

Circle of Security Parenting© **A Guide for Professionals**

What is Circle of Security Parenting© (COSP)?

The Circle of Security Parenting (COSP) approach is a programme for parents / primary caregivers developed to support them to develop strong and warm relationships with their baby or child. The programme is based on attachment theories and research about how parent-child relationships can be supported and strengthened. The approach helps parents/caregivers to develop their skills in understanding their baby's/child's behaviour, and their skills in regulating their own cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses to their baby/child. The groups are reflective and interactive in nature, with the aim of helping families sensitively tune into and respond to the emotional needs of their children.

The facilitators will ensure that the groups are user-friendly, non-judgmental, and enjoyable for the parent(s)/caregiver(s) attending. It is also a great way for parent(s)/caregiver(s) to make connections with other parent(s)/caregiver(s) and feel validated by the shared understanding that developing strong relationships with your baby isn't always easy.

Why might a COSP be helpful to a family?

Decades of research has confirmed that securely attached children show higher levels of empathy and self-esteem, better relationships with parents and peers, enhanced school readiness, and more sophisticated emotional regulation when compared to children who are not secure. COSP has taken this research on attachment theory and put it in language that families can understand and make use of.

The programme teaches parents/caregivers the fundamentals of attachment theory. It is based on the following key messages:

- We are all hard-wired for relationships. We know that, as soon as children are born, they are seeking to develop a relationship with their caregivers.
- We know that our children's needs are often hidden in the everyday rush of parenting but once we know what to look for they are easy to see.
- The quality of the parent-child relationship shapes behaviour. A secure attachment has long-lasting effects on things such as confidence, friendships and close relationships, conduct, learning and competence, stress management and general happiness.
- Our own experience of being parented affects how we parent in ways that we are often unaware of. Becoming aware of our strengths and struggles as a parent can help us make choices that will support security in our relationships with our children.

Who is it suitable for the group were running?

We are running these groups with parent(s)/primary caregiver(s) of infants up to 2 years old where there is an identified need in the parent-infant relationship and the parent(s)/caregiver(s) would like to strengthen their relationship with their baby. We work with primary caregivers, including parents, foster carers, grandparents, or others who may be in this role. As a service we committed to supporting dads, LGBTQ+ parents/caregivers, and families that might find traditional services more difficult to

access. We can offer additional sessions prior to the group to parents/caregivers who may need extra support or encouragement to attend this group in an environment they are comfortable in.

How is the course run?

The group course will be run over 6- 8 sessions of approximately 2 hours each, using dvd footage, handouts, and discussions in a family hub or another community base.

How to refer:

If you think you have a family that may benefit from attending this group, please refer to us using our referral form and/or contact us to discuss making a referral for COSP; via email: navigo.growingwelltogether@nhs.net or telephone: 01472 252570. We look forward to hearing from you.

For further information about COSP, including a video introduction, please visit [Resources for Parents - Circle of Security International](#)