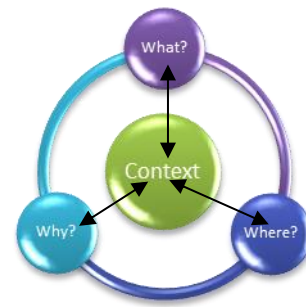


# Worked Case Study Examples - Constructions of 'Intimacy', 'Love' & 'Care'



## Concepts

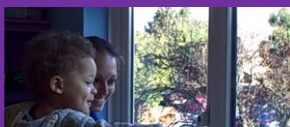
### Love?



### Intimacy?



### Care?



## Reflective Questioning

- **What** was the experience?
- **Where** did it take place?
- **Why** was your attention drawn to this experience?
- **What** was your immediate response?

### Context:

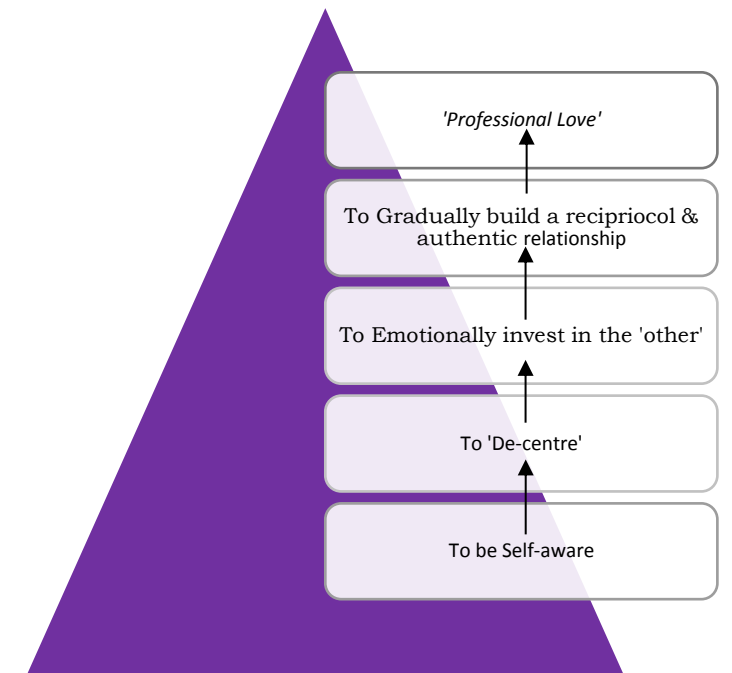
- In an early years setting the role of the practitioner is to understand the difference between professional and personal relationships to be able to provide children with safe and appropriate boundaries
- This involves the policy and practice of the individual child within the context of his/her family, community and early years setting
- Building professional reciprocal relationships takes time. It is only through regular and consistent communication practices, informed by **A CYCLE OF REFLECTION**, that safe, professional and loving boundaries can be maintained

Is this Professional Love?

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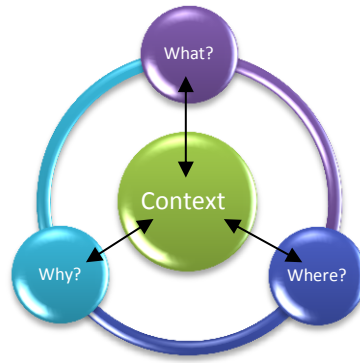
## Implications for Practice



How do these experiences identify expressions of **LOVE, INTIMACY** or **CARE** which are safe & appropriate?

What are the implications of these experiences for children, families and practitioners?

**A worked example for Constructions of Intimacy**



Louise - key person

Layla- child aged 2years 7months

**What was the experience?** Layla approached Louise for a cuddle. Louise picked her up and within 5 seconds Layla pulled out Louise's T shirt out and looked down her top. Louise immediately clutched the top of her T shirt together. Layla moved her attention to Louise's T. shirt buttons. Louise playfully told Layla not to do that with her buttons and then proceeded to point to the buttons on Layla's coat and said: *'Don't undo my buttons. You've got your own buttons'* both are laughing and continue to engage in conversation.

**Where did it take place?** Outside free play with large group of children playing in the presence of other practitioners.

