

# Supporting constituents with complex issues

## Councillor workbook



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# Foreword

The Local Government Association has worked with One Plus One as part of its remit to share good practice and strengthen leadership within local government. One Plus One is a team of researchers, information specialists and practitioners working together to strengthen couple and family relationships by putting relationship research into practice. Brief Encounters® was created by One Plus One initially to help health professionals support clients with relationship problems. It is now widely used by practitioners such as GPs, solicitors, prison volunteer visitors, children's centre workers and faith leaders working with a range of issues. Brief Encounters® is a working model that provides guidelines and boundaries for listening to problems without becoming overwhelmed and encourages clients to seek their own solutions.

This workbook is one of a series of workbooks produced for local councillors to support them in their work with constituents. The workbook has been designed as a learning aid for elected councillors. It will be useful regardless of whether you have been a councillor for a long time or are recently elected. Recently elected councillors are likely to find it particularly helpful as the workbook provides guidance on how to support constituents with complex issues which councillors may not be experienced in addressing.

The workbook offers few firm rules for councillors as it is recognised that each individual must decide how best to work with constituents with complex needs. This will be influenced by the other commitments in your life, the people you represent and the methods and approaches that suit you best. As such, the workbook should serve more as a direction marker rather than a road map.

In practical terms the workbook will take between **two to three hours** to work through. You do not need to complete it all in one session and may prefer to work through the material at your own pace. The key requirement is to think about your own approach to supporting constituents with complex issues – how the material relates to your local situation, the people you serve and the council you represent.

# Introduction

The workbook also takes into consideration research from the Young Foundation and Joseph Rowntree Foundation which focuses on the cultural shift needed in the councillor's role so that there is more emphasis on 'valuing the frontline aspects of the councillor's work'.

A number of councillors both new and long standing were interviewed by One Plus One during the planning stage of this workbook and many described their unease when they were faced with a constituent who is emotionally overwhelmed. They also reported that "helping people who are distressed and emotional is difficult" and several said that they didn't feel skilled enough to do this. The quotes are used in this workbook, to illustrate the specific issues that are raised by serving councillors and the case study demonstrates the practical use of the Brief Encounters® model by councillors in their everyday work.

Managing professional and personal boundaries within available time can be a challenge. A simple 3-stage, brief intervention model which uses basic listening skills and clear boundaries provides guidelines from the first sign of distress through to an ending with relevant but sensitive signposting/ referral and follow up. This can be used by anyone who believes in and understands the value of really listening to constituents, and who is confident in their listening skills.

Councillors who find themselves in a difficult position can use good listening skills to communicate that they value that constituent and what they have to say. This leads to a

calmer constituent who is more likely to cooperate.

In working through the material contained in this workbook you will encounter a number of features designed to help you think about the nature of facilitation and conflict resolution. These features are represented by the symbols shown below:



**Guidance** – this is used to indicate research, quotations, explanations and definitions that you may find helpful.



**Challenges** – these are questions or queries raised in the text which ask you to reflect on your role or approach – in essence, they are designed to be thought-provokers.



**Case studies** – these are 'pen pictures' of approaches used by other people or organisations.



**Hints and tips** – these represent a selection of good practices which you may find useful.



**Useful links** – these are signposts to sources of further information and support, outside of the workbook, which may help with principles, processes, methods and approaches. A full list of useful additional information and support is also set out in appendix A of the workbook.

# Supporting constituents with complex issues

Constituents may often approach a councillor with a range of problems from parking issues to neighbourhood disputes, overcrowded housing to education. These often complex issues are likely to have an impact on the relationships within the family or result from underlying relationship difficulties and as the pressure builds up councillors often feel out of their depth as to how they can help, especially if it is a problem which has no immediate solution.



“I try not to get involved in the emotional issues myself. It is very difficult – there is a tension in that as a councillor you are not trained in any particular issues and yet you are supposed to know about everything.”

