

7 minute ICON briefing

www.iconcope.org

www.facebook.com/iconcope

1

Introduction

ICON is a programme that provides information about infant crying and how to cope. It is being adopted by all partners in the South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Integrated Care System, including Barnsley. Ultimately the ICON programme aims to reduce the incidence of Abusive Head Trauma. This briefing contains information about the programme and clear messages that represents the ICON approach in managing crying babies. This advice is **not solely for health agencies**. Similar to safe sleep advice, ALL practitioners should take the opportunity, where they can, to be professionally curious about parental stresses and coping with a newborn baby.



Babies Cry, You Can Cope!

2

Background

Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) causes catastrophic injuries that can lead to death, or significant long term health problems and learning disabilities. AHT takes place when caregivers lose control and shake the baby. Around 1 in 14 cases of AHT are fatal before hospital discharge and half of severely injured survivors die before aged 21. Approximately 200 children are killed or hurt annually in the UK and these figures are likely to underestimate the real numbers involved. Incidences increase in the 1st month of life, peak at 6 weeks and decrease during the 3rd to 5th months of life. 70% of perpetrators are male.

7

When should you be concerned about a baby's crying?

Seek professional or medical help if you notice a baby has any of the following:

- A fit (seizure or convulsion)
- Very high pitched cry (doesn't sound normal)
- Breathing is a struggle or noisy or unusually fast
- Skin is greyish, mottled, blue or unusually pale
- A rash that doesn't fade when you press a glass against it
- High temperature

Babies
cry, you
can cope

3

Information

The ICON programme provides key messages and resources to let parents and carers know that babies cry (sometimes a lot!), helping them to understand why they cry and helping them find ways of coping with crying. Resources include leaflets and video clips which are shared with parents and carers at specific evidence-based contacts. The ICON approach recommends parents/carers try and soothe their baby through comforting methods. ICON guidance suggests ways of calming the child, before putting them down in a safe environment and walking away for a few minutes if the parent is struggling.

6

Are you aware of the ICON acronym?

I
Infant crying is normal and peaks around 6 weeks of age.

C
Comforting methods can help soothe a baby and crying may stop.

O
It's OK to walk away for a few minutes if crying is becoming too much, **as long as the baby is safe**.

N
Never ever shake a baby - it can lead to serious lifelong injuries and death,

5

What can you do?

Familiarise yourself with the ICON resources and attend training if available. Take the opportunity to raise awareness of ICON among colleagues. Talk through the key points in the ICON leaflet with parents and encourage them to share the information with any family and friends who may care for their child, such as aunts, uncles, grandparents etc. ICON always recommends contacting a health professional such as a health visitor, midwife or GP for support with their baby and always recommends that the leaflet is given with a conversation to accompany it.

4

Phase 1

The first phase of the ICON programme will be delivered from January 2021 through Barnsley Maternity Service and the 0-19 Public Health Nursing Services, to provide support within the first six to eight weeks of a baby's life when all babies start to cry more. The programme advises and provides professionals with resources including a leaflet and a "Coping with Crying plan", which they can complete with parents so they can plan in advance who to turn to for support if the crying becomes too much.