

Helping Families Programme: For Families with Complex Needs

Interview Topic Guide – Parent (treatment group)

Aim of the interview:

The aim of this interview is to find out how the parent experienced taking part in the research. The questions are not intended to be closed, so that the parent may bring up any issues that they feel are important.

Research

Response to invitation to participate in the research

We want to understand what the parents' initial reactions were to being offered the programme and what factors influenced this.

How did you feel about being asked to take part in the research?

When you learnt about the parenting programme you may receive, what did you think?

Probe: Reaction to parenting work? Relevance?

Probe: Have you received any help or support with parenting in the past? (has it ever been offered but not taken up?)

What benefits and opportunities did you feel that the parenting programmes may offer you?

Probe: Thinking back, were these things that you had not previously been offered? In what ways was the offer of the programme something new for you?

Did you have any concerns or worries about taking part?

Probe: What were these? How big a concern/worry was that for you? Did you feel able to discuss these worries at this stage?

What made you want to take part?

Randomisation

Did they worry about the possibility of not being randomised to the intervention? How did they feel when they were?

When did you learn that there was equal chance you would receive the new programme versus usual care which would be only one session?

Probe: What were your initial thoughts around this? Was it explained? Was it clear? Did you understand what this meant? How did you feel about it? Impressions on usual care? Was this made clear?

How did you feel when you found out which group you were in?

Probe: Did you want to continue? Experience? How was this news delivered to you?

Do think that this kind of support should be offered to other parents when there is the chance that they may not receive the full-programme?

Intervention

Parents' views about their therapist and experience of receiving a weekly intervention.

Engagement and retention

What was communicated to you in the first session about the focus of the programme?

Probe: What was your understanding of this? What was your reaction to this information?

How would you describe your relationship with your therapist?

Probe: Did you feel he/she understood your situation? Tell me more about this?

Did the therapist explain what was happening?

Were there any particularly positive/negative aspects of the way the therapist worked? Why was that? Tell me more about that?

Are you able to identify what it was the therapist did or said which made you describe them in that way?

Probe: How did this leave you feeling? Were there other things? (aim to build the narrative here)

Did your views and/or experience of the therapist change throughout the programme?

Do you know why this was/what it was linked to?

Did you have a conversation about crises within sessions? How did the therapist bring this up with you?

Did you ever feel unsure about continuing the programme?

Probe: What do you think made the difference?

The Helping Families Programme is based on regular, usually weekly, sessions. What was this like for you?

Probe: How was the frequency and timing of the sessions for you?

Were there any times when you had to cancel or postpone appointments?

Probe: When you cancelled/postponed sessions, what was that like for you? How did you weigh up the decision to cancel/postpone? What effects did these cancellations/postponements have on the momentum of the Programme to help you and your relationship with the practitioner?

Impact

Does the parent feel the programme has helped to address things which 'they' wanted to be different? What is their understanding of how things came to be different (causal factors) and at what 'level of change' these differences fit with (e.g. thoughts, feelings, child behaviour, relationship, wider family etc.)

Probe: Do you think the programme has helped you?

If 'yes,' can you tell me what the most important benefits have been? In what ways was it helpful / unhelpful?

Probe: How do you think that has affected you? Can you give me some examples? Behaviour, thoughts and feelings? Has it changed the way you are with your child(ren)? Do you think this is a good thing? Why? How?

If 'no' or 'unsure', have there been some helpful, some not so helpful aspects? Can you give me some examples?

Probe: How do you think that has affected you? Behaviour, thoughts and feelings? Has it changed the way you are with your child(ren)? Do you think this is a good thing? Why? How?

Can you give me any examples of things you have done differently? How was that for you and your child?

Probe as appropriate:

If changes have happened, when did you start to feel like these things were possible? What do you think influenced that? How did you experience this? What was that like for you? Are there any ways in which you would have liked to have been helped but have not?

Do you think that is something that they tried to help with, or was it something not covered?

Content

Participants' views on what was covered by the intervention.

Probe: How did you feel about the topics covered in the Helping Families programme?

Probe: Tell me more about that?

The programme encouraged you to try out things in the home in your everyday life, how did this go for you?

How did you feel about the written information and various handouts and tools used by you and the therapist?

Probe: Clear? Did they fit the conversation and topics you were discussing with your therapist?

In session did you and your therapist discuss your problems/goals in parenting?

Probe: If yes, how did you find this? How many goals? What was it like to focus on this number of goals (if this is the case)? Experience of generating goals? Reflections at the end?

If no, do you know why this was?

Did you discuss your strengths as a parent?

Probe: If yes, how did you find this? If no, do you know why this was?

What do you feel about the balance between thinking about the needs of your child and your own needs?

As part of the programme, the person you saw should have been taking regular opportunities to check with you on how things were going, and how helpful the programme was being? Did this happen?

Probe: What was this like for you?

Adverse events / Negative outcomes

Any negative reactions to the programme – whether reported at the time or not.

Probe: Did anything happen in the sessions which you did not like?

Probe: If yes, can you tell me about that?

Did this affect you? ... your relationship with the therapist? How?

Do you think what happened had any effect on you and your child(ren)?

How do you feel about what happened now?

Did anything happen at another point because of the sessions?

Probe: If yes, can you tell me about that?

Did this affect you? ... your relationship with the therapist? How?