During interviews with councillors we found that in order to manage difficult situations councillors use a number of avoidance strategies and didn't feel comfortable dealing with any emotional issues that the constituent may be experiencing. Several said that they “shy away” from emotional issues and try and dissuade constituents from raising them.

## What you can offer

- Time, attention and respect.
- A real ability and wish to listen.
- Normalise when appropriate.
- Sensitivity.
- Skills of a Brief Encounter® in a range of situations.
- Share ideas or suggestions.
- Encourage self help.
- Sensitive signposting – making relevant referrals in a non-rejecting way.

## Don't panic

- use the basic listening skills (reflecting back) to give yourself a breathing space
- listen without taking sides
- put your own views and anxieties on hold
- remind yourself you do not have to ‘solve’ this problem
- have a clear idea of information that will help the constituent
- be familiar with the protocol for referring/ signposting people on
- establish good support for yourself.

## Being a good listener



“Nobody trains you how to listen or deal with difficult situations – as councillors we get trained on how to use our laptops but not in listening skills.”

Councillors expressed reluctance to ‘get involved’ with emotional issues due to their lack of skills and inability to resolve such issues. But allowing constituents to express emotions is a healthy and natural part of developing a dialogue with them – even if it sometimes feel scary and uncomfortable. Often, what a constituent needs most is someone who will really listen to them: **Not to solve problems or to come up with answers, but just to listen.** Listening is the basis of good communication and is important in offering support.

When we offer people time, attention and respect, we convey to them that they are worthwhile and valuable. Our posture and responses encourage the constituent to trust us enough to share their thoughts and feelings and this can be the first step in helping them to help themselves. A surprising number of people seem able to help themselves or come up with ideas for improving their difficulties after ‘just listening’ help. When constituents are ‘stuck’, they often need minimal intervention. A little skilled support to get ‘unstuck’ helps constituents to focus and start to work through their situation.



## How listening helps

Listening sympathetically to someone:

- gives them a chance to get their feelings out and to let off steam
- allows them to express their needs and begin to talk about how at least some of these can be met
- gives them a greater ability to face issues, or be strong enough to cope
- supports them be more proactive about moving things forward.

As we use listening skills and encourage the constituents to share their story they often become reflective and begin to think of what they might do to help themselves.



“I would recommend that new councillors gain a working knowledge of what external services and charities can take up issues and problems that are not really those for a local councillor.”



## Listening responses include:

**Reflecting back content:** Restating in your own words what the constituent has said. This skill helps the constituent to focus more clearly and lets them know you are listening.

**Reflecting back feeling:** Similar to reflecting content, but emphasis is on the feelings being expressed by the constituent. This helps them become more aware of their feelings and will enhance understanding of the situation and increase rapport.

**Integrating feeling and experience:** Feelings arise from our experiences. This skill helps constituents identify the feelings and what caused them.

An easy way of doing this is to use the formula – ‘You feel ..... because .....’

**Acknowledging internal conflict:** Sometimes constituents are faced with conflicting feelings. This skill demonstrates an understanding by acknowledging the internal conflict which may exist for the constituent. This may be a mix of quite strong feelings.

The formula – ‘You feel ..... but you also feel .....’ is an easy way to remember this skill.

**Don’t advise unless asked:** People rarely take unasked for advice. Wait to be asked, or make suggestions tentatively.

**Don’t ignore the point:** It may be tempting to steer the conversation into more comfortable waters. Perhaps the subject is too close to your own feelings and makes you feel uneasy. If you decide you are out of your depth, then it is always better to say so. You will help the constituent far more by signposting them to relevant organisations for advice or support

**Do signpost with sensitivity:** If you feel out of your depth then consider who might be the best person or agency to refer the constituent to. It is important that signposting is appropriate and therefore knowing who to refer to is key and how comfortable the constituent feels with this.



## Exercise 1 – what you can offer

Think of what's going on inside you when trying to support someone in distress. You may want to think of an example during surgery or on a home visit.

