



# Russell House Publishing Ltd

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November 2004

Dear colleague:

It is not often that we can look forward to publishing a book with pre-publication comments like this:

*"This is **a brilliant book**. Every so often I read a book which I really wish I had written: this is one of those. Helping families in distress and adversity to keep together is a huge and vital task: this book explains how to do it. Using the realities of partnership, communication, empowerment, motivation, goal setting, and enabling new skills to be developed, Mark Hamer has provided detailed help to all of us who work in this field. He is to be hugely congratulated."*

**Professor Richard Velleman**

University of Bath and Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health NHS Trust

*"Packed with ideas and exercises, it will inspire practitioners and families. It will be plundered by all staff who wish to find **new and creative ways of engaging with families**. I could not fault it. I could not put it down. We have a gem here."*

**Martin C. Calder**

Team Manager, Child Protection Unit, City of Salford Community and Social Services Directorate

But perhaps we shouldn't be surprised...

This book is based on a way of working at Option 2 in Cardiff that won the **Community Care Award for Child Protection in 2001**. Author Mark Hamer is a founding member of the award winning team and a practising Social Worker who has spoken at events across the UK but prefers to work in his own community.

His book will provide **motivating, practical help** for:

- Childcare and child protection social workers, their managers and policy makers.
- Other professionals interested in practical ways of working, with clear outcomes, aimed at enabling families to care for their children and keep them out of the care system.
- Anyone whose work may require them to engage with resistant clients, including other social workers, social work assistants, managers, family centre staff, family aides, residential workers, outreach workers, youth offending teams, probation staff, neighbourhood and youth workers, BEST team workers and others.

**And the book is...**

# Preventing breakdown

A manual for those working with families and the individuals within them

By Mark Hamer

**Preventing breakdown** is a 'how - to' book. It explains how you as a front line worker, manager or policy maker can create an environment where families can exploit their potential to develop and protect their children. It offers tools and ideas that will guide workers into building on the family's strengths and self efficacy, developing family pride, a focus on solutions and a determination to succeed.

Before taking that most damaging step of taking children away from their homes and families and leaving them in strange and unfamiliar environments, childcare social workers, managers, and ultimately policy makers must be able to say that the alternatives have been tried, that family and community strengths have been explored, developed and exploited and that there really is no other option.

The tools and concepts in this book are deeply practical, providing clear professional input and measurable outcomes for children and families. Workers using them will feel valued as professionals, confident when trying to work with difficult situations, and they will make more accurate assessments.

Rhoda Emlyn-Jones, Service Manager for Option 2 at Cardiff, writes in her foreword: "*It is with great pleasure and some awe that I commend Mark's excellent work... to bring this successful approach to a much wider audience.*" **Now that's nice coming from your boss!**

**Preventing breakdown** will be published in January or February 2005 as an A4 wirebound manual of about 160 pages. (ISBN: 1-903855-61-6).

£29.95 From the Publisher

Sincerely,



Geoffrey Mann,  
Managing Director

**CONTENTS:** Foreword. Preface. Introduction: Families speaking. Guiding principles. An overview of the 'Option 2' model. Availability. Crisis intervention. Waiting lists. A structured intervention. Taking the referral. Referral criteria. Making contact. Assessment concepts. Inappropriate referrals. Brief interventions. Clients feelings. The next two weeks. The final days. Closing report. Maintenance meeting. Follow up visits. Booster sessions. Power and partnership. Written agreements. Client files. Working with fear. The truth is holistic. Problems are unique. Risk. Working with families. Communication skills. Working with the family. Joining with clients. Traps to avoid as a helper. Cognitive dissonance. Constructive feedback. Motivational interviewing. Resistance. Rolling with resistance. Self – motivational statements. Ambivalence. Stages of change. Solution focussed brief therapy. Pre-session change. Goal setting. Exception finding. Scaling. Reluctant clients. The Miracle question. Working with cards. Values cards. Strength cards. Goal cards. Paper exercises. Creating a safety plan. Goal attainment scaling (GAS). Goal sheets. Result of behaviour-specific goal setting. Developing a family centred plan of action. The weekly plan. Teaching new skills. Providing support services. Learning. Worker skills. Crisis card. 'I' messages. Self-defeating and self-enhancing ideas. Anger management. Cognitive distortions. An action plan to help parents manage children's behaviour. 93 ways to say 'very good'. Tips for coping with depression. Tips for coping with stress. Tips for coping with panic. Learn how to relax. Working with suicidal clients. Staff care. Safety policy. Guidelines for contacting your supervisor. Potentially difficult issues. Our workers. Real people. Continued improvement. Summary. Useful contacts. Further reading.