



helps children
communicate

REGISTERED CHARITY 210431

Communication difficulties as risk factors for mental health issues.

How does it affect the children and young people we work with?



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The terminology nightmare

Studies talk about communication difficulties or disorders/language impairment/complex language problems, primary, specific etc etc

Speech language and communication needs (SLCN);

Children with SLCN may have problems with production or comprehension of spoken language, with using or processing speech sounds, or with understanding and using language in social contexts. Some of these have specific and primary speech and language impairments, others may have SLCN as part of more generalised learning difficulties or another condition such as hearing impairment or autistic spectrum disorder. These children are likely to have persistent and long-term difficulties. It is estimated that as many as **10% of all children will have persistent SLCN.**

The plan

- SLCN as a risk factor for mental health difficulties
- SLCN in the SEBD/MHD population
- SLCN and ADHD
- Why are there links?
- Implications of SLCN
- What works designing a service for these Children and young people (CYP)?



SLCN is a risk factor for mental health difficulties

Longitudinal studies show that those who have primary communication difficulties **(especially problems understanding language)** often go on to develop mental health difficulties

Skovgaard 2000

Beitchman, et al 2001

Clegg, et al 2005

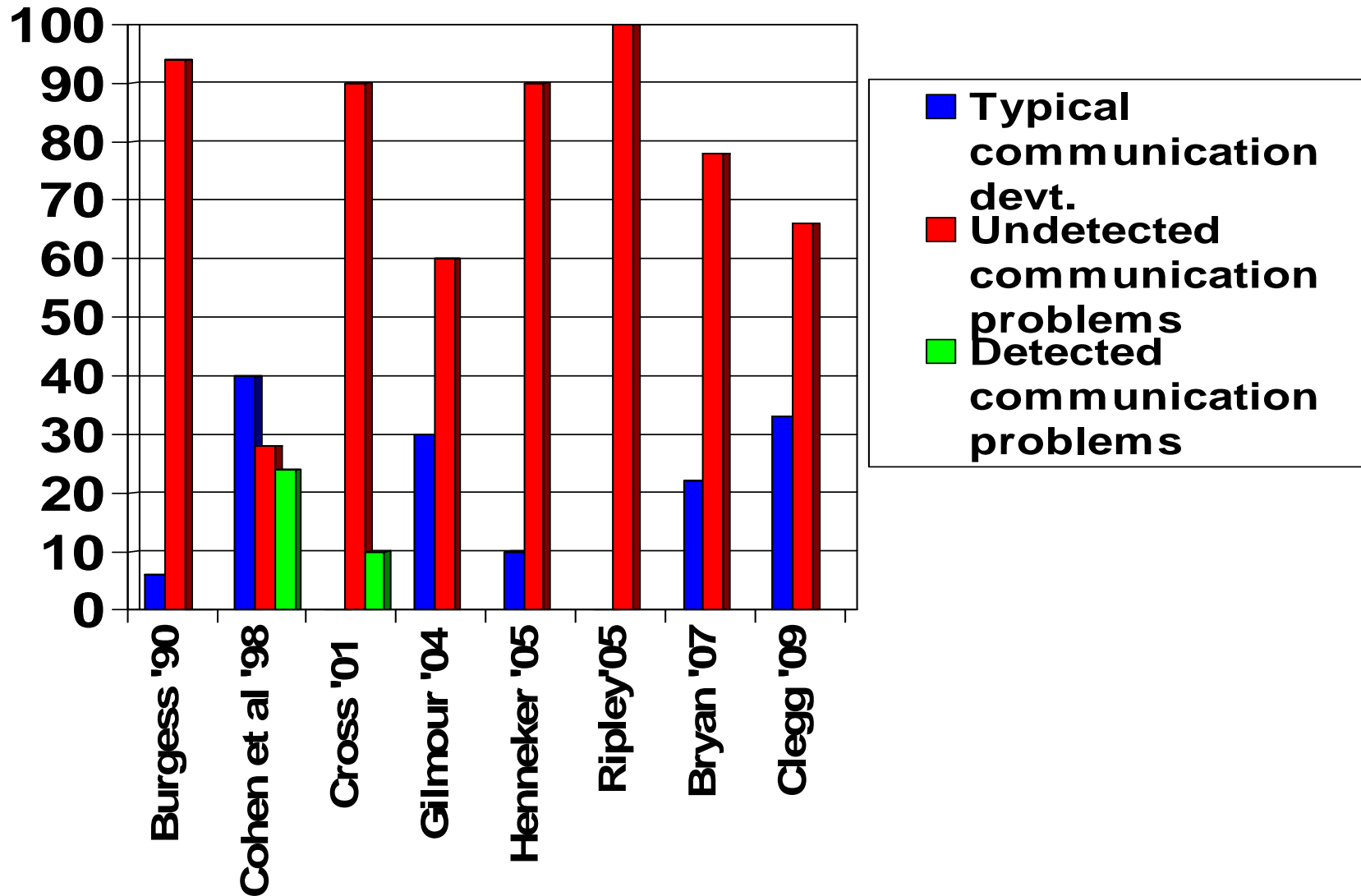
Snowling, et al 2006

Lindsay et al 2007

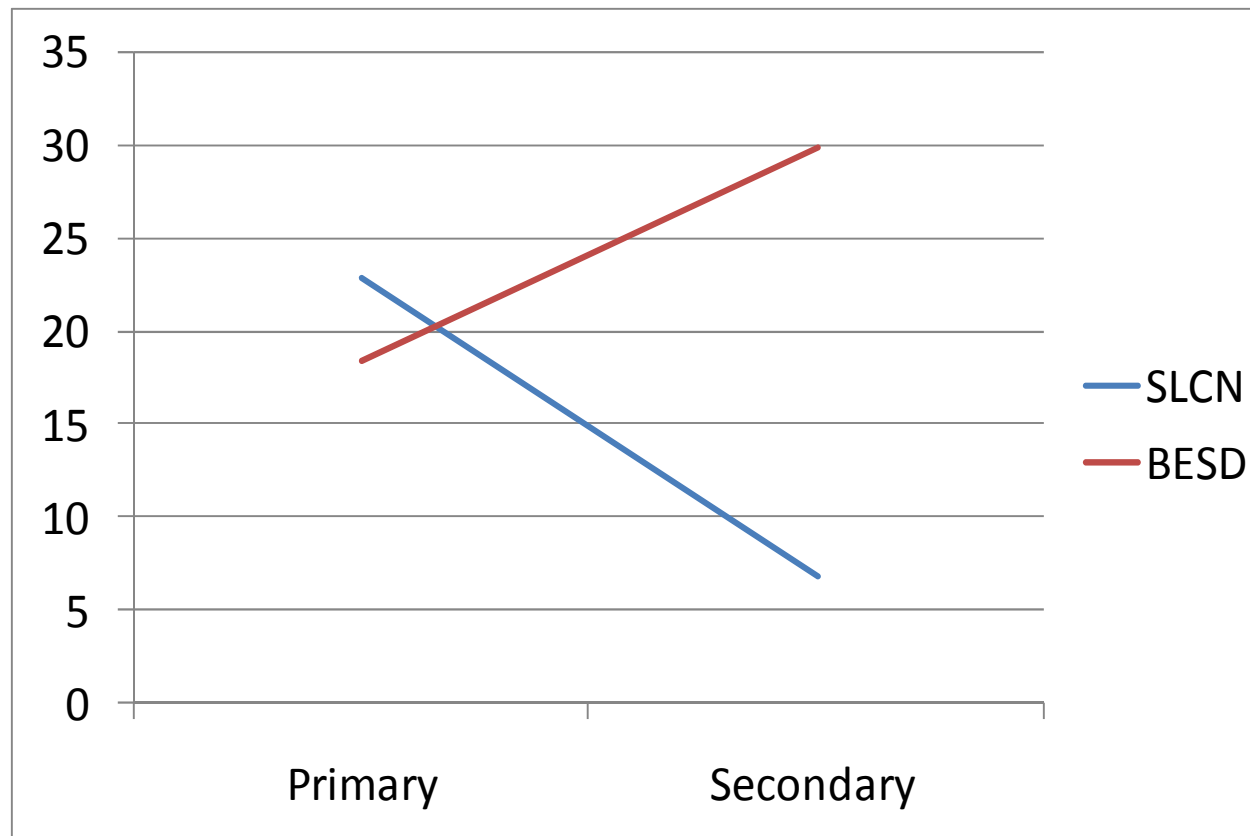


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SLCN in CYP with BESD/MHD



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN ENGLAND, JANUARY 2007 SFR 20/2007



Steer report 2009

‘Consideration should always be given to whether a child’s behavioural difficulties arise from an underlying learning difficulty that has not been identified, or is not being appropriately addressed.’

