

# DDP Pyramid of Need and Assessment Grid

Using the ‘Pyramid of Need’ developed by Kim Golding (Golding & Hughes, 2012), this paper guides commissioners and practitioners interested in exploring the use of DDP interventions with families of children who have experienced developmental trauma.

**Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP)** is a model of therapy developed by Dan Hughes that enables children who have experienced relational trauma to benefit from new relational experiences that are crucial for their development. DDP provides relational experiences similar to those provided in healthy parent-child relationships. They also provide opportunities for learning about self and others in a manner that is not distorted by past relational experiences of shame and terror.

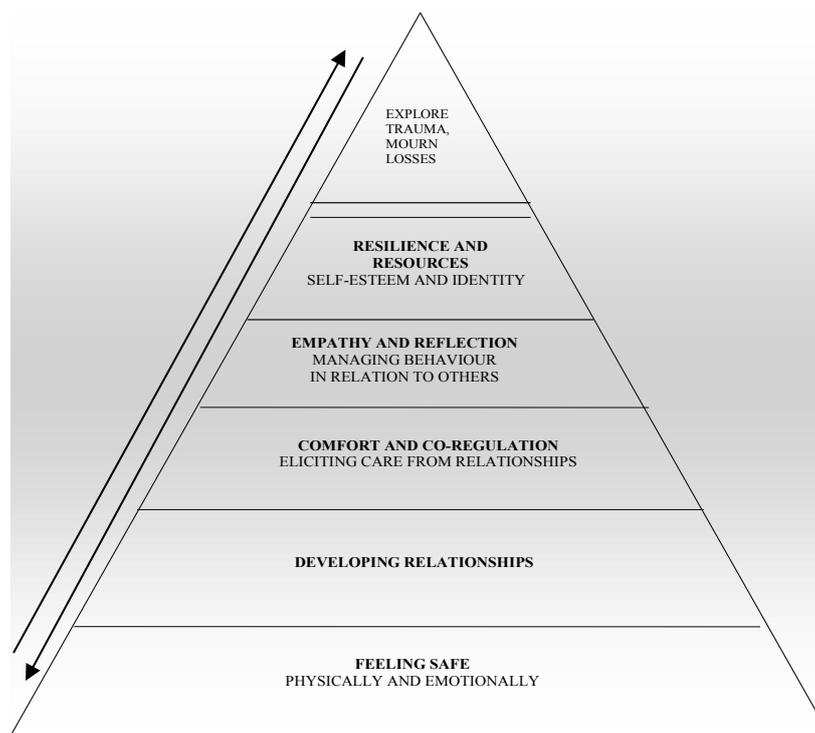
**Dyadic Developmental Practice** refers to the community network of services surrounding DDP and DDP-informed Parenting; often necessary to provide support to the child and family.

**DDP-informed Parenting** (also known as Dyadic Developmental Parenting) refers to a model of parenting, congruent with DDP, that is utilized by parents with their children whether or not their child is receiving Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy.

*(Golding, K. S. & Hughes, D. A. (2012) Creating Loving Attachments. Parenting with PACE to nurture confidence and security in the troubled child. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers*

*Definitions taken from: Hughes, D. A.; Golding, K.S. & Hudson, J. (2019) Healing relational trauma with attachment-focused interventions: Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy with children and families NY: W. W. Norton & Co, Inc)*

## Pyramid of Need



## Assessment Grids

The assessment grids are designed to guide the provision of a DDP intervention plan. Parents and children can be at different levels at once and will move up and down according to what is happening at the current time. Ongoing assessment and a flexible plan is needed.

The questions and observations are illustrative and do not represent a complete list. They will give commissioners and assessors ideas for the sorts of questions they could be asking and observations they could be making.

Please note, this does not exclude other complimentary interventions within the intervention plan. For example, DDP interventions have successfully been combined with sensory regulation support as advised by Occupational Therapists; Theraplay; and trauma therapies such as EMDR.

