

Everyone Has a Story

Ethical Consent

 young people

 research

 practitioners

 practitioners
survey

 government
and policy

Ethical Consent

Ethical and Consent Parameters

The purpose of this paper is to two-fold:

- Outline the parameters of the PDI Action Research Study in terms of guidance for practitioners in sharing stories

- Offer guiding principles to ensure the safety of children and young people

The parameters of this study:

The recovery project is focused on children and young people whose parents are deemed to be in recovery. Recovery is a very nebulous concept and can be interpreted in many different ways. For the purpose of this study we are defining this as:

A person in recovery is one who is progressing towards a substance free life and looking to make positive changes in all areas of their life; family, health, work and community.

In reality this will mean that parents are known to services, will be engaging with some form of support, and making attempts to change things in their life.

Children and young people may have little awareness or knowledge of what recovery means for their parents. It is therefore difficult to ask what this looks or feels like.

This lack of awareness of what recovery could mean or look like for children and young people can be illuminated by access to their stories. The stories can help us to build a picture of the complexity of recovery and its impact on children and young people. We will be looking at natural opportunities where young people might share information on:

changes in home life such as family, living arrangements, health of parents, their role, community, peer groups or education. How this impacts on their life, stresses, feelings and how they cope or what helps them make happy, sad;

changing patterns of substance use in their parents including reducing, abstaining, relapse or chaotic use, saying one thing and doing another and how this makes the child or young person feel (e.g. angry, happy or ambiguous).

*when we refer to changes we are aiming to ensure we capture any observations and insights from the child or young person however small or big. It will be important to pick up on what young people are saying through natural conversations and build on this to help explore their story.

The project is seeking to draw on established relationships between practitioners and young people to gain understanding of where and how young people share thoughts and feelings.

This action research is about building the questions, methods and approaches that will work best for practitioners and young people.

Building on these questions we are looking for practitioners to seek authorisation from young people to capture their stories. Practitioners may create or make use of natural opportunities when young people feel comfortable to establish a supportive approach and explore their thoughts and feelings. This is necessary to ensure we can fully understand and articulate in their words the complexity of their lives.

 Practitioners should feel comfortable in engaging with young people through existing relationships to ensure they:

want to share their story.

want to share their story as part of this project.

feel able to say no or ask for additional help at any point.

Consent Parameters



Safety and Security of Young People:

- Practitioners will have the relevant qualifications, training as identified by their organisation or relevant standards in the context of their professional discipline
- Practitioners have an established positive relationship with children and young people - young people feel comfortable in sharing and engaging with their worker
- Children and young people will give their consent prior to the study commencing - Practitioners will feel comfortable in outlining the purpose of the work with the emphasis on how it will help the child/young person, but at no time will children and young people be subject to pressure and they will be free to say no and withdrawn at any time.
- Children and young people understand they will have support from their worker - before, during and after sharing the story and that should issues or difficult feelings emerge young people will feel supported around managing or addressing these feelings.
- Children and young people will have ownership of their story - we will want to ensure young people see the story before any use publicly and they are comfortable with how and what it is used for and have the right, at any time during the study, to ask for their information not to be used.
- Stories will be reflected in children and young people's own words, pictures and thoughts



Safety and Security of Practitioners:

- Practitioners will seek consent from carer/safe guarder agreeing on sharing the stories (the involvement of child/young person)
- Practitioners will have the ability and skills to recognise and support children and young people should issues arise
- Practitioners will be working within the guidelines of their own organisations policies for child protection and addressing concerns
- Practitioners will have regular support and supervision to support any issues that may emerge

What will and won't be shared

- **We will share:**

the context of where the story or natural conversation was shared (e.g. in the car, doing arts and crafts)

the living arrangements of the child or young people, recognising this may change during the story

age group (8 -12, 13 -17, 17+)

how long has the practitioner known the young person (less than 3 months,

between 3 - 6 months, more than 6 months, over a year)

- **We won't share:**

Name, age, town/region, project/service working with young people, family background or any other identifiable features