Speech and Language Development and ADHD

- o 45% of children with ADHD have some form of speech and language impairment (Tirosh & Cohen, 1998).
- 60% of kindergarten children with communication disorders also meet diagnostic criteria for ADHD. (Beitchman et al 1986)

SLCN in ADHD

- o Problems with sentence formulation (Kim & Kaiser, 2000).
- o Narrative skills difficulties (Mathers 2005, Bruce et al 2006),
- o Social communication difficulties - interruptions, poor topic maintenance (Tannock & Schachar, 1996, Clark et al 2002)
- o Comprehension difficulties (Bruce et al 2005)
- o Dysfluency (Hurks et al 2004)
- o Less organised-mazes (even if not SLCN) (Redmond 2004)
- o No/limited internal speech

Is SLCN a disadvantage?

- 166 psychiatrically referred 7–14-yrs
 - Children with ADHD+SLCN
 - SLCN + other MHD
 - ADHD+ OK language
 - Other MHD and OK language

Those with SLCN were most disadvantaged, regardless of any other diagnosis

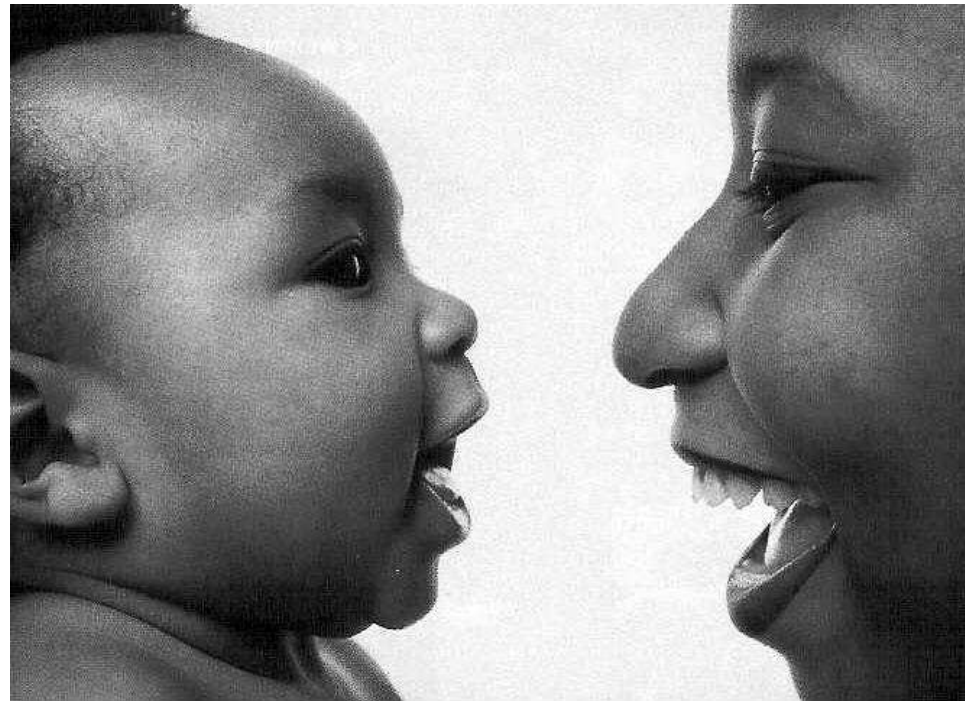
- Working memory measures most closely linked to SLCN

Why the link(s)?

