The Importance of History in Assessments

Warwickshire Safeguarding

What is the Background?

A learning review was recently completed in Warwickshire which identified that opportunities to reduce the risks to the child had been missed because critical information in the family history was not shared with agencies working with the children by Children's Services, which meant that interventions to support the children and parents were not based on a full understanding of the family history. The review panel agreed that all staff working with children should be reminded how important history is when completing assessments.

Where Can I Get More Information?

- Warwickshire Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures
- The Wilson Family Lessons Learned

Why is it Important?

Family functioning and history is a key part of assessment and includes both genetic and pyscho-social factors. The experience and history of parents, and their experience of parenting, will have significant impact on the child's lived experience

What Tools Can I Use to Help?

A Genogram is a tool used to visualise a person's family relationships and history. It moves a step further from the traditional family tree and highlights generational patterns and psychological factors that affect the relationships

What Should I Consider?

- Who is living in the household?
- Have there been any significant changes in family/household composition?
- What is the history of childhood experiences of the parents?
- To consider all the current & historical information about all the children, parents and household members

7 Minute briefing

What Should a Chronology Include?

- Key dates, life events and changes in family composition
- Factual information
- Transitions and life changes
- Key professional interventions
- Family or health issues
- This should give a sense of the child's lived experience

What Else Should I Think About?

- Do you have a chronology of life events for the family?
- Include all the people that are important to the child – absent parents and siblings
- Have the family been previously known to services?