

# Keeping Kids In Mind

## SEEING CHRONIC PARENTAL CONFLICT THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD

### Introduction

**What is it that can help engage separated parents in chronic medium to high level conflict to change?** The understanding from deep within, that their behaviour and actions are the very things that are damaging their children.

This course aims to assist parents to:

see through their children's eyes the experience and impact of being trapped in medium to high level chronic parental conflict.

develop greater awareness, understanding an internal resources about how to best support their children following family separation

gain more understanding of the world of their children's other parent by attending with parents of the opposite gender to them.

If parents can manage to change in these fundamental areas then they can better protect their children from the damaging effects of their chronic conflict.

### The Keys to Success?

The success of this course relies on the skills of the facilitators, the challenges of the content, and the experiences and learnings that the participants bring to the group. The course is process driven and challenges participants to think differently within a respectful and safe environment. Indeed in many situations it is the participants themselves who work together for change.

### Evaluation

The course has had an interim evaluation by the Family Action Centre at Newcastle University. Results show that the Keeping Kids in Mind course is valued by the participants and has had a positive and sustaining influence on their behaviour. All of the participants who took part in the evaluation felt that their children had benefitted from their attendance at Keeping Kids in Mind.

Participants in the research also commented that they found value in hearing from the other gender within the context of the group. It helped them see things from their co-parent's perspective.

### Course Content:

The course is psycho-educational, runs for 5 weeks and looks at:

**Loss and Grief After Separation**  
**The Hidden World of Children**  
**Rebuilding Resilience**  
**Bridging the Gap**  
**Looking Back and Moving Forward**

The course starts with acknowledging the loss and grief of the parents then moves them onto focusing on their children's, often hidden, experience of loss and grief. This session also examines how poorly managed strong emotions impact on those who are closest to the participants.

In **week 2** we look at attachment including how a loss of trust in parents can damage children's attachment. We challenge parents to examine their own behaviour and the potential harm it causes. This session also gives parents information on how they can repair their relationship with their child and increase their child's trust in them.

We move on, in **week 3** to explain to parents how they can help their children re-build resilience and how parents can strengthen their capacity to build stronger relationships with their children.

**Week 4** examines and highlights more productive and effective ways to co-parent through learning skills which loosen entrenched patterns of conflict with their children's other parent.

**Week 5** is an opportunity to consider what is required to make care arrangements work best for children and for parents to reflect and consider a different future for themselves with their children. Participants are challenged to see the strengths of the other parent.

Throughout the course, participants are invited to move from remaining stuck in the blame and anger dance with their child's other parent. They are reminded and re-focussed about the effects their own behaviour choices have on their children and the other parent.

For further information about the Keeping Kids in Mind course contact:

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