- **A common cause?**
 - **Executive function**; language plays an important role, narrative inner speech, impaired in ADHD
 - **Attachment difficulties**; insecurely attached children learn fewer internal state words (Lemche et al 2004)
 - **Overall developmental problems**
 - **Socio-economic deprivation**
- **Language is necessary for emotional development and to regulate behaviour.** (Singer and Bashir 1999)
- **Learn how to interact from interacting**, CYP with SLCN (and BESD) are less well accepted socially

Language and Emotional Development

↔ Responsive interactions and joint attention are important for language *and* emotional development.



Individual differences

- Children with a history of specific speech and language difficulties
- High levels of BESD were found at 8, 10 and 12 yrs
- Different patterns of trajectories for parents' and teachers' ratings.
- Language ability predicted teacher- but not parent-rated BESD.

Lindsay et al 2007

No obvious association between types of BESD
and SLCN

Clegg'09

Implications-literacy

- The most serious and robust ‘consequence’ of SLCN is literacy difficulties (Catts et al 2002)

NB Many ‘poor readers’ have undetected SLCN (Nation et al 2004)

- At the end of KS4 those with SLCN still needed literacy support Snowling et al. (2001) and Adams et al. (2001)

NB there is also evidence of greater psychiatric difficulties in poor readers (Arnold et al 2005)

Implications-Educational

There are inherent problems in the current assessment of children's progress throughout their education, because **measurement is primarily language based**. Current guidelines for testing arrangements for children with SEN do not have formal provision for children who are perceived to be disadvantaged by language and communication impairments.

Davis & Florian 2004

NB can only make special arrangements, if you know they have SLCN!

Implications -Mental Health

- Late talkers tend to be depressed/withdrawn, less social relatedness, pretend play/imitation and compliance. Mothers of late talkers reported more parenting stress (Irwin et al 2002)
- Children with difficulty with both understanding language and expressing themselves were most likely to have a clinical level of behavioural difficulty (Botting and Conti-Ramsden 2000)
- Individuals with a history of early language impairment had 2.7 times the odds of having a social phobia by age 19. (Voci et al 2006)

And.....

there is also evidence for externalising problems in those with SLCN

- *Aggression*
- *Delinquency*

(Van Daal, Verhoeven
& van Balkom, 2007)

Children with previously unsuspected language problems were rated as more difficult by both their Mothers and their teachers.

Cohen and Lipsett '93

“Communication difficulties,
particularly receptive language
disorders have emerged as high
risk indicators for psychiatric
difficulties.”

Toppleberg 2000

Language is fundamental for;

- **Learning;** in engaging with the teacher, peers, the ideas. NB internal speech
- **Socialisation;** what to say, when and to whom, negotiation, debate, social problem solving.
- **Emotion development and regulation;** language allows us some distance from the emotion, emotional literacy is language based.
 - Putting feelings into words activates a region of the brain that regulates emotional distress.

What can we change?

- The task?
- Mediator?
- Child or young person?

Constant reciprocal understanding

NB medical v social model of disability

- **Problem solving**
- **Negotiation**
- **Emotion regulation**
- **Conflict resolution**

Does everyone teaching these skills modify the language appropriately and help the CYP develop the necessary language skills?

The task

- **High task difficulty and**
- **Limited adult attention**

can lead to behaviour problems, or one sure way to create behaviour problems is to increase the linguistic complexity of the task instructions!