**Why was your attention drawn to this experience?** I was watching Louise who is a senior practitioner interact with the children during garden play and noticed how comfortable and at ease she was with Layla, her key child, particularly when Layla had approached Louise, for a cuddle.

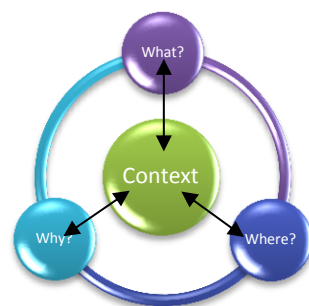
**Context:**

Louise is Layla's key person and she knows Layla very well. They seem to enjoy a strong, close and loving reciprocal relationship. Louise did look a bit surprised when Layla looked down Louise's T-shirt but by clutching her T shirt together and deflecting the conversation Louise signalled to Layla that pulling out her T shirt was not appropriate within their relationship. However, the continued dialogue and reassurance that Louise gave to Layla provided her with clear, loving and appropriate boundaries about the level of intimacy which is acceptable within their relationships without disrupting their close and affectionate bond.

**What was your immediate response?** I felt pleased that Layla could seek out comfort from Louise when she needed a cuddle. It was lovely to witness the close and affectionate bond between Louise and Layla. I wasn't sure why Layla had looked down Louise's t-shirt and I thought I might ask Louise about it during our next team meeting. The way Louise had responded to Layla did not seem to upset the child and I thought Louise handled the situation very sensitively. It made me think about how I might react if this had happened to me with one of my key children.

**Implications for practice.** After discussing the experience with the nursery manager during a routine supervision meeting, she explained to me that Layla had been a breast fed as a baby. The manager explained even though she is older now, it is not unusual for Layla to seek comfort from her mother by reaching for the breast. Louise has been preparing Layla for transition to the next room. Layla's mother and Louise concluded that Layla may be feeling nervous about the imminent transition which had resulted in her heightened need for comfort. Louise, Layla's mother and the nursery manager are in regular dialogue and are observing Layla closely for signs of changes in her behaviour which may indicate an increased anxiety.

**A worked example for *Constructions of Love***



Rainee – Practitioner

Eva - Child aged 21 months

**What was the experience?** Eva was asleep on a mattress on the floor. Rainee knelt down beside Eva. She bent right down to obtain eye contact. Rainee gently stroked the back of Eva’s head while quietly calling, ‘Hello’ in a sing-songy voice. Eva reciprocated by lifting her head up, looked at Rainee, rocked back on to her knees, rubbed her eyes and moved her head from side to side before lying down again. Rainee lowered her head to maintain eye contact with Eva. Eva reached out for her teddy which was at the top of her mattress whilst Rainee continued to stroke Eva’s head and talked to her until Eva was fully awake. Eva pointed to something on the other side of the room and Rainee said, ‘What’s that?’ Eva got to her knees and then stood up. Rainee remained on her knees so that she maintained eye contact. Eva said ‘Oh, Oh’, which Rainee echoed followed by, ‘I’m awake, I’m awake’. Eva appeared to be unsteady on her feet so Rainee, who was still kneeling, supported Eva by holding her hand. Eva sat down on Rainee’s knee to drink a cup of milk, which was bought in by a practitioner. Rainee put her arm round Eva’s back to support her whilst gently stroking Eva’s leg. Rainee continued to talk in soft tones when responding to Eva’s cues.

**Where did it take place?** In the toddler sleep room in the presence of 2 colleagues and several other toddlers.

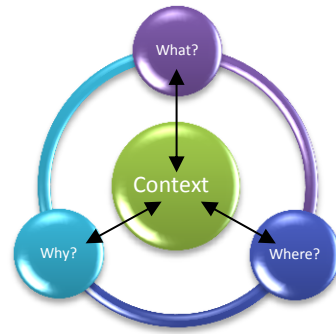
**Why was your attention drawn to this experience?** Eva had been asleep for longer than was usual for her and the practitioners decided it was in Eva’s best interests to be gently woken. I was drawn to this because of the way in which Rainee deferred to Eva throughout the experience.

