

#HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE

LET'S TALK

SEFTON'S 'GO TO' DIRECT WORK
TOOLS FOR COMMUNICATING
WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE





Message from Risthardh Hare, Director of Children's Services in Sefton

Ensuring the voice of children, young people and families is heard and reflected within the work we do requires meaningful engagement and direct involvement in decisions that impact their lives.

I hope that these tools put together by practitioners, managers and our young people act as a good starting point to support you in your work. Thank you to everyone across the services for all you do to support children, young people and families in Sefton.



Message from Lisa Cummings, Principal Social Worker

Spending time with children and young people; hearing about their life experiences, views, feelings, achievements, and aspirations for the future is a privilege. Some children irrespective of their early experiences will be happy and willing to talk with social workers and other childcare practitioners. Others will understandably take time and need to get to know professionals well before they can begin to trust and feel comfortable enough to share.

Children depending on their age, ability and needs will respond differently to different techniques and so the message is - **never give up** – their voice is important, and we need to try all we can to build rapport so that they are able to share their views and feelings. Different communication styles can be tried; some children will happily respond to question and answer type communication; others will prefer to go out and do an activity or speak in the car, the park, or whilst having some food. I met with our Youth Ambassadors (12-16) to seek their views about putting this booklet together; a number of them said they prefer to speak outside of their home; have a change of scenery and “walk and talk.”

Visual prompts may be preferred by children with complex needs; younger children may enjoy colouring and imaginative work. We realise that there are many tools out there but sometimes this can be overwhelming and so we thought it would be a good idea to share some Sefton favourites and build on this over time.



You will all be aware we are in a partnership with Leeds Strengthening Families, Protecting Children team and our aim is to work restoratively with children, young people and families; valuing their strengths and understanding their support networks. We hope you will find tools in this pack which compliment this approach.

Please take the time to read the inspiration behind the tools and practice using them with each other first. Please always keep a copy of the completed tool (photograph or original) and upload this to LCS; a new tab has been created to store this work separately – **under Direct Work.**

Using direct work tools can also be an effective use of time; the child's voice is clear within the tool and will be safely stored within LCS. The child's record can refer to this and highlight any pertinent points raised by the young person – as per Sefton Practice Standards please always use **blue font to highlight children's and young people's voices; or observations if they are too young to verbalise their views or non-verbal.**

At the back of this book you will find some smart working tips – my favourite 2 time saving tips; how to split your screen and how to use the snipping tool so that you can place examples of direct work or quotes/pictures drawn by the child directly into assessments or court reports. The child's voice really pops out if highlighted like this.

Be led by the child and young person – get to know what they enjoy first and work from there. When we meet children for the first time; conversation can sometimes feel really stifled. The circumstances in which you are meeting with the young person may be stressful for the child; they may feel torn if they speak with you; scared to tell others what their life is like or talk about things that are worrying them. They may be concerned about the impact of what they say not only on themselves but others in their family or friendship group. **Always remember to explain your role, the purpose for your involvement and safeguarding duties.**

We have placed different tools into categories, however all can be used throughout the child's journey and it is always a good idea to revisit work with children to see if anything has changed for them over time or for measuring progress and impact.

You will find coloured copies of the tools in designated spaces in Magdalen House on floors 3 and 4. Please let Business Support know if you take the last one.



You will find some useful references at the back of this book offering more specific links to support you in your work. Our plan is to expand this book over time; inviting entries from across Children's Services to showcase good practice examples. **Please contact me if you would like to share a “go to” tool.** As services develop, we will gain more ideas and hope to include more tools that can be used with the whole family.

We know that children and young people who live apart from their families will have questions about why this is so and need support and information to help them understand events and decisions which impact their lives. If they are not supported to understand why they are cared for by the local authority or within their extended family their story can often become very muddled. Katie Wrench in her book *Life Story Work for Fostered and Adopted Children* explains the importance of ensuring supportive scaffolding is surrounding children before beginning life story work. There is additional information attached as an appendix for you to consider. Always think about the impact discussions can have on the child and the rest of their family; to include foster carers who should be well informed about any work being undertaken.

Members of our Youth Ambassadors group have put together some tips which are important to them, they are attached at the back as Appendix 2. One key thing they highlight is the need for a check in after difficult discussions are held. Ensuring that support is available for children after visits is important – don't keep their carers in the dark; share relevant information.

Last point: Remember; gathering accurate information to support children to understand their feelings, identity and life journey is relevant to every team across Children's Services. We all have a responsibility to ensure accuracy and record in ways that will make sense to a child in later life and is respectful to them and their families. Work together as a partnership to identify who is the best person to speak with the child and communicate with each other.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to the development of this booklet; to members of Sefton Life Journey Task & Finish Group who still have further work to complete and to all the children and young people who we have learned from over many years. Our MAD group and Youth Ambassadors will continue to shape how we deliver services and continually improve so that we make a positive difference to as many children and families lives as possible.



LET'S TALK

RAPPORT BUILDING



Aim:

This direct work tool can be used to help children and young people think about their own problem-solving skills. The aim is to identify strengths rather than define hopes. The tool stars at the bottom of the ladders represent skills and strengths that the young person has developed. The snakes represent a backward step; but still provide an opportunity to talk about how they will use their skills, strengths, and support network to move forward again.

Inspiration:

I adapted this tool from the traditional game we all know – Snakes and Ladders. I had spotted a version of this tool in Barnardo's toolkit and seen similar in other resources. I made my own copy of this game and have used it with many children and young people to inform children, young people, and family assessments. I made my own counters and dice, but you could use buttons and a bought dice or create your own with the young person. I shared this tool as part of my presentation for progression to an I grade social worker. I talked about my work with the children and Lisa asked me if she could see the tool I used and share it wider as good practice. **Thanks – Sophie Satchell, Senior Social Worker, Assessment Team.**

Guidance:

You will likely be familiar with this game – each take turns to throw the dice and move across the board. If you land on a ladder, go up. If you land on a snake, come down. The stars at the bottom of the ladders represent skills and strengths that the young person has developed. If they land on the ladder; explore what they know about their strengths and own resources. The aim is to get to the end of the game; but we all know that this can take time with some ups and downs along the way. Think about your own stars – if you land on a ladder what strengths about yourself are you ready to share?


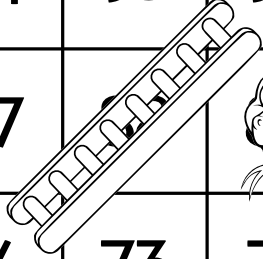












What you need:

Copy of Snakes and Ladders worksheet (attached – if you want to keep it nice; kindly ask Business Support colleagues if they can laminate this for you). If you have the board game yourself, you could also take this and introduce the idea of the tool stars at the bottom of the ladders. Don't forget you will need a dice and some buttons or counters.



LET'S TALK

SNAKES AND LADDERS

100		98	97	96	95	94	93	92	91
81	82	83	84	85	86	87			90
80	79	78	77		75		74	73	72
61	62		63	64	65		67	68	69
60	59	58	57	56	55		53	52	51
41		42		44	45	46	47	48	49
	39	38		36	35	34		33	32
21	22	23	24	25	26		28	29	30
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11
1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9
									10



Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



Aim:

This tool can be used to help build rapport with children, help them feel heard, also humanise yourself as more than just a professional and make the child/young person feel at ease.

Inspiration:

I'd read about his tool somewhere along the road as a way of getting past children feeling worried and nervous during your first session. Over time I've adapted it a bit -I often will use this at the beginning and end of session 1 to show children that I'm listening and taking things in -this has led to a lot of children asking for it to be a regular start/end to sessions as a 'warm up/cool down' which I think is a great idea as it works as a transition from whatever they had come from to seeing me and back again and can be a good grounding exercise to help them leave the session.

Thanks Pam Jones, Early Help Worker, Integrated Front Door

Guidance:

Explain to the child you're going to play the pebble game (you can call it what you want depending on what you're using to play the game)-explain the rules of the game:

Each person will have a time set for one minute. Each person has to say things they know are true-the aim is for this to become solely about each other, however in early sessions the rules can be relaxed to help the child (and yourself if you don't know too much about them yet) and can include the other persons physical appearance, the room you're in or the settling you're in. As your preparing you may want to pepper your discussion with a few small facts about yourself you'd be happy to share and of course you will be talking about who you are, what you do and why you're coming to see them; all facts that they can use and help make things clear for the child.

Each person takes their turn saying things that are true-I always take the opportunity to say at least 3 things that are obviously silly and wrong, so the child gets a head start. The other person puts a pebble into a container for each correct statement. At the end of the minute these are counted to see who got the most.

What you need:

A box or container to put items into, pebbles (or pinecones, shells, small figure toys-anything small and tactile-potentially aimed at the child's interests. In the past I've forgotten my resources and used items we've found in the room which has added a bit of humour to the session), a timer (stopwatch or the timer on your phone), a fun relaxed manner!



LET'S TALK

PEBBLE GAME



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Aim:

This direct work tool is a good rapport building tool. You can make the questions as easy or as complicated as you wish. It's always best to get some ideas from the child/young person you are communicating with so that they feel part of the game and have a sense of control. Think about what sort of issues may come up and always ensure there is supportive scaffolding around young people when undertaking direct work. This game can be good for children who prefer not to sit down; get active and have some fun.

Inspiration:

This is my "go to" direct work tool. I have used this with children and young people of different ages to get to know them and increase confidence. I enjoy being active and having fun with the young people I work with and this game allows just that; so is well suited to children who prefer to be up and about.

Thanks- Kayleigh Blue, Social Worker, Help and Protection

Guidance:

Use the attached leaflet for some ideas of questions you might want to ask. Also print out the Yes/No signs in red and blue. Always start with a good introduction to explain the game; make clear that some personal questions are out of bounds – this game is about getting to know each other. Ask the young person to suggest some things they would like to know about you. Have you ever swum in the sea? Have you ever been to a football match? Have you ever made a daisy chain? Have you ever slept in when you should have been somewhere important? Have you ever forgot to brush your teeth? Have you ever been to hospital? Have you ever made a snowman? There is scope in this game to move on as you get to know each other better and introduce feelings – Have you ever felt really cold? Have you ever felt very happy? Have you ever felt lonely?

What you need:

Direct work tool- Have you ever? (attached). Print off 2 lists of questions so that you can each answer the questions and place the questions under the YES/NO signs. This is so that you can come back to them and chat more about each point – or just use the prompts to promote conversation. Take some spare paper and pens with you – you will definitely want to add some questions from the young person. Also, take the 2 A4 pages – one with YES and one with NO on. Think about how you are going to record what you learn – maybe take a photograph of the lists when they are on the floor so that you can upload the direct work to the child's file.



Have you ever swum in the sea?

Have you ever felt happy?

Have you ever forgot to brush your teeth?

Have you ever made a snowperson?

Have you ever been to a football match?

Have you ever felt cold?

Have you ever been to hospital?

Have you ever slept in when you should have been somewhere important?

Have you ever felt lonely?

Have you ever made a daisy chain?



YES



NO



Aim:

This tool can help in getting to know children and young people; allowing them the chance to ask things about you too. Personalising the Jenga game with questions agreed by you and the young person can be a fun way of finding out key things about each other – what schools you have been to, your favourite food, colour, friend etc. There is scope to add additional questions as your relationship develops and the child's confidence and trust builds. When undertaking any direct work; always establish what support is in place for the child or young person and let their carer know how you plan to work together.

Inspiration:

When communicating with children and young people; why not make it as fun as possible? I have a Jenga game in my car boot which I have played with many children over my social work career. During Practice Week 2021; Laura Knights (AD) observed a young person and I playing this game and thought it was a great way to engage; much more relaxed than questions and answers.

Thanks- Helen Cavanna, IRO Team Manager

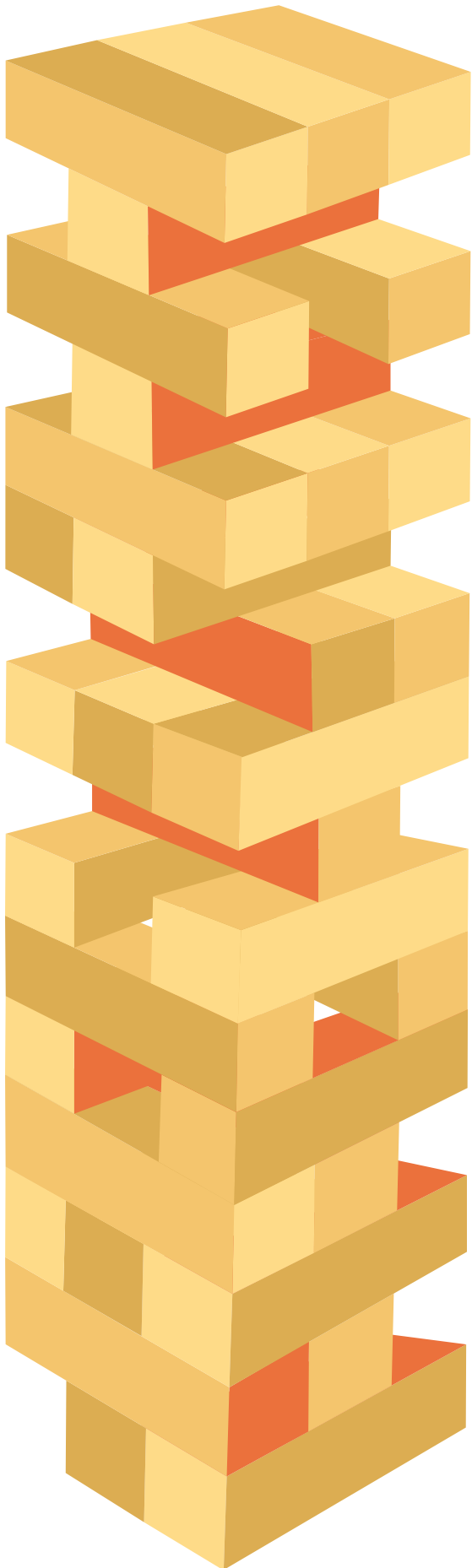
Guidance:

Ask the child/young person whether they have played Jenga before; they may know the game as “Tumbling Towers” (another version on sale in Home and Bargain, I think). If they have played before they will know what the purpose is; to build the tower as high as you can without it falling; each time taking out one piece of wood which may make the tower tumble! Before the tower is set up; write some questions on stickers and pop them on the mini pieces of wood. Start with simple things that the child is happy to talk about – ask them to help you write the questions on the stickers or give you some ideas for you to write down. If young people are not able to answer some questions, you can explore this with them; suggest a pass. Most important of all; have fun and try and keep the Tower tall.

What you need:

Jenga or Tumbling Towers game; stickers, pens





FAVE FOOD?

FAVE BOOK?

FAVE HOBBY?

FAVE TV SHOW?

FAVE SONG?



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Aim:

The direct work tool encourages interaction through play. It encourages communication without being intrusive and the session can be child led. When you start the session, the child should be advised that some topics could be hard to talk about, and they will be supported and encouraged to talk if they wish to. They should also be advised they can speak with their parents or carers and have them play the game with them. It is good child centred practice to allow the child to take the lead with the game and let them choose subjects. This gives the child / young person ownership of the session and enables them to change the headings each time.