‘It has long been recognised that securing the constructive engagement of pupils involves the planning of learning experiences that are **relevant, engaging and appropriately differentiated**.

’- Alan Steer

SEAL; A certain proficiency with language is assumed

- External motivation may be: I will get into trouble if I don't hand it in on time.
- Internal motivation may be: I enjoy doing a good job in this subject and I enjoy the feeling when I have completed it. (yr 8)

<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/banda/seal/>

<http://www.bandapilot.org.uk/secondary/>

The language of intervention

- ‘As most therapies are verbally based it is notable that language competence is rarely evaluated systematically before such therapies are undertaken.’
Cohen 2003
- Many of the interventions directed at addressing problems with BESD focus on aspects of language and communication and their efficacy for children with language learning needs should be examined.
Dockrell

CAMHs review 2008

- The Review found particularly limited service provision in (among other things) speech and language therapy.
- **NB professionals should use language that children understand, can you do this if they have SLCN? Or if you don't know they have SLCN?**
- That's aside from understanding the language of your colleagues from other professions!

NB Good communication skills are protective factor against mental health difficulties

The mediator

- Video; VIG, Hanen, video enhanced reflection on communication etc

<http://www.cpdeducation.co.uk/veroc/conference/archive/30-06-06.php>

- The importance of an elaborative style of conversation for theory of mind.
- Feelings state talk for older CYP?
- Positive interactions
- Differentiating adult language and facilitating interactions

Do we need extra skills in communication if the child/young person has SLCN?

The SLCF



- Skills and knowledge in speech, language and communication
- For all the children's workforce
- Complements other frameworks
- Interactive, online tool
- Includes ways to develop skills including relevant training courses

<http://www.communicationhelppoint.org.uk/>

Slide 28

L2

might need to explain TCT for some people

LMorgan, 06/05/2008

Skills for young people



- Teach communicative alternatives to unacceptable behaviours. (negotiation skills/conflict resolution)
- Build event-based script knowledge for socially or emotionally difficult situations. (unstructured time?)
- Manipulate antecedent behaviours to increase opportunities to practise positive communicative behaviours.
- Reward socially positive communication behaviours.
- Develop broader and more varied emotional vocabularies.

Gallagher 1999

What works in schools?

Joint working with specialist input e.g. www.elciss.com .

Teach;

- Vocabulary learning strategies
- Narrative skills
- Idiom
- Active listening and clarification
- Social communication skills
- Planning and organisational skills

Then;

- Provide explicit opportunities for transfer,
- Many and varied examples
- Extensive and varied practice
- Task-linked feedback

What works in class?

- Integrating work on communication into all lessons.
- Basing specialist input on the curriculum
- Knowing the communication skills of young people.
- Breaking down tasks and instructions and teaching clarification strategies.
- Extra and 'real' conversation/ interaction/ debate.
- More practise with new vocabulary.
- Visual support strategies.

Primary review – learning and talking

“Talk and social interaction among children play a key role in children’s social development and learning”

but

“Merely providing opportunities for children to work and talk together has no discernible benefit for learning”

What next?

- What should a service for children with SLCN and BESD/MHD look like?
- What works for both?
- Developing a shared understanding
- Do you want an I CAN hosted online forum about this?



Which is best in supporting children with SLCN?

2/3 times a week direct contact with a SLT

parent training

2/3 times a week direct contact with a teaching assistant

Whole school training on SLCN

Working with school staff to plan, set targets once a term

HOLIDAY CLUB

Advisory teacher modeling activities to staff

School project 'Talking Partners'

Bercow Review

- **Communication is crucial**
- Early identification and intervention are essential
- **There is a need for a continuum of services designed around the family** ie commissioning also youth justice system
- **Joint working is critical**

High variability and a lack of equity characterise the current system

Integrating services? Systemic change?

