

2nd to 5th October 2018

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**EUSARF 2018 PORTO**

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## **Improving Intervention with the Families in Portuguese Residential Care: Evaluation of a Training Process with Professionals**

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Thursday, 4th October @ 17:30: Poster Sessions & Coffee Break (Venue: Salão Nobre)

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Despite the global pressure for the deinstitutionalisation of children in care across Europe, and recent changes in national legislation, Portugal remains a country with very high prevalence of residential care amongst at risk children (87,4% - ISS, 2016).

Professionals who work in residential care face many demands, not only in working directly with the children, exposed to risk factors for their development, but also in addressing their biological and extended families in order to accomplish the best interest of the child (Mullins, 2011). However, in contrast with the multiple requirements of social work, these professionals are described as frequently lacking the specific training and up-dated scientific knowledge required for an effective assessment and intervention with these at risk children and families through the out of home care process (Bergmark & Lundstrom, 2002; Rosen, Proctor, Morrow-Howell, & Staudt, 1995).

This study aims to evaluate a training program, designed at request of the Social Welfare Services and tailored to the specific needs of 44 residential care workers (psychologists, social workers, educators from 12 residential care institutions of in the district of Porto, northern Portugal), regarding the relationship and intervention with the families of children in care. The main goals, contents and strategies of this 28h long training program will be presented, as well as a mixed method evaluation of the process, encompassing data from questionnaires and focus group with the participants to assess their views about training process, the satisfaction with the training, and the ability of the training to alter perceptions and promote changes in professional practices. Preliminary results point to the relevance of the training in altering professionals' perspectives about the families they work with, and the ability to stimulate reflective practice. Results will be discussed in relation to the stages of change and also to the urge of supporting professional development.