

## Reflective Parenting Guidelines for Trainee Handbook and Supervisors

### 1. What is Reflective Parenting?

The hallmarks of a reflective parenting session are that a Terapia trainee has helped a parent to think about their child's behaviour, to gain an understanding of the internal reasons for the behaviour and think with the parent how they can respond helpfully to their child. Reflective parenting offers a space for a parent or parental couple to think about their child without being judged and in which unhelpful responses to their child can be understood. Reflective Parenting enables a parent to be (helpfully) responsive, rather than reactive to their child and to be compassionate towards, rather than dismissive of, their child's struggles. Reflective parenting supports the connection, or development of a healthy connection, between parent and child.

### 2. At what point can a trainee undertake Reflective Parenting?

The trainee needs to have a sufficiently developed reflective capacity of their own to undertake Reflective Parenting, as well as sufficient clinical experience under their belt. **The commencement of Reflective Parenting should only be with the agreement of the trainee's clinical supervisor.** As part of this agreement, sufficient supervision, in accordance with Terapia's supervision-ratio policy, should be put in place to support the supervisee in undertaking this work.

### 3. Can I do Reflective Parenting with parents of a child/young person I am working with?

Terapia trainees **can** undertake reflective parenting hours with parents of children they are working with, and they **can** count those hours towards their 25 reflective parenting hours needed for UKCP accreditation. **However, the undertaking of reflective parenting with a client's parents should first be discussed in clinical supervision to ensure that it is appropriate. (NB See point 5).**

### 4. What about client confidentiality?

It is important that trainees feel comfortable and increasingly confident in working with parents of the children they are working with. The aim is to support parents in understanding their child and the communications that may be present under their child's behaviour. **Session confidentiality does not need to be broken, as you are thinking together about the child's behaviour at home.**

### 5. When should I not do Reflective Parenting with parents of a child/young person I am working with?

**Concerns for the child:** Where there is a concern that meeting with the child's parent may contaminate or rupture the therapeutic relationship then it **may not** be appropriate to undertake reflective parenting work with that/those parents or it may need to be delayed. Additionally, when there is a concern that meeting with a parent may put the child at risk of harm, reflective parenting sessions **should not** be undertaken. **Terapia trainees should always think through in supervision the appropriateness of undertaking reflective parenting with the parents of a child or young person they are working with.**

### 6. Can I do Reflective Parenting with parents of a child/young person I am not working with?

Yes. Occasionally on placements parents may be allocated a separate therapist to their child for the purpose of reflective parenting or, it may only be the parents who are receiving support as it has been reflective parenting alone that has been indicated from the initial assessment. You may also be working as part of a team when one therapist works with the child and another with the parent. If a child is not in therapy or refusing to be in therapy, but the parents recognise a therapeutic need, it can be helpful to work with child 'by proxy' through reflective parenting work.

**7. What counts as a Reflective Parenting hour?**

Simply meeting the parents for brief half termly or termly feedback - or a review - is not the same as reflective parenting. A conversation in a review meeting may be a precursor to setting up Reflective Parenting sessions. The purpose of reflective parenting is to think with the parent about their child's behaviour and, in the process, to further the parent's understanding of their child. Reflective parenting needs to be contracted with the parent, specifically for that purpose and consented to by the parent. This means that Reflective Parenting sessions can then be prepared for with the child's knowledge. A reflective parenting session is a 50-minute 'hour.' For reflective parenting hours to be counted towards UKCP Registration, they need to be undertaken face to face.

**8. What ratio of supervision do I need in order to count Reflective Parenting hours towards my hours for registration with the UKCP?**

Reflective parenting hours can count as client hours for the purpose of accruing hours for UKCP registration and need to be supervised in accordance with Terapia's supervision-ratio policy. 25 Reflective Parenting hours can be counted towards the 450 hours needed for UKCP registration.

**9. How often should Reflective Parenting sessions take place?**

It's important to think through in supervision the frequency of Reflective Parenting sessions. Often fortnightly sessions are enough and give parents time to put into practice things discussed in the sessions before coming back to reflect further. When the family system requires a lot of holding, weekly Reflective Parenting sessions may be needed. These can reduce to fortnightly when appropriate.

**10. What is the difference between Reflective Parenting and a Therapeutic Session with an Adult?**

Students are required to undertake 25 Reflective Parenting hours and 25 Therapeutic Sessions with Adults as part of the 450 hours required for UKCP Registration through Terapia. Therapeutic Sessions with Adults are offered to support an adult's mental health and well-being. Students must demonstrate 'advanced therapeutic skills in working with adults' for the purpose of their 25 Therapeutic Sessions with Adults. If the adult is also a parent and talks about their child, the focus will be on the adult's *experience* of their child and is still a therapeutic session for the adult. Even if you offer some insight into their child's experience/internal world gained from your training/clinical experience with children, this cannot count as a Reflective Parenting hour as the adult has come to you and contracted with you for therapy. Reflective Parenting sessions are set up expressly for the purpose of helping parents understand and respond helpfully to their children. Even if compassion, empathy and understanding are offered to the parent as part of a reflective parenting session, this cannot count as a therapeutic session with an adult!

