

This rationale will explain the choices made and the design aspects used in creating a mental health leaflet which highlights some key aspects of parental depression and sources of help. This supports the huge increase in awareness of a child's needs when his or her parent has difficulties attributed to mental illness and the parental capacity is interrupted. It will explain the reasoning for colours, fonts and images used and touch upon the need for a greater understanding of parental depression. It will conclude with any positive aspects of parenting with mental ill health. For clarity, the definition of parenting is offered by Jones (2009, quoted in Horwath, 2009 p.283) as the characteristics of giving care to children enabling them to become prosperous adults in their own culture, and depression defined by (The Mental Health Foundation, 2018) as a prolonged feeling of hopelessness and worthlessness, a lack of pleasure, low interest and concentration levels, disturbance in sleep patterns, changes in appetite and a general unhappiness. This leaflet has been designed to highlight services in West Wales in keeping with The Future Generations Act and its endeavour to achieve its seven well-being goals (Future Generations Wales, 2019).

Many parents who face challenging emotional circumstances are able to provide stimulating, nurturing and safe care for their children. However, as problems become harder to shoulder coping gets more difficult and this can leave children vulnerable. With the correct guidance and support many parents with depression and other mild mental illness are able to manage their situation well and continue to raise their children to a high standard but sometimes the illness will affect coping mechanisms which in turn affect family life. (NSPCC, 2018). To parent effectively, (Cleaver, Unell and Aldgate, 2011) state that he/she requires the capacity to deliver seven key principles. These are listed as providing basic care, ensuring safety, emotional affection, stimulation, stability, boundaries and guidance. As stated in the definition of depression in the introduction it can be seen that when affected by the symptoms, all of these attributes may be difficult to attend to. (Falkov, 2004, quoted in Cowling 2004) encapsulates the situation well with the quote 'children whose parents are mentally ill live with the symptoms, behaviours and expressions of mental illness. They see it and feel it'. He went on to say that children of the depressed will have a home life very different from many others.

An important issue often expressed in the discussion of parental mental illness is that a depressed parent may not be fully accessible to the child either emotionally or physically. Cori, 2010 states that long periods of unavailability will create trauma and is distressing to a child. This leads to fears of emotional neglect and a lack of stimulation and (Bowlby, 2005, p24) recreates his clinic scene

acknowledging that with the children he saw, many of their issues had arisen due to parents being unaware of emotional difficulties and therefore unable to control them.

In trying to find some interventions for these families a holistic approach needs to be implemented rather than just focusing on the adult or child singularly. (Falkov 2012 p.13) agrees that an inclusive and balanced approach is best with a concentration on communication, team work and shared responsibility. Unfortunately, services are all too often only available to support adults or children individually, rarely does a service encompass both together, and the leaflet alongside this rationale supports the family focused theory approach which is embedded in Welsh Government policy. Programmes such as Families First, The Family Information Services and the Adverse Childhood Experiences Support Hub are schemes designed to help and support Wales's most vulnerable families.

A parent who responds sensitively and consistently to a Child's needs sends messages that build a sense of security and self identity and this leaflet aims to help parents recognise that their emotional distance may be having a detrimental long term impact on their child. It should be noted at this point, that great care has been taken to differentiate between post partum depression and parental depression which can be an extension of post partum or occur later on in a child/parent relationship.

With regard to the design of the leaflet, a simple, balanced approach was considered. Not too text heavy but relating information alongside images that match the tone. Understanding the use of colour in design can lead to advertising materials being either eye catching and emotive or utterly un-engaging and dismissed. A dependable way to create an engaging leaflet is to choose colours that reflect the mood and its information and that work together on the colour wheel first designed by Sir Isaac Newton in 1666 (Design Studio, 2019). This leaflet uses a triadic example from (Homedit 2019) colour wheel model, three colours equally spaced apart from each other on the wheel, specific colours chosen to reflect the response the information wants to stimulate. The overall colour of the leaflet is a pale shade of yellow, and this creates an emotional response, yellow is the colour of optimism, emotional strength and confidence. It is the colour of sunshine and should essentially lift our spirits. Then for the wording on the leaflet blue has been chosen. Blue is a colour of calm and trust, of reflection and efficiency. These two colours together are chosen to promote an unconscious message that draws on positive change is possible. (Wright 1998, p.26-27). Similarly, with colour and continuing the theme of visual elements, font's chosen will also send a message to leaflet readers and is another important aspect of visualising words. The cognitive fluency theory (the ease in which we process information states that if visual information is harder to read it results in a difficulty in

processing the information within and that things appear easier to accomplish when they are easier to read. (Hubspot 2019) clarify that the font you choose ultimately conveys the message you want to send to your readers. The font 'Cambria' is used throughout the leaflet as it is considered mature, stable and practical. Font size is also considered and is chosen to again balance in comparison to the overall look of the leaflet however a study has shown that a larger font can extract a stronger emotional connection. Bold lettering has also been used as research suggests that this is more persuasive than a standard font. (The Next Web, 2017). Emotion plays a large part in a decision making process, it is important to encourage the right emotions in your readers. Typography can be a beneficial aspect of design. (Colour Graphics, 2019). The leaflet displays a very symmetrical design; again this is a well considered feature. Symmetry provides a sense of balance which draws on the reflection of self and provides comfort. Here the focal points are images with text framing the illustrations (Fresh Home, 2014)

Lastly, within the structure of the leaflet are pictures. These images were chosen specifically to illustrate that fathers can also suffer from depression just as commonly as mothers can and this can be just as detrimental to relationships. (Dads Matter UK, nd) offer statistics showing that a recognised ten percent of men suffer post natal depression, thirty eight percent of men are concerned about their own mental health and one in three dads worry about the mental health of their partner. It goes on to describe men using negative coping strategies such as abusing alcohol or gambling, again things that will have a detrimental impact on a whole family.

To conclude, mental illness can adversely affect an individual's ability to parent, but it is possible, if provided with adequate resources, that many individuals with mental illness are able to successfully care for their children. (Reupert and Maybery 2007, p.365) The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children regularly receive calls from partners of recently diagnosed sufferers of depression wanting to know how best to support them and how it will affect the family as a whole and the relationships with children and (Ackerson, 2003) shares the findings that rather than having negative parenting outcomes, many depression suffering parents describe the emotional bond stronger because of the illness. He goes on to state that rather than concentrating on what parents cannot do whilst mentally ill, acknowledging parental strengths may serve to reduce stigma, helping more parents seek support. There is a growing knowledge with regard to adverse childhood experiences and this can only serve to enhance the understanding of adults and issues that may lead to mental illness and educate on how to avoid our children growing up in the same circumstances. This leaflet is designed so as not to accuse a person of bad parenting but to allow consideration that

they may not be alone in the illness, that there is support available and that whole family happiness matters.

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Images

Image 1 <https://www.learningliftoff.com/parental-depression-not-just-grown-ups/>

Image 2 <https://parentalstress.com.au/parental-depression/>