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**Reflection section** (See Reflection and learning section – write down your thoughts if this helps)

Reflect on the example you have given previously in relation to the following questions:

- Can you listen well when anxious about coping with disclosures or afraid of making things worse?

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- Are you unsure about your role in making what may be unwelcome enquiries?

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- Did you feel as if you had to come up with a solution?

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- Were you able to set out and stick to clear time boundaries?

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- What can you learn from how you felt? Do you feel instinctively that something just below the surface is upsetting the constituent? Or does your heart sink as you wonder what you are getting into?

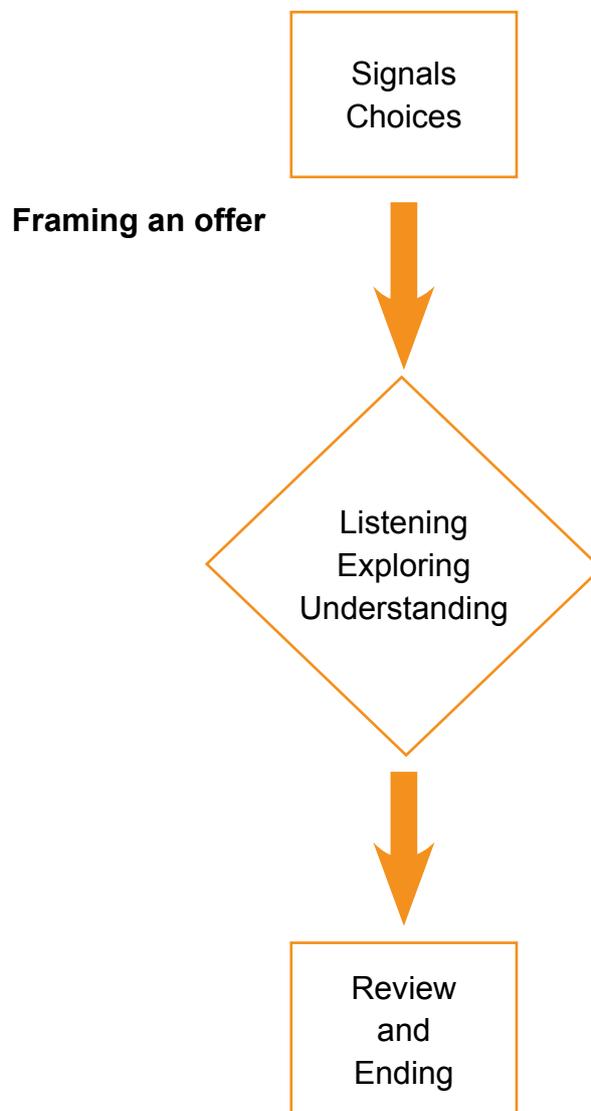
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## The Brief Encounters® model

The Brief Encounters® model provides a framework that maps out the three stages of an encounter that works well. The model encourages you to make choices about how to respond, **if at all**, when your instinct tells you that a constituent needs to share something that is distressing them. Setting clear boundaries for you and the constituent, that sound welcoming and positive is a valuable skill. Management of the available time and professional or personal boundaries is crucial to the success of a Brief Encounter®.

When a constituent accepts an offer of help the councillor becomes an active listener, ‘coming alongside’ the constituent and following their agenda but working within the agreed boundaries. Councillors stated that “...often the thing they are upset over are things that local government have no control over.” It is important that the councillor does not feel they have to ‘fix’ the problem – the focus here is simply to listen.



## Stage 1 – Signals and choices

There is recognition and acknowledgement of the **signal**, a sign of distress given by a constituent when they are troubled and need to talk, whether explicit or covert. When appropriate the councillor then **chooses** whether to make an offer of help, taking into account the time available and the limits of their own competence.

This is **framing an offer** and constitutes 'a working agreement' that states the purpose of the encounter and the boundaries necessary to allow both constituent and councillor to make efficient use of the available time. In practice some constituents are too distressed and their situation demands a high priority response.



