

'The Child's Protective Circle' (le Cercle de l'Enfant): A tool of community social pediatry

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The Child's Protective Circle Model

Le Cercle de l'Enfant

- Mobilization and Strengths Focus
- Family network (children, parents, family)
- Social Network (professionals, institutions)

 Supported by community members 

- A tool developed in community social pediatry.

The GOPE Vision

Gift

Every child is born with at least one gift

Opportunities

This gift is developed through opportunities offered to the child from her family network and her community

Partnership

The family network, the community and the social network must work in partnership

Equity

Partnership will ensure equitable opportunities and resources for children in various communities

The Child's Protective Circle Model

Le Cercle de l'Enfant

- 1) Model philosophy and description;
- 2) Evaluation study: preliminary findings
- 3) Discussion: alternative approaches to children's well-being.

Cercle: Philosophy and Application

Philosophy rooted in:

- Aboriginal Perspective
- Participatory Justice
- Community Social
Pediatrics

Influential Approaches:

- Multidisciplinary
- Mediation
- Family Group
Conference

Community social pediatry

Based on trust, respect and proximity to ensure that everyone who is on the child's development path can act efficiently in a concept of shared social responsibilities.

Establishing a special relationship

Exchanging information

Decoding knowledge and experience

Acting based on a consensus between family members and professionals, for all childrens' needs.

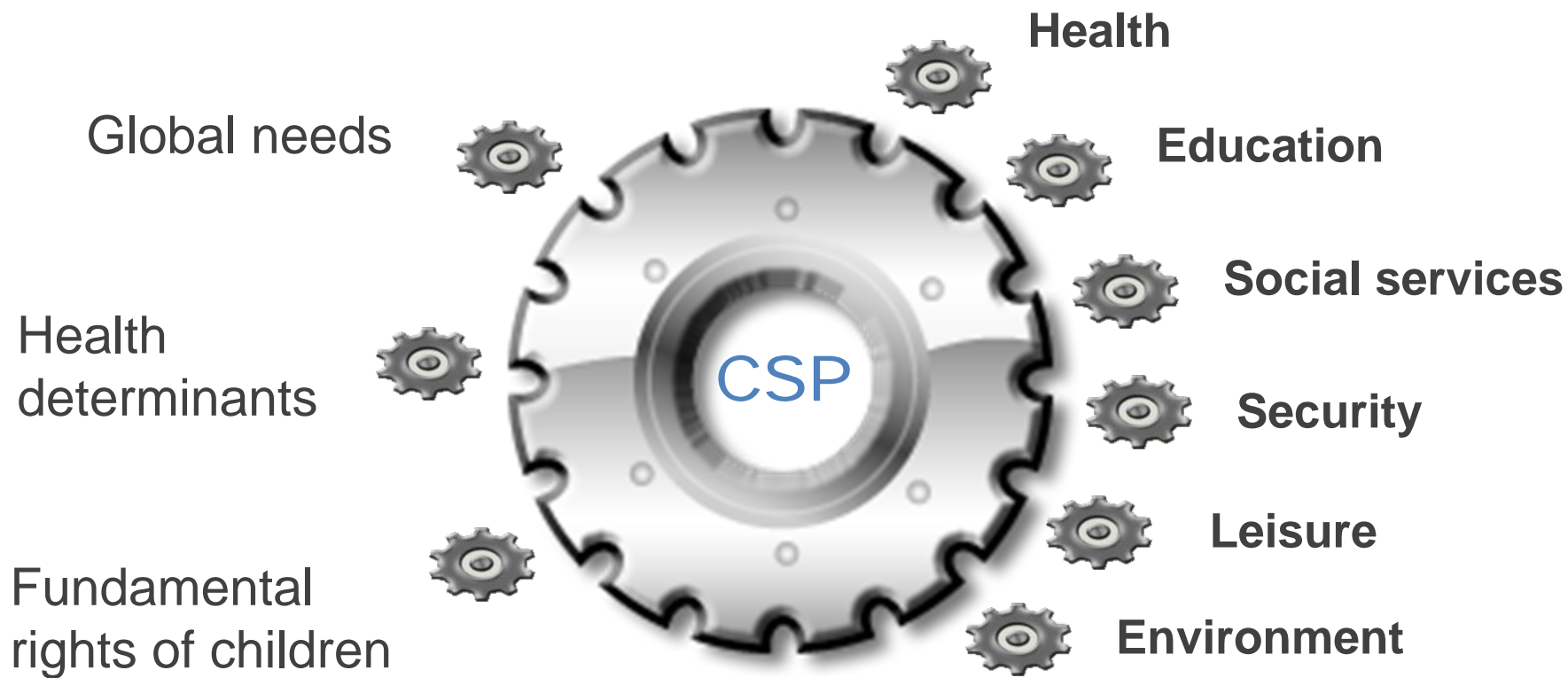
Children's health or behavioural problems too often hide a breach of their fundamental rights:

