THINKING ABOUT CHILD PROTECTION PRACTICE
Case studies for critical reflection and discussion

Jadwiga Leigh and Jane Laing
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Jane: For Mum who always knew I could; Lynn who showed me how and Josh who will always be the why and for Jane Burton who always asked when?

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Affect, emotion and object relations: affect is the experience of feeling or emotion. Emotion is an affective state characterised by intense mental activity and a high degree of pleasure or displeasure. An affect is different to an emotion because it is something that is produced by the body, or the mind, when an interaction has occurred with another body or mind. This interaction subsequently increases or diminishes the body’s power of activity. Object relations theory is a psychoanalytic theory that emphasises the dynamics of interpersonal relations (see Chapter 4).

Attachment theory: states that a strong emotional and physical attachment, or bond, to at least one primary caregiver is critical to personal development. John Bowlby first coined the term as a result of his studies involving the developmental psychology of children from various backgrounds. Research also indicates that attachments are developed over time and affect the emotional state and behaviour of adults as well as children (see Chapter 6).

Dramaturgy: developed by Erving Goffman, the dramaturgical approach makes us realise how when we act, we worry about our ‘audience’ and how they will judge our performance to see if we will slip up and show how we really act ‘behind the scenes’ (see Chapter 2).

Internal working model: the child’s attachment relationship with their primary caregiver leads to the development of an internal working model. This is a cognitive framework comprising mental representations for understanding the world, self and others. A person’s interaction with others is guided by memories and expectations from their internal model that influence and help evaluate their contact with others (see Chapter 8).

Management theory: addresses how managers and supervisors relate to their organisations and its objectives. It also seeks to explore how the implementation of effective methods can accomplish ideal goals as well as how employees can be motivated to perform to the highest standard (see Chapter 3).

Managing risk: In child protection social work, managing risk is an integral part of practice and often involves completing, or considering, risk. Risk assessments involve understanding the likelihood of beneficial and harmful outcomes occurring within a particular timescale. Despite pressure on social workers to adopt defensive risk management, considering and acting on all forms of risk, it is widely recognised that it is impossible to eliminate risk (see Chapter 5).
Thinking about child protection practice

**Motivational Interviewing:** refers to a counselling approach developed in part by clinical psychologists William R. Miller and Stephen Rollnick. The main goals are to engage clients, elicit change talk (where the client articulates their own rationale for behaviour change) and evoke motivation to make positive changes for the client (see Chapter 7).

**Performativity:** the terms ‘performativity’ and ‘performance’ derive from the verb ‘to perform’. They define how an action is executed. In this context, it refers to what the audience experiences as well as the actors involved in the action directly (see Chapter 2).

**Person-centred approach (to care):** an approach that developed from the work of the psychologist Dr Carl Rogers (1902–1987). It is a way of thinking and doing things that sees the people using health and social services as equal partners in planning, developing and monitoring care to make sure it meets their needs (see Chapter 1).

**Professionalisation:** a social process by which an occupation transforms itself into a profession so that it can attain the highest form of integrity and competence. Professionalisation tends to result once the professional has established acceptable qualifications, and is deemed to be able to practice and oversee the conduct of members of the profession (see Chapter 2).

**Single- and double-loop learning:** according to Chris Argyris (psychologist) and Donald Schön (philosopher), single- and double-loop learning is required so that the organisation and its employees will improve their understanding of the cause of problems and the effective way of solving them. Single-loop learning involves the detection and correction of error. This normally occurs when something goes wrong and people look for another strategy. However, double-loop learning is an alternative response and involves people questioning and subjecting the governing variables to critical scrutiny. This form of learning may then lead to a shift in the way in which future strategies and consequences are framed (see Chapter 3).

**Symbolic interactionism:** a sociological perspective that developed from the American philosophy of pragmatism and particularly from the work of George Herbert Mead. It is the view of social behaviour that emphasises linguistic or gestural communication and its subjective understanding, especially the role of language in the formation of a social being (see Chapter 1).

**Systems theory:** premised on the idea that an effective system is based on the individual needs, rewards, expectations and attributes of the people living in the system. The theory is designed on the structures, and sub-systems, that surround
a service user, for example, the family, organisations and institutions to which that service user belongs. The theory also recognises that any change in one part of the system tends to have repercussions for the other parts (see Chapter 1).

**Theory of mind and space:** theory of mind (often abbreviated to ToM) is the ability to attribute mental states – beliefs, intents, desires, pretending, knowledge, etc – to oneself and others and to understand that others have beliefs, desires, intentions and perspectives that are different from one’s own (see Chapter 7).