### Exercise 2 – what factors might affect your decision

When you choose to invite some exploration of the constituent's distress, check out that it is acceptable to the constituent, and it may help to establish how much time you have to offer – but be positive. Even ten minutes of really listening with attention and respect is valuable and will be appreciated.

Write down a list of the factors that might affect your decision:

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Some points to consider:

How much time have you got?

Can you create some privacy?

Would it be better to acknowledge the distress or the signal and offer a time in the near future?

Be aware of your own feelings eg you may be very tired, coping with your own distress or the constituents issues may raise unresolved issues in you – often called 'personal baggage'.



## 'Personal baggage'

Everyone has personal experiences, the stuff of their own history. It can help us to empathise, or it can make us want to avoid certain subjects. If you find this happening, it might help to think about whether:

- You are having difficulty managing your own feelings. Where you might get support?
- You are afraid you won't be able to cope with the constituent's feelings, or of being swamped by their demand. What do you need to do to feel enabled?
- You aren't confident about your own skill? Where might you get further training/support?

## Stage 2 – Listening, exploring, understanding

If the offer of help is accepted, the councillor uses good listening skills to help the constituent focus on what is troubling them. Really listening means you fine tune your ear into what is being said. Concentrate absolutely to hear the content and the feelings in the story you are hearing. Put on hold all your own thoughts, anxieties and feelings. Your role is to hear what you are being told. You are tracking every word that is said, and you will have to stop them quite often to let them know what you have heard and what feelings were expressed or hinted at. Don't ignore strong feelings. This creates an opportunity for the constituent to talk and brings them close to voicing their needs.

As the councillor listens and encourages the constituent to explore their difficulties both the councillor and the constituent gain understanding. Good listening skills (and enough privacy) are essential to create a sense of rapport so that you can engage with the constituent. Councillors may be in a position to put the constituent's experiences sensitively into perspective and share information that may help. Empathetic responses make it possible to keep a balance between normalising problems and trivialising them.

As the constituent shares something of their difficulties and underlying issues become clearer the constituent may begin to understand and gain some insight in how to move things on. It is important for the councillor to keep in mind that the issues that the constituent presents may be masking underlying relationship difficulties and the relationship is likely to be impacted by the overwhelming nature of the external difficulties (see Couple relationships – Appendix 1).



**This case study illustrates how the Brief Encounters® model has been used in a typical scenario when a ‘signal’ has been picked up during a phone call from a constituent.**

As the local councillor, I had a call from a young woman about the transfer of a tenancy agreement. She suggested that it would not be possible for her to have the tenancy of the house in which she lived as her name was not on the agreement and her husband, in whose name it was, had left her for someone else. She – and her father, who also rang me – were raising the spectre of eviction and being out on the streets with her children. It was unfair, she said, that she would be homeless whilst he had a flat with his new partner.

I made a number of enquiries with the housing authorities and they assured me that no eviction was planned and that she could indeed have the tenancy transferred into her name. However, both parties would be needed to sign off the old agreement and then a new one could be established. She had told them that she would not come in to their office to sign the agreement at the same time as her estranged husband as she did not want to meet him again.

After another call to her and some discussion, I arranged with her to attend the office before her husband, so she did not meet him. Then he followed to do his signing at a later appointment. The real problem was not a possible eviction, but a breakdown of the relationship between the two parties and it was good to know that the solution was an easy one to arrange and not the extreme problem first raised with me.



## Exercise 3 – good listening

Describe a time when you used good listening skills. What made it a good experience for you and the constituent? Write down the factors that you would consider being important in good listening.

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Look at the answers you have given and compare them to the guidelines on page 23. Reflect on the situation of good listening that you described above. If you had the same situation again would you respond in the same way or would you respond differently? What are the reasons for your answer?

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## Stage 3 – Review and ending

As the time limit for the discussion is reached it helps to **review** any change or progress that has been made during the discussion, and to check out with the constituent that their story has been accurately heard. Can a further offer of help be made or can partners, friends or relatives be involved to offer support? There will of course be times when the councillor is faced with constituents who have more serious problems, that need more structured and professional help and a referral may be necessary as a way of **ending** the Brief Encounters® session.