Level 1 –changes to inputs processes and structures, e.g. CAF and multi agency panels.

Level 2 changes to experiences and attitudes, e.g. better understanding of others services,

Level 3 changes to outcomes for children,

Level 4 institutional/systemic embedding -and further changes in outcomes for children.

Steer Recommendations include;

- schools working in partnership with one another and with other providers to extend the range of school based support;
- local areas setting out a clear description of the services available, including services to improve mental health and psychological well-being;

Steer review

Alternative Provision needs to recognise individual needs. For too long there has been a 'one size fits all' approach which can result in the children concerned not receiving the education and support relevant to them.

A proper assessment of need for all children entering Alternative Provision would help to ensure that individual needs are met.

I CAN wants to help!

- Information, training, support and online resources for children, families and professionals
- Direct service provision
- Consultancy and outreach services
- Awareness raising campaigns
- Campaigning to place communication skills at the heart of children and young people's policy

- www.ican.org.uk

Guidance/initiatives

- Inclusion Development Programme
<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/features/inclusion/sen/idp>
- *DfES Standards Site – Literacy across the Curriculum 2002*,
http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/secondary/keystage3/all/respub/lit_xc
- Speaking and Listening Website <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/speakingandlistening>
- Assessment for Learning materials; developing questioning skills of teachers and pupils.
<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primaryframework/assessment/dafl/ppl/dol/page005/>
<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/97905>
- Personalised learning; clarification strategies
<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/46392>
- Pedagogy into Practice; Questioning for Pupils
<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/97131>
- Personal, learning and thinking skills http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/skills/plts/index.aspx#page2_p

Resources- Primary

- *The Language Support Model for Teachers* by Elspeth McCartney provides a comprehensive range of ideas for teachers who are working with speech and language therapists to support children in mainstream primary schools with SLCN.
<http://www.strath.ac.uk/eps/centresdivisions/slt/teachingresources/lsm/>
- *The Targets and Activities Project (TAP)* website www.commtap.org has been set up to allow Speech and Language Therapists, Language and Communication Teachers and others to share ideas with those working with children with communication difficulties in schools and other locations.
- Elkan Language Builders www.elklan.co.uk
- I CAN Primary Talk <http://www.ican.org.uk/primary%20talk.aspx>
- The communication cook book <http://www.communicationcookbook.org.uk/>
- Targeting Talk www.targetingtalk.com

Resources-Secondary

- **Secondary Talk- we need your help!**
- Afasic Scotland Secondary Pack *Including young people with speech and language impairments in secondary school*
- Basic Skills Agency – speaking and listening skills in the workplace
<http://www.basic-skills.co.uk/sharingpractice/detail.php?SharingPracticeID=397735658>
- BT Education Resources <http://www.bt.com/education>
- ‘Inclusion for Pupils with Speech Language and Communication Needs at Secondary Age’, Kate Ripley
- ‘Social Use of Language Programme’, Rinaldi
- ‘Talk About’ ,Alex Kelly
- ‘Secondary Language Builders’ <http://www.elklan.co.uk>
- ‘Paul’s story, Using speaking and listening to teach literacy and citizenship at Key stage 3’ Basic Skills agency, National Centre for Citizenship and the Law (NCCL)
- ‘Getting children to listen to every word’ Maggie Johnson (QED)



Online information services

Talking Point is run by I CAN, working with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and Afasic.

www.talkingpoint.org.uk

It includes

www.talkingpoint.org.uk/parentpoint

www.talkingpoint.org.uk/professionalpoint

www.talkingpoint.org.uk/talkinglinks

Approaches to helping children with MHD/SEBD;

- **Systemic:** the child in context, team work
- **Behavioural:** identify causes, boundaries, rules, rewards and sanctions
- **Cognitive:** reframe negative thoughts, teach positive interactions, teach skills, use mediated learning
- **Therapeutic:** nurture groups, raising self esteem, positive interactions

**Which need to consider the young person's
communication skill level?**