Inspiration:

I have used this tool when I cared for children and young people in residential settings in Sefton. It helped me understand what the children liked, disliked and areas where they may be struggling. It also enabled me to show I had listened to the child and that I was interested in their lives as well as wanting to spend valuable time with them.

Thank you - Ged Simons, Practice Assessor Lead - Social Work Academy

Guidance:

How does this game work?






A piece of paper is split into sections. All topics can be agreed at the start of each game. Each person takes it in turn starting by saying A out loud and then going through the alphabet silently until the other person playing the game says stop. The players then complete each topic i.e., boy, girl etc with that letter. Ten points are given to each answer that nobody else gets and five points for the answers that are duplicated. The scores are then added in the total section at the end of each line.

What do you need?

Plain paper and pens / coloured pencils/ markers.





TOTAL							
BEST DAY OUT							
FAVE SUBJECT AT SCHOOL							
BEST THING IN MY HOUSE							
FAVE FOOD							
FAVE MUSIC ARTIST							
FAVE PET NAME							
GIRL							
BOY							



Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



Aim:

This direct work tool can be used to help children and young people identify feelings. This is a good tool to begin with – we can't assume that children think the same; know the words to describe feelings. We need to be on the same page if we are going to understand their world and support them as best, we can.

Inspiration:

I worked for CAFCASS in a variety of roles for 14 years. An important part of my work was listening to children – ascertaining their views, wishes and feelings. We used emoji stickers regularly to help children talk and explain their feelings – you can often find stickers like this in supermarkets but if you can't or don't have packs of feelings cards; try using this tool to begin conversations around spotting feelings. **Thanks Lisa Cummings, Principal Social Worker.**

Guidance:

Basically, this is about recognising emotions – children and young people who have access to mobile phones will recognise some of these faces as they are used in text messaging a lot. I find it best just to begin with naming the emotions – sometimes you will have different perceptions – once you have considered a range of emotions you can use the faces to link to situations, plans, people or events. Be as creative as you want – you can use the faces to talk about a particular plan e.g., a change of school, going on holiday, not seeing an old friend, or more generally to think about a range of things. It's rare to have only one feeling about something; often we have mixed emotions which can be harder to explain but is absolutely understandable.

What you need:

Copy of the Emoji faces worksheet (attached) or your own stickers or cards if you have them. If you are artistic or are working with a child who is, start off with a blank sheet of paper and draw circles on this – they may want to draw their own version of facial expressions. Coloured pens, any craft bits you may have in your direct work toolbox!





Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



Aim:

This tool can be used with young people to understand where they are at – emotionally, physically or practically. It can help you talk about feelings, anxieties, and goals and what needs to happen to help them feel better or move closer towards next steps or what they want to achieve.

Inspiration:

We used this tool in a team meeting recently to gain everyone's perspective. Speaking with Lisa, PSW on the way to Tams – we spoke about how it had helped everyone to express their views. The team had found it helpful, and we thought it could also be a good tool to use with our care experienced young people, teenagers or families. **Thanks – Care Experienced Team.**

Guidance:

Are you ready to go, full of the joys, sorted? In green. Feeling cautious/unsure? bit worried? on the brink of tipping over the edge? In amber. Do you feel out of control? Overwhelmed? Lost direction? Fuming with anger? In red. Think about each colour within the traffic light to support discussion around change, loss, or transition. You can use the traffic lights to scale feelings – what's happened to move up to amber? What would need to happen to help you feel more comfortable/settled at green etc?

This tool can also be used to plan practically; write in the green traffic light things that you have organised; in amber things you are about to sort, in red future aims/barriers to overcome. The could be good when talking with young people about college, jobs, housing, staying connected with family etc. Have a look at the worryometer tool too. It's the same concept and can support people to develop solution focused thinking and show people how far they have come if repeated over time.

What you need:

Pen and paper if you want to draw the traffic lights unplanned or take the Traffic light tool out with you and a few pens or Worryometer tool





**NO CLUE WHAT WILL
HAPPEN NEXT,
WORRIED, ANXIOUS,
PANICKED**



**OK, NERVOUS BUT
COPING, SEMI
ORGANISED**

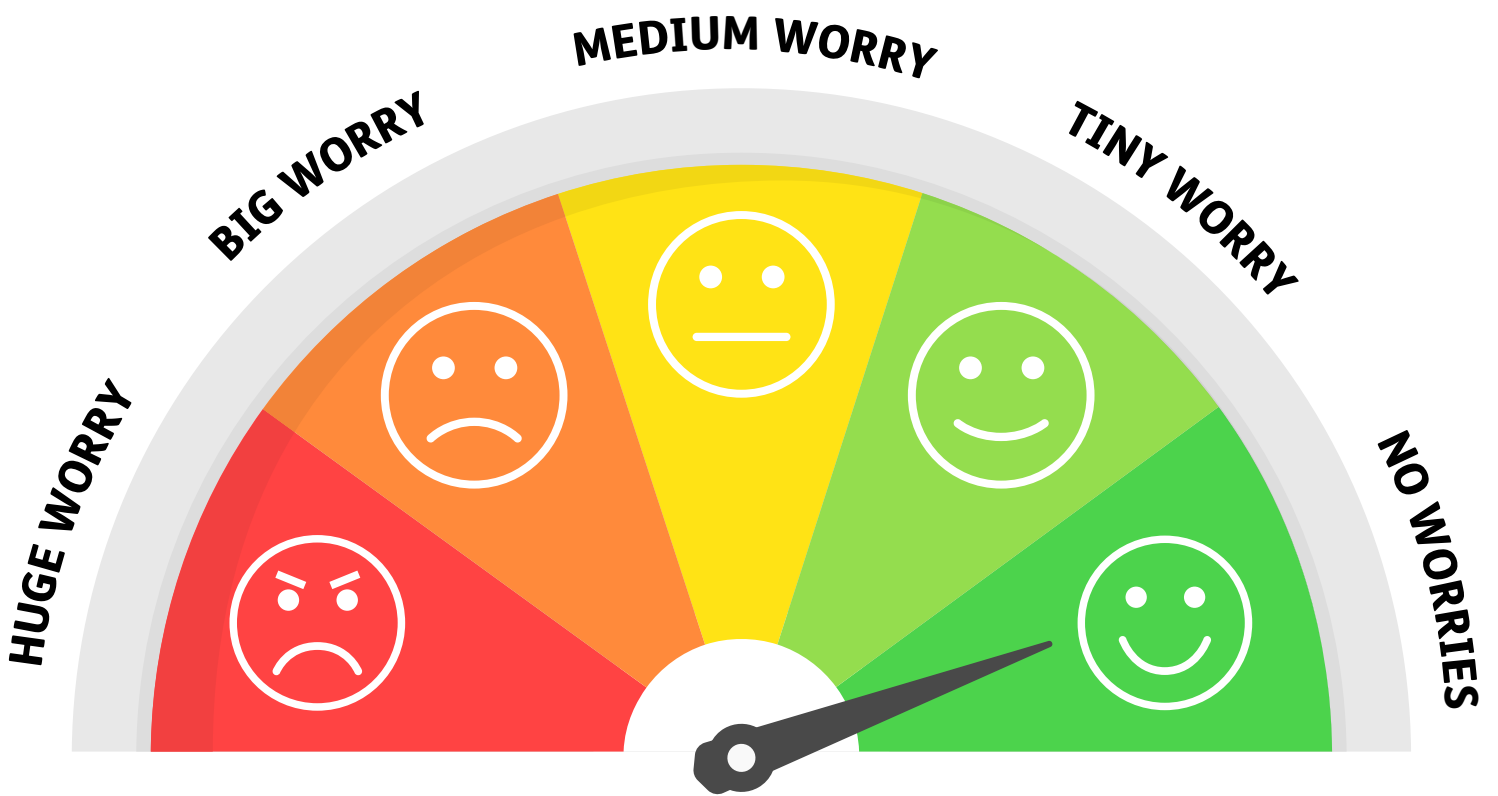


**HAPPY, SORTED, IN
CONTROL**



LET'S TALK

TRAFFIC LIGHTS



Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



Aim:

This direct work tool can be used to help children and young people talk about their feelings, their identity and what is important to them. Some feelings we show in our expressions, behaviours, or voice. Other feelings can be stored up in our bodies and are not always easily visible to others or recognised by ourselves. You should always build rapport with young people before using a tool like this. You could also adapt this tool to work with parents.

Inspiration:

I worked as a Project Worker for Barnardo's Keeping Children Safe Project for a number of years. This was a therapeutic social work role; as a team we focused on work to help children explore their feelings and help them keep safe. We also worked with parents to empower them to keep their children safe. I used versions of this tool with many young people to help them express their feelings and think more about what others see and how we feel. I'm sure we have all felt butterflies in our stomachs when on the outside you may look calm. Where do you feel feelings in your body? **Thanks - Lisa Cummings, Principal Social Worker.**

Guidance:

You can begin slowly by talking about feelings with children – giving and asking them for examples of when they have felt something but perhaps not shown it. I have a beautiful shell in my direct work toolbox which I have used a lot – the outside is jagged and colourful and the inside perfectly smooth. Sharing this has helped me to explore the inside out concept. It's always good to have a few useful items in your toolbox to back up ideas you are sharing. Think with the young person about a part of their body where they hold their feelings – some children will talk about having a volcano in their tummy or muddles in their head. You can build conversation over the session; think about triggers for emotions, how they can deal with these; who they can talk to; also, what they notice about others and how they manage emotions. This tool works well after doing some basic work on identifying emotions. Think about the emoji faces tool before you introduce this.

What you need:

Copy of Inside Out worksheet (attached). If you are artistic or are working with a child who is, let them draw themselves. If they want to draw around their own body; take some lining paper with you. You will need pens or felt tips for writing. Any craft bits, stickers, shells you may have in your direct work toolbox!

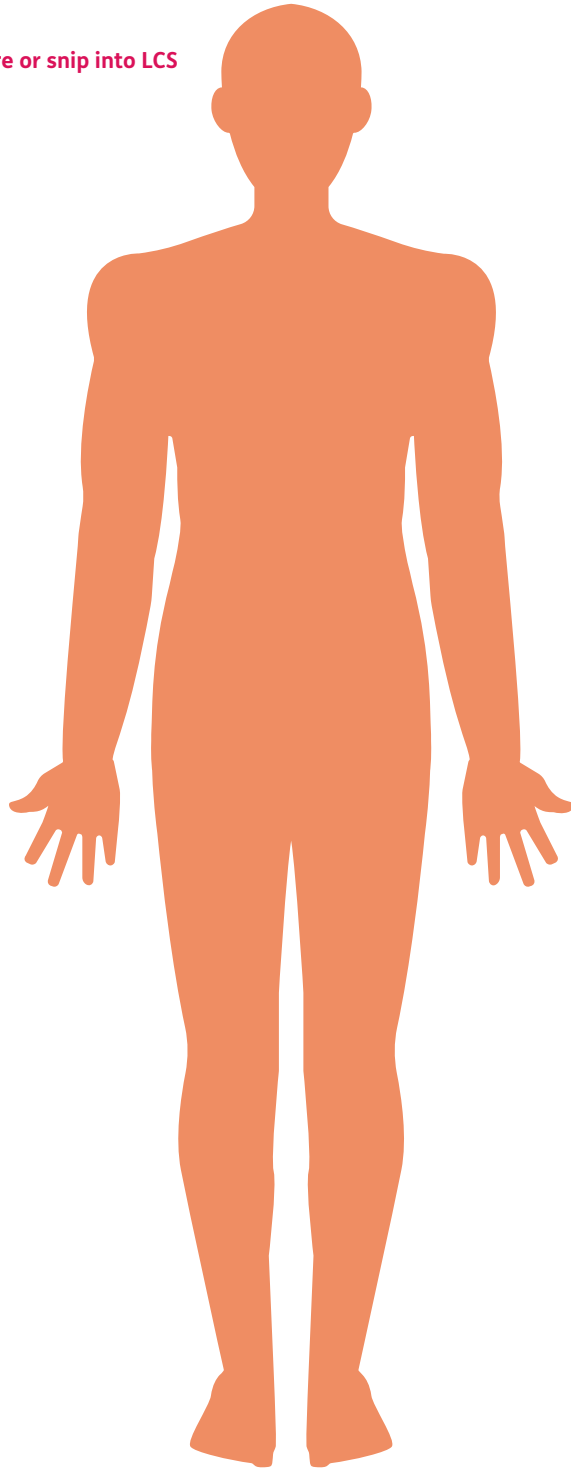


LET'S TALK

INSIDE OUT



Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



Aim:

This direct work tool can be used to help children and young people talk about their identity and what is important to them as an individual. You could also adapt it to work with parents. You should always build rapport with young people before using a tool like this. Think about whether they have support and speak with their parents/carers about what you plan to look at when undertaking direct work. It is essential that supportive scaffolding is around our young people.

Inspiration:

The body is my go-to tool and the first piece of direct work I use when starting life story work. It is hard to talk to professionals, it is even harder when put on the spot to tell other what we like, don't like etc. This tool is a way of finding out what/who is important to the child in a fun and relaxed format. **Thanks- Jennifer Durrans, Child Social Care Support Worker**

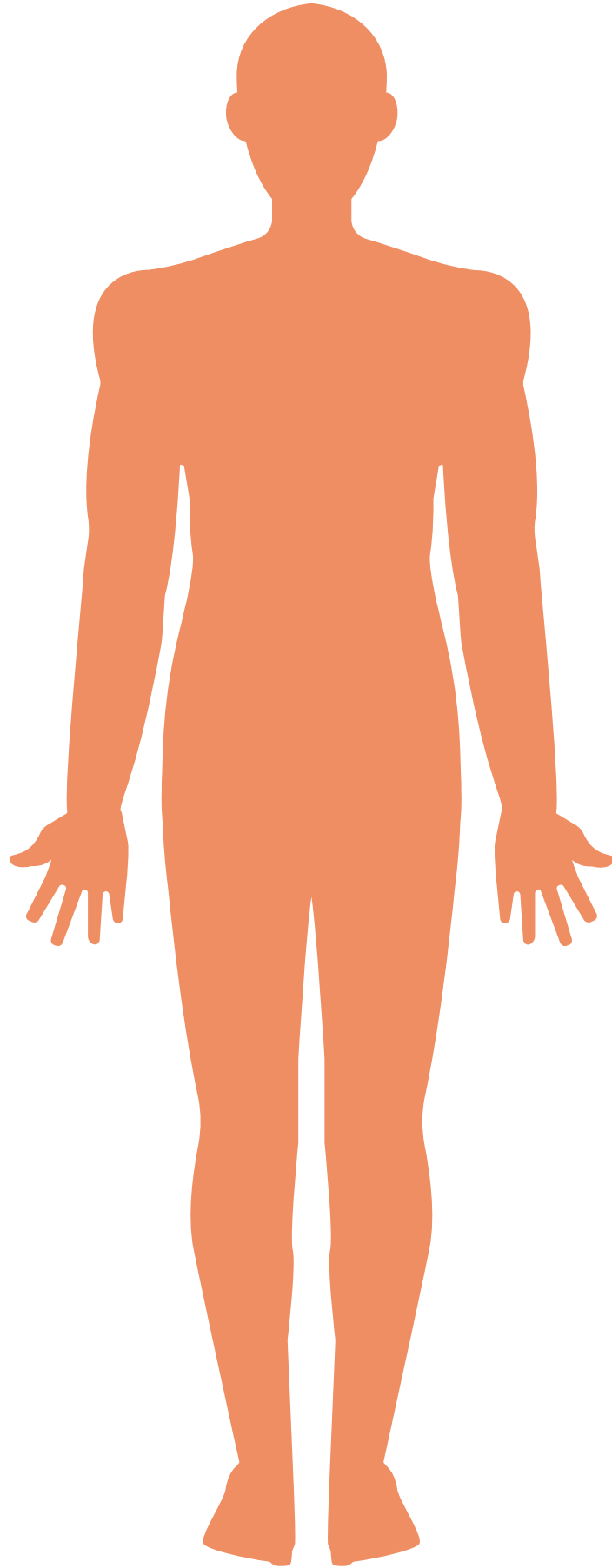
Guidance:

You can either, use a A4 piece of paper or draw around the child on a large piece of paper (large roll of lining paper). I always use A4 paper the reason for this is to see how the child draws themselves on the paper – do they take up the whole sheet, do they draw themselves very small in one corner of the paper. Direct work is also about interpreting what is not said as to what is said. Once the body is drawn, ask the child to dress the body in their favourite clothes, with their colour hair, eyes, freckles etc. Start adding things around the body.: - their height (always carry a tape measure, at the end of life story work, I always remeasure to see how much they have grown over the year), their favourite food, book, film etc. Talk as you go, why are they your favourite clothes? What makes them special? do you remember going to buy them? Where they a gift, if so, who from? Why is that your favourite book, did you read it on your own? Who read it to you? Have you read it more than once. Who is your family, are you a brother or sister to anyone what are their names? do you know how old they are? All these questions whilst doing the work will build up a brief picture of what and who is important to the child. Whilst the child draws themselves, I do the same, I draw myself and build up a picture of me, this gives the child a snap view of you and what you like this starts to build the foundations of the relationship you will need with the child whilst undertaking their life story work.