### Suggestions for moving the constituent on

- Councillors and constituents will find it useful to summarise what has been shared.
- This skill increases understanding and encourages action from the constituent to help themselves.
- Invite suggestions by asking – how would you like things to be, or what would be happening if things were better?
- A reminder of how constituents have resolved difficulties in the past is affirming and puts them back in touch with their more coping self.
- Some constituents will feel unable to make changes but experience relief at being listened to and understood.



### Exercise 4 – moving on

Think of a situation when you offered support to a constituent in distress with particular focus on the ending.

- How did that encounter end?

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- What factors influenced the ending?

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## Exercise 5 – reflection section

(See Reflection and Learning section p 19. Write down your thoughts if this helps)

Reflect on the example in relation to the following questions:

- How serious and pressing was the situation?

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- Were you able to manage the constituent's difficulties by listening and perhaps offering information or tentative advice?

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- Were there other sources of help the constituent could make use of, such as self-help groups?

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- Were they able to get help from supportive family or friends?

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- Would the constituent have benefited from more specialised help?

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- Are you familiar with the services available in your area or do you lack knowledge, confidence or support?

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## Signposting – making a relevant referral

Signposting is the term used for referring the constituent to another person or agency who have the time, skill or expertise to help with the specific problem.

You may feel out of your depth quite early on in the process of listening, or you may be seriously worried about a situation. If you feel you are getting into something over your head, allow enough of the story to unfold before jumping in too soon and making a hasty decision.

It may be clear that signposting is appropriate. Share this information in a sensitive, caring and confident way as early in the encounter as the decision is made. As your own feelings will influence the decision, it helps if you are aware of how you are feeling.

The following will help you to consider how to make a relevant referral when constituents need more help than you can offer.

- Knowledge about how support services operate is key to making relevant referrals. This knowledge will include what the services provide and the criteria for making referrals.



### Exercise 6 – building resources: networks

**Internal networks.** How much do you know about the skills and expertise of other local councillors? How can you find out? How can you let them know what skills and expertise you have?

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**External networks.** How much do you know about the local services in your area? How can you find out?

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Build up a resource file with names of local councillors and their areas of expertise and also local agencies and the services they provide.

When thinking about where to refer constituents on to there are two main referral routes used by councillors. Firstly, the internal network of other councillors and secondly the external network of local (and/or national) agencies. Councillors often use internal networks because they know and trust the skills and expertise of their colleagues. Internal networks are used to contact colleagues who may be able to offer support, advice and information. The difficulties and advantages of creating and maintaining relationships with colleagues and networking with other disciplines are very pertinent so avoiding professional isolation. External networks between councillors and local support agencies are likely to have a strong influence on referral practice. Close working relationships and good communication, involving a negotiation of how information will be shared, will increase the effectiveness of referrals.

### **Information to give to constituents**

Constituents need information about what to expect from the organisation or individual they are referred to including practical information about costs, what will be offered, what are the working methods and expected boundaries and benefits. This is crucial to the quality and relevance of the referral. If you are not sure about this would you be able to find out on behalf of the client?

### **What type of services are available for constituents seeking emotional support?**

- the general practitioner or the community psychiatric nurse
- helplines (See Appendix 2)
- relationship support services, such as Relate ([www.relate.org.uk](http://www.relate.org.uk)) and Marriage care ([www.marriagecare.org.uk](http://www.marriagecare.org.uk))
- health centre or independent counsellors
- national or local befriending and support groups, such as Gingerbread ([www.gingerbread.org.uk](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk)), Home-Start ([www.home-start.org.uk](http://www.home-start.org.uk)), or Cruse ([www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk))
- less obvious options, such as employee assistance programmes, assertiveness training groups
- referral to other councillors with specialist knowledge.



