THINKING PSYCHOLOGICALLY ABOUT CHILDREN WHO ARE LOOKED AFTER AND ADOPTED
THINKING PSYCHOLOGICALLY ABOUT CHILDREN WHO ARE LOOKED AFTER AND ADOPTED

Space for Reflection

Edited by

Kim S. Golding
Helen R. Dent
Ruth Nissim
Liz Stott

John Wiley & Sons, Ltd
We would like to dedicate this book to our families of origin and our families of creation from whom we have learned so much.

A special thank you to:

Chris, Alex and Deborah
Roger, Benedict, Joscelin and Maximilian
Peter
Pat, Ben, Aoife and Lewie

who helped to create the space for us to write this book
## CONTENTS

*About the Editors* ............................................  ix

*Contributors* ................................................ xi

*Foreword by David Howe* ..................................... xiii

*Preface* ...................................................... xv

*Acknowledgements* ............................................ xxiii

1  Being Heard: Listening to the Voices of Young People,  
   and their Families ........................................  1  
   *Kim S. Golding, Helen R. Dent, Ruth Nissim and Liz Stott*

### Part I  MAPPING THE TERRITORY  .........................  35

2  Holding it All Together: Creating Thinking Networks ........  37  
   *Liz Stott*

3  The Zoo of Human Consciousness: Adversity, Brain Development  
   and Health ............................................. 68  
   *Helen R. Dent with Sharon Brown*

4  ‘Like Highly Polished Mirrors’: Educational Psychology and  
   Support for the Education of Looked After and  
   Adopted Children ....................................... 98  
   *Anne Peake*

   Addendum to Part I: Supporting the Looked After Child in School:  
   A Case Example ........................................ 128  
   *Helen Hill*
### CONTENTS

#### Part II  CREATING A CONTEXT FOR CHANGE  ............... 133

5 A Snapshot in Time: The Role of Psychological Assessment of Children and Young People in the Court System  ............... 135  
   *Jenny Stevenson and Catherine Hamilton-Giachritsis*

6 Engaging the Network: Consultation for Looked After and Adopted Children  ............... 164  
   *Helen R. Dent and Kim S. Golding*

7 Finding the Light at the End of the Tunnel: Parenting Interventions for Adoptive and Foster Carers  ............... 195  
   *Kim S. Golding*

8 Being Adopted: Psychological Services for Adopting Families  .... 222  
   *Julie Hudson*

9 More than Walls: The Context of Residential Care  ............... 255  
   *Ruth Nissim*

#### Part III  THERAPEUTIC SPACES FOR DIRECT WORKING  ...... 279

10 Home From Home: Interventions within Residential Settings  .... 281  
   *Ruth Nissim*

11 Opening the Door: How Can Therapy Help the Child and Young Person Living in Foster or Adoptive Homes?  ............... 304  
   *Kim S. Golding with Ann Courtney and Jane Foulkes*

12 ‘Forgotten Miseries’: Can Attachment Theory Help to Guide Interventions?  ............... 333  
   *Kim S. Golding*

   *Conclusion: Travelling Hopefully – The Journey Continues*  .... 361  
   *Liz Stott, Ruth Nissim, Helen R. Dent and Kim S. Golding*

Index  .................................................... 366
ABOUT THE EDITORS

Kim S. Golding, BSC (Hons), MSc (Clinical Psychology), DClinPsy
Kim is a chartered clinical psychologist, employed by Wyre Forest Primary Care Trust in Worcestershire, providing clinical leadership for the Integrated Service for Looked After Children (ISL). She was part of a small group who developed the Primary Care and Support Team (now part of ISL). The team provides support and training for foster, adoptive and residential carers. Kim has a longstanding interest in parenting, and collaborating with parents or carers to develop their parenting skills tailored to the particular needs of the children they are caring for. Within ISL she has developed a group for foster carers based on attachment theory, and has carried out research exploring the use of the consultation service. Kim coordinated a national network for clinical psychologists working with looked after and adopted children for a number of years. Additional to her clinical work Kim was, for 15 years, an associate lecturer for the Open University teaching Introduction to Psychology and Child Development.

Contact details: Integrated Service for Looked After Children, The Pines, Bilford Road, Worcester, WR3 8PU.
Email: kim.golding@tiscali.co.uk

Helen R. Dent, BA (Hons), MPhil, PhD
Helen is a chartered clinical and forensic psychologist, currently employed as Programme Director of the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the Universities of Staffordshire and Keele. Her previous post was Consultant Clinical Psychologist in an Inter-Agency team with children looked after by the local authority. She is continuing her work in this area, and has a contract with North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS trust as Honorary Consultant Clinical Psychologist. She is particularly interested in strategic and systemic interventions, and in neuropsychological development. Prior to training as a clinical psychologist at the Institute of Psychiatry, Helen gained a PhD from the University of Nottingham, for which she carried out pioneering research into children as witnesses. She has held various academic and clinical
appointments and has edited three previous books, including *Children as Witnesses* (1992) with Rhona Flin, published by John Wiley & Sons.

Contact details: Shropshire and Staffordshire Clinical Psychology Training Programme, Faculty of Health and Sciences, Staffordshire University, Mellor Building, College Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2DE.

Email: helen.dent@staffs.ac.uk

**Ruth Nissim**, BA (Hons,) MEd, PhD
Ruth is a consultant clinical psychologist and UKCP registered family therapist who has been in practice since qualifying in 1977. Since the early 1980s she has specialized in children living away from home in substitute families and in residential care. She has worked in all three agencies: Education, Social Services and the NHS, as well as for a private adoption agency. Since taking early retirement Ruth has worked on a freelance basis with a particular focus on supporting adoptive families. In 1999 she completed a research doctorate looking at the outcomes for children placed in adoptive or foster families longer-term.

