

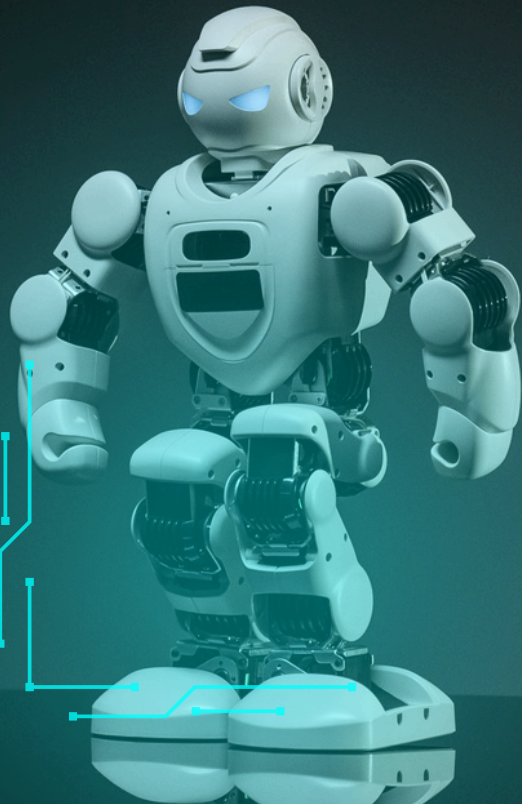
AI as Cognitive Infrastructure

From Tool to Teammate

From uncertainty to confident use of
AI in social work practice

Reduce administrative burden, support structured
thinking, and enhance professional judgement.

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Social Worker



OPENING REALITY

You were not trained for AI.
But you are now being asked to shape its
future in social care.

And the risk is not that AI will replace you,
the risk is that it will be implemented without
your input if you don't engage it.

Don't stay on the sidelines.

Get involved.



KEY WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

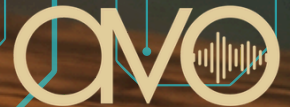
- Simplify AI for social work practice
- Establish why it matters that you get involved

YOU FACTOR

AI IS COGNITIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Your Virtual PA. Your Teammate.
Your Cognitive Advantage.

PEOPLE.
PURPOSE.
POSSIBILITY.



HUMAN JUDGEMENT
Always



ETHICS & SAFETY
Built In



STRONGER TOGETHER
Human + AI



FOCUS ON IMPACT
Not Admin

THE SHIFT



Safeguarding is everyone's job and
as professionals, we face

- ✓ Pressure
- ✓ Fear of getting it wrong
- ✓ Accountability weight

**AI is already entering your work.
The question is: will you shape it?**

REFRAME

AI is not just a tool.
It is cognitive infrastructure.

**Cognitive infrastructure is the support system
behind human thinking.**

**AI becomes cognitive infrastructure when it helps
professionals think clearer, process faster, and
focus on what matters most.**



