

Promise Learning Collaborative- Nov 2025

Table Notes

Families Outside/ Project Change

Question - How do you prioritise creating and embedding meaningful change in times of crisis?

- Advocating! – for colleagues, young people, residential workers
 - Speaking ‘their language’ eg making financial arguments to financiers
 - ‘ I feel like we are always making change in crisis!’
 - Constantly adapt, refund, think about change management structures
 - Mechanisms like oversight boards to avoid mission drift
 - Being honest is so refreshing- is relatable for organisations/ retention of staff
 - Change piece might move to being operational as you are trying to keep mission critical things
 - You can sidestep to manage a crisis but still maintain heading towards a vision
 - Sunk cost fallacy- having the confidence to park something and not getting swayed by how much money you may have already spent
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- Talking to each other more- less siloed
 - money needs to be less siloed – focusing too much on initial X should be spent on rather than bigger picture
 - Focusing on outcomes & meaningful change rather than money
 - Focus on multidisciplinary team - What is missing?
 - Need strategic permission to undertake the promise within teams rather than focus bureaucratic structures
 - Ask Young people what is missing: empower them to find solutions / meaning making- don’t assume you know what people mean

- Tapping into young people's enthusiasm, senior staff lead by example
 - Focus/ relationship building, taking time to listen to young people in the workforce, languages etc
 - Workforce issues- create strong working relationships, strong to manage a crisis
 - Teamwork
 - Value people across the board- cultural change
 - Crisis- what is the purpose, day to day basis why are you doing it? Measurable, building human connections#
 - Funding: return- transactional, not about young people
 - High-level qualified? Clear understanding of how it is yo work front facing.
 - 'trust' experiences & relationships
 - Hierarchal structures challenge
 - Drive change- boots on the ground can only do so much
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- Meaningful to who (person)- remember the WHY!
 - Ego/ barriers
 - Things change- ongoing reviews#
 - Accountability/ authenticity/ personal/org oversight vs personal
 - Keep it real- no tickbox
 - Prioritise- what is the absolute essentials- fall back
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- Retroactive rather than responsive
 - Sufficient staffing
 - Balance young people and other tasks- to change culture
 - Good recruitment- retention through support, training, confidence – need to prioritise a supportive workforce to be able to provide the service effectively
 - Mandatory training priorities attendance
 - Embed the promise in education, social work degrees, HNC social care, SVQ's- add to curriculum
 - Police training academy- police & education not aware if the promise as much as residential houses

- Planning- setting value & foundations
- Community work eg firework night- clear knowledge and practical support
- Quicker process- timeframe free process / no referral
- Investment in resources, places, projects
- Reflection- acknowledgement when something is not working
- No 'buy in'
- Documentation
- CEC- knee jerk reactions- need consideration
- Need consistency & continuation of good work

CYCJ

Question - What actions could your organisation make to move Scotland closer to achieving the conclusions of the promise for children and young people who come into conflict with the law?

- Partnership meetings – 'how do we keep the young person safe?'
- Reimagining secure care
- Language- how we frame things / asset based- why in situation?/ having power over young people
- All work together

- Address HOW our organisations listen to and understand the experiences of young people who come into conflict with the law- do organisations have the skills to enable this?

- CULTURE change – crisis as a trigger. How to kickstart?
- Better alternatives to prosecution
- More prevention
- Lack of confidence in staff, lack of exposure, knowledge of law/rights- upskilling staff and young people#
- Support from schools
- Talk to each other – promise keeper events cancelled
- How to talk and be heard- senior participation needed, stop box ticking
- Put pressure- now is the time! Ground up change
- Community supports local authorities
- Justice route as last resort: culture shift

- Resources for young people around legal rights/ responsibilities- esp just arrived

Let's Talk About 2 – Listen Up Storytelling

Question - How might you use the CAKE framework within your organization and where would you start?

