



EVALUATION OF HENRY CORE TRAINING

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Introduction

In November 2019 the Health Improvement Commission funded service-wide HENRY training for the Health Visiting Team. This aimed to increase knowledge, confidence and skills of Health Visitors to provide early intervention and support families to achieve and maintain healthy weight status by providing practical support on healthy eating, physical activity, parenting strategies around food and behaviour management.

14 Health Visitors and Staff Nurses were trained (80% of the Health Visitors in post at the time) in addition to 3 other community practitioners to ensure consistency in advice given and approaches taken across providers. A simple evaluation was completed by 11 (79%) of the Health Visitors at 6-8 months post training.

Results

Perceptions of confidence & skills since the HENRY Core Training

	Agree (N)	Somewhat Agree (N)	Disagree (N)
I feel more confident providing advice around healthy eating	8	3	0
I feel more confident promoting healthy relationships with food	9	2	0
I feel more confident promoting physical activity	7	4	0
I feel more confident providing behaviour management strategies which increase empathy	10	1	0
I feel more confident raising the subject of weight status	9	2	0
I feel more confident recognising risk factors to overweight and obesity	9	2	0
I feel more confident recognising when a referral for further support is required	8	3	0

Use of skills / resources provided during HENRY Core training

100% of Health Visitors reported using the HENRY skills/resources in their practice with 73% using them *Very Frequently* or *Frequently*.

Qualitative Practitioner feedback

- *“Parents raise the issue of fussy eating frequently and I am now able to confidently provide strategies for managing this. I never thought about it as a risk factor to obesity before the training and the behavioural input has produced some big improvements for a lot of families.”*
- *“Family health is raised within contacts all – universal and targeted so the wide range resources and strategies provided through the training means it is something relevant for all families.”*
- *“I use the skills nearly daily as part of the job role.”*
- *“It is incorporated into weaning discussions on a one to one and group basis, which is one contact/opportunity where building a healthy relationship with food is offered to all families.”*

- *“Parental attitudes to food is something I think about more when discussing infant feeding and behaviour management/routines etc.”*
- *“This has reiterated the importance of making mealtimes social and this makes a big difference for preventing fussy eating.”*
- *“I used Henry during a visit where the parents were really struggling to move onto the next stage of weaning. I sat with them during their daughter’s meal time and used Henry skills to help develop and support theirs and their child’s relationship with food.”*
- *“For me the family reward systems are a really useful strategy. I find using them gets great responses from parents and children.”*
- *The portion size guide is invaluable.”*
- *HENRY has become really integral part of my working life and the solution focussed aspect of Henry really helps me to support families on my caseload in a more productive way.*
- *Some of the best and most enjoyable training I have ever had.*
- *The wide range resources and strategies provided through the training means it is something relevant for all families.*
- *The strengths focussed approach is the way I love to work. I am very involved with delivering the Incredible Years Course which incorporates similar approaches with parents.*

Qualitative Parent Feedback

My kids wouldn’t eat anything except what they wanted to. I had to cook three different meals each teatime. Now I cook one meal for everyone and they eat it. Even the veg. It has made life so much easier and I know how to handle their fussiness better.

Sophie – Mum who received HENRY messages and advice through Fun with Food groups.

I used different reward systems instead of just a sticker chart. My Health Visitor taught me to involve everyone in something fun to make everyone feel good and work as a team. We built a Lego tower once that was too tall to add to in the end! The kids started praising each other and me. I use it for everything now – not just behaviour at mealtimes.

Jo – Mum of two who received 1:1 support at home.

I wish someone had given me advice about relaxing and going with it when they get to toddler age with my first. If I had known it is just offering the opportunity to eat rather than focusing on the amount they eat at every meal I would have enjoyed it as much as I enjoy mealtimes this time round. I focused so much on her having a full tummy and with him I focus on the variety I offer. I offer decent food and he eats if he is hungry and mealtimes aren’t a battle anymore. The portion size guide helped to reassure me that he is getting enough.

Philippa – Mum who received advice at the 3.5yr development review clinic and phone support.

Conclusion

Service-wide training in relation to recognizing and managing the issue of childhood overweight and obesity was feasible, well attended and valuable. The HENRY Core training increased Health Visitors’ perceptions of knowledge, skills and confidence in relation to supporting families to address the issue of childhood overweight and obesity.

The partnership approach to working alongside families to build on their strengths, as well as the learning, tools and resources from the training are being used frequently within universal contacts as well as to improve health outcomes for the most vulnerable families.

HENRY messages and approaches have become an integral part of health visiting practice in delivery of consistent messaging and early intervention at targeted level with the aim to reduce health inequality.

HENRY Core training has increased capacity within the team to support local families to reach their full potential in their delivery of the Healthy Child Programme (DH, 2009).

Going forwards, further delivery of core training will be needed to ensure new staff are trained to use the HENRY approach. The Commission have also agreed to fund a HENRY group programme for parents of children under 5 years, to support them to achieve and maintain healthy weight status.