What you need:

One plain piece of paper. Felt tip pens for colouring and a ball point pen for writing around the body.





Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



Aim:

This direct work tool can be used to help gain an understanding of the child's lived experience; allowing them to express their views and feelings via Stickman. It is important to firstly establish that children recognise emotion; so, start off slowly and have some fun. Perhaps think about using the emoji faces tool before Stickman.

Inspiration:

I developed this tool when I was responsible for undertaking direct work with children and young people and have used it many times to help children to express their feelings. I love the tool as it is a simple idea and you don't need anything other than paper and a pen. This helps me to engage freely with young people. Some children you work with may have their own ideas of what a Stickman looks like if they have read Stickman by Julia Donaldson, a great book by the way!

Thanks Nicola Read, Learning & Development Officer

Guidance:

Start by talking about a Stickman – someone with a body, face and arms and legs that look like sticks. You could ask the child/young person if they would like to draw a Stickman to get them into the idea. The attached tool shows a Stickman in 3 different poses – you can use this to support your conversation; draw the Stickman yourself or ask the young person to draw different Stickmen.

First image (top right): Starting with the first image (top right) ask the young person if they can guess how the Stickman might be feeling – happy, worried, sad etc. Checking that they can identify emotions is an important part of any work we do with children. Relate the Stickman to them and the reasons why Children's Services are involved – if they identify that the Stickman is worried – ask how we would know if they were worried, how do they show how they feel; how would we/others know how they are feeling – what might they say, look like; how might they act? . You can ask them if its ok to write their responses next to the Stickmen or they may prefer to write themselves.

Second image (middle): Ask what they think needs to happen? What needs to change? Who is responsible for this? Who could help them?

Third image (bottom right): Ask what would make them happy? How they would feel if the above changes were made? How would we know that they were happier? okay? feeling better? It is important that you consider and analyse what the young person is telling you. What does this mean for them? How will what they share with you inform how you support them or their plan?

Where appropriate feedback to the child's care giver in a sensitive way anything significant or additional support needed.

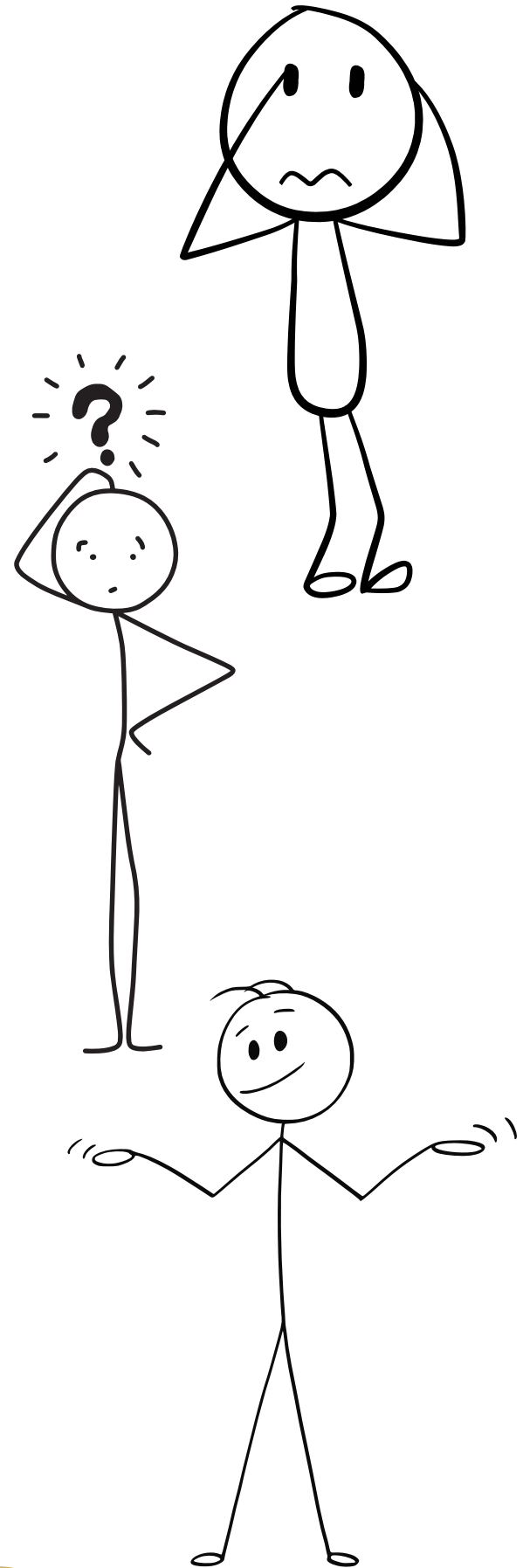
What you need:

Direct work tool Stickman or a plain piece of paper, pens, or pencils.



LET'S TALK

STICKMAN



Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



Aim:

This direct work tool can be used to help children and young people talk about their feelings. You could also adapt it to work with parents. You should always build rapport with young people before using a tool like this. Think about whether they have support and speak with their parents/carers about what you plan to look at when undertaking direct work.

Inspiration:

When I qualified as a Social Worker in 1996; the book “The Huge Bag of Worries” was a popular direct work tool. I read this book with many children and young people and have referred to it over the years. The book by Victoria Ironside is still available on Amazon and it is celebrating its 25th year in publication. It is a reassuring book which can help children open up about their feelings, fears, and anxieties. As they identify worries; you can help to think about ways to help them manage their feelings or people who are there to support them and address issues on their behalf. Jenny, the child in the book realises as she carries her bag around everywhere she goes that it is getting heavier and heavier with more and more worries! When it gets too heavy it’s bound to explode! Some children will love to hear the story; others will be able to think about their own worries and how they can sometimes weigh you down by talking about the concept.

Thanks- Lisa Cummings, Principal Social Worker.

Guidance:

Imagine you had a huge ruck sack on your back or that you were pulling a really heavy suitcase along. If you keep adding more to it; the bag may one day explode, or things might fall out when you don’t expect them too. This could be embarrassing, upsetting, or annoying. Take the idea of a bag overflowing; adding more and more worries into it and not talking about things to help you manage your feelings. By taking out even just one worry and discussing this; you might just feel a little lighter and more relaxed. We know that children tell us that they want to feel safe and be reassured that things will be ok; that’s not always a given but this tool will help you to support children to express themselves and think about support. Always be clear that if a worry is a big one that places them or others at harm; you will need to tell someone else.

What you need:

Copy of the Huge Bag of Worries worksheet (attached). If you are artistic or are working with a child who has a particular bag they love, they can draw that, or you could take a photograph of it and enlarge this. You will need pens or felt tips for writing. Any craft bits, stickers you may have in your direct work toolbox!



LET'S TALK

HUGE BAG OF WORRIES



 Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



#HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #

LET'S TALK

FAMILY TREES AND SUPPORT NETWORKS



Aim:

This direct work tool encourages thoughtful interaction and communication; it will help you to understand who is important to a child. The aim of the session is to clearly understand the child's relationship line and who they feel they could talk to if they need to within their own family setting. From a restorative perspective, this then allows the child to consider the quality of family relationships.

You could ask questions like:

- Who is important to you and why?
- What makes a relationship with someone else good?
- What do you like most about your relationship with X?
- Do you remember a time when your relationship was more relaxed, easier, happier? Do you wonder why this changed?
- How do you think we could improve that relationship to make it better for you?

The aim is to also to help family members understand the child's perspective of their relationships and improve relationships. If you plan to share the child's views with their parents or the court for example, make this explicit to the child at the outset of your work.

Inspiration:

I have used this format several times with lots of young people and children within Sefton Children's Services. It helped me have a greater understanding of family dynamics and enabled the child's voice to be heard. It also enabled me to have open and honest conversations with the child, families, and carers to help them formulate their own pathway for improving their situation.

Feedback from children and families about the success of this session has been very positive. They have reported in the past, this has helped them understand their family dynamics and helped them gauge the children's perspective.

Thanks- Ged Simons, Practice Assessor Lead, Social Work Academy

Guidance:

You should explain that you are trying to learn who is important in their lives and who they feel closest to. You can use the stick person on the sheet attached to start this session. Explain that the person will be holding balloons, they will draw the line and assign each balloon to people in their life. The nearer the line is to the hand, the closer the person is to the child. The child can write the person's name in the balloon. Ask the child if they would like anyone to hold their hand - if so they can draw a person next to them and say who that is. You can discuss any person's name and the reason why the child/ young person put that person at the place they did at any point. You might spend time naming the people who the child feels closest too - its important to allow enough time to talk more about each person so you understand why. Also, don't jump to conclusions if a child places a family member far away - they may live at a distance -they could still have close relationship.

What do you need?

Plain paper, pencil, pens, rubber, coloured pencils, markers and sticky back paper. The children may want to keep their sheet so it could be useful to also have a plastic sleeve / folder which they could use. If so, don't forget to take a photo to upload to LCS and write up work within case notes.



LET'S TALK

BALLOON PERSON



Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



Aim:

The direct work tool can be used with a child or young person to explore the relationships around them. The tool can be adapted to discuss friendships, exploring how the friendship began, where they talk the most, how long they have had the friendship and the strength of the friendship. Through doing this, the visual tool allows the child/young person to physically see the support that they have around them, at the same time it enables practitioners to gain a greater understanding of the child/young persons lived experience.

Inspiration:

As a Newly Qualified Social Worker, I found that a lot of the direct work I had been completing was with parents/carers through completing genograms and exploring their support networks. When working with one teenager, I learnt that they enjoyed talking about their friendships or fallings out the most, and this appeared to be what she prioritised in her life at this time. Despite this, she had that many friends that I could not keep track of all the new names on each visit, nor where she was meeting and making these new friends. Therefore, I reflected on how, in my practice, I would pay lots of attention to parents/carers support network and assume that the parents/carers and family were the children's support network, disregarding how for many children, it is their friends who they consider their support network. **Thanks – Anna Smith, Newly Qualified Social Worker, Sefton Social Work Academy**

Guidance:

Start with asking the child/young person if they wish to write or draw, or whether they would prefer yourself to do the writing throughout the conversation. In the middle of the page either write the child's name, the word friendships or the word enemies. Then start by asking the child if there is anyone they would wish to speak about; let the child take the lead, see who they identify as being important to them, use open questions to explore how the friendship began, what they find supportive about the friendship, the age of the friend and how long they have had the friendship. Ask the child how they would like to represent certain things. Again, if the child wants to talk about their difficult relationships, put a word in the middle to represent this and again, use open questions to explore what led to the difficulties and how this made them feel. This can be revisited over time.

What you need:

A blank A3 piece of paper and colouring pens/pencils. Example attached.





Aim:

This direct work tool can be used to help children and young people tell you about their family and others in their life who are significant.

Inspiration:

We all know how important it is that we understand a child family background. This is important at every stage of their journey – at the IFD when contacts are first received and throughout the life of our involvement. This is perhaps a more child friendly version of a genogram – it allows the child to set out who is in their family. This can then be compared with genograms that may have been completed with parents or carers. Our aim is to find out who the child considers to be their family, who they feel closest too but also allow them to think about people who they may not spend time with or see. You can use this tool to support matching or when asked to consider Child Arrangement Orders, Special Guardianship or relationships with brothers, sisters, cousins etc.

Thanks – Lisa Cummings, Principal Social Worker.

Guidance:

Use the attached picture of the apple tree with the child to add names of their family. If they would like to put the people, they are closest to nearest to the tree they can or they might want to add the names of people in their family then use different colours or numbers for each of the apples. You can add more branches as you go and also add apples on the ground if they talk of people, they no longer spend time with.

Another way of using this tool is to draw an onion and think about the layers – adding the names of the closest people to the centre of the onion. Be guided by the young person they may prefer to show their relationships in their own unique way – use this as an idea.

