4. The EEDA method

4.1   The EEDA method is, first and foremost, an updated version of the traditional scientific method that involves collecting and analyzing data, developing hypotheses and formulating a plan that will be implemented, monitored and evaluated along the way (Julien 2004). It is applied throughout the service continuum and "basically involves getting to know the children and their families intimately and setting up ways to follow children with the support of the community" (Julien 2007).

4.2   This method is a way of letting facts and information emerge[1] through a prism formed by the various elements that constitute the conceptual framework, namely: needs, rights, sources of toxic stress, motivations/resilience, strengths, expectations/identity/culture, attachment, the child's lifecourse trajectory/development and his or her well-being. It is based on the idea of circular questioning[2] that comes from family therapy (see the section on follow-up/accompaniment) and takes into account neutrality, hypothesizing (assessment method involving hypotheses) and circularity (Seywert 1993). According to research, these three concepts are defined as follows:

- Neutrality means the professional team needs to be impartial and non-judgmental at all times with respect to its perception of the family. The team of professionals leaves room for other participants to express themselves and tries to create close ties with all partners. The goal is to foster true dialogue (Fleuridas et al. 1986).

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[1] "Information is the difference that makes the difference" Bateson (1979).
[2] Concept developed by the Milan school (Selvini et al. 1980).

-Hypothesizing means bringing together all the assumptions, impressions, mind maps, possible explanations or alternative views about the family's situation (Fleuridas et al. 1986). This gives the family a chance to bring additional information to the discussion that can help better explain the situation. In addition, it guides the team of professionals and fosters systems-thinking by working together to develop different hypotheses.

-Circularity is the therapist's ability to conduct the clinical process by relying on the family's feedback and other information that help him or her make links. Circularity is a way of making a real difference and fostering change (Selvini Palazzoli et al. cited in Fleuridas et al. 1986).

Thus, the EEDA method involves non-linear communication between the CSP team and partners in assessment/course of action within the family, social and institutional networks. It doesn't simply look at cause and effect, which is a process meant to resolve symptom-based problems through an expert questioning a patient. This method works in quite the opposite way by focusing on building a relationship to draw out information that will make a real difference to the family.

4.3   Below is a detailed description of what is entailed in each step in order to better understand the EEDA method:

E is for **E**stablishing a special relationship. This involves getting to know each other, entering each other's world, starting to feel comfortable, and establishing a basis for working together that is conducive to assistance and support. This step and the next both involve sharing facts and information. This first step can take place not only at the clinic, but also in the child's everyday surroundings (home, school, day care, etc.).

E is for **E**xchanging. This involves opening up to others without any preconceived ideas on the facts, ideas and emotions in relation to the child. Sharing views on beliefs and habits and accepting different ways of doing things are essential to better explain the context and the challenges, and to explore possible solutions.

D is for **D**ecoding. This involves using an integrated approach to analyse everyone's understanding and experiences in order to decode the meaning of a problem and decide what steps to take next.

A is for **A**ction. All the steps needed to improve the child's well-being are spelled out when the reasons and needs are identified through a true consensus between professionals, the parents, the extended family and others (neighbours, friends, etc.). Taking action based on needs which all parties understand, accept and prioritize is a pragmatic approach designed to improve effectiveness and ensure lasting results for the children and their families.

4.4   To summarize

Establishing	- Welcoming the child and family - Making the child feel comfortable and open: physical contact, providing food, giving symbolic gifts…
Exchanging	- Leading the discussion among participants - Gathering information on family history and genetics - Researching relevant facts, causal factors - Asking questions and offering clues - Taking a complete and comprehensive history
Decoding	- Examining the child - Decoding the information gathered - Flagging potential diagnoses based on the information collected

	- Confirming possible solutions with all the participants - Prioritizing problems and solutions - Ensuring that all professionals are on board and actively participating in the process, and that solutions are set in place - Summarizing the steps that need to be taken and spelling out the integrated plan adapted to the child's needs
Action	- Developing an intervention plan - Planning the steps to be taken - Ensuring follow-up

4.5   The EEDA method can be used with all children and by anyone working with them. It provides a range of scenarios for action to set up sustainable problem-solving mechanisms.

Conclusion

Assessment/course of action is a practice built on establishing a special relationship and mutual understanding between the child, the family and the CSP team. It is a way to identify the child's sources of stress and better perceive the family's problem areas, while interacting with professionals and key people in the child's life in a coherent way. The community social pediatrics team uses a case-by-case approach and the resulting services that are assembled provide a quick response to the child's most immediate and acute needs.

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