Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Child Guidance Center October 26, 2026	WHAT CHILDREN DON'T KNOW... HURTS THEM by Karen Glistrup Family- and psychotherapist MPF
Comments and feedback on the training	**In the pre-workshop questionnaire, you were asked what you hoped to be able to do by the end of the training. Please describe anything you are taking away from today's training.**
This was a very meaningful training session that gave me an opportunity to reconsider how I interact with children and how I think about telling children the facts.	I was able to think concretely about what I should do in two of my own cases.
The shoulder exercise was interesting because, through our hands, I could feel both my own breathing and the other person's breathing. I also realized how important it is for parents and other adults to first face their own feelings before telling a child something they have kept secret. It is not simply a matter of communicating facts. Parents and others involved need to confront their own feelings, including shame. To make that possible, the professionals supporting the parents, and those who support the professionals, also need a sense of safety. When adults imagine what a child may be feeling and try to face those feelings together, the child's sense of isolation or lack of belonging may be eased. I felt that this is a process of restoring connection in many different senses.	I have a case in which we may need to tell a child about a parent's illness. Until now, I had mainly been thinking about technical and formal matters, such as how to explain the facts clearly. I now want to take time with the parent and relatives to consider carefully what the child is feeling, what the family as a whole has been unable to address, and what has been treated as secret or shameful. I would like us to think together about what words could help restore the child's sense of connection. I also felt that mentalizing through the framework of aligning what the child senses, sees, and understands may be easier for parents to work with than the usual mentalizing framework.
At first, I felt anxious because I did not know how the session would proceed or what would happen. By the end, however, I felt relieved and even somewhat healed. Although I could not understand the speaker's words directly, I think her personality and presence created that feeling. I hope to become a child psychologist who can make children feel the same way.	I realized again how consistently the speaker maintains an attitude of communicating honestly and sincerely with children. To be honest, I do not yet have such a firm conviction, and I am unsure whether I can put it fully into practice. Even so, I feel that her attitude and words will support me when I am uncertain. This may have differed from my original goal, but receiving that support was a major takeaway.

It was valuable to learn experientially through activities. I was also impressed when the speaker briefly demonstrated how she talks with children. She appeared calm while also receiving the child's feelings with strength. I learned the importance of telling children the facts.	I felt that relationships with parents might change if we continue discussing difficult subjects without treating them as taboo and if, when working with parents who are currently difficult to engage, we can reflect on their own childhood experiences. I have explained things to children before, but I realized that I sometimes imposed adults' views rather than fully considering the child's feelings.
Listening to Karen, I felt that she was full of respect and love for children. This is the kind of clinical practitioner I aspire to be. I have long believed that children should be told the facts regardless of age, but there have been many times when I could not persuade colleagues or other people involved and gave up. Today's words and demonstrations gave me great courage and confirmed my determination to persuade those around me and communicate the facts to children. I was also struck by her comment that even someone with her experience makes mistakes. I want to say "I don't know" when I do not know and actively face the facts together with the child.	I achieved what I wrote in the pre-workshop questionnaire, but I also made another discovery. I realized that what I currently lack in order to communicate facts to children is building trusting relationships with parents and taking time to talk with them. The number of child psychologists has increased, giving us a little more time to spend with parents, so I would like to begin working on this immediately.
Especially with very young children, I had often chosen not to tell them certain things because they were considered "adult matters." I learned that, however young a child may be, we must not avoid making the effort to tell them the facts honestly in language they can understand at their developmental level.	The timing and wording need to be considered case by case. However, across cases, withholding facts can cause children to distrust adults or feel that they are to blame. I want to keep this perspective in mind in every case I handle.
I felt that the speaker places great importance on sincerely understanding and empathizing with children and parents. She answered questions carefully and enthusiastically, and I learned a great deal and had a very fulfilling time. Thank you. I would also like to purchase and read her book.	I want to value the child's perspective and the position of the person directly concerned in my clinical work. I would like to keep checking that the professionals involved are not moving matters forward on their own.
I came to deeply understand the importance of valuing a child's desire to know and, after talking with the parent, telling the child the facts. It is important for adults to face the situation without becoming overwhelmed by anxiety.	I realized that ambiguity can heighten anxiety and leave children unsure of what to do, perhaps leading them to think they should not say anything. Rather than questioning the child, it is important to use mentalization and openly share information with them.

I felt that the approach was grounded in Open Dialogue and shared many features with it. This way of thinking does not seem to be widely established in child guidance centers, so I hope this opportunity will help it spread more broadly.	I was reminded of the importance of Open Dialogue and want to provide sincere explanations to children.
The warm atmosphere made this a good training session. While thinking about my own cases, I felt both the importance and difficulty of communicating facts. I realized that actions intended to protect children from being hurt may actually hurt them or undermine their trust in adults. I learned that there are not facts that should simply be withheld; what matters is communicating them in a way suited to the child's age and development.	This differs from what I wrote in the pre-workshop questionnaire, but in transferred cases it is especially easy to lose track of which facts have and have not been communicated. Additional facts may also emerge during long-term involvement. I therefore intend to review the child's case record carefully and identify the facts that should be communicated.
I realized the importance of not dismissing a child's needs simply because they are a child or because we feel sorry for them, and of telling them the facts. Thank you for the many valuable lessons.	Even when a subject is difficult to explain to a child, I want to imagine the child's feelings and try to communicate it in my own words.
The demonstration using cards to show how an actual case might be handled was very informative.	The statement that it is important to tell the facts even to very young children will guide my future practice.
We often say that we respect children's views, but I learned how important it is to interact with children in a way that enables them to actually feel respected and to remain constantly aware of this.	I want to have the courage to apologize to children for mistakes and tell them the facts.
The lecture took place in a very warm atmosphere, which helped me feel relaxed.	Although it is difficult, I felt that sincerely facing the child is more important than anything else in casework. There is no easy method, but the first step is to keep imagining what the child may currently be thinking based on the information available.
This training gave me a new perspective. Thank you.	