Child to Parent Abuse

Participant practice handout

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Core practice stance
Understand context without excusing harm. Protect safety without defining a child by their behaviour. Treat family members as experts in their own experiences.

1. Recognising the pattern

- What behaviour is occurring, how often, and with what impact?
- Who is afraid, harmed or changing their behaviour to prevent escalation?
- Can family members say no freely, and what happens when boundaries are set?
- Does the impact continue beyond the incident?
- What may the parent or child be risking by speaking openly?

Ordinary conflict	Possible abusive pattern
Disagreement without sustained fear	Fear, intimidation or coercion
Boundaries can be set safely	Boundaries trigger threats, harm or retaliation
Both people retain freedom and voice	A parent or sibling changes behaviour to stay safe
Repair follows and the impact reduces	The impact continues beyond the incident

2. Understanding a recurring CPA pattern

FBS practice synthesis — not a fixed or universal sequence

Tension or unmet need → escalation → harmful behaviour → parent adapts or crisis response → temporary calm → tension rebuilds

- This FBS practice synthesis is a reflective aid, not a validated universal cycle. Not every family experiences every stage or experiences them in this order.
- Trauma, adversity or neurodivergence may help us understand escalation, but do not excuse harm.
- A parent may give in, withdraw, avoid visitors or change routines to prevent another incident.
- Temporary calm can hide the seriousness of the pattern and unintentionally reinforce it.
- Possible interruption points include earlier recognition, regulation, clear safety plans, different responses, accountability, repair and reconnection.

3. Holding risk and possibility together

Safety and risk	Strengths and change
Who is afraid or being harmed?	When is the problem less intense?
Frequency, severity and escalation	Who can influence safety?
Weapons, strangulation, threats or stalking	What is already being managed?
Siblings and other household members	What matters to each person?
What happens when boundaries are set?	What would a small improvement look like?

4. Exploring context without assumptions

- How might trauma, neurodivergence, communication, sensory needs or regulation be relevant?
- Has the child experienced or witnessed domestic or family violence? If so, how might this be influencing current relationships?
- How do culture, identity, family roles, faith, gender, stigma, racism or migration shape the meaning of what is happening?
- What would respectful and useful help look like to this family?
- What pressures in school, housing, services or the wider system are affecting safety and change?

Remember
Culture does not cause child to parent abuse. Family violence is not present in every case and is not a complete explanation. Ask this family, remain curious, and keep safety and accountability clear.

5. Questions that create movement

Best hopes	What are your best hopes from us talking together? How would you notice? Who else would

	notice?
Coping	How have you managed to get through the moments that felt impossible? What did that take from you?
Exceptions	Tell me about a recent time when the problem could have taken over, but did not. What was different?
Scaling	On a scale from 0 to 10, where are things now? What puts you there and not lower? What would one point higher look like?
Accountability	What was happening just before? Who was affected? What could you do when you notice that feeling building?
Repair	What would let the other person know you are taking responsibility? What would meaningful repair look like for everyone?

6. Safety planning prompts

- What are the early signs and predictable pressure points?
- Where are the safe spaces and exits, and how can help be reached?
- What do siblings, pets and other household members need?
- Who can be contacted, when, and what will they do?
- What will professionals do if risk increases?

7. Case application

A parent reports that her 15 year old son shouts, blocks doorways and damages property when she says no. She has stopped inviting relatives home and sometimes gives him money to prevent escalation. He has recently been excluded from school and is waiting for an autism assessment.

The first safety question: _____

One question for the parent: _____

One question for the young person: _____

One multi agency action: _____

8. Reflection and transfer to practice

One idea I want to remember: _____

One change I will make: _____

One question I still have: _____

My next step

In my next relevant conversation, I will…

_____

_____

Practice notes

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Evidence note: This handout accompanies the training presentation and the separate verified bibliography. The recurring-pattern diagram is an FBS synthesis of frontline practice and established CPA concepts; it should support curiosity and assessment, not replace individualised safeguarding or clinical judgement.

After the training

Review your organisation's safeguarding and emergency procedures. If anyone is in immediate danger, contact the emergency services for the country in which you are working. Further information: familybasedsolutions.org.uk