What you need:

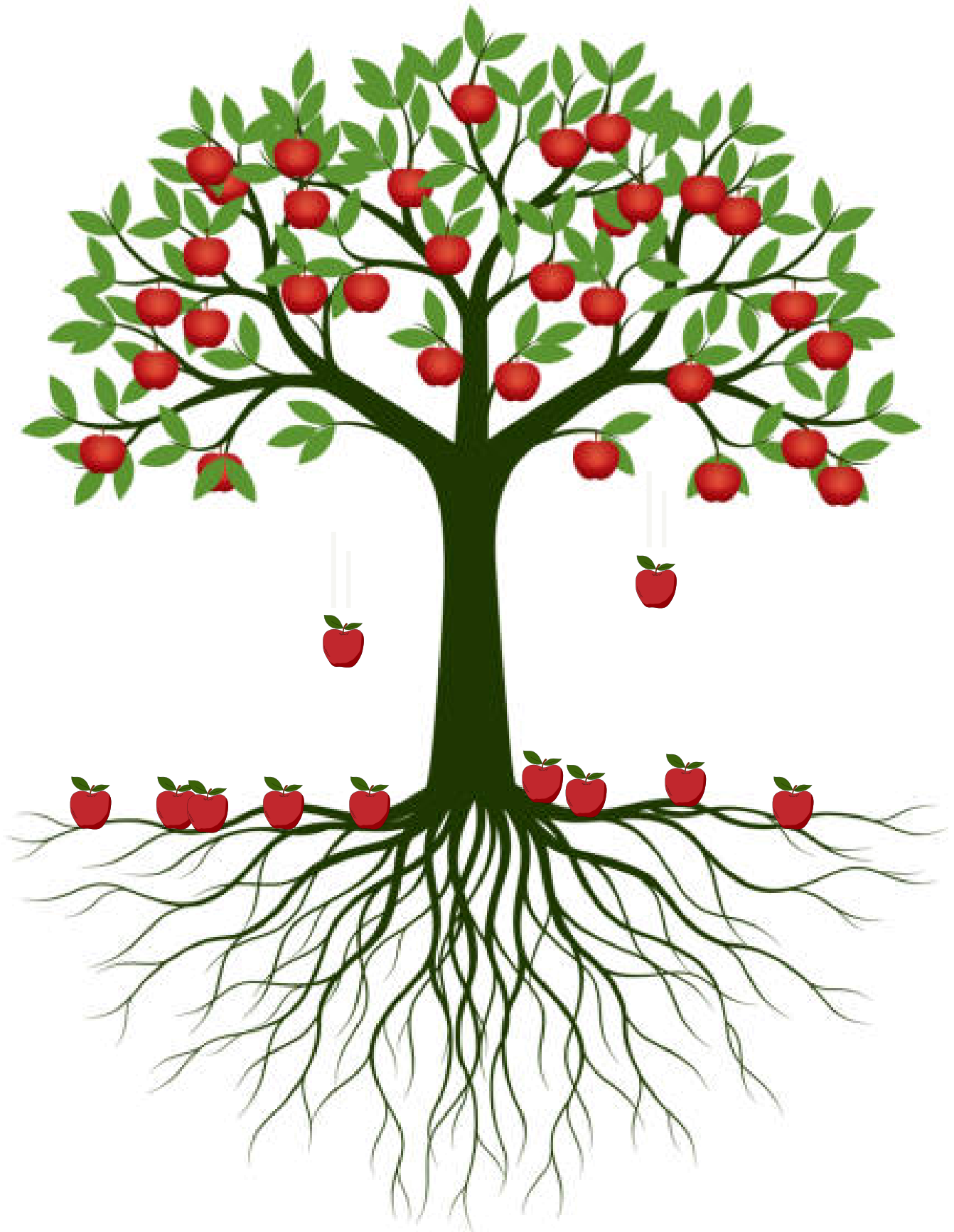
Copy of Family tree worksheet, coloured pens. If the child wants to take away their work, ask to take a photograph of it to keep safe on their record.





LET'S TALK

FAMILY TREE



Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



#HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE

LET'S TALK

ROUTINES



Aim:

This direct work tool can be used with children, young people, parents, and families to understand daily lived experience, family life and routines. You should always build rapport with young people first and begin with gentle questions to gauge how comfortable they are to talk. Always think about whether young people have support in place and speak with their parents/carers about what you plan to look at when undertaking direct work. It is essential that supportive scaffolding is around our young people. With this tool, it will help if you are able to give examples of things you do at different parts of the day.

Inspiration:

I recently submitted my portfolio to complete my ASYE. In this, I referred to a range of direct work tools in my analysis. Lisa Cummings PSW asked to meet with me afterwards to tell her more about the tools I had used and explain more about how they had helped to increase my understanding of children's daily lives. I showed Lisa the Tick Tock tool to be used to support discussion around a young person's routine – when they get up, what time they have breakfast, school lessons, teatime, and bedtime etc. As you get to know the young person better, you can talk about different days of the week as well as times. The young people I have worked with have been able to tell the time and break their day down; younger children may prefer to think about morning, afternoon, teatime, and bedtime.

Thanks- Charley Davidson, Social Worker, Help and Protection Team

Guidance:

The attached worksheet of a clock can be used firstly to check out whether children can tell the time. You may find that they would prefer to use a 24-hour clock. You can revamp the clock; personalise it as part of this activity. It would seem logical to start at the beginning of the day, but it really doesn't matter; it may be that a young person will feel more comfortable talking about their school timetable first – be led by them.

There is opportunity to really develop your understanding of the child's daily lived experience by considering additional questions as follow up – who helps you get ready in the morning, who would you go to in school if you felt hungry/at home, who reminds you to brush your teeth at bedtime. Also, think about how weekend routines differ to the week. If children spend time with different family members at different points in the week; this will help you to gauge whether they understand plans that impact on them. By allowing the child to describe their day using their own language; you can check out that you have understood them correctly – people can often use different language to describe things, e.g. dinner vs tea.

What you need:

Copy of the Tick Tock worksheet (attached). If you are artistic or are working with a child who has a particular clock at home, they could draw this themselves– others may want something like Big Ben or a modern 24-hour clock on a mobile phone. You will need pens or felt tips for writing. Any craft bits, stickers you may have in your direct work toolbox!





Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



Aim:

This picture tool can be used to support conversations around routine, mealtimes, preferences, and food preparation etc. Mealtimes can be stressful; food can be sparse. Food can act as a comfort and can also be used to celebrate special times or occasions. Children can learn cooking skills to help them develop independence; others can be relied upon to cook if they have caring responsibilities. If children cannot be cared for at home; we need to know what they enjoy eating most, whether they have any dietary needs or individual or cultural preferences. Who prepares food in their home? Do they help? Let's get to know a little more; always consider the impact of what children are telling you.

Inspiration:

I recently submitted my portfolio to complete my ASYE. In this, I referred to a range of direct Another tool from the amazing Safeguarding Lead in a school I worked in when I was living and studying Social Work in Birmingham. Thanks – Lisa Cummings, Principal Social Worker

Guidance:

Use the tool to learn more about the child. It could be good to start asking about their school day – what time they eat and what sort of food they enjoy; who they sit with etc? Open up the conversation; spend time on the drawing and allow conversation to follow.

What you need:

Food that rocks tool. Coloured pens, magazine as a prompt if you think this could be good.





Aim:

This direct work tool can be used with children, young people and adults, it can work well to find out who is meeting the child's needs but can also show who the child feels are supporting them within the home. It is a fun direct work tool and so should help a child to relax into a game.

Inspiration:

This was something that I found on the Social Work Facebook account. It is something that I have used on a number of occasions and shared with families and front-line social workers in my previous Local Authority to support them with obtaining a more rounded view of family life.

Thanks- Andrea Fullerton, Practice Assessor Lead – Sefton Social Work Academy.

Guidance:

The attached worksheet is a series of cards which should be cut out and laminated to make them more appealing to children/young people.

The original guidance for this activity suggests asking the child to draw pictures of each family member e.g. dad, nan, Uncle Jim, cousin Sarah and Heidi, the cockapoo- then add a person called Nobody, this is for a job that no one does to help the child.

The cards themselves should be lay face down with the child picking each one in turn.

The child will then choose 'Whose Job' it is and put it in front of this person. If the child states that nobody does this job check that there aren't any other family members who do this for them. It might be that someone outside of the family completes that role. If this is the case, it will also allow you to explore possible support networks and contingency plans if the child feels some of this help is external. We all know that recording the work completed with a child is important for their record so take a photograph of the work once completed and **ensure it is uploaded to direct work.**

What you need:

Cards (attached)



LET'S TALK

WHOSE JOB

**OPEN THE
MAIL**



MAKE TEA



**WASH
CLOTHES**



**KEEP
THINGS
SAFE**



**COLLECT
MEDICINE**



**WASH
DISHES**



BUY FOOD



**GIVE OUT
BUS FARE**



**MAKE
BREAKFAST**



**GET TO
SCHOOL**



**HELP WITH
WORRIES**



**HELP WITH
HOMEWORK**



Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



**PUT ME TO
BED**



**BUY
PRESENTS**



**LOOK
AFTER PETS**



**READ ME A
STORY**



**MAKE THE
BEDS**



**MAKE ME
LAUGH**



**KEEP ME
SAFE**



**SPEAK TO
SOCIAL
WORKER**



**MAKE
DOCTORS
APPOINTMENT**



**KEEP THE
FRIDGE
CLEAN**



**BUY
CLOTHES**



**BOIL THE
KETTLE**



USE THE
MICROWAVE



BAKE A
BIRTHDAY
CAKE



ORDER A
TAKEAWAY



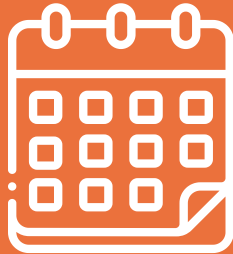
LOCK THE
DOOR AT
NIGHT



WATCH THE
BABY



ORGANISE
CLUBS



DECIDE
WHO VISITS



GIVE
CUDDLES



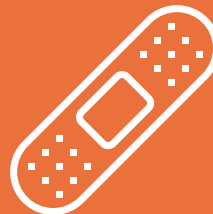
TELL ME
WHEN TO
TAKE A BATH



MAKE SURE I
HAVE
TOOTHPASTE



HELP ME
WHEN I
HURT
MYSELF



LOOK AFTER
ME WHEN
IM ILL



Aim:

This tool can be used to explore day to day life routines with children, young people, or families. It can be used to focus on schooling, college, home life, planning transition etc.

Inspiration:

I worked with an amazing school in Birmingham when I trained as a Social Worker. The Safeguarding Lead and I ran a group for children who it was known had been exposed to domestic abuse. Some of the children were living in refuges close to the school and had anxieties around coming into school and going home; their lives had been unpredictable, and some felt nervous about leaving their mum and younger brothers and sisters when they went to school. Talking with them about what they did during different days of the week helped them to name what they were worried about and also allowed them to talk about good days where they felt less anxious. A simple tool that could be used in many different ways. **Thanks- Tracy McKeating, Service Manager, School Support Services**

Guidance:

Use the picture of days of the week with the young person in a variety of ways e.g., a homework assignment planner, meals, to set out family time arrangements, clubs or activities or to help the child talk about their average week; who they see and what happens on different days. The quote at the end ... My favourite day is... draws on positives but could be altered or expanded upon.

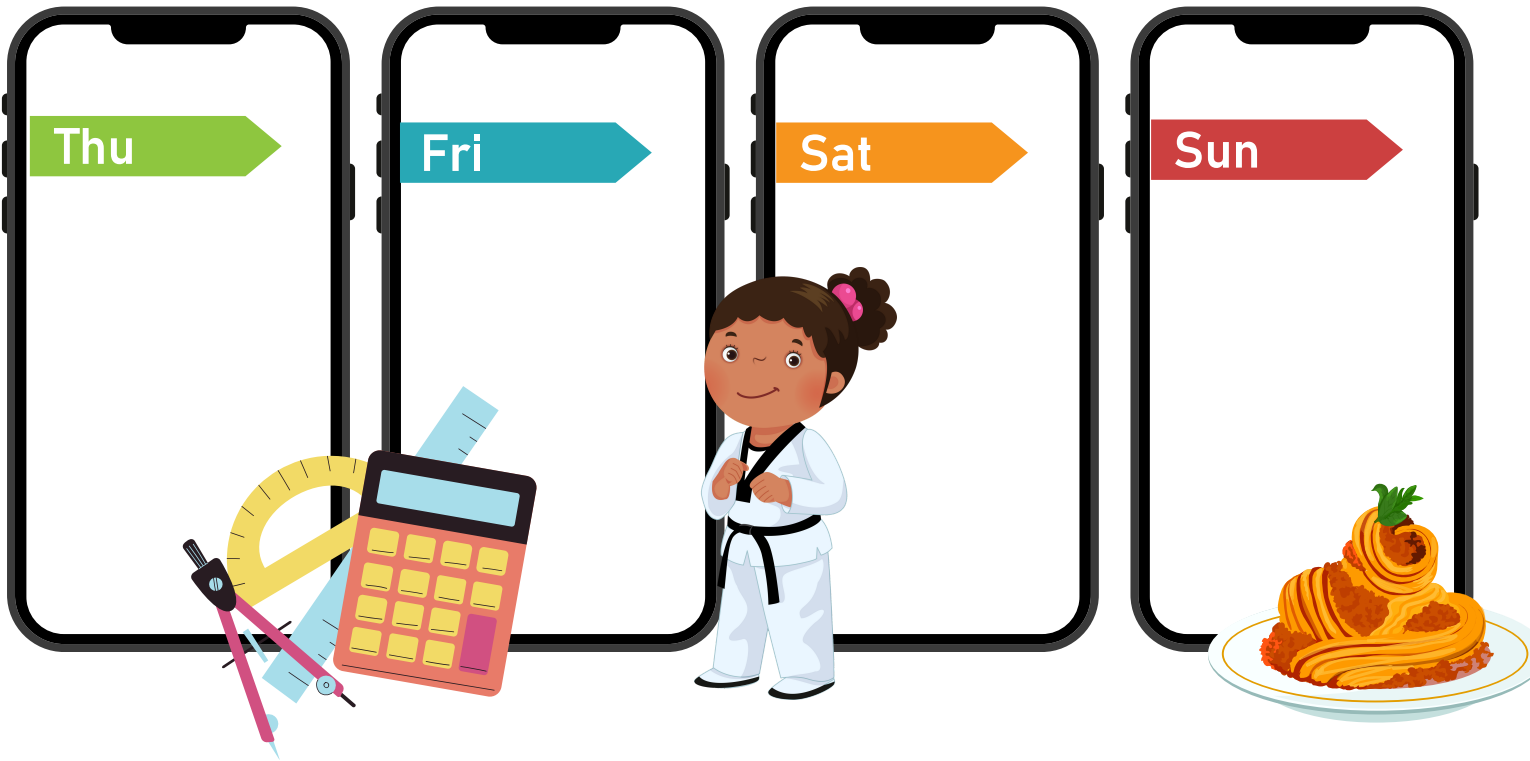
What you need:

Direct work tool attached, pens, papers



LET'S TALK

DAYS OF THE WEEK



MY FAVOURITE DAY OF THE WEEK IS.....



Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



Aim:

This direct work tool can be used to help children and young people talk about their life at home; the things, surroundings or people that help them feel safe and potentially things that upset or worry them. Always ensure that there is adequate support in place before using this tool.

Inspiration:

I met with Lisa, PSW after completing my ASYE portfolio to discuss direct work tools that I found most effective, including the Safety House. I explained how I had used the Safety House to support assessment work as it had helped me to gain a good understanding of the children's lived experience. I had previously used the 3 Houses tool but found that I preferred this tool, it was easier to explain to children and less confusing for them. My Service Manager, Paula Seivewright had used this tool previously and explained the benefits and it is now a firm favourite in my direct work toolbox. This tool can be used with children who are living at home, with foster carers; kinship carers; following separation or when there is a context of domestic abuse to inform or support safety planning. When I use this tool, I always add a path up to the door, it has been interesting to hear more about visitors to the home and also learn who has to stay outside or cannot come near the house.

Thanks- Charley Davidson, Social Worker, Help and Protection

Guidance:

Use the attached picture of a Safety House to start off your conversation. The house is purposefully very plain; with a door, windows, a roof, a chimney. Spend time personalising the house so it looks similar to the young persons by adding more windows, letterbox, number, curtains/blinds, garden and path. If the young person prefers they can draw their home (flat/house) from scratch themselves. If they don't have a path add one, as this is an important feature of the house.

