

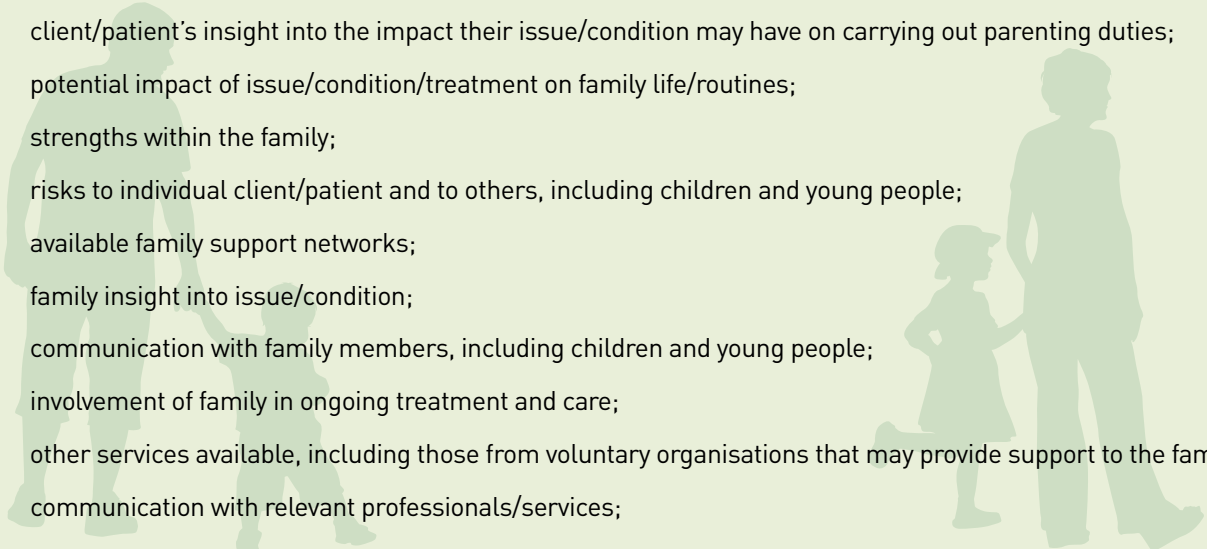
This resource is to help you in your professional contact with parents with mental health issues, including substance misuse, to think beyond the individual and consider their children or family members.

Considering the care and treatment of your client/patient in the wider family context can enhance recovery. Involving the client/patient's family along the various stages of the care pathway is likely to lead to improved recovery rates, reduced relapse rates and better outcomes for the health and wellbeing of children and young people both in the short and long term.

## During the course of caring for or treating someone, ask yourself the following:

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| <p><b>Q.</b> Do you think beyond the issues presented by the client/patient in front of you?</p>   | <p><b>A.</b> You should bear in mind that they may be a parent or carer with dependants and their recovery could be affected as a result of the responsibilities they may have at home.</p>   |
| <p><b>Q.</b> Are you aware that other family members may help you with information to support the client/patient's care or treatment?</p>                      | <p><b>A.</b> You should always give the family as much information as you can. Ask the family what they know and how they feel about the situation.</p>   |
| <p><b>Q.</b> Do you consider the wellbeing and safety of other family members, including children and young people?</p>  | <p><b>A.</b> You should be aware and prepared to intervene where there are concerns about the safety and wellbeing of any dependants in the family. Intervention could range from signposting, and/or referral for support to making a child in need/child protection referral.</p> |
| <p><b>Q.</b> Do you keep the family, including children and young people, updated on the client/patient's progress and include them in your care planning?</p> | <p><b>A.</b> You should tell the family, including children and young people, what is happening and what is going to happen next. Keep the family involved and updated: they need to be included.</p>   |

## Checklist to consider when assessing, planning, providing or reviewing care or treatment of a client/patient with mental health issues, including substance misuse:

- family composition;
  - client/patient's insight into the impact their issue/condition may have on carrying out parenting duties;
  - potential impact of issue/condition/treatment on family life/routines;
  - strengths within the family;
  - risks to individual client/patient and to others, including children and young people;
  - available family support networks;
  - family insight into issue/condition;
  - communication with family members, including children and young people;
  - involvement of family in ongoing treatment and care;
  - other services available, including those from voluntary organisations that may provide support to the family;
  - communication with relevant professionals/services;
  - joint care planning;
  - record details in notes/case file.
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For further information, visit: [www.hscboard.hscni.net/thinkfamily/](http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/thinkfamily/) or [www.familysupportni.gov.uk](http://www.familysupportni.gov.uk)