Course Journal/Workbook

Participatory Practice for children and young people affected by sexual violence

Introduction

How familiar are you with Participatory Practice?

To what extent what extent do you and your organisation already use participatory methods?

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What do you hope to gain from this course?

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Sexual Violence

What harmful sexual behaviors are young people in your community experiencing (e.g. sharing indecent images)?

Which services are available for SV-affected young people in your area?

How accessible is your service to young people? What are the opportunities and barriers?
How participatory is the service? What do you do well and what needs improving?

What strategies do you or your organization employ in supporting and reaching out to young
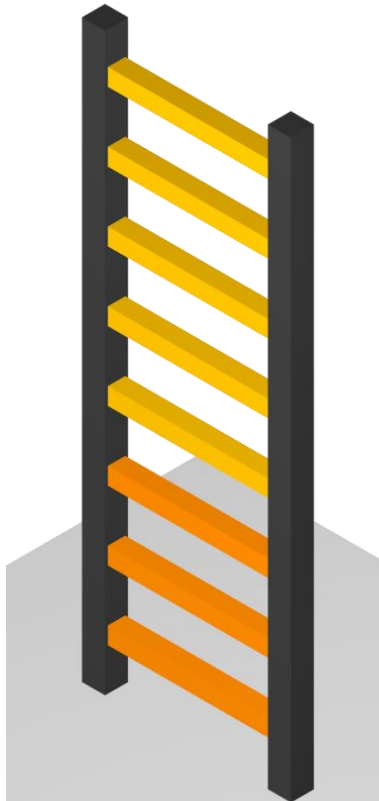people?

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Applying Participatory Practice to SV Services

Using Hart's Ladder, how would you rate yourself?

Participation

Young-People-Initiated (Shared decisions with adults)

Young-People-Initiated (And Directed)

Adult-Initiated (Shared decisions with young people)

Consulted and Informed

Assigned, but Informed

Non- Participation

Tokenism

Decoration

Manipulation

Reflecting on your own practice (or the policies of the organisation you work with), in what ways might you be reinforcing power imbalances vis-a-vis the young people you work with? What do you currently do or what could you potentially do to counteract power imbalances?

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Relational Practice

What have you done or what could you potentially do to create safe spaces for your interactions with SV-affected young people?

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To what extent do young people drive the pace and content of one-to-one interactions, either in your own practice or in the organisations that you work with? What are some ways that you could imagine changing these interactions to make them more participatory?

How difficult do you find it to establish trust with SV-affected young people? What types of experiences might cause them to be slower to develop trust? Do you think affording them greater control might help them overcome reservations?

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How do you normally respond to non-participation? How do you think we might be able to keep an engagement moving while still respecting a young person's right to *not* participate?

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Group Work

In general, how do you view the idea of having SV-affected young people work together in groups? Do your thoughts tend to focus on the risks or the benefits?

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If you were a young person affected by sexual violence, what concerns might you have about group work? What rules or guidelines would you want to see incorporated into a group agreement?

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Can you imagine the young people you work with interacting positively in a group setting? What things might you be able to do to help facilitate positive interactions whilst managing risk?

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Of the various risks discussed in the module, which do you find most concerning and why? Meanwhile, which benefits do you find most appealing in why? How would you weigh the one against the other?

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Checklist for developing young people's participation in child sexual exploitation services or policy development

The following is a set of questions* that have been used when planning group-based participatory activities with young people affected by child sexual exploitation, involving them in collective decision-making processes. It is presented as a set of prompts for reflective discussion and is not exhaustive.

(Please note that involving young people in collective decision-making activities should be carried out alongside integrated participatory approaches to all aspects of service delivery, including one-to-one work.)

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* Adapted from "Young person-centred approaches in child sexual exploitation (CSE) - promoting participation and building self-efficacy" - Warrington, 2016

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☑ RATIONALE: Why are you involving young people?

Children's participation can often be tokenistic and is likely to involve an element of 'co-option' (young people being invited to participate in professionally determined agendas). Honest discussion from the outset about the purpose, agenda and ownership of any activities can help to reduce the likelihood of tokenism and provide transparency.

How do young people get involved in your organization? Are processes accessible for all and fair?

Once young people are involved, what are the opportunities/roles available to them?

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Are there opportunities for children and young people to feed into the planning and agenda setting of the activity/initiative?

What will be the benefits to the project? What will be the benefits to young people?

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> ☑ **ENGAGEMENT: How will you identify and engage potential young participants?**

There may be a range of good reasons why certain opportunities are not appropriate or beneficial to young people at certain points in time. For example, when young people are involved in a 'live investigation' there will be restrictions on what is appropriate for professionals to discuss with young people. Working inclusively also means supporting professionals to think creatively to overcome barriers to involvement.

