

NESTED FAMILY SUPPORT: The Axial Role of Support Workers for Families in Which a Parent is in Treatment for Substance Misuse

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BACKGROUND

The UK National Health Service (NHS) defines addiction as loss of control over harmful behaviour.

Addiction is commonly linked to drugs and alcohol with varied community-based treatment services available in England.

Parental substance misuse affects individuals and the entire family systems.

Family-centred approaches are increasingly recognised as essential for supporting recovery.

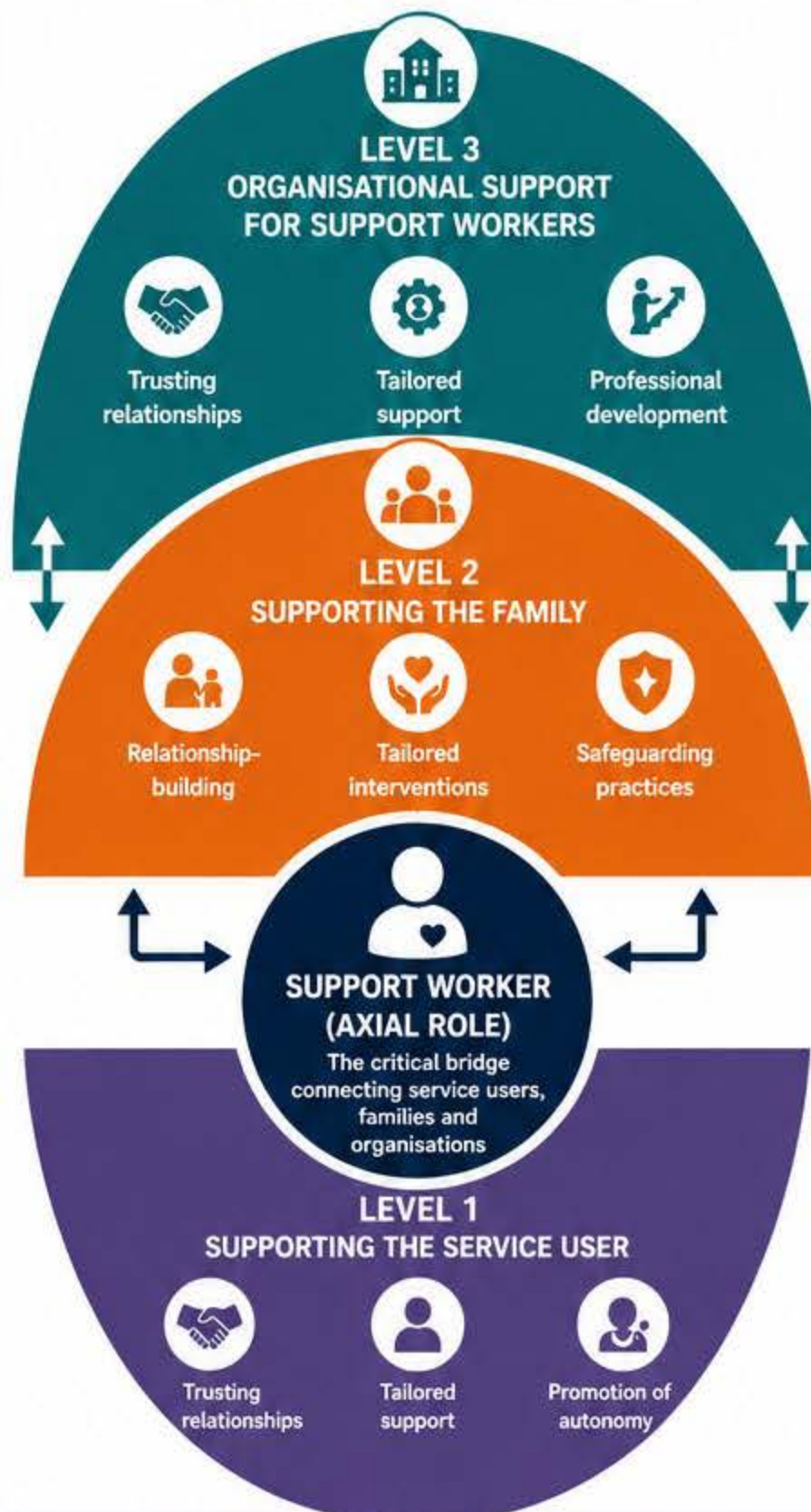
AIM

To explore the experiences of support workers working with families in which a parent is receiving treatment for substance misuse.

METHODS

-  **Design:** Organisational qualitative case study
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-  **Setting:** NHS-commissioned community substance misuse service
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-  **Participants:** 11 support workers (Whole Family Approach)
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-  **Data Collection:** Online semi-structured interviews
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-  **Analysis:** Inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
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-  **Ethics:** University of Leeds (HREC 23-011)

Figure 1. Nested Family Support Model
(Image created with ChatGPT, OpenAI, May 2024)



RESULTS

The analysis resulted in the development of the Nested Family Support Model, which conceptualises support as a series of interconnected and mutually dependent levels. At the centre of the model is the support worker, who plays an axial role in supporting both service users and their families. Three levels of support were identified:

LEVEL 1 SUPPORTING THE SERVICE USER

-  Trusting relationships
-  Tailored support
-  Promotion of autonomy

LEVEL 2 SUPPORTING THE FAMILY

-  Relationship-building
-  Tailored interventions
-  Safeguarding practices

LEVEL 3 ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT FOR SUPPORT WORKERS

-  Trusting relationships
-  Tailored support
-  Professional development

The findings suggest that effective recovery is sustained through a nested system of relationships, in which the support provided to service users and families is strengthened by the support that organisations provide to their workforce.

KEY MESSAGE / TAKEAWAY



Recovery is sustained through a nested system of relationships. Support workers act as the critical bridge between service users, families and organisations, making organisational support an essential component of effective family recovery services.



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