



Coaching & Therapeutic Parenting Information Pack

What is Therapeutic Parenting?

Therapeutic Parenting is a way of parenting aimed at meeting the specific needs of your children. Therapeutic Parenting is often spoken about in the context of trauma and attachment, as a child's needs can be very different if they have experienced trauma and difficulties in attaching to care-givers whilst they were young. However, with increasing knowledge in the areas of mental health and child development, parents are becoming increasingly aware that they may need to know more in order to help their children – Therapeutic Parenting meets that need.

In our own experiences of being parented, we develop an understanding and appreciation for parenting concepts such as boundaries and taking responsibility; however, if a child has experienced trauma and attachment issues, or they have developed some unhealthy processes such as a need to get things perfect, their ability to respond well to 'general parenting' can be impaired. Therapeutic Parenting facilitates your understanding of your child's trauma, attachment style & behaviours, helps you understand your own motivations when it comes to supporting your child and equips you with the knowledge and skill to parent in the way your child needs in order to heal, attach and learn new ways of being themselves.

It is not about being a perfect parent, it is not about holding shame or guilt for not being 'a natural parent', being a Therapeutic Parent is being aware and OK with your limited capacity to know and do what your child needs, and making the commitment to learn and develop with your child.

How is Therapeutic Parenting Useful?

Accessing support for Therapeutic Parenting allows you time out of your day-to-day functioning as a parent, to reflect on what has been happening, how you have responded and how well your responses have served your child.

In the Context of Trauma and Attachment:

Between the ages 0-3 years, a baby's brain is still developing and it thrives with nurture and safe relationships. Without these, neural pathways are thwarted and not developed, instead, a heightened need for survival becomes their focus; changing the developing brain.

The impact of trauma and poor attachment in research is still a developing area, it's OK not to know this, you can use Therapeutic Parenting to fill the gaps and teach you what you need to know about your child's thoughts, feelings and behaviours so that you can help them. What I can tell you right now, is that your child's brain can be changed, those neural pathways that were stunted because their needs weren't met when they reached out, so they no longer reach out and instead, may push you away, can be re-established through nurture and attachment.

The first stage of your child's recovery is safety, not the safety you innately offer, but the feeling of safety. The ability for your child to feel safe, believe it's real, that it will last and that it's for them for just being them. Therapeutic Parenting can help you identify your child's deep motivations and relational needs in their behaviours so that you can respond to the need and not the behaviour and in doing so, meet their unmet need and increase their feeling of safety.

Therapeutic Parenting can help you navigate and facilitate the following challenges your child may show. The possible reasons given for these behaviours are to illustrate the difference between the behaviour and their motivation, they are not the same for all children.

The need for control – children learn that the only way to be safe is to be in control which means not letting you be in control

Defiance – sometimes the world in which children live are so oppressive, the only way to survive is to be defiant

Aggression – aggression can be in the context of flight or fight. Though you may not perceive a dangerous or fearful situation, children's brains who have experienced trauma can be triggered and then the body and hormones take over

Running away – a child may struggle to belong if they have never felt like they have, they may run away as a subconscious way to maintain distance in relationships, even though it causes them pain

In the Context of Challenging Behaviours, Thoughts and Feelings:

As mini-humans, our children are open to the same challenges we are as adults, though their capacity to problem solve, communicate and therefore access their support is limited. What happens is that they become self-sufficient, making decisions and developing beliefs (out of awareness) based on limited experience, perspective and fantasy thinking (using hypothetical situations and ideas as being a reflection of reality). Ultimately, their aim, like ours, is to have their needs met and survive their world, but sometimes the way they learn to do this doesn't serve them well and it can feel, for them, and seem to you, that they are not surviving well and getting their needs met at all; besides you want to see them living!

Together we can:

- * Develop your knowledge and understanding of your child's emotional and biological development & needs
- * Address the challenges you have with parenting the way you want, to improve your relationship with your children through an understanding of attachment & your own experiences of being a child
- * Develop your understanding of mental health, self-esteem and emotional literacy
- * Increase your confidence in supporting your children
- * Develop resources tailored to yours & your children's needs
- * Reduce the need for external services



About Alex Carling

Alex Carling (BSc. Hons. | Dip. | MBACP) has considerable experience working therapeutically in the field of abuse trauma and development, she graduated with a first class honours Psychology degree from Hull University and achieved a diploma in Transactional Analysis (TA) from the Manchester Institute for Psychotherapy.

Alex offers a wide range of training and therapeutic services which are underpinned by TA. She is a registered member of the BACP, insured with Oxygen Insurance, has an enhanced DBS and is also registered with the ICO.

Alex has developed therapeutic programmes for children and young people (YP) and training courses for adults working directly with children and YP. She has a passion for all areas of mental health and is valued amongst professionals for her delivery and content.

"Alex is an excellent communicator and has many skills in ensuring an even balance within the training groups; gently challenging perceptions and knowledge. Alex has a wide range and depth of knowledge, which translates extremely well to the training room. Her knowledge represents an integration of theoretical models and practical experiences, which create a sense of credibility and respect"

Victoria Burton. BA Programme Director. Hull University

Alex's passion for working with parents and their families means she offers free content on her website and has a free Facebook group for parents and carers, supporting them to understand their children's behaviours and equip them with confidence and knowledge to move forward.

Anyone can join her Facebook group, you can find it at www.facebook.com/groups/AlexCarling

"Having a young son with complex issues of ADHD and OCD and given the shortage of mental health services in the UK I cannot express how valuable Alex Carling is to my family. I'd consider myself quite a savvy parent when it comes to my children's mental health and I generally do ok supporting my son. However, there have been several times that I have felt disconnected from him, I was unable to mentally connect and therefore unable to help. Times like these are so upsetting for the entire family not to mention my poor son who felt so "trapped". This is why having a different mindset and approach to understanding a child's behaviour or thought process is so massively important."

Mum of 3 young boys and foster carer.

Alex works in private practice in Hull and offers the following others services:

Counselling & Psychotherapy

Alex works with individual adults, couples, children and young people and families, offering short and long-term work in a number of different contexts.

Training

Alex offers bespoke training packages for schools and businesses to strengthen existing and develop new knowledge of mental health, self-awareness, relationships, and communication.

Consultancy

Alex works with schools and business, using TA, to enhance their performance and/or relationship with their pupils, service users and customers.

Where to find Alex:

Website: www.counsellinginhull.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/alexcarling.therapy

Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/AlexCarling

Twitter: @AlexCarlingTTS