USE AI IN YOUR WORK

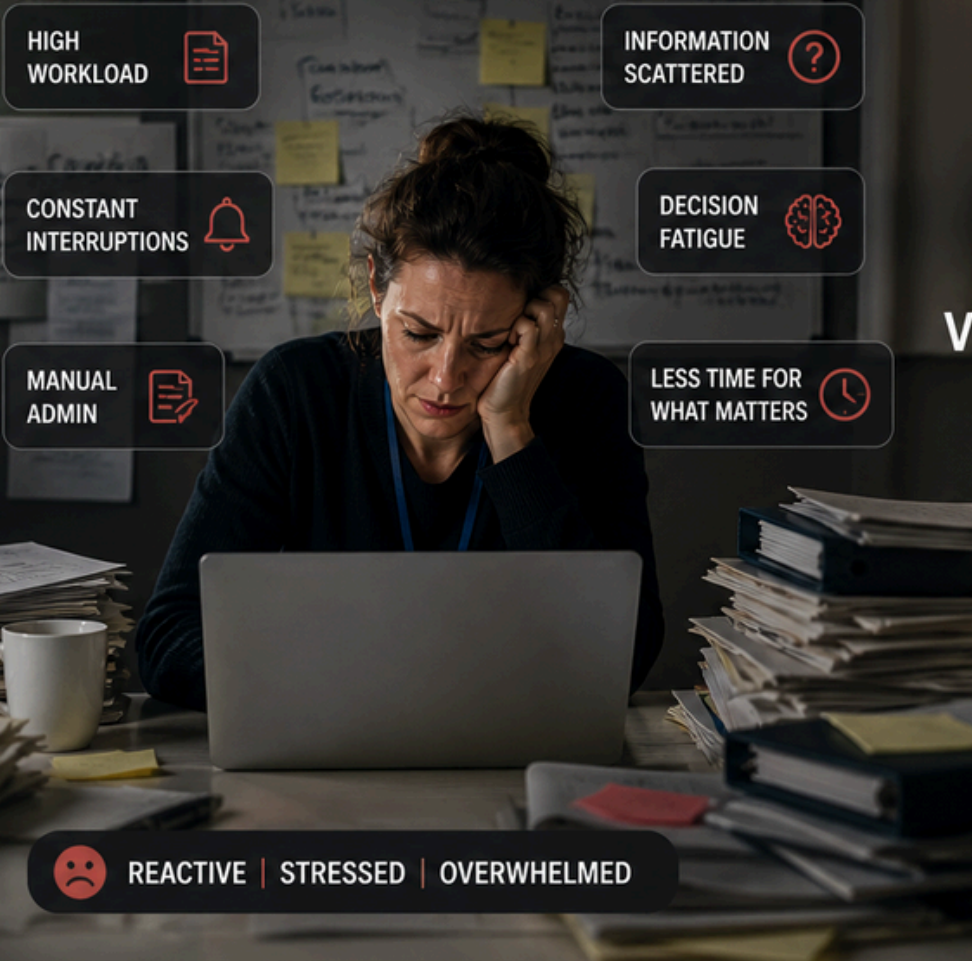


SIMPLIFY


Think of AI as:

- ✓ A virtual PA
- ✓ A thinking partner
- ✓ A teammate

COGNITIVE OVERLOAD





HIGH WORKLOAD 

CONSTANT INTERRUPTIONS 

MANUAL ADMIN 

INFORMATION SCATTERED 

DECISION FATIGUE 

LESS TIME FOR WHAT MATTERS 

REACTIVE | STRESSED | OVERWHELMED

VS

AI AS COGNITIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Your Virtual PA. Your Cognitive Extension.



PRIORITIES CLARIFIED 

WORKFLOW AUTOMATED 

MORE TIME FOR PEOPLE 

INFORMATION ORGANIZED 

SMART SUMMARIES 

DRAFTS & DOCUMENTS 

INSIGHTS THAT SUPPORT DECISIONS 

FOCUS. CLARITY. IMPACT.

FOCUSED | EMPOWERED | IMPACTFUL



AI DOESN'T REPLACE YOU.
IT EXTENDS YOUR CAPACITY TO DO WHAT MATTERS MOST.



HUMAN JUDGEMENT



ETHICS & SAFETY



BETTER OUTCOMES



STRONGER TOGETHER



CORE PRINCIPLE

You don't need to understand how AI is created.

You need to understand your workflow.

Then, plug AI into it.



3 QUESTIONS

Where do I spend time?
Where do I repeat myself?
Where am I drained?

INSIGHT:

**Those are areas where AI supports
you.**



CASE RISK



Case Study

AI using historical data to judge a new referral with no historical context on record

But the Practitioner was able to notice patterns not easily captured in structured data

AI can miss nuance.

Incomplete data = incomplete decisions.

AI cannot replace professional discernment.

CASE STRENGTH

Case study 2

A social worker is managing a complex safeguarding case involving a large family network, multiple agencies, and a long history of involvement

The practitioner spends hours

Reading, Re-reading, Trying to piece together patterns

Cognitive overload sets in

Important details risk being missed

AI can process volume.

Helping you think clearer and handle judgment better



KEY DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE CASES

**AI doesn't decide.
It clarifies thinking.**

ETHICS

AI supports judgement.
Humans remain accountable.

GUARDRAILS

- Don't outsource thinking
 - Question outputs
 - Maintain context



ETHICAL GUARDRAILS FRAMEWORK

1. Judgement Supremacy

Human decision-making remains final.

2. Context Priority

No output is valid without contextual interpretation.

3. Transparency Requirement

Practitioners must understand system function and limitation.

4. Bias Recognition

All outputs reflect historical and systemic bias.

5. Practice-Led Governance

System use must be shaped by those closest to the work.



TECH INNOVATORS + PRACTITIONERS

Tech Innovators know how
to create the tool.
You know the work.

Both must collaborate.



YOUR ROLE

You are not a tech expert.
You are a practice expert.
Lend your voice to preserve
the future of social work.

Turn AI tool to teammate



PRACTICAL ACTIVATION

Write down one task that drains you.



EXAMPLE

Use AI to summarise notes
or
structure reports
or
search out blind spots in your
solutions

OPTIMISE



PROMPT EXAMPLE

BASIC PROMPT

“Summarise key risks and patterns from this case.”

ENHANCED PROMPT

Optimise this prompt for best possible result and execute “Summarise key risks and patterns from this case.”



BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE

Start small.
Test safely.
Reflect.



SHIFT

From user → shaper

You don't need to become technical.

But you do need to become
intentional.

Ask AI what it can do for you by
telling it about your work.



REALITY CHECK

If you don't shape AI use, someone else will and out perform you.

The future of social care does not belong to AI, it belongs to practitioners who take responsibility to shape it today.



THE FUTURE

The future of social work will be shaped by those who engage.

AI in social work must be governed as cognitive infrastructure, not adopted as operational convenience.

Its legitimacy is determined not by its capability, but by the integrity of its integration.



LANDING

**AI should reduce paperwork/
streamline administrative work/
cognitive overload, not judgement.**

Final judgment remains with you.



FEEDBACK & QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!



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