## Exercise 7 – signposting

What factors might prevent a constituent from seeking specialist help?

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Write down the agencies or groups you can refer to and make a note of their contact details and any relevant referral information necessary eg waiting list, costs, etc? If you are unsure then research this area. You could begin by checking out the local authority website, libraries and local directories.

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Have you got access to current lists of service providers? If not where might you get access to a current list?

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# Supporting the changing role of councillors

## Using reflection to support learning



“It’s unavoidable, it happens to everyone. There will always be times when we are faced with new challenges and we feel incompetent. But do we dare to move on – to manage our fears.”

Active learning is central to reflective practice and the worker’s capacity for self appraisal and the ability to learn constructively from significant experiences.

### Key stages in reflection:

1. describe and analyse a situation or event
  - describe this situation in detail – what happened, why the situation came about, where it took place and how you felt about it
  - follow this by analysing the knowledge, skills and experience you had at the time of the situation
2. evaluate the outcome by matching your intentions to the achievements
3. identify learning points
  - what do you understand for this situation?
  - what could have been done differently?
4. how will you act on what you have learnt?

These stages can be translated into practical use by asking yourself the following questions at the end of any session with a constituent:

- what was the overall impact of the encounter/interaction?
- What did I learn?
- What could have been better?
- What particularly did I find difficult, would like to explore more or practice further?

This allows learning and development of good practice at every stage.



## Top tips from an experienced councillor

Take up issues as quickly as possible and if necessary at a senior level.

**Never** promise a constituent that you will resolve the issue or that it will be resolved quickly.

Be sympathetic but don't get emotional. Try to gauge the anxiety that is being created by the issue.

Find out as much detail as possible including contact numbers, address, e-mail etc.

If you know explain briefly how things work (or should work).

If you don't know be honest and don't make it up!

Give people time – don't rush them but don't overstay your welcome.

Keep them in touch where something is protracted.

If you pass the problem on to another party keep the constituent informed.

Show an interest however insignificant you might consider the issue.



## Some guidelines for good listening

- **Relax.** Trying too hard can make us feel self-conscious.
- **Concentrate on listening.** It's easy to be distracted by our own anxieties and what we want to say to reassure.
- **Repeat what you have heard, to be sure you understood it.** Unlikely though it seems, it does help people to go on talking, and it stops us interrupting before they have a chance to say what's really on their mind.
- **Listen carefully for feelings being hinted at, and talk about them, especially strong feelings.** It helps to voice them aloud and to describe them. For example, a response to a complex issue being presented could just pick up feelings: "You sound overwhelmed by it all."

If a constituent says "I can't stand it anymore" that's a stronger message and shouldn't be ignored; to acknowledge what you've heard you might reply: "You sound as though you're at the end of your tether."

- **Don't be afraid** to name the feelings you pick up – it won't make things worse – it will be a relief for the constituent. Someone who finally understands!
- **Listen carefully for the main message.** If you encourage a constituent to talk for 10 minutes, do they talk about the housing situation, or how tired they are, or is the main message really that they are at the end of their tether?

If you hear a clear message that they are desperate, you may need to encourage them to talk about their feelings, and see whether they need more help than you can give.

### Some important things to avoid

- Don't share personal experiences before someone has a chance to talk through theirs as it may stop them communicating. A constituent needs to feel you are tuning into them directly, not substituting your own experiences.
- Don't judge – disapproval is the quickest way to stop someone talking. It is difficult for someone to communicate if they don't feel respected.
- Don't appear distracted.
- Don't miss the point – this is related to active listening. If you misunderstand, people are unlikely to keep talking.

## Next steps

Use the following checklist to identify your strengths and growth areas. To do this, use a scale of 1-10. If you feel that you are always able to incorporate this point into your practice then score a 10, if you feel you rarely address this point in your practice score a 1. Your rating may be affected by a number of things including time to research, skills and training, 'personal baggage', your understanding of your professional role etc.