Contact details: Dores Cottage, 17, High St, Finstock, Oxon OX7 3DA.

**Liz Stott**, MSc (Hons), MSc (Clinical Psychology)
Liz is a chartered clinical psychologist who has been working with children for the past 16 years. She has worked in both residential adolescent units and outpatient CAMHS before taking up specific posts to work with looked after children and their carers. She is interested in systemic and psychodynamic approaches to consultation and uses these ideas to inform practice when working with larger organizations such as Social Services, smaller organizations such as children’s homes and also in consultation with carers. She is currently employed by Partnership Trust in Gloucestershire.

Contact details: The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Delancey Hospital, Charlton Lane, Cheltenham, Glos GL53 9DU.

Email: liz@patnliz.eclipse.co.uk
CONTRIBUTORS

**Sharon Brown**  Since qualifying as a general nurse over 20 years ago, Sharon has added Midwifery, Family Planning, Health Promotion and Sexual Health training to her portfolio. She has a wide range of experience but more recently has specialized in working for local authorities as a health coordinator for children looked after in residential and foster care.

Contact details: Centre for Health, St John’s Campus, Tiffield, Northants, NN12 8AA.
Email: ShaBrown@northamptonshire.gov.uk

**Ann Courtney**  Ann originally trained as a social worker, specializing in adoption and fostering. She qualified as a Play Therapist at the University of York in 1997 and now works as a Play Therapist in the Midlands and lectures and supervises on the Play Therapy course at York.

Contact details: University of York, Department of Social Work and Social Policy.
Email: ac47@york.ac.uk

**Jane Foulkes**  Jane initially trained as a social worker/probation officer. She worked in probation for several years before setting up as an independent therapist and trainer specializing in trauma and attachment.

Contact details: C/O ISL, The Pines, Bilford Road, Worcester, Worcs WR3 8PU.
Email: jane@bjfoulkes.fsnet.co.uk

**Catherine Hamilton-Giachritsis**  Catherine is a chartered forensic psychologist and senior lecturer at the University of Birmingham. Previously she worked in Birmingham Social Services Psychology Department, undertaking assessments of families where there was considered to be a risk to children or assessing the needs of children and adolescents in such families.

Contact details: Centre for Forensic and Family Psychology, School of Psychology, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT.
Email: C.Hamilton.1@Bham.ac.uk
Helen Hill  Helen is an education professional with considerable experience as a middle school teacher, subject coordinator, pastoral head of year, special needs coordinator and deputy head. For the last five years she has been the manager of a multi-agency team of education and Social Services professionals which supports the education of looked after children in Worcestershire.

Contact details: ISL, The Pines, Bilford Road, Worcester, WR3 8PU.
Email: HHill@worcestershire.gov.uk

Julie Hudson  Julie is a consultant clinical psychologist who has worked in a range of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for 20 years. Since 2000, she has worked in Bath, in a joint Health and Social Services post, developing consultative and therapeutic services for children who are looked after, and for adopted children and their families.

Contact details: LOCATE, Child and Family Therapy Services, 24 Combe Park, BA1 3NR.
Email: julie.hudson@awp.nhs.uk

Anne Peake  Anne has worked as an educational psychologist since 1976 for Education and Social Services in Liverpool, London Borough of Haringey and now in Oxfordshire, in a specialist post for looked after children. Her main area of professional interest is in Child Protection.

Contact details: Educational Psychology Service, 44, Church Green, Witney, Oxon OX28 4AW.
Email: anne.peake@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Jenny Stevenson  Jenny is a chartered clinical psychologist with over 20 years’ experience of working with children, young people and their families in the NHS, Education and Local Authority settings. Jenny is currently in independent practice, working mainly in the Family Courts.

Contact details: 7, Chad Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3EN.
Email: jennystevenson@aol.com
FOREWORD

To be cared for by substitute parents or residential workers represents a breakdown in the natural order of things. That such a radical change of caregiver is necessary indicates a failure of the child’s biological parenting. Thus, not only do placed children suffer a primary loss, invariably they will also have experienced poor quality care, including abuse and neglect. Children develop a range of psychological and behavioural strategies in their attempts to survive these early hostile and helpless caregiving environments. However, these adaptive strategies generally impair their psychological development and lead to a range of behavioural problems. Therefore the premise underpinning children’s removal is to ensure their safety and sponsor developmental recovery by placing them with new, protective and emotionally available carers.

It is certainly the case that a change of carer represents the most radical, and potentially most effective child care intervention. But many of these children have survived their original ordeals by learning not to trust carers. Their emotional needs are great. Their behaviours can be difficult, and many children tax even the most relaxed and sensitive of carers. Many also experience problems at school. They underachieve. They find relationships with peers stressful. Recognizing the hurt and damage suffered by more and more placed children and the challenge faced by new carers, child health and welfare professionals accept the need to provide a range of expert support and advisory services. If children are to recover, they have to experience the benefits of long-term, stable and sensitive caregiving. Yet in many cases, it is the children’s needs and problems that threaten the placement and the emotional availability of the new parents and carers. It is the job of child health and welfare experts to help carers to understand and connect with their children, and to help children to trust and feel safe with their carers. These are worthy though difficult objectives, but if they are achieved children’s lives can be transformed.

Assessing the needs of placed children requires an understanding of developmental psychology and its application. It is therefore logical that policies