



## Parental mental illness and child-aware practice e-learning course

Many parents with mental illness will have the capacity, strengths and supports to help their children thrive. However, without the right support, parental mental illness can have long-term impacts on children's mental health, development and wellbeing.

### About this course

This course acknowledges the resilience and values of parents with mental illness, while recognising that mental illness can place great stress on the family. Parental stress can affect a child's ability to develop positive mental health; impact on the parent-child relationship; and disrupt the family's daily routines, relationships and connections.

All practitioners play a key role in supporting children, parents and families to function cohesively where there is adversity. Practitioners who can sensitively and respectfully ask parents how their mental health might affect their parenting, and their children's social and emotional wellbeing, are critical in the early identification and prevention responses to children's mental health.

### Why was this course developed?

Evidence indicates between 12–45% of all people attending adult mental health services are parents experiencing mental illness.<sup>1</sup> Many of these parents are able to parent in safe, consistent and nurturing ways, but some will at times need extra support.

By conducting respectful, collaborative conversations around parenting, mental health and the child's wellbeing, practitioners can help to reduce any negative impacts of the parent's illness, and support the parent's strengths and hopes for their family.

<sup>1</sup> Maybery, D., & Reupert, A.E. (2018). The number of parents who are patients attending adult psychiatric services. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 31, 358–62. doi: 10.1097/YCO.0000000000000427

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Start Course

### How was this course developed?

This course was developed in collaboration with stakeholders from academia, child and family services, child mental health experts and families with lived experience of mental illness.

### Who is this course for?

This course has been designed for practitioners working in adult services with parent-clients experiencing mental illness.

### What is included in the course?

This course features fictional video demonstrations of conversations between practitioners and parents, along with reading material and reflective activities. It is designed to be undertaken individually, but can also be used as a prompt for conversations between colleagues.

The course also introduces the *PERCS Conversation Guide* – a psychosocial discussion tool developed through consultations with practitioners and parents. The guide provides a pathway and example questions to help practitioners explore five key domains in a child's life. It is designed to help practitioners recognise parents' strengths and hopes for their family, and opportunities to support and improve children's mental and physical health, resilience and wellbeing. It also aims to improve practitioners' confidence in holding preventative conversations with parents.