

# AVIGuk CONFERENCE 9.10.25

## WORKSHOP TIMINGS, TITLES, SPEAKERS AND OVERVIEWS

### GROUP 1 Timings 11.10 am – 12pm

**Baby's Best Beginning: Using VIG as part of a multi-agency approach to support parents with babies on the edge of care during the first 1001 days**

*REBECCA NEWMAN, SELINA LIGHT, NICOLE BLACKWOOD*

*Cardiff*

We are an Educational Psychologist (and VIG supervisor) and two Psychology-Led Practitioners (both accredited VIG practitioners) from Parents Plus in Cardiff. Parents Plus is a psychology-led parenting service, with our entire team trained in VIG and sitting within Early Help in the Local Authority.

We have recently started a project called Baby's Best Beginning, which supports parents in pregnancy with children on the edge of care. We are part of a multi-agency approach to identify and provide the most appropriate support to these families to achieve the safest outcomes post birth. As part of our parents plus interventions, we often use VIG with these families, either antenatally, postnatally or both. We will discuss how VIG is used in Parents Plus and a brief outline of Baby's Best Beginning. We will share casework examples, including video examples from both antenatal and postnatal work, outcome data and reflections on the impact of VIG on families and practitioners.

**The Power of the Traject Plan: Impact for parents. Impact for practice. Enhancing the child's voice**

*ZOE STEPHENS AND JOHANNE ANDERSON*

*Cornwall*

We work in the Cornwall VIG Service with professionals across, health, education and social care. Families referred to the VIG Service are from a range of contexts: parent-infant relationship work for children 2 and under, Early Help, Child Protection, Children in Care and children / young people with SEND, potentially up to the age of 25.

This workshop will look at 'traject planning' to capture and generalise learning and next steps for parents following VIG. Shared review footage will be explored to see this in action for a 9 year old boy and his dad, whose family have stepped up and down between Child Protection and Early Help services a few times before.

## **Meeting everyone's needs: The impact of a VERP project in early learning and additional support needs centres**

*ANNE-MARIE WALKER*

Dumfries & Galloway, Scotland

Faced with a partnership early learning centre who were making many referrals for additional resources and help and previous inputs to improve the quality of the offer having minimal impact, Dumfries and Galloway Educational Psychology Service collaborated with the Educational Visiting Team to trial VERP in this 2-5 context. The outcomes were so good with improved staff wellbeing, confidence and skills and improved outcomes for the children with more needs being met well without external help we were able to establish a larger VERP project. So far our VERP project has worked with the staff from 3 learning centres where children with the most significant needs attend school (5-18) and 8 early learning centres (age 2-5) with many more planned.

This presentation will outline the impact on both staff, children and the setting with both short-term and medium-term findings. Interviews with participants to hear their own voices about the experience will also be shared.

## **A study of the successful rollout of VIG for 450 practitioners in 75 LAs through Best Start Family Hubs (BSFH)**

*HILARY KENNEDY AND CAROLINE FELTHAM-KING*

Across England

Data-collection and analysis by Michelle Carr, VIG - Best Start Family Hubs Programme administrator. For this workshop Hilary (AVIGuk's joint CEO for Training, Research and Development) supported by Caroline (AVIGuk Supervisor and Educational Psychologist) will show with video how VIG changes lives for Supervisors, Practitioners, Parents and Children.

This workshop will explore the views of the AVIGuk registered supervisors (involved in the project through focus groups) and of the Best Start Family Hub VIG trainees, who have successfully completed their midpoint or achieved accreditation. We asked BSFH supervisors, practitioners and trainees to reflect on the successful moments of their journey and think about what they were doing to contribute to their success. The results give fresh important insights into how VIG works.

## GROUP 2 Timings 12.05 – 12.55pm

### Moments That Matter: The Power and Effectiveness of VIG in Perinatal Mental Health Work

*JESSICA WILLIAMS AND MATT LEWIS*

#### South Wales

Perinatal mental health work is emotionally complex, multi-layered, and deeply relational. This workshop explores the power and effectiveness of VIG within perinatal mental health teams, where working with complexity is crucial. VIG offers a hopeful, strengths-based way of connecting parents with their babies, and with their sense of identity as a parent.

We'll present video examples, discuss adaptations for perinatal contexts, and hear voices from patient and practitioner experience of VIG in this setting. We will highlight how VIG helps teams hold both complexity and hope—focusing not only on difficulties but also on moments of strength, attunement, and possibility. Participants will be invited to reflect on their own settings and consider how to enhance the impact of VIG in complex situations. This session will be of interest to anyone using or commissioning VIG in perinatal or secondary/ tertiary care services.

### Music, Attunement and Connection: A Participatory Workshop

*RIKKI PULLEN AND OONAGH DAVIES*

#### Cardiff and Stroud

Rikki is the co-founder, CEO and Musical Director for a charity choir, [Side by Side](#) - who focus on community, connection and inclusion for those with long-term conditions, disabilities and additional needs. Oonagh Davies is a specialist Child and Educational Psychologist (EP), former secondary teacher, and an accredited VIG practitioner - who initiated VIG training and practice for Gloucestershire Perinatal Health Visitors and the Educational Psychology Service. You might also recognise her as AVIGuk's coordinator for Research and Events. In her spare time, she plays music – singing, cello-ing and whistling (!) – for a local Community Interest Company, as part of their musical storytelling band, [Playcircle](#).

Both Rikki and Oonagh share a passion for the power of music, attunement and connection. This participatory workshop aims to get you singing together, thinking, talking and connecting.