The origin of vulnerability

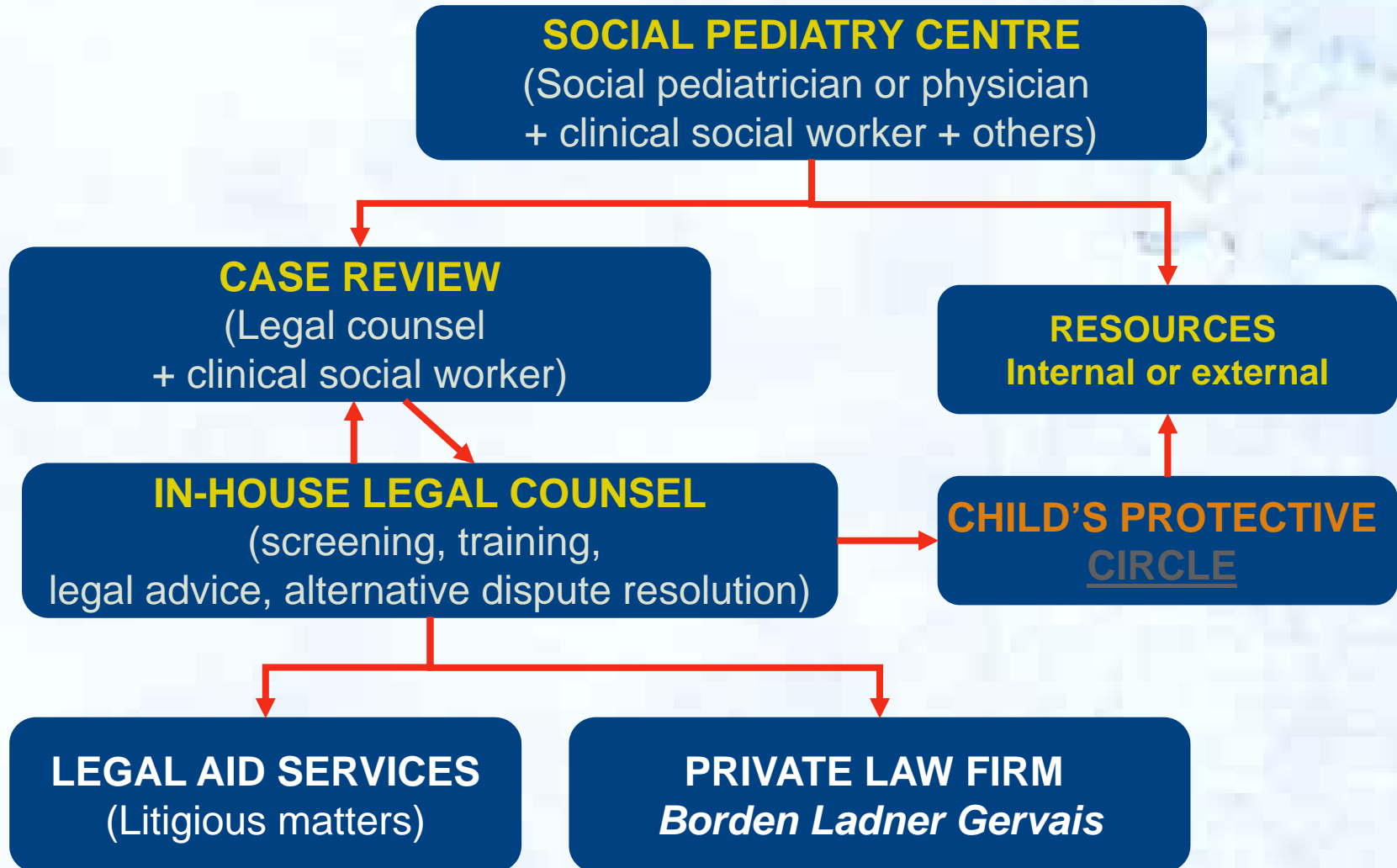
- Unsafe housing
- Lack of stimulation
- Financial insecurity
- Poor environment
- Poor attachment and filiation
- Lack of a protective circle
- Precarity or absence of identity
- Lack of sustainability
- Malnutrition
- Lack of reference and guidance
- Cultural breakdown
- Exclusion and abandonment
- Violence
- No citizenship

Community Social Pediatrics Centres

Mechanism in the community that ensures efficient actions to meet the child's needs



Health & Law Alliance



Phase of reference (social pediatry centre)

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graph TD; A[Phase of reference (social pediatry centre)] --> B[Phase of preparation: Individual/Pré-Cercle Family + Social Networks]; B --> C[Cercle de l'Enfant Session]; C --> D[Implementation of the plan Follow-Up Circle];
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**Phase of preparation: Individual/Pré-Cercle
Family + Social Networks**

Cercle de l'Enfant Session

**Implementation of the plan
Follow-Up Circle**

Cercle de l'Enfant Session

- 1) Opening remarks or ceremony**
- 2) Sharing of information**
- 3) Private time**
- 4) Sharing of a meal together**
- 5) Putting the objectives in common**
- 6) Building a partnership to identify means, responsible people, and calendar**
- 7) Distributing the action plan to all participants**
- 8) Closing remarks or ceremony**

Evaluation Objectives

- To explore and describe Le Cercle during implementation years (2008-2011);
- Phase I: model description, impacts, perceptions
- Phase II: comparative measure of impacts on participants (children and families);
- Data collected: family and social networks participation, evolution of children's situations, perceptions about the model, resource access and use, information sharing.

