



Integrated therapeutic approach



Your guide to the SMILE approach

## Mosaic and SMILE.

**SMILE is our integrated therapeutic approach which supports, and helps enable, our foster parents to deliver therapeutic parenting, whilst equipping our team with the knowledge and practice wisdom to truly support our children, young people and foster parents.**

Developed by our team, from an initial idea from one of our senior social workers, we have embedded the model throughout the organisation.

We hope this guide will help start a journey that enables learning and reflection which ultimately helps change childrens' lives for the better.



Jenna  
Snr. Social Worker



Aly  
Therapeutic Lead



Andi  
Director



Greg  
Manager

**To grow and nurture a therapeutic culture Mosaic has developed a model that utilises the acronym SMILE. Our model combines the essential elements based on research and practice that help foster a therapeutic environment and help enable foster parents to parent therapeutically.**

SMILE is embedded through four integral elements: training, experiential, reflection and therapy. These elements provide all the adults within Mosaic a sense of what the children and young people may be feeling, bolster self-awareness into all our interactions, provide an understanding of the deeper meanings of trauma and what it means to be a foster parent living with a traumatised child.

The fundamental aim within Mosaic is to increase foster parents' capabilities to understand themselves, the children and young people they live with, be alongside and know the child, rather than just coping with the behaviour. This process over time enables a child who has experienced adverse childhood experiences, significant multiple losses, and traumas to develop a secure attachment and ultimately manage their own thoughts, feelings and memories in relation to their early life experiences.



## Safety.

**For young people who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) the need to be safe, and in particular, feel safe, is very important.**

We have developed robust forums which are held at least every three months, to ensure that our team, working with other professionals such as teachers and health workers, are prioritising and proactively ensuring that our children feel and are safe. There are many ways in which we keep the safety of our foster parents, children and staff at the centre of our work.

For long-term placements there is a strong need for pragmatic safety and an in-depth understanding of the child, that allows the child over time to develop a feeling of emotional safety. Foster parents must also understand their inner selves, in order to prevent any responses to the child that may make the child feel anxious or insecure.

The foster parent is able to then provide clear firm boundaries and a continuity of fair, loving care, keeping the child's needs in mind, prioritising these needs and do their best to make sure these needs are met.



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## Multi-skilled team.

**'It takes a village to raise a child' is certainly true in many societies. For Mosaic Foster Care this realisation has meant the development of many different types of team member, with different skills and qualifications, working together to help support our children and foster parents.**

We have social workers, support workers and therapists (who often work directly with the child), all working effectively together with professionals from health and education. Having these different disciplines offers different perspectives and helps support our foster parents to deliver therapeutic parenting and avoid compassion fatigue.

Working as a team with different professional and personal backgrounds leads to conversations about our different beliefs and values. This challenges us all to be more flexible in our work, as naturally some are allied to one perspective and others to another.

Working collaboratively is helpful to understand the perspective of all involved in the system around the child. We then come together in a way that allows us to creatively think about a child's needs and how we as a team can meet them.



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## Intentional and connected parenting.

**Developing a connection with a child is fundamental to facilitating change. We were early adopters of the Secure Base Model (University of East Anglia, Schofield and Beek) which is based on attachment theory. We also use elements of Dan Hughes' PACE model (Playful, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) which combines elements of both connected and intentional parenting.**

Once truly connected, our foster parents can then utilise intentional parenting strategies, designed and informed by our social workers and therapists. Intentional parenting focuses on carefully crafted plans which make it easier to respond to the child and not react to behaviours.

Regular consultation with our therapists and social workers also ensures that our foster parents are connected to their own experiences which ensures our foster parents own well-being is nurtured.

In training, therapeutic supervision and the weekly reflective groups, the foster parent learns to think beyond the behaviour, begins to understand that their relationships are the key to unlocking the child's hidden potential behind the often difficult to understand behaviour. They grow in their capacity to reflect on difficulties that arise in keeping the child's needs paramount. It is through these experiential processes that the foster parent then learns how to emotionally contain the child and through role modelling demonstrates how feelings are managed (co-regulation) and remains attuned to all the emotions in the fostering home.





## Long-term.

**Our agency focuses only on long-term therapeutic placements. The reason for this is that we know that children who have had adverse childhood experiences need a secure base placement over time to recover from their experiences.**

**Trauma affects the way a child's brain develops, but we know that with the right care, the brain can recover and rebuild connections that were not made in earlier childhood. This requires skilled intervention by specialists not usually available to foster parents.**

Long-term itself relates to a period of time and time is a commodity that Mosaic feels is worth investing in. Time to create a consistency for the children and young peoples' lives that have been disrupted, time to heal wounds, time for them to develop trust that someone will listen and time to help find the means for them to express themselves.

This investment in time helps the children to internalise the therapeutic parenting and achieve a better understanding of themselves and their impact on others, building resilience for their journey in the wider world once they move on from Mosaic.







## Environment - high structure and high nurture.

Trauma, and particularly trauma which occurs within relationships, is characterised by unpredictability and a lack of control. Children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences often operate from a fear-based world view and therefore find it difficult to trust any caregiver.

**High structure through consistent boundaries, held in place by nurturing yet firm parents, is something the child can depend on. Over time, the child experiences this structure as dependable and predictable, the opposite of their previous experiences.**

High structure can seem quite cold and clinical which is why the careful balance of high structure and high nurture is so important. Often childrens' experience, which is imprinted on their brain and view of the world, is that they are not lovable or liked. So often, lots of nurture is at odds with the child's experience and they can seemingly push away. However, over time and with the right balance, the child's experience of high nurture does begin to change their perception.



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You care We care

**Mosaic Foster Care**  
Therapeutic foster care

## Embedded within SMILE are Mosaic's core values.

1. **Child-centred** – We hold the child in mind and keep them at the forefront of decision making.
2. **Ambitious** – We strive to be the best at providing long term, stable, supported placements.
3. **Compassionate** – We maintain a working environment which supports people both professionally and personally.
4. **Inspirational** – To adopt an attitude and culture where creativity and adaptability are core.
5. **Empathic** – To show respect and love for each other



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...and being part of the growing family of foster parents with Mosaic has brought a broader understanding and commitment to life... I smile everyday... thank you





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[mosaicfostercare.com](http://mosaicfostercare.com)



Suite 2, Chalkwell Lawns, 648-656 London Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, SS0 9HR  
Southend: 01702 344088 Colchester: 01206 986010 Em. [info@mosaicfostercare.com](mailto:info@mosaicfostercare.com)

Registered Office: The Forge, Langham, Colchester, Essex, CO4 5PX Registered in England No.4106334