Are there inclusion/exclusion criteria for participation work? What are the criteria based on (e.g. risk assessments)? Has it been shared with young people?

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What (if any) barriers to inclusion do you foresee for potential participants? Which of these can you address with current resources?

What (if any) barriers may be presented by gatekeepers (such as other professionals involved in supporting young people, or parents and carers) and how can you support them to adopt an inclusive approach?

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☑	**SHARING POWER: What type of decisions are you proposing involving young people in?**

Consultation with young people affected by CSE will necessarily involve dialogue between stakeholders with different ideas and different perspectives on risk. Prior to working collaboratively with young people, professionals need to consider how they manage alternative perspectives and how they will support young people to have meaningful influence.

What are the boundaries of young people's participation in responsibility/decision-making aspects of the project or program?

Is there a clear rationale where children and young people are excluded from some stages of the decision-making process? How can you explain and justify this to them?

STAKEHOLDER COMMITMENT: What is the level of commitment to young people's participation from different stakeholders?

In CSE work young people's participation can often be framed as an 'add-on', or of less significance than crisis intervention and risk management. Recognising the relationship between children's participation and safeguarding can help ensure the work is properly resourced, valued and has influence.

To what extent do stakeholders share the same values and understanding of young people's participation?

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☑ **ACCESSIBILITY:** **How will you ensure activities or tasks are understood and accessible?**

Young people affected by CSE are likely to have a diverse range of intersecting vulnerabilities and needs. These are factors which are often used by professionals to justify young people's exclusion from decision-making processes.

What information do you collect about young people? Are young people informed about the information kept about them? Is the information available for young people to see?

When working with young people and partners, is your use of language jargon-free and accessible, using supporting visual resources for example?

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Do the ways in which young people can contribute to projects allows for participation by all young people, regardless of ability, cultural background and social background

Do you have an induction programme? Are there staff who could be responsible for supporting and mentoring young people when they start?

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> ☑ **SAFETY AND GROUP DYNAMICS: How can you make this a safe and comfortable process for participants, and manage risk safely and proportionally?**

A common justification for excluding CSE-affected young people from decision-making processes involves fears about the risk young people may pose to each other in group contexts. A major consideration for managing risk is understanding and planning for instances where young people disclose personal information that may compromise their physical or emotional well-being. While these are legitimate considerations, it should not be assumed that risks can't be managed properly.

How can you help participants make informed decisions about disclosure within the group context or with sharing information (for example supporting understanding of limits of confidentiality within a group and potential impact on others)?

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What are the procedures for dealing with disclosures; group conflict; distress? How can you manage this positively and proportionally?

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What, if any, potential risks may participants pose to each other? How will you manage this?

What follow-up support do participants have access to?

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REFLECTION, LEARNING AND EVALUATION: How will you capture learning and reflect and review the process?

Participatory work with young people affected by CSE is undertaken in diverse ways, but practice remains limited and rarely documented. Opportunities to capture and disseminate further learning in this area will support young people and professionals undertaking this work and further good practice. Reflection is also a key means of ensuring safe practice.

What steps can you build in to capture and disseminate learning about the process with other professionals?

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How will you enable all participants and stakeholders to reflect and review the process and demonstrate how the organisation responds to this feedback?

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FEEDBACK AND RECOGNITION: How will you feed back to participants?

Young people affected by CSE will have diverse views about if and how to identify themselves with the issue and there are significant risks associated with public identification. However, it is also important that young people's contributions, skills and learning are acknowledged.

How will you acknowledge young people's contributions without compromising anonymity?

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When supporting young people in public dialogue, how do you prepare them and the audience to ensure a positive environment and reception?

How do you feed back any outcomes to young people and other practitioners?

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Participation on an Organisational Level

How do the staff of the organisations you work with currently view young people's role in decision-making? Are young people consulted? Are they given opportunities to provide feedback? Do they ever initiate policies or projects on the organisational level?

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What sorts of proposals to expand young people's participation at an organisational level do you think would have the best chance of acceptance within your organisation? How might you present them to your colleagues and other stakeholders?

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Can you think of any cases where you saw adults involve young people in a project in ways that might be considered tokenistic, decorative or even manipulative? Can you think of other cases where you saw children and young people participate more meaningfully in an organisation-level initiative?

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Beyond Service Delivery

If young people asked you about ways they could get involved locally in your area, what kind of things might you suggest they look into?

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To what extent is your organisation willing and/or able to support young people's advocacy? Is it something they might be interested in doing more of?