## **The positive impact of introducing VERP to Early Years Practitioners, as part of the DfE Government-funded Stronger Practice Hubs' Covid-19 recovery programme**

*JO FOWLER AND JANNICE SIMPSON*

### **East of England**

This workshop will discuss the positive outcomes from recent VERP interventions delivered to EY Practitioners in East Anglia by Jo Fowler (retired Early Years Specialist Educational Psychologist) and Jannice Simpson (VERP Lead for the East of England Early Years Stronger Practice Hub).

In summer 2023, we were successful in our bid submitted to the National Children's Bureau (the DfE's Stronger Practice Hubs delivery partner) for VERP to be included in the two-year package of Covid-19 recovery programmes on offer to EY practitioners through the East of England SPH – which covers Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. Following a number of successful introductory webinars and face-to-face workshops, we were invited by three very different EY settings to deliver the full VERP ITC for their staff. Two of these EY settings subsequently requested the complete VERP package, which extended our involvement to three group-based shared review cycles, plus a final evaluation and celebration event, for each setting. The presentation will highlight the power of VERP, through the sharing of both quantitative and qualitative data gathered from participants on our various courses.

## **VIG with families of children with a learning disability referred to specialist mental health services**

*VASO TOTSIKA, SOPHIE LEVITT AND CHARMAINE KOHN*

### **England**

Behaviours that challenge and mental health problems are 3-4 times higher in children with a learning disability (LD) compared to other children. Remote VIG could help services offer support to more families to manage effectively at home. To determine if VIG works well as a remote therapy, the first step was to determine if we could recruit parents to a study and if they liked VIG.

This session will outline a VIG research study led by University College London, working alongside the Centre for Trials Research at Cardiff University, the Challenging Behaviour Foundation, Brighter Futures for Children, Evelina London Children's Hospital (Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust) and the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. This workshop describes the positive findings of remotely delivered VIG, reported by Parents and Clinicians alike.

**GROUP 3 Timings 2.45pm – 3.35pm**

## **VIG with doctors to improve interpersonal communication**

*RUTH HIND AND CHLOE ERLAM*

London

We are both Psychologists by professional background, now working independently as VIG advanced practitioners, supervisors and trainers. We are both based in London but work remotely. We work with a wide range of professionals and client groups across the UK and abroad.

We will be sharing our experience of delivering an application of VIG to a cohort of doctors to improve their interpersonal skills in their medical consultations. Our work demonstrates the potential of VIG in other contexts where an attuned interaction is vital for effective outcomes.

We will share the findings of our initial pilot study, where the positive results helped lead to a permanent contract with Wessex Professional Development Unit, delivering training on a quarterly basis.

## **The Importance of the Child's Voice in VIG**

*AOIFE MCNALLY, EMMA EKINS, BEN LEVINE AND LOUISE BROKOF*

Cardiff

We are an educational psychologist and psychology-led practitioners, working in a psychology-led parenting service. As part of Early Help we deliver non-statutory, bespoke, psychology-led interventions to parents and carers of children aged 5 to 18. We create evidence-informed interventions based on parent/carer's goals for change. These interventions are unique to each family but most include improving parent/carer reflection and the parent/carer-child relationship, and aspects of psychoeducation. Over the past 5 years, VIG has become an increasing part of that offer. It has been used both as a 'standalone' intervention as well as being embedded within a psychology-led intervention.

Cardiff is the UK's first city to be formally recognised by UNICEF as a Child Friendly City. Accessing and responding to children's views is a core part of our work. VIG is aligned with this principle through its requirement for VIG guiders to address power imbalances. As VIG practitioners working with parents of children aged 5+, we have had to consider how to gain informed consent from children at the start of our intervention – including how to respond when this is not given. This interactive workshop will outline how we have attempted to address these dilemmas and we will also share casework examples, when acting on the voice of the child has led us in unexpected directions.

## **Video Interaction Guidance in the Early Years: How Hackney EPS are embedding complex perinatal work into their daily practice**

*PAMELA HAMILTON, HOLLY SEAMAN AND HANNAH JONES*

London

The Hackney Educational Psychology Service and Family Hubs have teamed up to provide a community focused, therapeutically driven, and versatile VIG service for parents/carers in the borough who have a child under the age of 3. Much of this work has involved working with parents who have additional needs and/or family complexities. Members of the VIG team will be sharing, discussing and reflecting on their work so far, along with presenting an insight to listeners who may be thinking about bringing VIG to their service.

Practitioners may be interested in this workshop for a wide variety of reasons: if they work within an EPS and have had trouble within embedding it into their service and obtaining buy in from their managers; if they work or are considering working with families where the adults have additional needs and/or complexities; if they are unsure of the various ways to collect data or are interested in how various data collection methods can be used to present a story of impact to commissioner (whilst also thinking about the appropriateness of the data collection measures based on the demographic they are working with) and finally, if they are interested in how genuine reflexivity and being a critical friend can be used to strengthen VIG practice.

## **Together again: Using VIG to reunify a child back home**

*JADWIGA LEIGH*

Stockport

I am a CEO of a charity called New Beginnings. We work to support families who are in contact with the child protection process. I am currently working on a project called Together Again which has been commissioned by the Local Authority to try and reunify children in care back to their birth families. Our project work with parents and their children whose ages range from birth to teenage years.

The focus of this presentation is a complex case that shows how VIG was used to help develop a connection between a mother and son who were estranged from one another. Many local authorities follow the NSPCC guidance around reunification which is primarily focused on assessment, timescales and standard social care intervention. Thus, when a reunification takes place using this method, and breaks down, the parent is blamed. In this presentation, I hope to demonstrate how powerful VIG can be in cases of estrangement, and how it should be adopted and utilised by all practitioners involved in the child protection arena.