Analysis of the Cercle Model

- 1) Observations: Cercles (10), Cercles de suivi (3)
Comités clinique/évaluation;
- 2) In-depth semi-structured interviews; participants from all networks involved (15)
- 3) Questionnaires (exiting the Cercle meeting) (n=61)
- 4) Follow-up phone calls: planning and decision making processes (n=13)
- 5) Discussions with mediators and model developers;
- 6) Case analysis of family trajectories (in development).

Participant's Evaluation of the meeting

Sub-Scales	Satisfaction Level (1 to 7)
Dimensions of the Cercle Meeting	Mean (Standard deviation)
Preparation	6.1 (1.03)
Participation	6.3 (0.86)
Animation/Organisation of meeting	6.1 (0.90)
Plan and decision-making	6.2 (0.64)
Global satisfaction score:	6.2 (0.75)

Observations and interviews

Themes:

- 1) Participation of networks;
- 2) Sharing and expression of participants;
- 3) Involvement and mobilization of family networks;
- 4) Efficacy and continuity of partnerships.

Participation of networks

- **Proportion of networks in the meeting**
 - Ratio professionals/family network members
 - Over-involvement of professionals= a necessary evil?
- **Distance in the child situation; closer collaborations in the Cercle**
 - Reinvolving significant adults/discovering who's there
 - Familiarization and clarification of professional's roles/ family member's assets
 - Uncovering the unknown: the situation and contributions of hidden collaborators.

Sharing and expression

- Balancing sharing time (concerns) and efficacy of the meeting;
- Preserving energy to produce a satisfying plan;
- Need to develop a knowledge of the child's situation; need to understand interventions;
- Perceptions to clarify in conflictual situations=
=Time and process.
- Families who feel judged/professionals who want to be considered.

(ctn'd) Factors limiting or encouraging expression of participants

- **Divergent viewpoints among participants and networks:**
 - Definition of the problem (reading of the level of risk)----Pré-Cercle step was added
 - Approaches or interventions judged necessary.
- **External decisions (outside of the Circle)**
 - Parental competencies evaluations, court date, etc.

(ctn'd) Factors limiting or encouraging expression of participants

- **Family Dynamics**
 - Loyalty conflicts; ambivalence in exposing family problems
 - Dynamics of denunciation or support
 - The cost of helping.
- **Power and weight of professional/family interventions**
 - Families need support and encouragement (expression and ownership of the process)
 - Being there, while transferring the solution process;
- **Knowledge of the situation/confidentiality concerns**
 - Breaking the ice/asserting the level of concern with everyone.

Involvement and mobilization of family networks

- **Balancing the needs of children and adults**
 - Child centered process
 - Parents: developing the capacity to be involved.
- **Message of strength, message of concern**
 - Mobilizing the positive aspects of the family;
 - Alleviates the heaviness of difficulties;
encouraging and empowering;
 - Keeping a place for a full recognition of the problem by the family network.

(ctn'd) Involvement and mobilization of family networks

- **Decisional power of families and institutions**

- Empowerment and risk: tension

- Circle=independent process

- Family networks need to demonstrate their capacity and their organization to prevent recurrence;

- Precarious social situations: conflicts, instability or lack of recognition?

- Familiarization with available resources and possibilities-encouraging / not imposing

Efficacy and continuity of partnerships

- **A work of communication**
 - Preparatory phase
 - Meeting
 - Follow-up
- **A work of trust**
- **Continuity of the partnership mode**
- **Expectations about the Cercle**
 - Being saved/ownership of the process
 - Continued service or punctual resolution?

Discussion : challenges in implementing Le Cercle

- Redistributing responsibility
- Towards a global definition of children's well-being in interventions
- Mobilizing partners in the process.

Conclusion...and Discussion

- Model is adapted to the needs, is useful to unlock strengths of different networks and involve them.
- Access to the Cercle and steps of the process follow the empowerment logic;
- Collaborations among professional and family partners are complex; understanding and strengthening of relationships;
- Who owns the Circle?
 - Identification of problems/degrees of recognition
 - Motivations and understanding of model
- Sharing of responsibilities in care: degree and risk management
- Creation of stronger supports/ breaking isolation
- Development of model theory and identity.