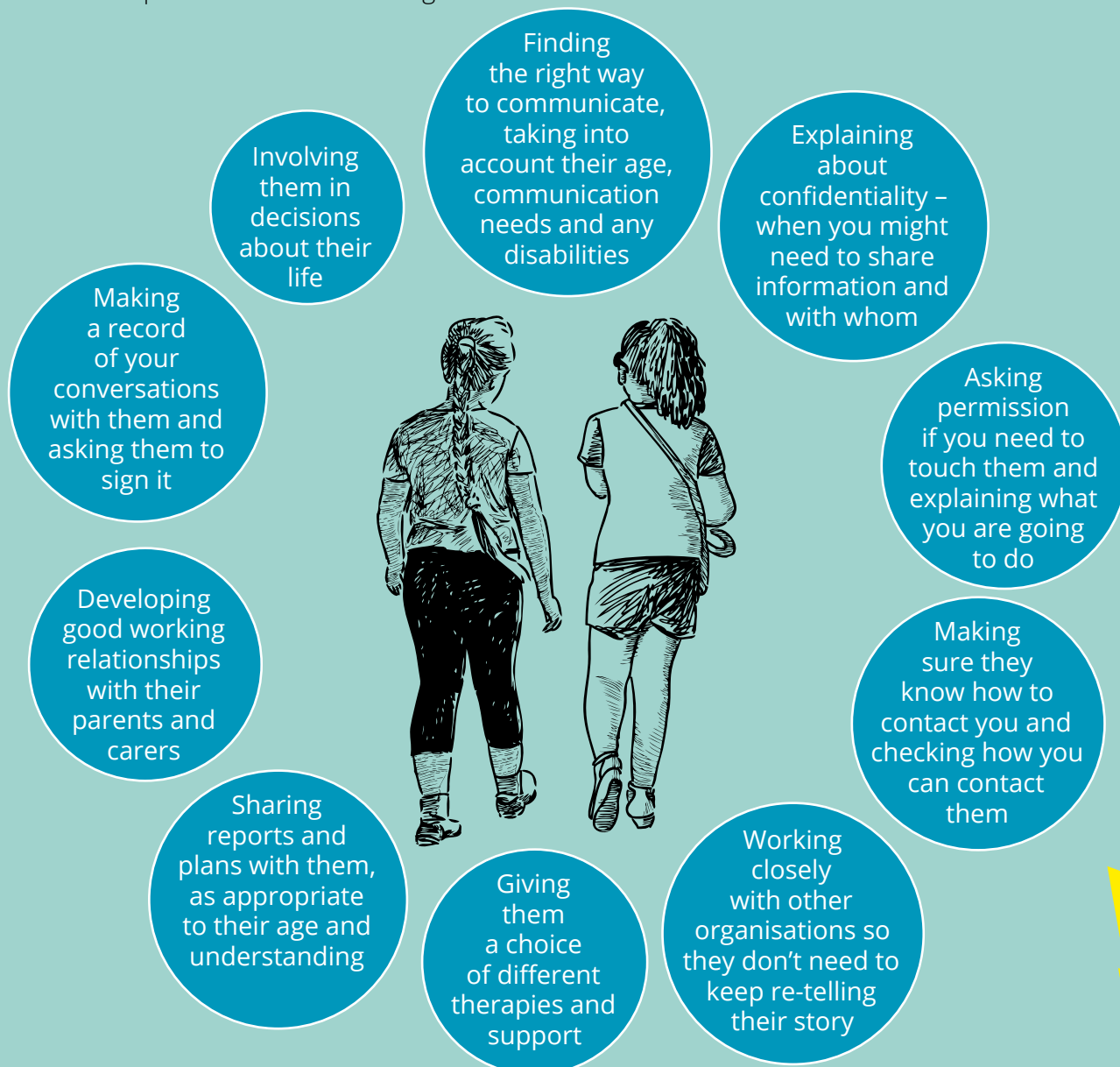
Provide separate sessions for non-abusing parent or carer to help them support their child's attendance and address issues in the family

Age 6–14



Working with children and young people after abuse and neglect

The following principles were identified as particularly important by children and young people who have experienced abuse and neglect:



Further information

Child abuse and neglect – NICE guideline. Additional information about therapeutic interventions is included in the 'Terms used in this guideline' section.

Working together to safeguard children – Department for Education

Children's attachment: attachment in children and young people who are adopted from care, in care or at high risk of going into care – NICE guideline

This content has been co-produced by NICE and SCIE and is based on NICE's guideline on child abuse and neglect.

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Getting help to overcome abuse

– NICE quick guide for practitioners to share with young people