- Get leaders involved
- Team days:
A great way to unpack work teams' concerns and wins.
 - Nurturing.
- Use stories to create action plans:
 - Create children's plans
 - Family plans
- Can help to contextualise ways of working
→ Taking the abstract and making it more practical

How do we use stories to:

- Understand people's experiences & feelings
- Create action from stories
- Share learning
- Use for insights

- Use with your teams to understand and increase shared feelings, common voice & understanding what is important to service users
- Realignment and capturing knowledge
- Team building
- Bite-sized check-in / creating time for reflection
- Worth energy to keep going
- How do we safeguard this time?

- Bringing new groups or teams together & building relationships
- All staff or in-person gatherings or spread-out teams
- Useful in therapeutic space? Peer support
- Staff wellbeing – protecting frontline staff from vicarious trauma
- Coaching model to help people to get unstuck
Psychologically trained, reflective practice
- Ingredients for the cake seem to really matter enough, which is great
- A lot of organizations in this sector have existing structures e.g., supervision so we aren't starting from scratch
- Protecting time to do it! – creating a culture where wellbeing framework is protected
- Interesting analogy of slices of cake vs having the whole cake – doing the slices sequentially
- Important following the effects of COVID and ways of working together
- Interested at exploring how we can use it with carers, thinking about peer carers supporting VASCs and how trauma might impact behavior
- 1st slice check-in + check out
- Sharing mood in training that exists – value is clearly & well welcomed
- Stories trigger stories & us learning
- Aim to facilitate these conversations
- Tool: creative ways + resources
- Process
 - Critical part → not doing well (helpful) → need to know as a team what's going on
 - Helps prevent burnout

- Depends on where you are more useful for your teams?
- Project level?
 - Reflection on ongoing work is different from transformational change
- Framework proposal
 - Good framework proposal
 - Team thinking → creates psychological safety in everyday practice
 - Needs more action planning
 - Learning → pulls practice
 - Solutions are easy → practice together embeds it
 - Not just about programs
- Use the app – visualize their priorities like free tools
- Draw in 160 to their day
- Show visuals to use examples to show where the exact space affects personal & mental health
- Allow space to explore service & how service impacts the way
- Pilot project to include feedback – don't take on trust
- Share frameworks – make sure there's buy-in
- Cultural attitudes re: mental health challenge – learn/discomfort
- Clarity & process re: safe space – communicate
- Be conscious of power dynamics re: relationships & use of space
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Summary of Key Insights

- Leadership involvement is critical for success.
- Storytelling is a powerful tool for creating action plans, sharing learning, and understanding experiences.
- Protecting time and creating psychological safety are essential for embedding CAKE practices.
- Wellbeing and mental health considerations must be integrated into the framework.
- Use creative tools, apps, and visuals to make abstract concepts practical and relatable.
- Pilot projects and feedback loops help refine implementation and ensure buy-in.
- Cultural attitudes, transparency, and power dynamics need to be addressed for effective change.
- Framework should support both ongoing reflection and transformational change.
- Promote collaboration across teams and create safe spaces for dialogue.
- Focus on incremental steps ('slices of cake') rather than overwhelming changes all at once.

Children 1st

Question - Could Scotland become a global leader in child-centred family-led decision making, and if not, what's holding us back?

- Yes!
- Principle is good

Holding us back:

- Families not always ready to engage
- Can be power imbalance without skilled and knowledgeable facilitation
- Can go badly and be damaging to families (can be done well but also badly)
- Local authorities not connected up
- What does 'family' mean and who decides?
- Do they have to be family groups?
- Could it be more well known? It is in some places but not others.
- Inconsistency

- Yes

Holding us back:

- Grass roots family-led: step back, see if support is there
- To do this well you have to engage the communities
- The community can come together around the family, people in the community are not supported to do this
- String advocates for family-led decision making
- the system not supporting the workforce to then support communities
- long term funding needed- everything changes too much (too many changes in funding and priorities)

- Yes
- The promise is amazing!
- We know it works!
- UNCRC!
- The foundations are there, audience is there

Holding us back:

- Ministers don't understand
 - Conflict with GDPR
 - Short term governance cycles- eg spend to save but no-one is spending
 - Stickiness between national vs local organisations
 - Toxic political space
 - What evidence is being used for decision making? Eg being led by 'financial' decisions that is actually erroneous
 - Who's paying? What are they paying for?
 - Can things grow organically or should we regulate? Missed trick not building this into bills?
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- Differences across local authorities and not joined up/ sharing
 - Structures that don't allow it
 - Resources/ investment
 - Diversifying the workforce and develop cultural competence for equitable availability and engagement with support
 - Meaningful engagement and outreach, not just expecting uptake
 - Combating negative perception/ difference

ArtClub? East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership

Question - Meaningful Participatory engagement (like ArtClub?) builds strong positive relationships. How can we maximise the potential for these relationships to enable authentic scaffolding & collaborative support to help our children and young people reach their full potential?