You can use the tool to talk about the different rooms behind each window; who sleeps where; where people eat, work etc. If a child does not feel safe; they can be more specific about what worries them. Be sure to think about who comes in and out of the house, who may stay connected via post (or phone). Also, think about quiet spaces, noisy times, family gatherings to gain more information about support networks and significant people etc.

What you need:

Direct work tool (My Safety House); pens, papers, glue – magazines are also good for gathering ideas; pictures of household items; people etc



LET'S TALK

MY SAFETY HOUSE



Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



Aim:

This direct work tool can be used to allow children and young people to talk about their own personal space and why/what is important to them. Be aware that their bedroom or home may not have been/be a place where they feel safe and secure so don't assume this. If they do name their bedroom as their own space then be guided by them. If they share a bedroom; they may still consider this to be their own personal space – they may talk about rules around privacy and sharing.

Inspiration:

This tool can be used in conjunction with the Safety House tool or on its own. If you have used the Safety House tool you will remember thinking about the rooms behind each window. Family living can be tricky for many children and young people; sometimes school will be their safe place so be guided by them. This room is purposefully not set up as a bedroom as this may not be a safe place for children. It can be any room in the home, somewhere else or even a different planet in space. We have created 2 options for you to think about.

Thanks – Lisa Cummings, Principal Social Worker

Guidance:

Personal space can be important when you are growing up whether this be at home with your parents, in foster care or a residential setting. What helps you feel safe and secure? Some children will have personal belongings that they love and wish to protect – we need to understand what acts as a comfort for them so that they can feel as supported as possible. Use the My personal space tool to think about things that children enjoy or help them to relax etc.

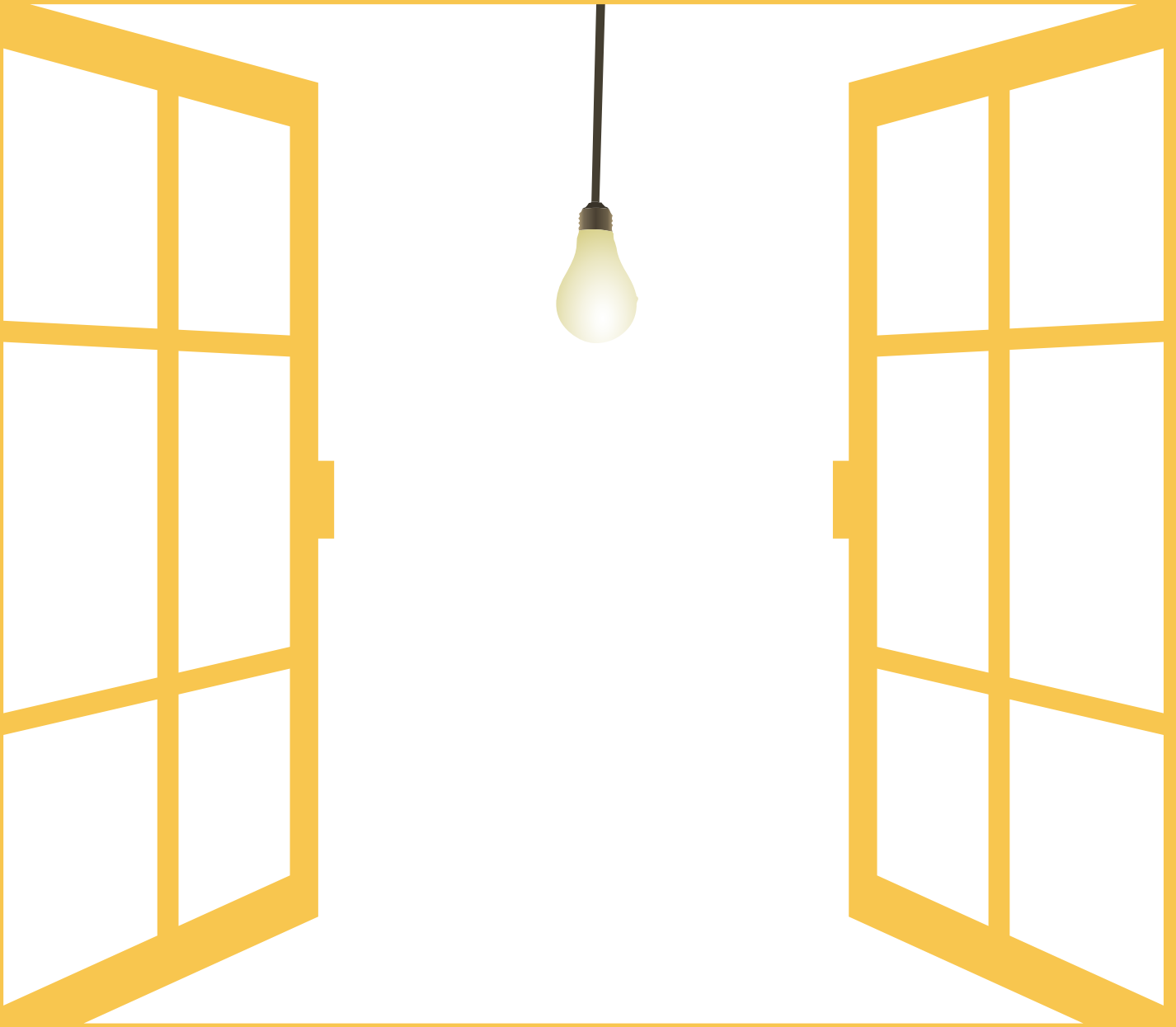
What you need:

Copy of My personal space worksheet (attached), pens, etc



LET'S TALK

MY PERSONAL SPACE

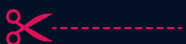
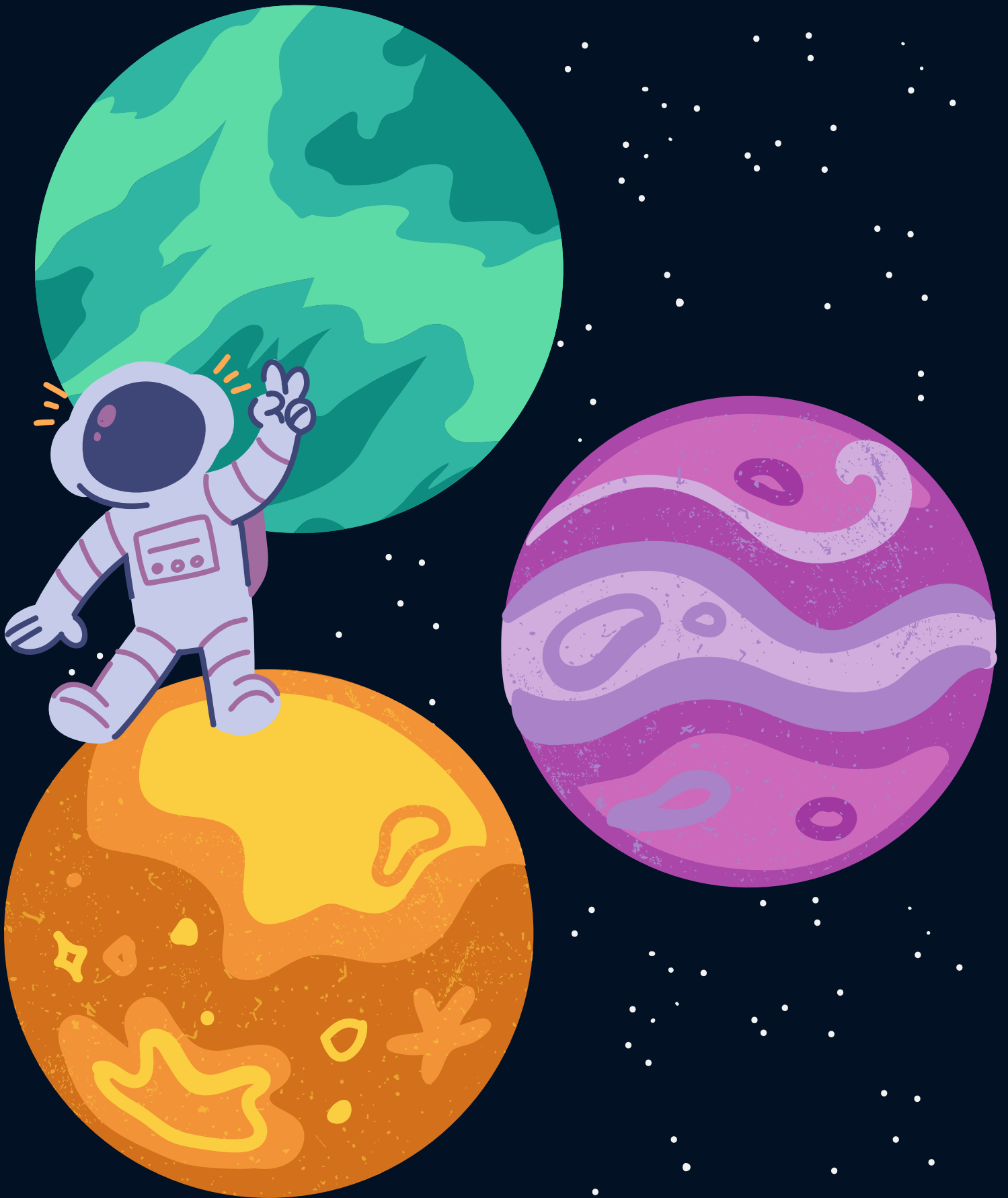


Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



LET'S TALK

MY PERSONAL SPACE



Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



Aim:

This direct work tool can be used to help children and young people talk about their relationship with family members and give insights into the functioning of a family group. This tool is particularly insightful when working with children where there are issues of Domestic Abuse. Looking at personalities within a family home, what descriptions children and young people associate with family members or those living within their home can be telling of family structures and roles taken within family functioning.

Inspiration:

Having worked within the field of Domestic abuse with perpetrators since 2011, one area that has always presented through our work is how adults feel children are not impacted by the abuse that has occurred due to either not being present when an incident has occurred or having been in bed at the time. Much evidence shows that children are in fact impacted by the abuse that occurs. I have seen this piece of work being completed previously, the information that was obtained was powerful in showing the family functions and roles within the family home and the impact this has had on the child. It also opened up discussions of feelings and creation of safety plans and who is there to make them feel safe.

Thanks- Michelle Gillespie, Targeted Family Support Manager

Guidance:

Imagine those people either in your home or closest to you are animals, what animals would they be? How would the animal look? How does the animal act? Does the animal have any of the same qualities as the family member? Talk through the animals chosen, why were they chosen and talk through the animals' behaviours and presentation. This session can lead to discussions of feelings, creation of safety plans, and discovery of who a child or young person can talk to should they feel worried or anxious. Ensuring you talk through the animals chosen whilst not jumping to conclusions is vital, for example a Lion may be powerful and dominant but there are many reasons for this such as the person who protects them rather than being scary or overpowering.

What you need:

Copy of the My family as animals' worksheet (attached). You could ask the child to draw the animals if they enjoy drawing or take some magazines with animals for cutting out, paper, scissors, glue, pens, books about animals are helpful too!





LET'S TALK

ANIMAL GAME



Aim:

This tool can be used to help talk about communicating online. There are lots of specialist resources available to support you; use this tool to start the conversation about keeping safe and ask schools or colleges to share good resources they know about. CAS also have some great resources – they showed me some fab direct work tools from Teen Talk when I was talking to them about this tool kit, These tools are kept safe on Floor 3. Ask any member of the team to show you where they are and explain how they can be used.

Inspiration:

Seeing the amount of time children in my own family spend online. Feeling out my depth as some children understand phones and computers so well.

Thanks – Lisa Cummings, Principal Social Worker

Guidance:

Use the tool to learn about how the child communicates with friends, school pals, family etc. Some young people may be happy to share their knowledge and show you their phone; others will be happy to offer you a lesson. Ask them what advice they would give a young person of a similar age if someone was concerned about their safety online. What have they learnt so far from school? Their friends? Home? Do they have a phone? Group chats? How are people added? Who might they call if they need help? Would they remember important phone numbers if they lost their phone, or it was stolen? Have they heard of find my phone? Do they have an emergency contact stored? What word might they use if they were worried and did not want to say? What would they do if someone they did not know asked to be their friend? Meet them after school? Do they use email? Passwords? Relationship status? Tik Tok? Do they have Go Henry? Internet banking? Listen to pod casts on their phone? Music? Any exercise apps? Anxiety apps? Relaxation? Shopping? Get to know their life and how they operate. Seek their help to learn more to support them and other children.

What you need:

Willingness to listen and learn; a phone or device or the Think before you Click worksheet as a prompt. Pens too.



LET'S TALK

THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK



Clockwise: Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp, TikTok, Snapchat, Youtube





#HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE

LET'S TALK

ASPIRATIONS AND FUTURE



Aim:

This direct work tool can be used to help children and young people think about what they have achieved so far and what they would like their future to look like. It is more likely that you would think about using the tool when preparing children for change, when updating an assessment or at a significant transition point. Endings our important in our work; this tool can be used as you are preparing to end work with a young person as a way of checking out what support is in place for them and allowing them to tell you what their aspirations are. Also, giving you a chance to summarise changes you have noticed in them over the time you have known them – super achievements like swimming their first 25 metres. You could also adapt this tool to work with parents.

Inspiration:

Members of our MAD group and our Youth Ambassadors tell us that they gain more from working with practitioners who take the time to listen to their views rather than make assumptions about them. A member of our MAD group was keen to make clear that just because young people have been involved with social workers; it doesn't mean they want to go into social work. She also reminded us that just because someone in a child's family had made mistakes, it did not mean that young people didn't want to hear about their family or see them. Looking to the future allows us also to think about what young people have achieved so far and helps to capture joy, achievement, and aspirations for the future. Younger children may prefer to talk about wishes or dreams – you will need to be led by the young person you are working with and adapt the picture to suit. A superhero or a fairy could be used or anything the child identifies with. The practitioner can develop the conversation by adding what they would like for the young person and what others might consider important.

Thanks Lisa Cummings, Principal Social Worker.

Guidance:

You can begin by talking about achievements in life so far; perhaps think about using My Trophy direct work tool before this.

Explain that in Sefton we have 22 miles of beautiful coastline. Ask the young person if they have ever been to the beach; they may have seen the Iron Men on the beach and be able to tell you about a time they were there. Looking out to sea; anything is possible – it is a blank sheet. Ask them to think about the future – be led by them; they may not want to talk about in-depth issues. Some children may want to draw on the sea; others will add words. The positioning of things they want to achieve or change can be important also; are there some things that they are close to achieving; others that are more ambitious for the longer term and need some further thought? It's important to remind young people that things can change and that's ok – sometimes it's good to reflect and change our minds or direction in life. Younger children may prefer to talk about wishes and feelings, see fairy and superhero alternatives.

What you need:

Direct work tool (My Future); pens, papers, glue – magazines are also good for gathering ideas and thinking about new things that you have not considered before.



LET'S TALK

MY FUTURE



LET'S TALK

MY FUTURE



Aim:

This direct work tool can be used to help build children's confidence and self-esteem, giving them opportunities to tell you what they are proud of or have achieved. They may not have received a physical trophy or medal – but something they share with you might deserve recognition. If you are in touch with school and health partners, you can often learn things about children that they may not think to share so ensure you seek out things to talk about which will help to recognise their efforts and build their confidence.