Once you have completed the checklist exercise identify ways of getting support around the **three areas that scored lowest** on your sheet. These ratings are not fixed and will vary depending on a number of internal and external factors.

Complete the exercise again once you have gained support around your chosen areas and see whether your ratings have increased in those areas.

Checklist	Score
<b>How able are you to incorporate this area into your work practice:</b>	<b>1 (rarely)- 10 (always)</b>
Respond to signals of distress.	
Address sensitive issues including relationships.	
Understand the signals you are giving to a constituent eg how busy or how open you are, how much you care or if you are being judgmental.	
Awareness of your own feelings during the encounter which might provide valuable clues about the constituent, your relationship with them, your own barriers to referral and your personal competency.	
Seek out training to increase skills and confidence.	
Find out information on local providers.	
Find out how support services operate, what they provide and the criteria for referral.	
Work within confidential boundaries.	
Encourage contact with local support services.	
Respond positively to constituents who may default on attending support services.	
Seek out and use peer mentoring support.	

# Appendix 1 – Couple relationships

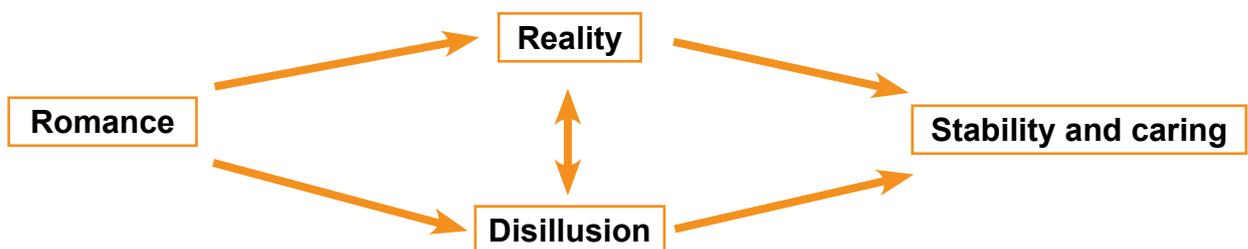
Most couples start out ‘in love’, wanting the best for themselves and their children, but making a go of it – achieving a loving, stable relationship, is a challenge. Family life developments, times of change, expected and unwelcome happenings – all have to be successfully negotiated during the life of the couple and can undermine their stability. Few people are immune. Most of us will recognise and have experienced the change from the early romantic stage, to the reality of trying to live together.



We know from research that a great deal of the foundation building for successful relationships is achieved during the first 5 years and that many couples experience some level of relationship difficulty in these crucial years. These are testing times of change eg the birth of a first child or children requires major adjustment for a couple:

“I find it is very important not to be overwhelmed by the complexity of a constituents case and to try and hone in on what can be solved by a local government intervention”

**A councillor from Chorley Borough Council**



## Transitions

A transition may be described as the process of changing from one state to another, such as a woman becoming a mother, a man losing his job or a family becoming homeless. The inevitable developmental changes of maturation or change challenge the original state of stability. The coping response of the person experiencing the transition will be influenced by their resources and capacity for change. Everyone, as we move 'from the cradle to the grave' have to work through many transitions. Life is rarely static and this is reflected in our relationships.

## Coping with transitions

As we look back on our own transition times we will see that sometimes we have been flexible and have survived transitions well, and at other times we have suffered distress and anxiety. The ability, energy and commitment to cope with transitions are affected by:

- stress\*
- family background
- self-esteem
- support
- education/information
- health.

\* Stress may be associated with a number of separate or coexisting factors and this can have a cumulative effect.

## When a transition becomes a crisis

When the response to internal or external stress cannot be managed by a constituent's usual coping mechanisms, they experience a state of crisis. They are then faced with what seems to be an impossible dilemma which, for the time being, is beyond their normal problem-solving skills.

A crisis is an upset in a steady state, a turning point, a disruption or breakdown in a person's or couple's normal and usual pattern of functioning that creates a state of 'disequilibrium'. During a state of disequilibrium people suffer from increased anxiety, tension and disorganisation, and attempt to resolve their situation with their normal help-seeking and problem-solving methods.