# DDP Pyramid of Need and Assessment Grid

## Assessment Grid 1: Parents and Carers

<b>Feeling Safe</b>	Do the parents feel unsafe in their interactions with health, education and social service practitioners?	Parents are concealing information from practitioners.	Dyadic Developmental Practice Model with practitioners and parents' network to enable them to use the DDP principles to provide emotional and physical safety for the parents, including supporting the building of a relationship with a practitioner who can provide parenting support.
		Parents are becoming angry and/or defensive in meetings.	
		Parents are saying that they do not feel heard and supported and/or that they are feeling blamed for the difficulties the child and family are encountering.	
		Parents are searching for a diagnosis or solution for the child whilst struggling to think with practitioners about their parenting and/or their own past traumas or difficulties	
	Do the parents feel unsafe within their homes and in their day-to-day parenting?	Parents are struggling to use boundaries for fear of the reaction of the child.	Dyadic Developmental Practice Model to increase support to parents Combined with DDP-informed parenting model. Can include DDP endorsed parenting programmes eg Nurturing Attachments and/or Foundations for Attachment  <b>This work needs to precede Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy with the child.</b>
		Parents are having to manage a high level of violence and risk with their child.	
		Parents are socially isolated and unsupported.	
	Do the parents struggle to stay open and engaged towards the child?	Parents are quickly becoming defensive shown through irritation, frustration, anger and/or hopelessness	Dyadic Developmental Practice Model to increase support to parents Combined with DDP-informed parenting model. Can include DDP endorsed parenting programmes eg Nurturing Attachments and/or Foundations for Attachment  <b>This work needs to precede Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy with the child.</b>
		Parents are showing signs of blocked care; finding it hard to enjoy or get satisfaction out of parenting.	
	Are the parent struggling to help the child to feel safe?	Parents are not offering sufficient attunement and responsivity towards the child. Eg not picking up cues or not understanding miscues of child.	DDP-informed parenting model to provide parenting support to help the parents parent the child in way which increases feelings of safety Can include DDP endorsed parenting programmes eg Nurturing Attachments and/or Foundations for Attachment  <b>This work needs to precede Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy with the child.</b>
		Parents are too strict or lenient in boundaries?	
		Parents are not sufficiently available for the child.	

# DDP Pyramid of Need and Assessment Grid

<b>Making Relationships</b>	Are the parents struggling to develop a secure relationship with the child?	Parents are struggling to understand and accept the emotional experience of the child.	<b>DDP-informed parenting model to provide parenting support to help the parent to parent the child in a way which increases security in the relationship. Can include DDP endorsed parenting programmes eg Nurturing Attachments and/or Foundations for Attachment</b>		
		Parents are struggling to offer empathy towards the child.			
		Parents are struggling to be playful at appropriate times so that joy in relationship is missing.			
	Are the parents responding to the miscuing of the child or not responding to cues of the child leading to misattachment?	Parents are struggling to understand the cues the child is giving and to respond with available, attuned responses.		<b>Some of this work needs to precede Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy with the child</b>	
		Parents are responding defensively eg with frustration or irritation			
		Parents are withdrawing from the child when the child needs them or trying to respond with solutions when the child needs emotional support and regulation.			
	Are the parents struggling to remain open and engaged to the child at times when the child needs this to feel secure?	Parents are becoming defensive at the time that the child most needs them to be available to him.			<b>Parents are assessed as being able to provide relationship building experiences which can support the child in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy</b>
	Are the parents wanting and able to provide a parenting environment which helps to build the relationship and increase security for the child? Can the parents repair the relationship when they lose this environment at times of increased stress?				

## DDP Pyramid of Need and Assessment Grid

<b>Comfort &amp; Co-regulation</b>		Parents withdraw when the child needs comfort and regulatory support	<p>DDP-informed parenting model to provide parenting support to help parent provide appropriate nurture including regulatory support and comfort when needed.</p> <p>Can include DDP endorsed parenting programmes eg Nurturing Attachments and/or Foundations for Attachment</p> <p><b>Some of this work needs to precede Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy with the child</b></p>
	<p>Are the parents struggling to provide regulatory support and comfort when needed?</p>	Parents provide discipline and advice when the child needs regulatory support and comfort.	
		Parents respond to the child's need for regulatory support or comfort with frustration or anger.	
	<p>Are the parents able to nurture the child by offering a warm, emotionally regulating environment?</p> <p>Can the parents repair the relationship when they lose this environment at times of increased stress?</p>	<p>Parents are assessed as being able to provide the parenting environment which can support the child in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy</p>	