Inspiration:

For some children we work with they may have experienced changes which have prevented them from engaging with clubs or attending awards ceremonies. They may never have attended a club outside of school, or may have changed schools frequently. Use this tool to think about things they have achieved and are proud of: tying their shoelaces, being able to get dressed on their own, learning to ride a bike, being a kind friend, baking a cake, reading a book, writing a story, and so on. They can award themselves a medal or trophies, or award them to others and explain why people they know have done great things. One of the questions we ask on children's PEP (Personal Education Plan) is: What is your Super Power? This can spark a conversation or revelation about what is important to a child or young person, and allow us to acknowledge and celebrate their strengths. The Virtual School also send vouchers and certificates out termly for maintained attendance over 95% or improved attendance. Even a small improvement can involve a lot of effort and should be acknowledged. **Thank You- Mary Palin, Virtual Head Teacher**

Guidance:

Depending on how well you know the child; you may have little or lots of information about them. As part of any assessment, you will want to learn from the child, their parents, school, and others about what the child enjoys and does well; as well as understand any areas of struggle or need to support them. When children become cared for; we are their corporate parents – as such we will want to know lots about them and have high aspirations for them. The Virtual School are based on the 4th floor of Magdalen House in the Cared for Children service; we are here if you have any questions or concerns. Use the Trophies and medals tool to build our children up and show them how much we all value them.

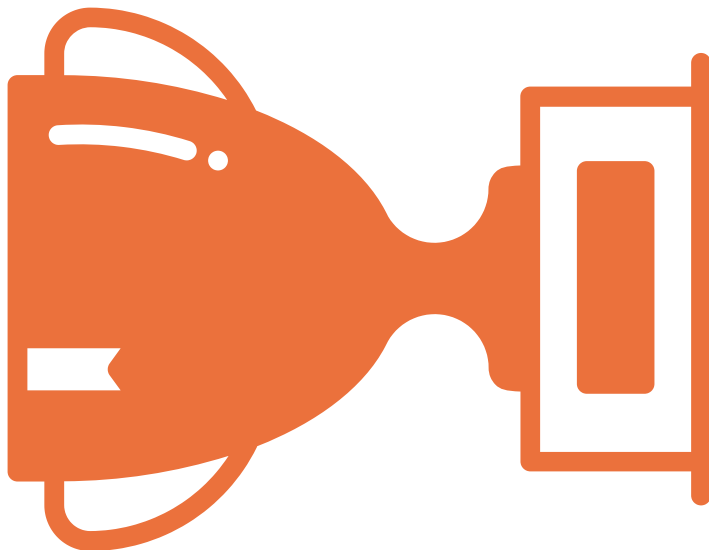
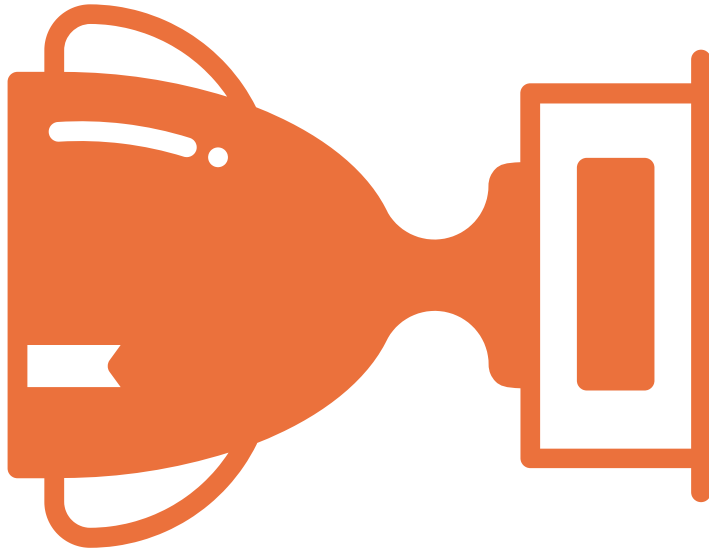
What you need:

Copy of Trophies and medals worksheet (attached). Begin with the single medal if you are working with a young person who struggles to share positives about themselves. The PEP can be a useful starting point to look for strengths. Some people prefer to use shields or a 'personal logo' as an alternative to trophies and medals. Remember to record what children tell you – their voice should be highlighted in blue font in case records, so it stands out.



LET'S TALK

TROPHIES AND MEDALS



Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



LET'S TALK

TROPHIES AND MEDALS



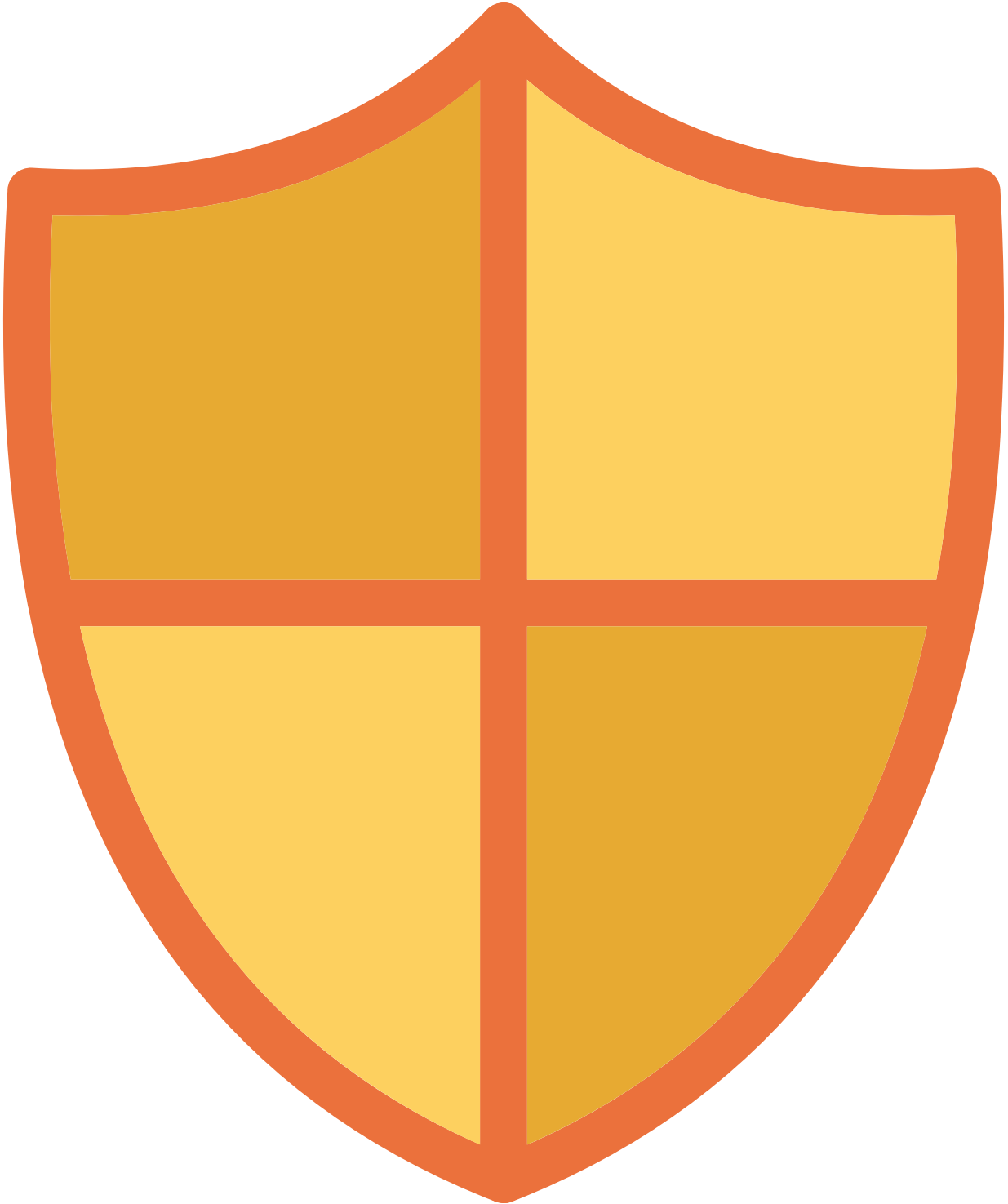
Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS





LET'S TALK

TROPHIES AND MEDALS



Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



Aim:

This direct work tool can be used to help children and young people talk about people who are important to them – who would be in their hall of fame?

Inspiration:

I used a similar tool to this years ago; I don't know where it originated from but know that it was popular within my team and with children I was working with. Art is in the eye of the beholder – you don't have to be able to draw well to create something unique and interesting. This can be used with children of different ages and abilities. Thanks – Lisa Cummings, Principal Social Worker.

Guidance:

There are 6 picture frames on the Hall of Fame tool for children to draw important people on. Start by reminding them of who is the most important person – them. Remind them of why you are involved; that they are important and that their views, feelings, safety and security is important. They most certainly deserve a place in the Hall of Fame. After they have added themselves and talked about some of their qualities ask them to think about who else they might want to add to this important gallery of people. Be guided by them; you can repeat this session again – allow them to talk and draw freely. They may want their first hall of fame to have a friendship focus or a school focus. Don't forget how important pets can be to children too. Take time to get to know who and what is important to them.

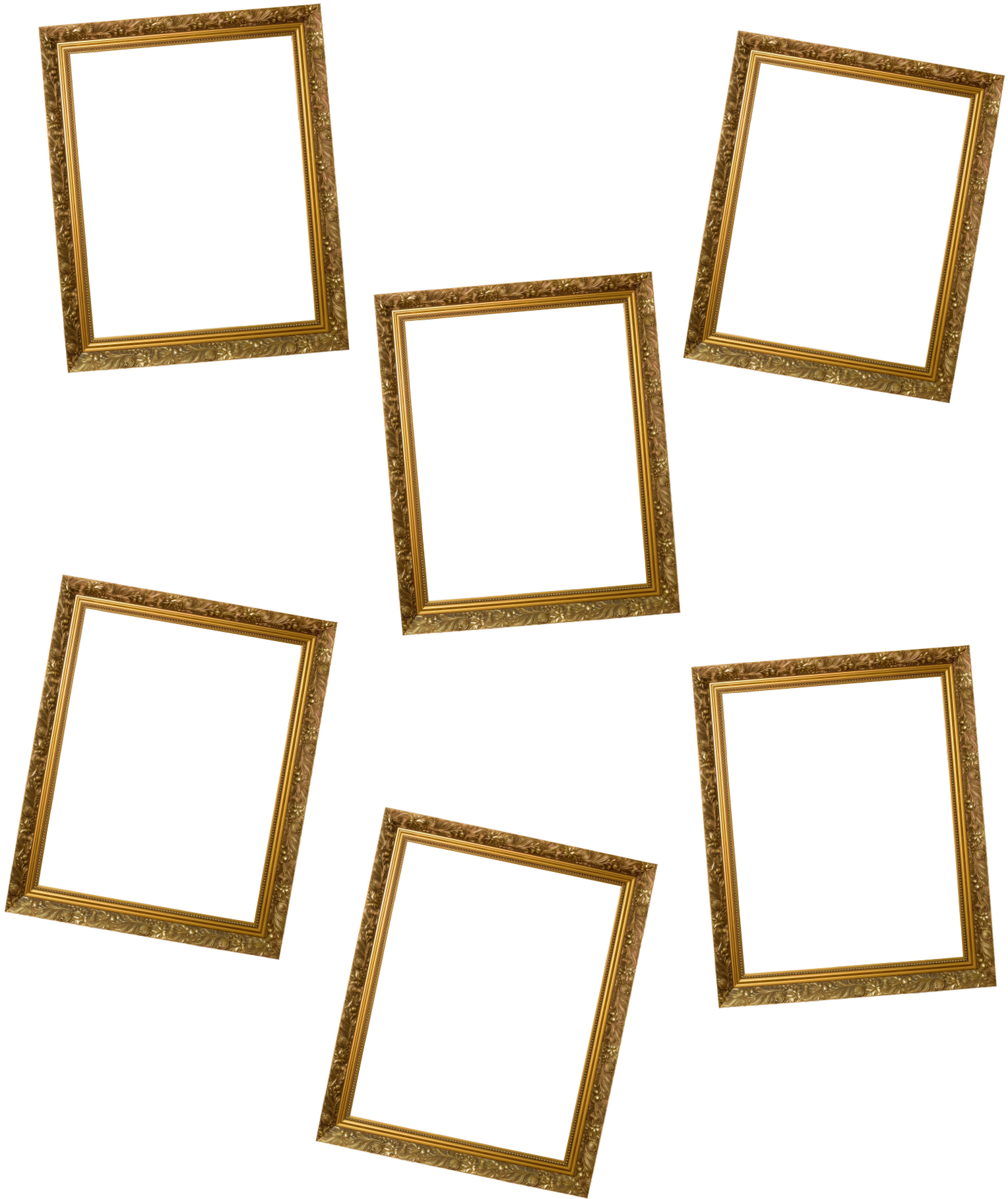
What you need:

Copy of Hall of Fame worksheet, pens, and paper. If the child wants to take away their work, ask to take a photograph of it to keep safe on their record.



LET'S TALK

HALL OF FAME



Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



#HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE #HEARMYVOICE

LET'S TALK

LIVED EXPERIENCED



Aim:

Spending time with a young person; hearing about their life is a privilege. This direct work tool can be used to help children and young people talk about their lived experience; people, places and things that are important to them. You should build rapport with the young person before using a tool like this as there may be some life events that trigger painful memories or worries. Think about whether they have support and speak with their parents/carers about what you plan to look at when undertaking direct work. It is essential that supportive scaffolding is around our young people. Some children prefer to draw than talk; others may choose to act out things. Every individual is unique, every day in a person's life or life movie is different. This tool shows how pictures can tell a story and can act as a platform to think about positive futures and aspirations.

Inspiration:

I met with the Youth Ambassadors group in 2022; 2 of the group members love drama. They acted out what a good Social Worker is like when they visit them and showed the group what sort of behaviours, they don't think are good. Respecting what they had done in the day and their plans for later that day was important to them; also, ensuring visits do not coincide with any clubs they love to go to.

Thanks to our Youth Ambassadors for reminding me about this tool that I used many years ago when I worked in a Keeping Children Safe Project at Barnardo's. It has been revamped with these boys and their excellent social worker in mind – Peter Byrne.

Recalling events can be powerful; sometimes painful so ensure support is in place. For children with low self-esteem, replaying how they felt when they won a 100-metre race at school or swam their first length can be amazing! This tool can be used with young children, young people, and adults. **Thanks Lisa Cummings, Principal Social Worker.**

Guidance:

Imagine your life is made into a movie. Or it could just be a short film – a day in your life. Sketch into the film set, things, events, props, people, sounds, scenes, or feelings that you remember. You don't need to draw things in any order; you can draw things that spring to your mind like a collage if that's best or even stick pictures in from a magazine. Afterwards, you might want to look at the size, place, and colour of things you have drawn and think about what things have been super important to you.

You can develop this tool by asking the young person whether there is anything they want to change. If you were doing a sequel, what would happen?

