



What works for troubled children?

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Barnardo's has been promoting an evidence-based approach to children's services since the mid-1990's. During the past 10 years we have commissioned leading academics and expert practitioners to review research about 'What works?' for children in a wide range of subject areas.

We have recently re-launched the series of 'What works?' publications, bringing the material up to date and also including new titles.

The first edition of *What works for troubled children?* resulted from a collaboration between Barnardo's and Wiltshire County Council. It differed from other titles in the series in that it combined the exhaustive review of research with the results of a consultation exercise with social care practitioners. The consultation identified the types of problems that troubled children presented to – and the solutions offered by – practitioners.

The issues include:

- bullying
- family breakdown
- anxiety and depression
- aggressive behaviour
- loss and bereavement.

The revised edition looks at developments in assessment, prevention projects and behavioural/cognitive behavioural interventions. It will be invaluable for front-line workers – social workers, teachers, health visitors – as well as managers and policy makers.



Contents of *What works for troubled children?* include:

Part I Overview explores

- Why are children with troubled behaviour of interest to social workers, teachers and others working on the front-line?
- Causes and consequences
 - What is 'normal' and what is a 'problem'?
 - Emotional vs. behavioural problems
 - Measuring behaviours
 - Causes: risk and protective factors
 - Resilience
- What helps? The views of parents
 - Ages and stages at which help is wanted
 - Drugs and alcohol
 - Bullying
- What helps? the views of young people
 - Personal factors
 - Family factors
 - School

Part II Assessment

- Principles in intervention
 - Responsibilities of workers
 - Specialist services
- What works in assessment?
 - Choosing the most effective level of intervention
 - Individual assessment tools
 - Assessment of 'significant others'
 - Tools for talking to children and young people

Part III Interventions looks at

- Prevention projects
 - Targeted perinatal home visiting

- Working with fathers
 - Pre-school programmes
 - Structured parenting group programmes
 - Other interventions
 - Peer-led teaching skills with adolescents
 - Telephone/internet helplines
- Children at special risk
 - Children of substance-abusing parents
 - Children experiencing divorce
 - Living with domestic violence
 - Supporting young carers
 - Living with parental mental illness
 - Runaways
 - Children at risk of suspension from school
- Managing children with emotional and behavioural problems age 3 – 10
 - Principles of behaviour/cognitive behavioural interventions
 - Particular interventions
- Managing common adolescent emotional and behavioural problems
 - Feeling down and depressed
 - Managing anxiety and fears
 - Managing anger
 - Loss and bereavement
 - Post-traumatic stress disorder
 - Substance abuse
 - Risk of offending

Why should social worker, teachers and others working in the front-line be concerned about it?

- Children's behaviour is often the presenting problem that initiates a referral to social and other front-line services.
- Emotional and behavioural problems in children have many causes but are more common in children who experience family and other adversities.
- The first task of the social worker is to safeguard the child/children from harm.

- Children often communicate their distress by 'troubled' behaviour.
- Difficult behaviour can place a child at risk of abuse.
- Emotional and behavioural problems in children interfere with school work, affect their life chances, impinge on peer group and family relationships, and may make them more vulnerable to mental and physical health problems in adult life.
- Children's behaviour is often the last straw that leads to family breakdown and, for children who are looked after, placement breakdown.
- Children with emotional and behavioural problems are 'children in need' under the Children Act 1989.

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