Research shows that many of us will turn for help to people that we know or trust, as part of our help-seeking behaviour. Often these are people whose work brings them into routine contact with families such as councillors.

During this period minimum intervention can have maximum impact.



“A minimum of therapeutic intervention during the brief crisis period can often produce a maximum therapeutic effect. Practice-derived wisdom suggests that access to help should be available early and that help is best timed at the onset of a crisis experience. The goal of crisis intervention is to reduce stress and sustain the clients coping.” (Marmor, 1979)

**Excerpts from a paper edited by  
Dr N Rao Pudukollu – Recent  
Advances in Crisis Intervention**

# Appendix 2 – Resources

## Printed publications

'A Councillor's Guide 2012/2013'  
<http://tinyurl.com/c8en673>

'Help for helping your residents,' LG Group/  
Citizens Advice Bureau  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

## Useful websites

[www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)  
Local Government Association website which  
is an invaluable source of help and advice for  
all those in local government.

[www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)  
Website of the Office for National Statistics  
(ONS) which provides ward profiles.

[www.upmystreet.com](http://www.upmystreet.com)  
Type in the relevant postcode for a wealth  
of social and economic information by  
neighbourhood.

[www.youngfoundation.org.uk](http://www.youngfoundation.org.uk)  
The Young Foundation study on changing  
role of councillors.

[www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk)  
The full report 'Ward Councillors and  
community leadership: a future perspective'  
by Saffron James and Ed Cox is published  
by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and is  
available as a free download from  
<http://tinyurl.com/ckvgzyn>

## Useful sources of support

Relate (National Marriage Guidance)  
Tel.0300 100 1234  
[www.relate.org.uk](http://www.relate.org.uk)

Refuge (for women and children against  
domestic violence)  
24 hour national helpline 0808 200 247  
[refuge.org.uk](http://refuge.org.uk)

Marriage Care  
Tel.0207 371 1341  
email: [info@marriagecare.org](mailto:info@marriagecare.org)  
[www.marriagecare.org.uk](http://www.marriagecare.org.uk)

South London Family Centre (formerly  
African Caribbean Family Mediation service)  
Tel: 0208 671 5843  
email: [southlondonfamily@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:southlondonfamily@yahoo.co.uk)

Asian Family Counselling Service  
Tel.0208 571 3933  
email: [afcs@btconnect.com](mailto:afcs@btconnect.com)

Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships  
Tel.020 7380 1960  
email: [appointments@tccr.org.uk](mailto:appointments@tccr.org.uk)  
[www.tccr.org.uk](http://www.tccr.org.uk)

National Family Mediation  
Tel.01392 271610  
email: [general@nfm.org.uk](mailto:general@nfm.org.uk)  
[www.nfm.org.uk](http://www.nfm.org.uk)

Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus)  
Free 24-hour helpline 0808 800 2222  
[familylives.org.uk](http://familylives.org.uk)

Samaritans

24-hour helpline 08457 90 90 90

email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

Childline

Free helpline 0800 1111

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

British Association for Counselling &

Psychotherapy

01455 883316

[www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)

London Lesbian & Gay Switchboard

Helpline 10am-11pm 0300 330 0630

Office 020 7837 6768

email: [admin@llgs.org.uk](mailto:admin@llgs.org.uk)

[www.llgs.org.uk](http://www.llgs.org.uk)

Refugee Council on line

Tel: 020 7346 6700

[www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

For Training In Brief Encounters® Model  
contact

One Plus One

1 Benjamin Street, London, EC1M 5QG

Tel: 0207 553 9530

Fax: 020 7553 9550

Email: [info@oneplusone.org.uk](mailto:info@oneplusone.org.uk)

Training enquiries: [training@oneplusone.org.uk](mailto:training@oneplusone.org.uk)

Website: [www.oneplusone.org.uk](http://www.oneplusone.org.uk)



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