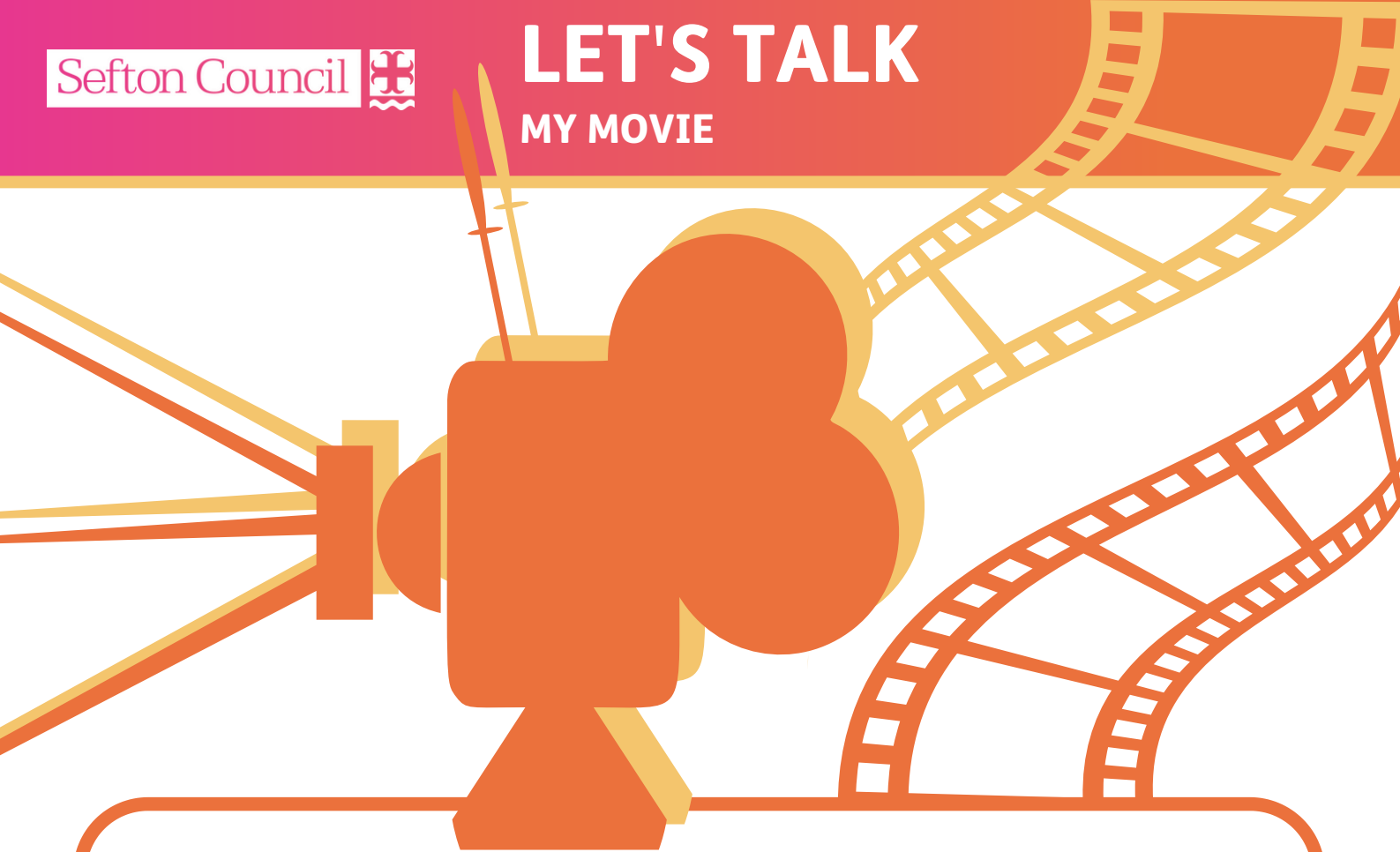
What you need:

Copy of the Movie set (attached), pens, paper, a magazine with pictures in, sequins, stars – anything in your direct work toolbox! Children and young people may want to bring their favourite things or tell you in advance what they like.



LET'S TALK

MY MOVIE



Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



Aim:

For the child to be able to put on paper their story in a more child friendly and engaging way.

Inspiration:

A long time ago I worked with a young person who was particularly interested in comic books but didn't want to engage with me in sessions and wouldn't talk about some of the serious things that were happening around them. However, they would chat with me about the comic books they were reading. One week I took some paper with comic book panels drawn on and some text boxes underneath. I suggested we make a comic where they were the hero; we started small and eventually worked up to them telling me stories from their life. Thanks, Pam Jones, Early Help Worker, Integrated Front Door

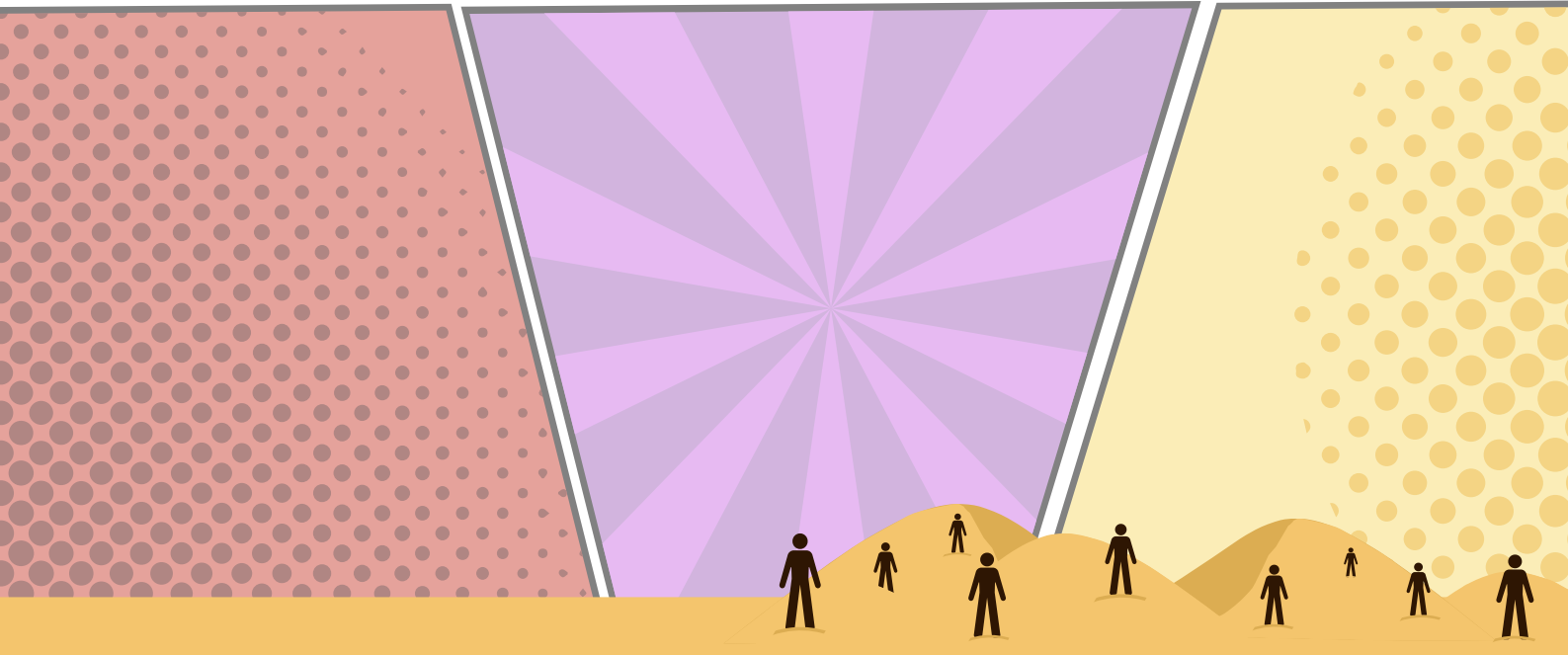
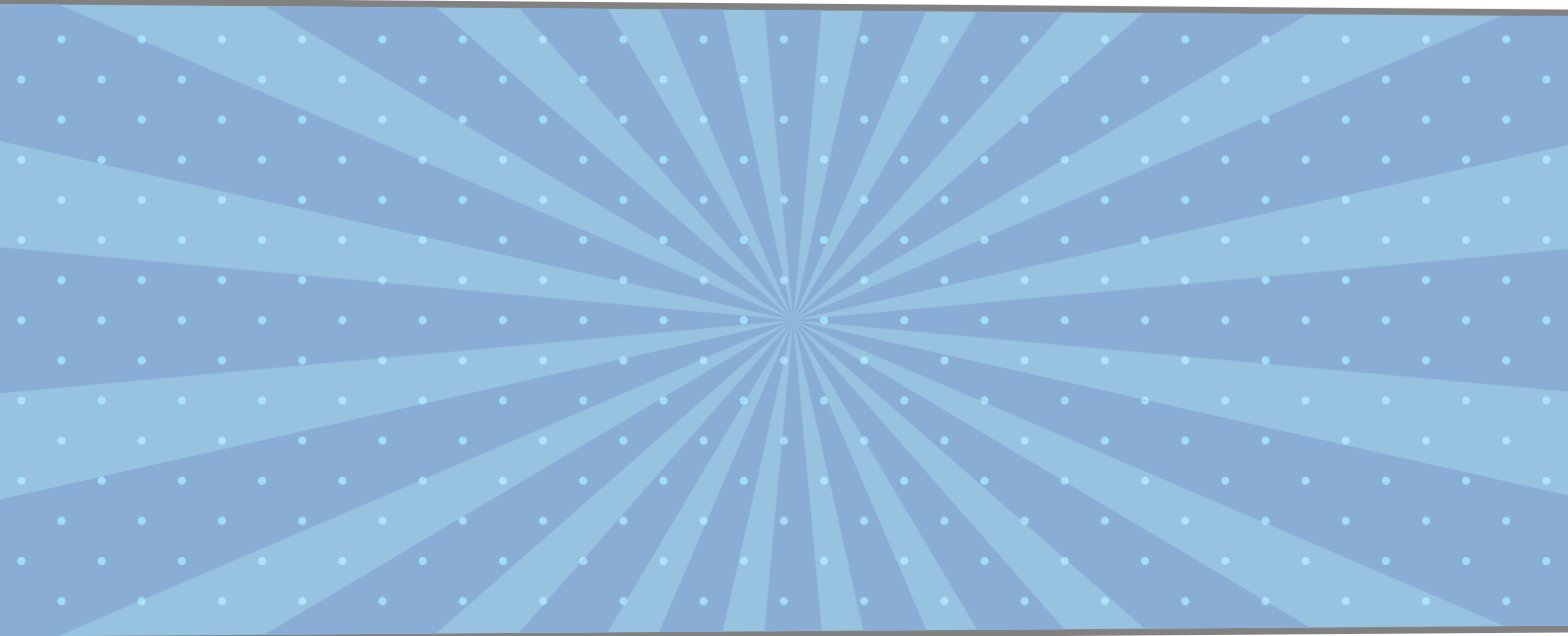
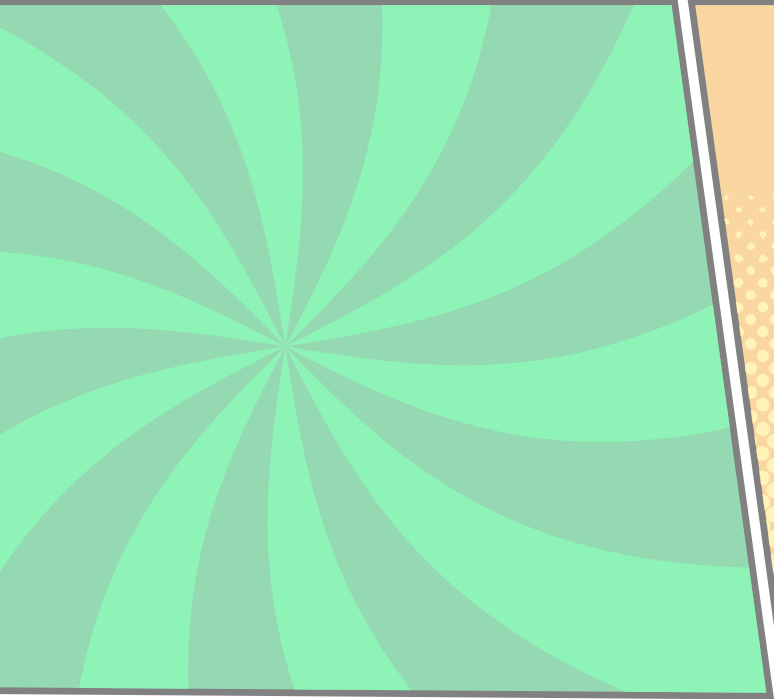
Guidance:

Explain to the child that you're going to make their own comic all about them drawing in their stories; adding text below above that explains the drawings and putting in speech and thought bubbles. The thought bubbles can sometimes be quite telling as they give you a view into what the child was thinking when things have happened to them and what they think others are thinking -which may not be what they actually were thinking. Invite the child to draw their character in the same clothing for every panel so you know who they are; it may be useful to start just drawing the child's character. The child may need prompting to pick the story apart into smaller parts, so sometimes it can be helpful to cut out the panels so they can be moved around on a larger sheet of paper and then glued down once the whole story has been revealed.

What you need:

**Paper with comic panel drawn on (or separate panels), pens, pencils, glue-
imagination (and not necessarily good art skills-its about the story, not
creating a work of art).**





Aim:

The cards can help you to gain information for assessing parenting capacity - strengths and areas to develop and assessing and understanding the lived experience of children and young people. These cards should enable parents to feel relaxed in engaging in these sessions, allow them to pinpoint what they feel both the strengths and vulnerabilities of their own family are allowing them to seek support where they feel it is needed as well as understanding what the Local Authority may be worried about.

Inspiration:

When parenting assessments are ordered by the court; parents are likely to be very anxious about the outcome and can be worried about what information is being asked for and why. I had always undertaken direct work with children and so had a number of tools that I used and could see how well this supported the engagement of children. A work colleague from Warrington kindly gifted me a pack of Lets Sort It cards for my birthday which have been adapted to create this tool. When completing parenting assessments for Court, it helps parents to feel more relaxed; they understand that we are not simply talking about what we are worried about, we are also thinking about strengths and therefore they feel that it is more of a partnership.

Thank You - Andrea Fullerton, Practice Assessor Lead - Social Work Academy.

Guidance:

The attached cards should be cut out and laminated and then put in the following order Strength, No Problem, Small Problem, Big Problem. Take out the 'Is It A Problem For The Adult' 'Is It A Problem for the Child' 'Is it a problem for both' cards at this point.

Turn each card over in turn and ask where the parents want this to be put. So for instance the parent could put behaviour in the Small Problem pile whilst the reason for referral could be due to poor guidance and boundaries being implemented and this can lead to a discussion to consider the parents views. These cards cover all areas of the Assessment Framework Triangle and allow for free flowing discussions. Using these cards with families helps to build an understanding of priorities for the family as well as the Local Authority.

Once the cards have been exhausted you can if relevant and if it is felt further exploration is needed utilise the 'Is it a problem for the adult' 'Is it a problem for the child' 'Is it a problem for both' cards. I have found that at times these can be useful but there are also sessions where these questions have been asked and considered in the earlier session and so haven't been needed. This will depend on how the conversation and sessions flow.

What you need:

Cards attached.



