

## **Workshop 4 – Mental Health**

Facilitator: Wendy Stewart, New Life Counselling

1. General overview of key points covered in the workshop
  - New Life Counselling began work in response to the high number of suicides in Belfast
  - Trauma, depression, anxiety and the impact of the Troubles are key stressors
  - Economic stress now impacts
  - Aim is to build hope and family resilience
  
2. How do we link with other agencies and share information?
  - Referrals to/from GP's and Educational Welfare Officers
  - Refer / create links with Sure Starts, Child Services
  - Internal referrals between programmes within the organisation
  
3. How do we agree goals for the family?
  - Understand the family's perception of their circumstances
  - Look at family communications and intergenerational patterns
  - Enable family members to identify solutions (come up with ideas)
  - Maintain awareness of developmental influences on the family – looking at the family unit, extended family and social system
  - Help families to define roles
  - Identify key processes for resilience and encourage the family's own best efforts for recovery and growth
  
4. Tips for practitioners working with particular groups of parents
  - Understand how family members perceive the difficulties
  - Be aware inter-generational changes, particularly in interface areas
  - All families go through change and transition – be aware of the family life cycle
  - Family time is very important / Parent time together is important
  - Recognise that the family is the expert and they have the solutions
  - Give everyone a voice