- Try and build safe relationships, inc. neurodivergence
 - Be mindful
 - See issues in crisis/ see issues in allowing expression to be possible/possibly more
 - an art space might be a better place for ND children and young people to express themselves honestly than the support based services often are
 - It made me think a bit about whether our models of family support were unintentionally bad for ND CYP, tbh; what's seen as a mutually supportive environment might just be a space where an ND person keeps being dominated
 - this is important because art spaces are often seen primarily as creative spaces— my feeling from ARTiculate is that they're probably better at flagging systems issues and putting children at the centre than the system which is notionally supposed to be doing that
 - voice can be non-verbal, voice can be expressed in this way (through art)
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- Power to communities
 - Be transparent about what we can and can't do
 - Maximise their experience/ creative experience
 - Full time education is very rigid – make it part of Art or Nat 4's
 - Meaningful relationships are missing – go to Art club and build that positive relationship
 - Feedback: Creative clubs maximise young people's experience being creative and build positive relationships (which is missing in yp's life)
 - Shift the power balance

- Respect in a relationship- how staff feel the need to segment their lives really prevent relationships, this has to mirror the young people compartmentalising aspects of their lives
 - Consistency – regardless of phase and stage, ‘progress’ or not
 - Flexibility- often see limitations when we are defining young people eg you are here because of ‘this’ or you can only discuss ‘this’.
 - Flexibility in working with young people- culturally this can be difficult with restricted funding and rigid frameworks
 - Recognising power dynamics, physical space, but also meta physical space
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- Thinking about creativity as inclusive as possible
 - Really sense tool
 - Use voice to drive outcomes / services
 - Engagement that leads to value
 - More accessible entrance
 - Enhancing co-production
 - Financially valuing voice
 - The relationship is the scaffolding
 - Creating pathways
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- Following children and young people’s passions (ie interest in guitar- get them a guitar to play/ singing lessons etc) – young people feel heard
 - Therapeutic
 - The arts help to access potential skills (eg didn’t know you could do a thing because you had no access to it)
 - Tapping into other resources- community spaces etc.
 - Space to create trust
 - Disclosure can happen- supervision for staff
 - More collaboration within communities to offer young people opportunities- who is in your community that can offer support?
 - How do we know who in our community could support?

Summary

The document explores how creative spaces, particularly art clubs, can better support neurodivergent children and young people compared to traditional support services. Key points include:

- **Safe Relationships & Inclusion**
Emphasis on building safe, mindful relationships that respect individuality and avoid dominance in family or support models.
- **Role of Art Spaces**
Art spaces are seen as more effective than rigid systems for enabling honest expression, highlighting systemic issues, and centering children's voices—both verbal and non-verbal.
- **Empowerment & Transparency**
Communities should be empowered, with clear communication about what services can and cannot provide.
- **Flexibility & Consistency**
Services need flexibility to avoid limiting young people by labels or rigid frameworks, while maintaining consistency regardless of progress or stage.
- **Creativity as Inclusive**
Creativity should be accessible and inclusive, using art as a tool for engagement, co-production, and valuing young people's voices.
- **Building Relationships Through Creative Clubs**
Creative clubs help maximize experiences, build positive relationships, and shift power dynamics.
- **Practical Actions**
 - Follow young people's passions (e.g., music lessons, instruments).
 - Use arts therapeutically to unlock hidden skills.
 - Collaborate with community resources for opportunities.
 - Create trust-building spaces where disclosure can happen safely.

- Challenges

Funding restrictions and rigid frameworks often limit flexibility and cultural responsiveness.