Do you think what happened had any effect on you and your child(ren)?

How do you feel about what happened now?

Other services

How this programme fits in with other interventions that they may receive (if any).

Probe: Were you or your family getting any other help or support at the same time?

Probe: What sort of things (ensure complete picture obtained – i.e. health & social care, child and adult services)

How do you think the programme worked alongside those other services?

Probe: Did you feel there were attempts to work together? How effective/successfully?

Did you feel the help you received from the programme fitted with the other help you received? (Probe reasons for answer.)

Did you discuss the parenting work with your keyworker?

Did any other services change the type or amount of support they gave you when you started the programme? How did you feel about that?

What about after the programmes – did you discuss whether you would like support in the future?

When we have talked to clinicians they have sometimes worried about raising something like this with a parent as they don't want to upset them, what do you think of this?

Overall Assessment – in summary

Do parents think that the programme was helpful and should it be available for others?

Probe: Thinking about the programme as a whole, how would you describe it in terms of its helpfulness to you?

Do you think it is the sort of thing which ought to be more widely available to parents?

Do you think others would benefit from it?

Probe: Do you think it might work well for some, not for others. Why?

How useful did you feel the programme was to you, your family and your child?

Interview Checklist

Initial reaction to HFP

Hopes and concerns

Thoughts about randomisation

Feelings about being in intervention group

Relationship with therapist

What was it like to have regular, weekly sessions

Materials

Impact of sessions: + and -

Content of sessions (child vs parent needs, goals, topics)

Fit with other services

Helping Families Programme: For Families with Complex Needs

Interview Topic Guide – Parent (usual care)

(Plus supplementary questions for those who declined the offer of the usual care session).

Aim of the interview:

The aim of this interview is to find out how the parent experienced taking part in the research. The questions are not intended to be closed, so that the parent may bring up any issues that they feel are important.

Research

Response to invitation to participate in the research

We want to understand what the parents' initial reactions were to being offered the programme and what factors influenced this.

Probe: How did you feel about being asked to take part in the research?

When you learnt about the parenting programme you may receive, what did you think?

Probe: Reaction to parenting work? Relevance?

Probe: Have you received any help or support with parenting in the past? (has it ever been offered but not taken up?)

What benefits and opportunities did you feel that the parenting programmes may offer you?

Probe: Thinking back, were these things that you had not previously been offered? In what ways was the offer of the programme something new for you?

Did you have any concerns or worries about taking part?

Probe: What were these? How big a concern/worry was that for you? Did you feel able to discuss these worries at this stage?

What made you want to take part?

Randomisation

Did they worry about the possibility of not being randomised to the intervention? How did they feel when they were allocated to usual care?

Probe: When did you learn that there was equal chance you would receive the new programme versus usual care which would be only one session?

Probe: What were your initial thoughts around this? Was it explained? Was it clear? Did you understand what this meant? How did you feel about it? Impressions on usual care? Was this made clear?

How did you feel when you found out which group you were in?

Probe: Did you want to continue? Experience? How was this news delivered to you?

Do think that this kind of support should be offered to other parents when there is the chance that they may not receive the full-programme?

Usual care group (for those who took up the offer)

Parents views on whether or not the parent feels the single parenting session has been useful or not. If it has been useful, we want to understand what the parent feels were the most useful aspects and whether or not this has impacted on their family.

What was your understanding of the purpose of this session, prior to meeting with therapist?

What are your thoughts on the session which was provided?

Probe: Can you elaborate?

What are your views on how helpful this session was?

Probe: Has it helped with the problems that you came into the research experiencing? Do you think this session has impacted on your family? Your relationship with your child? Your child's behaviour? Was there something specific that you were able to take away from the session? How did it leave you feeling at the end? Can you give some examples?

Was there anything which you found unhelpful/less relevant for your family?

What are your thoughts on the practitioner who worked with you?

Probe: Do you feel he/she understood your situation? How would you describe them? What makes you describe them in that way? What was it they said or did? How did this leave you feeling?

Was the content and materials used in the session new to you?

Probe: Which parts? Where they clear? Fit the conversation you were having?

Were you able to make use of the advice and information provided in this session for you and your child?

What would you have loved to have been different, if anything?

Probe: What, how, why?

Did you have a discussion about what getting support in the future/or what the next steps might be?

Probe: If yes, how was this? How did it leave you feeling?

Overall Assessment – in summary

Do parents think that the single session was helpful and should it be available for others?

Thinking about the session as a whole, how would you describe it in terms of its helpfulness to you?

Do you think it is the sort of thing which ought to be more widely available to parents?

Do you think others would benefit from it?

Probe: Do you think it might work well for some, not for others. Why?

How useful did you feel the session was to you, your family and your child?

Supplementary usual care group questions (for those who did not wish to take up the offer of a single session)

Parents views about the reasons for refusing the one-off session.

You were not allocated to the programme, so were offered the single session of parenting advice. Why didn't you want to do this?

Probe: Was it because you were disappointed at not being allocated to the full course?

Probe: Was it because it didn't sound very helpful?

Probe: Were you too busy at the time?

Probe: Was it because you've done that sort of thing before?

Interview Checklist

Initial reaction to HFP

Hopes and concerns

Thoughts about randomisation

Feelings about being in control group

Helpfulness of session

Practitioner

Materials

Impact

Possible uses