<b>Empathy &amp; Reflection</b>	<p>Are the parents struggling to reflect on their child and to understand the emotional experience of the child?</p>	<p>Parents are jumping to conclusions or providing irrational explanations for the child's behaviour.</p> <p>Eg the child does this because he hates me.</p>	<p>DDP-informed parenting model to provide parenting support to help the parents to reflect on the child so that they understand the experience of the child and can experience their own empathy for the child.</p> <p>Can include DDP endorsed parenting programmes eg Nurturing Attachments and/or Foundations for Attachment</p> <p><b>Some of this work needs to precede Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy with the child</b></p>
	<p>Are the parents struggling to have empathy for their child?</p>	<p>Parents are responding angrily or with irritation to the child based on not being able to understand the child's experience.</p>	
	<p>Are the parents trying to deal with the child without understanding the child?</p>	<p>Parents are moving too quickly to disciplining the child without stopping to understand why the child is behaving as he is.</p>	
	<p>Are the parents able to reflect on their child's experience and to experience empathy for this?</p> <p>Can the parents repair the relationship with the child at times when reflection is lost at times of increased stress?</p>	<p>Parents are assessed as being sufficiently reflective to support the child in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy</p>	

## DDP Pyramid of Need and Assessment Grid

<b>Resilience and resources (self-esteem and identity)</b>	Are the parents experiencing blocked care?	Parents are struggling to like the child or to enjoy parenting.	<p>Dyadic Developmental Practice Model to increase support to parents</p> <p>Combined with DDP-informed parenting model.</p> <p>Can include DDP endorsed parenting programmes eg Nurturing Attachments and/or Foundations for Attachment</p> <p><b>This work needs to precede Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy with the child.</b></p>
		Parents are wanting to spend a lot of time away from the child eg using nursery or after school care and activities to a large extent	
	Are parents socially isolated?	Parents do not have family and friends who they can ask for help from.	
		Parents are not finding time to socialise with friends or with each other.	
	Are parents feeling a sense of failure and are doubting their ability to parent the child?	Parents are comparing themselves unfavourably to other parents.	
		Parents are feeling that no-one else has made the mistakes/had the problems that they have.	
Are parents assessed as having resilience and resources for parenting the child?		<p>Parents are assessed as being sufficiently resilient to support the child in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy</p>	
<b>Explore trauma; mourn losses</b>	Do the parents have unresolved trauma which is or potentially could be triggered by parenting the child?	Parents experience an emotional response to the child which is out of proportion to what the child has done.	<p>DDP-informed parenting model can help the parent to explore traumas and losses and understand how they are impacting on their parenting.</p> <p>If they cannot engage in this work, they may need therapy for themselves with a therapist who understands the DDP model and the complexity of parenting developmentally traumatised children.</p>
	Do the parents have losses that they have not fully grieved for?	Parents finds it hard to be available or close to the child, alongside preoccupation with the person who has been lost.	
	Are the parents understanding of the child's trauma and losses and beginning to provide a DDP informed parenting environment?		<p>Parents are assessed as able to support the child in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy</p>

# DDP Pyramid of Need and Assessment Grid

## Assessment Grid 2: Children and Young People

<b>Feeling Safe</b>	Is the child demonstrating high levels of fear and anxiety at home, displayed through anxious or angry behaviours?	Child needs regulatory support and high levels of nurture	DDP-informed parenting model to provide parenting support to help the child feel safer. Can include DDP endorsed parenting programmes eg Nurturing Attachments and/or Foundations for Attachment Can be supported by Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy when parents are ready to support this (see grid 1)
	Does child struggle to use carers as a secure base to increase feelings of safety, demonstrated through overly self-reliant or attention needing behaviours?	Child needs help to accept and use the nurturing the carer is offering	
	Is child emotionally struggling to separate from carer? Shown in clinginess or apparent indifference	Child needs help to increase security and develop trust in availability of carer.	
	Does child find it difficult to feel safe away from carer? Eg at school	Child needs attachment support at school	Dyadic Developmental Practice Model with school and community staff to enable them to use the DDP principles in providing a less stressful environment and in their support to the child to feel less stressed by the environment
	Is the school environment too stressful for the child? Shown through hypervigilance, emotional dysregulation, oppositional /aggressive behaviours, passive/compliant /withdrawn behaviours or coercive behaviours	Child needs stress in the environment reduced and increased adult support	
<b>Making Relationships</b>	Does child struggle to trust in availability of carer and therefore miscues attachment needs? Shown in overly self-reliant behaviours	Child needs help to trust in the availability of the carer.	DDP-informed parenting model to provide parenting support to help the child feel more secure in relationships. Can include DDP endorsed parenting programmes eg Nurturing Attachments and/or Foundations for Attachment Can be supported by Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy when parents are ready to support this (see grid 1)
		Child needs help to use the nurturing the carer is offering?	
	Does child struggle to make or keep friends? Shown in social isolation and withdrawal or aggressive and/or controlling behaviours with peers and/or drawn to inappropriate and risky peer groups.	Child needs support to engage with other children	Dyadic Developmental Practice Model with school and community staff to enable them to use the DDP principles to support the child in managing relationships.
Child needs structured opportunities to meet peers and develop friendships			
Child needs structure and supervision to manage social relationships			

