

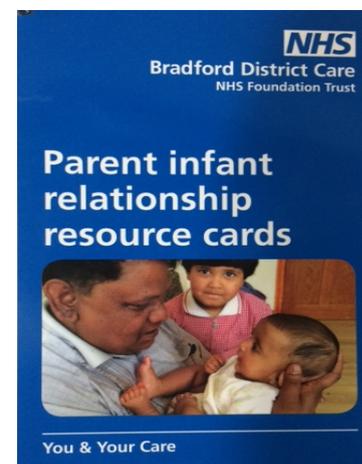
Introduction

Perinatal mental health costs an estimated £8.1 billion per cohort of infants, with 72% of this cost associated with the infant (Bauer et al. 2014). This indicates that supporting the parent-infant relationship is an important aspect of perinatal mental health care.

A preliminary evaluation of the Ready to Relate Cards:

supporting the parent-infant relationship

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Assessing the mother-baby relationship and providing information regarding this is recommended by NICE (2014). It has been suggested that an effective way of improving parenting behaviours and infant outcomes is to support parents to better understand their infants (Meins 2017). Research has shown that interventions which help parents appreciate their infant's capacities can benefit parent-infant interaction and maternal mental health (Nugent et al. 2014).

The Ready to Relate Cards (R2R) remind us how amazing babies really are! They are a visual tool for professionals to facilitate the sharing of evidence based messages with families, in an accessible and effective form.

The R2R has been used to embed Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust's Parent-Infant Relationship Training into practice. The training and R2R has been used in the Community Perinatal Mental Health team, CMHTs, EIP, HV, MW and 0-19 services in Bradford.

R2R conversations are part of trauma informed care, supporting prevention and early interventions. Supporting the parent-infant relationship may mitigate the stress infants may experience when their mother is experiencing mental health issues, decreasing adverse childhood events.

Bradford Specialist Mother and Baby Mental Health Team use the R2R cards regularly to support women and families involved in their service.

Bradford's parent-infant relationship pathway to change

Parent-Infant Relationship Training

Ready to Relate Cards

Enhancing knowledge and skills + tool for sharing with families = Changing practice

Changing the story for Bradford's families – early intervention and prevention of trauma and ACES



How to use in practice

The R2R cards are on a key ring; they are versatile and cards can be used individually to suit the client. They provide evidence based information in an accessible and visual format with minimal wording, to stimulate conversation, thought and wonder.



When

The R2R cards can be used with:

- all families to inspire and excite them in their parenthood journey
- as an intervention to help raise awareness of specific relationship factors, challenge unhelpful attributions and behaviours and improve understanding of the infant

Key messages

The R2R Cards bring key messages to families that support the parent-infant relationship. They are designed to enhance:

- mind-mindedness • maternal sensitivity
- mid-range contingency • emotional regulation • repair



References

Bauer A, Parsonage M, Knapp M et al. (2014) Costs of perinatal mental health problems. Centre for Mental Health

Meins E (2017) The Overrated Predictive Power Of Attachment. The Psychologist 30 (1) 20-24

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2014) Antenatal and Postnatal Mental Health NICE guideline (CG192)

Nugent K, Dym-Bartlett J, and Valim C. (2014). Effects of an infant-focused relationship-based hospital and home visiting intervention on reducing symptoms of postpartum maternal depression: A pilot study, *Infants & Young Children* 27 (4), 292-304

Contact

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Evaluation

151 professionals responded to a questionnaire regarding using the R2R cards in their practice.

The responses were overwhelmingly positive. Main themes included:

- Useful when there is a language barrier and useful for interpreters
- Helping responsiveness of parent to child
- Increasing knowledge of infant cues
- Making conversation easier between practitioner and parent
- Keeping conversation focused
- Accessible – real people, lots of photos
- Increase knowledge of practitioners (training tool)
- Improving practitioners practice / encouraging evidence based practice
- A prompt to practitioner knowledge/ embedding training
- Helping practitioners share knowledge with parents
- Emphasises babies needs not just ours

Nine south Asian mothers were interviewed after the R2R intervention. 100% of mothers were positive about the experience.

Themes included that R2R:

- Was very helpful
- Increased their aware of the importance of the parent-infant relationship
- Helped them to interact with their baby better
- Helped them feel more confident caring for their baby
- Helped them understand more about the way that their baby was communicating with them

“I didn’t know a little baby was able to communicate so much. I wish I had known this with my first child who is 2½.”

(Mother of 6 week old baby)

“I like the slides of the brain growth, I didn’t know it was so important to respond to my baby before.”

(Mother of 6 week old baby)

Longitudinal follow-up

Two mothers and one father were interviewed over one year post intervention with the cards: Parents recalled the cards and described them positively impacting their parenting of their child and subsequent child. The cards had changed the way they understood their baby and their relationship with their baby for the better.

“I remember seeing that from the cards. so every time I do contact with the little one it reminds me of what you told me - I love it! So I do it more.”

(Mum - 2 years post intervention)

“I think the brain development, that was really important... the connections of how quickly they develop I think that was really, really good and informative... and the connection you’ve got with your baby when you’re with them ...and you’re looking at them.”

(Dad - 1 year post intervention)

“Leave them, let them cry, that’s what it said on the internet, well, I think that’s even harder for the baby... makes them cry and think they’re not wanted, so when you showed me the cards well that’s what I do, I cuddle them, I hug them, they go quiet, they know, want reassurance, that someone’s there, so I don’t believe what it said on the internet.”

(Mum - 2 years post intervention)