**Context:** Rainee’s role is to cover for staff over lunch; this means that she is a regular and consistent figure at this time of the day for Eva. There was evidence of a comfortable and familiar feel to their relationship. The appropriate and gentle manner in which Rainee woke Eva up demonstrated her understanding of the individual needs of Eva.

**What was your immediate response?** I was struck by the unhurried manner in which Eva was woken up and the way in which Rainee was completely aware of and absorbed in the best and most appropriate experience for Eva. The ease with which Eva accepted Rainee and the gentleness that Rainee afforded Eva reminded me of the way in which a parent might wake a child if they were in their own home. It confirmed for me the need for practitioners to be flexible so that they can work at an individual child’s pace and not be driven by the organisational routines of the nursery. This appeared to be the normal approach for this room as all the other practitioners were working in a similar manner. To me this was an example of professionally loving practice.

**Implications for practice.** This is an example of good practice which is going to be shared at the next whole staff team meeting and included as a case study in the Fennies new parents handbook.

### A worked example for **Constructions of Care**



Mother - Gemma

Louise & Joey- Practitioners

Mason - Child aged 2 years 6 months

**What was the experience?** Mason and Gemma arrived at the nursery. Mason was holding Gemma's keys. When they enter the room Gemma picked mason up. They went straight over to Joey and in what appeared to be a familiar routine, Joey handed Mason his own key fob and then Mason returned Gemma's keys to her. Gemma then turned to Louise who asked Gemma how Mason had slept the previous night. Gemma said, 'He was coughing again all night'. Louise asked, 'Did he sleep through it all?' to which Gemma commented, 'No he was a bit up and down'. Louise then said to Mason, 'Oh no you still got a cough?'. She then held out her hands and said to Mason, 'Can I have a cuddle?' and as he bent forward, Gemma lifted him upward towards Louise and she reached out to take him. Louise asked Gemma if Mason had had breakfast and she said, 'No'. As Gemma moved toward the door, Louise told Mason what choices there were for breakfast and she proceeded to name the list of cereals. Joey then said, 'We got in hoops especially for Mason'. Gemma reacted with an 'Ah', a smile and reached over to stroke Mason's head. Gemma said to Mason, 'Have a good day' and bent in to kiss him. Louise said to Mason, 'Are you going to say good bye to mummy?' Gemma then responded with, 'Bye, see you later'. As Gemma reached for the door Louise suggested to Mason, 'Shall we wave?' Gemma asked Mason, 'Are you going to look out of the window?' Louise joked with Gemma about the key fob, 'This is a better key because it's got a better key ring'. Gemma went out of the door, turned her head, blew Mason a kiss and said, 'See you later'. Altogether the adults said, 'Bye'. Louise went over to the window with Mason still in her arms and said, 'We'll go and see'. As they stood looking out of the window Louise pointed left and right and asked, 'That way or that way? Other children arrived and as Louise turned her head to welcome them Mason also looked in their direction. As they waited for Gemma, Louise chatted with Mason as they tried to guess which way Gemma would go. When Gemma appeared Louise said, 'There she is'. Mason's eyes lit up as he pointed toward his mother. She looked up, smiled and waved to Mason as she walked away.

**Where did it take place?** 07:45 in the toddler room with one other practitioner.

**Why was your attention drawn to this experience?** I was watching the children arrive at nursery and was struck by the way in which Louise managed the separation process for both Mason and Gemma.

**Context:** Gemma always drops Mason off at nursery at exactly the same time every day which enables this ease of separation and as a consequence the routine is well established and familiar to all parties.

**What was your immediate response?** The handover of Mason to Louise appeared to be easy but as I observed this ease I realised that it was only possible because of the attention to the intricate detail which can only occur through familiarity and strong, reciprocal relationships which seem to me can only happen over time.

**Implications for practice.** Mason has been attending the nursery regularly since he was a young baby and as such he is familiar with partings and reunions with his mother. Yet, it is only the predictably of the minute detail which matters most to Mason and affects how secure he is throughout the remainder of the day. Witnessing Mason's arrival has highlighted the need to avoid moving staff from one area of the nursery to another when there are staff shortages, particularly at the beginning and end of the day. These organisational dilemmas will be discussed at the next senior managers' team meeting.