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<b>Comfort &amp; Co-regulation</b>	Does child struggle to manage emotion leading to dysregulation or dissociation at home?	Child needs parental support to co-regulate emotion	DDP-informed parenting model to provide parenting support to help child with emotional experience. Can include DDP endorsed parenting programmes eg Nurturing Attachments and/or Foundations for Attachment Can be supported by Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy when parents are ready to support this (see grid 1)
		Child needs help to trust in parents' support	Parents are assessed as able to and are prepared to support the child in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy then work with child & carer using the Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy Model in addition to parenting support (see grid 1)
	Does child struggle to manage emotion leading to emotional and sensory dysregulation or dissociation at school?	Child will need regulatory based support in school	Dyadic Developmental Practice Model with school and community staff to enable them to use the DDP principles to provide emotional and sensory regulation in school and to help child to notice and talk about emotional experience
<b>Empathy &amp; Reflection</b>	Does child struggle to make sense of internal world of self. Child appears unaware of internal experience or unable to express this in words	Child needs help to recognise and talk about emotional experience	DDP-informed parenting model to provide parenting support to help child self-reflection. Can include DDP endorsed parenting programmes eg Nurturing Attachments and/or Foundations for Attachment Can be supported by Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy when parents are ready to support this (see grid 1)
	Does child struggle to make sense of internal world of others. Child does not express empathy for other or appears unaware of impact of self on other.	Child needs adult support to notice what others might be experiencing and how they may be impacting on this.	Dyadic Developmental Practice Model with school and community staff to enable them to use DDP principles to support child's self-reflection and to help child to notice experience of others and their impact on this.
	Does child appear fearful or anxious about noticing internal world. For example, showing distrust or rejection of empathy from others which draws attention to their inner world.	Child needs adult support to feel secure and comfortable making meaning out of experience	Parents are assessed as able to and are prepared to support the child in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy then work with child & carer using the Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy Model in addition to parenting support (see grid 1)

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<b>Resilience and resources (self-esteem and identity)</b>	Does the child have little resilience so that he is prone to seeing himself in a poor light?	Child needs good relationship experience	DDP-informed parenting model to provide parenting support to help child self-esteem and identity. Can include DDP endorsed parenting programmes eg Nurturing Attachments and/or Foundations for Attachment Can be supported by Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy when parents are ready to support this (see grid 1)
	Does the child struggle to develop and use skills or talents which help him to feel effective and to feel good about himself (self-esteem)	Child needs opportunities to succeed and to build confidence	Dyadic Developmental Practice Model with school and community staff to enable them to use the DDP principles to support child's self-esteem and identity.
	Is the child struggling with negative sense of identity; often seen as beliefs about own sense of badness	Child needs understanding of how past experience has impacted on his sense of who he is, so he can feel more secure in his relationships, thus helping to revise his sense of identity over time.	Parents are assessed as able to and are prepared to support the child in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy then work with child & carer using the Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy Model in addition to parenting support (see grid 1)
<b>Explore trauma; mourn losses</b>	Child is struggling with feelings of grief and loss, sometimes masked by angry and rejecting behaviours	Child needs help to develop trust in carers who can support with this emotional experience	DDP-informed parenting model to provide parenting support to help child with impact of trauma and loss. Can include DDP endorsed parenting programmes eg Nurturing Attachments and/or Foundations for Attachment Can be supported by Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy when parents are ready to support this (see grid 1)
	Child does not trust adults to support him with his emotional experience.	Child needs understanding and acceptance for his emotional experience of grief and loss.	Parents are assessed as able to and are prepared to support the child in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy then work with child & carer using the Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy Model in addition to parenting support (see grid 1)
	Child is struggling to understand experience and/or is showing post traumatic symptoms such as flashbacks and intrusive memories.	Child needs help to hold a coherent narrative/story about his experience,	Parents are assessed as able to and are prepared to support the child in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy Model in addition to parenting support (see grid 1)