STRENGTH	SMALL PROBLEM	IS IT A PROBLEM FOR THE CHILD?	IS IT A PROBLEM FOR BOTH?
IS IT A PROBLEM FOR THE ADULTS?	BIG PROBLEM	NO PROBLEM	FIGHTING, AGRESSION, DOMESTIC ABUSE
SAFETY	SMOKING	BEHAVIOUR	SHARING
MEAL TIME/ FEEDING	FRIENDSHIPS	THE PAST	HURTS OTHERS
FAMILY	DISABILITY	LONELINESS / ISOLATION	CRIME



Don't forget to record your direct work, take a picture or snip into LCS



EMPLOYMENT

HOUSING

WEIGHT

DESTRUCTIVE

**BABYSITTING/
CHILDCARE**

**DEMANDING
ATTENTION**

**SELF
HARM**

ALCOHOL

**ENERGY,
FITNESS**

LIES

**CRYING
ALL THE
TIME**

PARENTHOOD

GETTING UP

**SELF
CONFIDENCE**

MESSY

**WON'T
LISTEN**

DEPRESSION

BULLYING

**SCHOOL/
NURSERY**

NEIGHBOURS



**TIME,
SPACE**

**PARENTS
BEHAVIOURS**

DRUGS

SUPPORT

MONEY

**CHILD'S
DEVELOPMENT**

HOUSEKEEPING

**BEDTIME,
SLEEPING**

HEALTH

RELATIONSHIPS

**SEX,
CONTRACEPTION**

**LOVE AND
AFFECTION**



Aim:

This direct work tool can be used to help children and young people talk about their life; their interests, dreams, passions, and ambitions (words chosen by our Youth Ambassadors). Remember, always take time to build rapport and check in after you have seen children and young people if you have been talking about difficult things. Think about whether they have support before you meet and speak with them and agree who you will speak to if you feel they need additional support.

Inspiration:

I regularly meet with our Youth Ambassadors group to gain their feedback about how we develop services for children and young people. In January 2023, I shared with them ideas around building a pack of Sefton “go to” direct work tools. One of the group had a picture of a train as his Teams backdrop. We got onto talking about tapping into young people’s interests; he said he loved being on trains; hearing the sounds and viewing amazing scenery. As a group we talked about whether we could make a direct work tool using the idea of a journey – where you want to go next? And how you might get there? Who helps along the way? What could hinder progress? We agreed that sometimes things happen that throw you off track, upset you or set you back but with time and support; you can get back on the right train and achieve your goals. You can easily adapt their “The Journey” tool by printing off a picture of a spaceship, boat, plane anything that moves and helps you progress from A to B. **Thanks - 4 members of our Youth Ambassadors Group**

Guidance:

Use the attached image of a train and explain that we are all on a life journey. Sometimes, we are faced with good experiences, at other times problems and upset. Imagine being at a junction – being able to pick the direction they take next; being able to plan their own route by choosing a fast direct train that gets them to their chosen destination quickly or a slower train. Where is it, they want to get to? What is their end goal? Be guided by the young person – the journey can often be more important than the actual destination – they will be able to think about who/what helps them? What have they learnt about themselves and others? Whether they have developed any new resilience skills? What has bothered or worried them? How have they overcome challenges?

What you need:

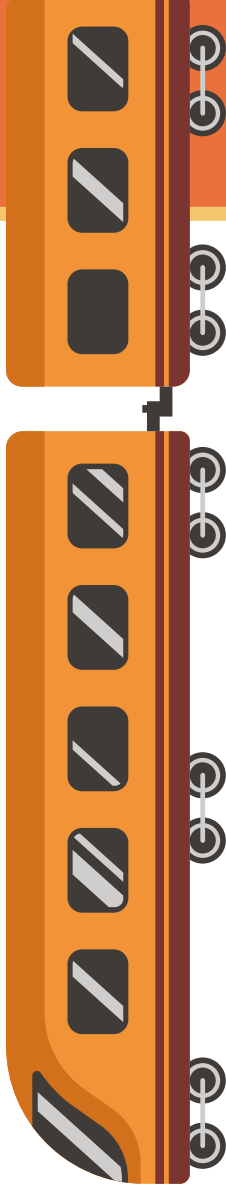
Picture of The Journey – tool attached, pens and paper. If you know that a young person loves bikes, scooters, speedboats, Ferraris go for an image of that instead.





LET'S TALK

THE JOURNEY





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LET'S TALK

APPENDICES



The importance of “building a sense of safety “– taken from Life Story Work with Children who are Fostered or Adopted – Katie Wrench and Lesley Naylor (2013)

Some of you will have met Katie during Practice Week 2022 when she delivered a great session on the importance of life journey work.

There are various stages to life journey work from “building a sense of safety” to “looking to the future.” Before beginning life journey work with a child or young person, we need to be sure that we have the right scaffolding in place to support the child, young person and their carer as life journey work can trigger strong emotions and raise additional issues.

Stage 1 - Building the Foundations for Life Journey/Story Work – thinking about the child/young person, the support network around them and identifying the right person who will be responsible for working with the child/young person. If this is to be their social worker or a child social care support worker, we need to be clear that this work can be given priority, that the individual has the right support, understanding of the impact of trauma and confidence to support the child/young person on their journey.

Stage 2 - Creating a Sense of Safety – building rapport and a sense of safety with the child/young person will lay the best foundations for the child’s/young person’s life story journey. Linked with this is developing the child/young person’s skills in emotional regulation to ensure they do not become overwhelmed and are better able to tolerate more difficult aspects. Think about – who helps them feel safe – this could be a person, an object, a place; things that help them to relax? what makes them nervous, scared, or worried? ask them how you will know if they are feeling upset, concerned, or scared?

A working agreement can be co- created with the child/young person which sets out what you plan to do together, practical arrangements, timings, who will be involved and confidentiality. This will help you and the child/young person think about priorities and build a relationship based on honesty and openness. Where possible, involve the child/young person’s carer in this – they will be supporting them through this work so need to understand what it will involve. Creating an agreement will be led by them; their ideas, interests, and priorities; think also about frequency and pace – ensuring things they enjoy continue; important events they should be able to attend are given high priority. Periods of consolidation or breaks for good reason may need to be built in.



Stage 3 – Emotional Literacy and Regulation – children who have experienced adverse life experiences, separation and loss can struggle to articulate their emotional experience verbally; to name different feelings and self-regulate when things can get hard for them. Working with children to help them develop these skills and recognise triggers will support them as you talk about life events.

Stage 4 – Resilience and Self Esteem – One of our primary aims is to boost children's resilience and minimise risk factors. Drawing on positives and strengths throughout life journey work will be important. Think with them about what they are proud of? Gather positive stories from others? Help children and young people identify qualities in themselves where they have shown great problem-solving skills.

Stage 5 – Identity – Children's sense of self develops from birth alongside relationships with family, friends, and their community. Where the process of identity formation has been impacted by trauma, loss, separation, or harm it is particularly important to offer children messages of love, respect, and encouragement. At this stage in their journey, think about activities which will increase both yours and the child/young person's understanding of their life and themselves. Understanding their perception of family will be important; think about creating a genogram/family tree with them.

Stage 6 – Information sharing and integration – this is the stage of the work where factual narrative can be shared and will give the child/young person the opportunity to explore what happened and why. The child/young person will be looking to you for clear, strong guidance.

Stage 7 - Future – the final part of the life journey process ought to be a celebration of the child; packed with hope and optimism for the future. It also presents opportunity to reinforce important messages to support them into their future. The child and their carer should now have a clearer understanding of their history and what to expect from the future so that strategies can be considered to help the child when they experience difficult times.



Hey, we want to get better at working with you, what can we do?

15:00

It's easy... First, make sure I know you are coming to see me. Oh and check if that time is ok for me!

15:01

I might have plans or it might be tea time, it won't help if I'm distracted! Oh also, if you're gonna be late, tell me!

15:01

So would it work if we met somewhere else?

15:02

Yeh! We could go for a walk or you could come and see me in school- just don't say where you're from, I don't want everyone to know.

15:03

Ok great, and what do you want from us?

15:03

Don't make promises you can't keep! Just be honest with me. Listen to me and let me get my words out

15:04

Be patient! I might have told my story before so it may take time for me to want to talk to you. Don't give up!

15:04

Is there anything else we can do?

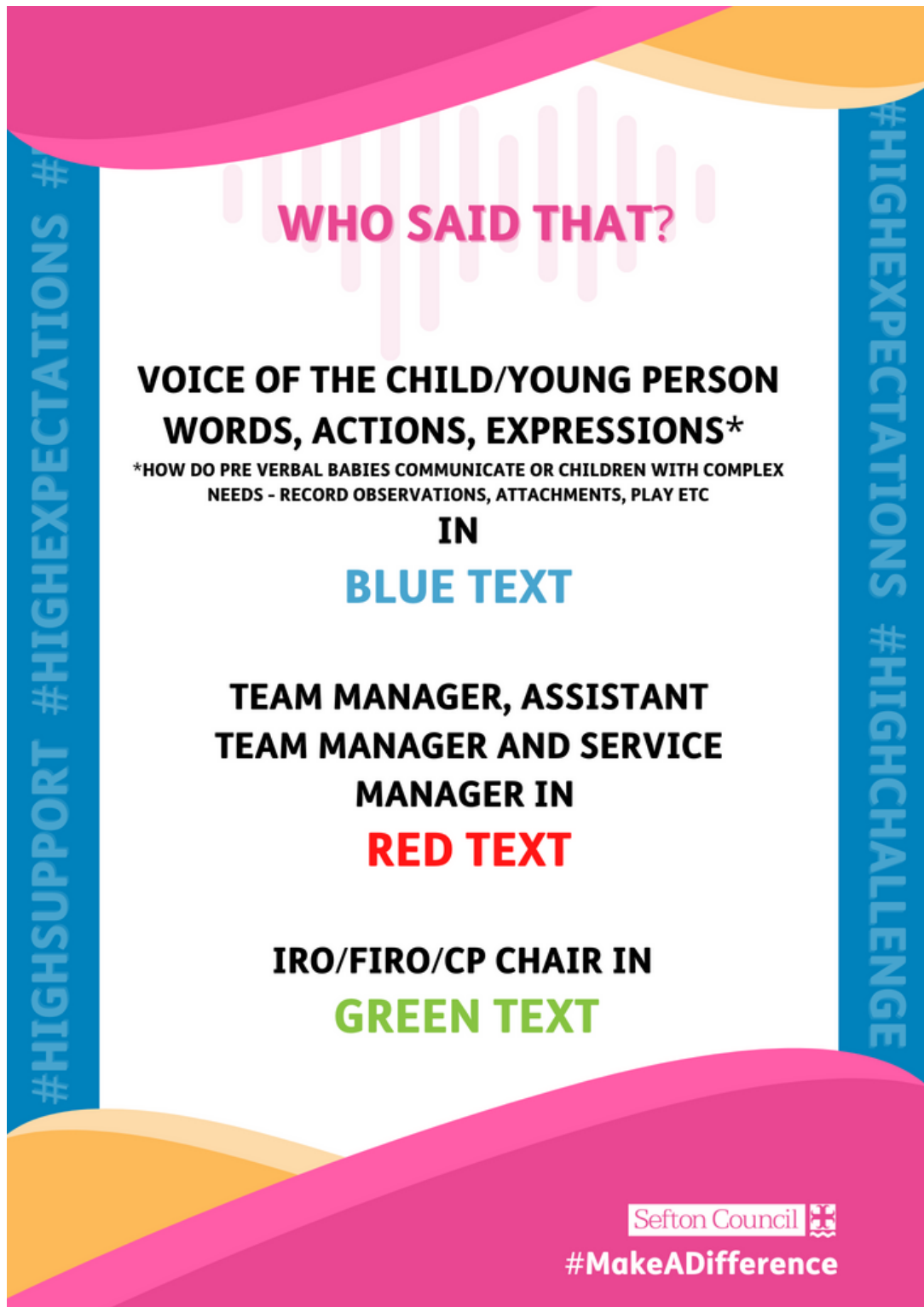
15:05

Make sure you check in after we've chatted about difficult stuff- and please, don't disappear in a puff of smoke!

15:06



REMEMBER, RECORD THE CHILD'S VOICE ...



WHO SAID THAT?


VOICE OF THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON
WORDS, ACTIONS, EXPRESSIONS*

*HOW DO PRE VERBAL BABIES COMMUNICATE OR CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX NEEDS - RECORD OBSERVATIONS, ATTACHMENTS, PLAY ETC

IN
BLUE TEXT

TEAM MANAGER, ASSISTANT
TEAM MANAGER AND SERVICE
MANAGER IN
RED TEXT

IRO/FIRO/CP CHAIR IN
GREEN TEXT

Sefton Council 
#MakeADifference



HEAR

M **My Experience** – What is it?
Understand my history. **Make it count.**

Y **You** are my narrator.
Hear me, even when I am silent.

V **Verbal exchange** is only 7%
of communication. Consider – How do I
communicate with the world around me?

O **Observe** my appearance; how do I
look, how do I behave, what does my body
language tell you?

I **Interaction** – What do my relationships look
like, and with who? What are my reactions to my
environment and those around me; parents, carers,
siblings, other children / adults, and with you?

C **Communicate** with me creatively;
Be receptive to me, listen. **Capture ME**
in all you do!

E **Expression**; Look at me. **ASK** yourself what
am I telling you? What am I not able to tell you?
How do I express how I feel? What do I think of
my situation? What do I need?
Have you asked me?



RESEARCH IN PRACTICE

<https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/>

NSPCC PANTS

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/pants-underwear-rule/>

SOCIAL WORK TOOLKIT

<http://www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/>

PRACTICE STANDARDS

<https://intranet.smbc.loc/services/childrens-social-care/children%E2%80%99s-social-care-policy-and-procedure/practice-standards.aspx>



STEP ONE

WARNING SIGNS OF A CRISIS



STEP TWO

THINGS I CAN DO/ PLACES TO GO TO TAKE MY MIND OFF THINGS



STEP THREE

PEOPLE I CAN CALL FOR HELP WITH NUMBERS



STEP FOUR

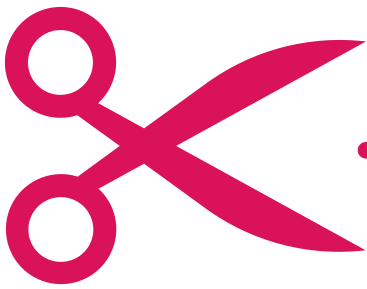
HOW CAN SUPORTIVE PEOPLE KEEP ME SAFE



STEP FIVE

STRENGTHS THAT HELP ME GET BY





To use the Snipping Tool:

1. Press Windows logo key + Shift + S. The desktop will darken while you select an area for your screenshot.
2. Rectangular mode is selected by default. You can change the shape of your snip by choosing one of the following options in the toolbar: Rectangular mode, Window mode, Full-screen mode, and Free-form mode.
3. The screenshot is automatically copied to your clipboard.
4. Paste it wherever you need to Shift + Ctrl+ V



It makes it easier if you split your screen before you snip and you can paste easier without switching between windows.

In an active window, press and hold the Windows key and then press either the Left or Right arrow key. This should automatically snap the active window to the left or right.

Select another window to fill the second empty space.

