

CHILDREN IN NEED OF PROTECTION – PARENTS IN NEED OF HELP

Narrowing the Gaps

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and Nico Trocmé**

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HOW DO ADULT ISSUES SUCH AS drug addiction, mental illness, intellectual disability or violence affect the parent-child relationship? What kinds of intervention are the most efficient and promising? How can legal issues, ethical concerns and clinical objectives be reconciled? What are the most effective ways to assist parents and children to establish support systems? How can they best be helped to access the services they need? The authors, specialists in child welfare and adult treatment programs, draw from their backgrounds in clinical practice and research to focus on the fragmented nature of the services available as well as the benefits, and at



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times the risks, of a more integrated network. They shed light on the complex issues surrounding child and youth protection when adults in the family have one or more serious problems, and call for preconceived notions to be set aside to focus less on risks and more on fostering healing relationships. Special attention is given to finding new ways of collaboration to integrate services for children and adults.

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SUMMARY

- **When parental personal development also compromises that of their children**
- **Better understanding of the complex issues surrounding youth protection by viewing it through the eyes of the various involved players**
 - Parallel worlds?
 - Including the father
 - Listening to children
 - Drug addicted parents under treatment
 - Exploring meaningful supports for parents with intellectual disabilities
 - Magnitude and correlation of the violence inflicted on children and partners within a family context
- **Issues for consideration**
 - Help for adults living in an atmosphere of domestic violence and protection for children victims of maltreatment
 - Mothers with serious mental illness and their fetuses
 - Attachment of young children to their host families
- **Alternate methods of intervention**
 - Intervention in maltreatment families founded on principles of attachment
 - Group intervention with abused women
 - Assessing parenting capacity in parents with intellectual disabilities
- **Working side by side**
 - New and audacious collaborative efforts between parents, the CHUM and the DYP (Department of Youth Protection) within an alcohol abuse context
 - Evaluating the family group conferencing approach in a First Nations context
 - Models for intervention with children exposed to domestic violence and their family members
 - Developing a comprehensive integrated services program to counter child negligence
 - A case study to develop and evaluate an interagency common assessment for children in need
 - Risking intervention, together
- **Meeting challenges to ensure a future for children in a child protection context**