An Action Learning Project

EVERYONE HAS A STORY.

Chloe's Story (age 9)

"I don't really think about it very often, but when it happens, it happens and THEN I have to think about it."

"When mum was ill she was drinking wine and she dropped the glass — she was a heavy drinker. She had a gold rim around the tap. Luckily we won the same, but there's not really the point."

"Chloe then wanted to draw a picture for her story and make it into a sort of story book. For others to read, she thought it would be a good idea for her teachers to read the stories that children wrote so that if they had problems with a similar experience to her they would know what to do. She called the story The Problem. But because she used bubble writing there wasn't enough room to fit the whole word in one line. If it was all the same size, her writing was actually small. Chloe said this was like real life because the problems start really big but then it gets smaller."

"Because she has been sober for a year she is getting herself a new phone, but I think she claimed it at least a month ago! I think she should get a present every year and it should get better the longer she stays sober. It doesn't have to be expensive, or even bought, it could be something I made her. Moises presents are better because they are made by the people you love."

Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland

Robertson Scottish Government

The Scottish Government

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Everyone Has a Story focuses on the voices of young people.

The purpose of the project was to address a specific gap in knowledge, support and evidence based on a participatory and cumulative approach.

The aim is to improve the support for children and young people whose parents are in recovery and loss to:

- Increase awareness of the views from children and young people.
- Increase understanding of support needs for children and young people.
- Enhance practitioner skills to deliver supportive models based on evidence of need.
- Increase in strategic planning and policy developments in this area.
- Increase applications to PDI that will recognize the needs and views of children and young people.

Key Messages

Children and young people's stories:

- don't talk about recovery
- tell us they love their parents
- understand strange
- show their need to care better

Practitioners tell us:

- children and young people know very little about recovery
- children and young people have big concerns about their parent relapsing
- parents worry about their parenting

The findings from this project tell us:

- the importance of listening to children and young people before acting, our assumptions need to take a back seat
- there is little in the research that tells us about the impact of recovery on children and young people
- young people should have control over how access to share information, they have ideas and thoughts on how to share their story
- we need to continue to look at ways to improve joined-up approaches between adult and children and family services.

Why is this different?

No other research has set out to develop a variety of methods to hear the voices of children and young people.

We have not only listened but also collaborated with young people and practitioners to develop:

- Story questions for active listening (found in the Overview Report)
- A template for capturing stories (in Component 3)
- A blueprint designed by young people on how they want to share their story (in component 5)
- An ethical framework for this process (in appendices)

What does 'Everyone Has a Story' consist of?

Overview - provides an overview of the Everyone Has a Story project and summarizes the evidence from the 4 components.

Component 1: What we heard from the stories and experiences.

Component 2: What practitioners tell us.

Component 3: How young people could share their story.

Component 4: What the evidence tells us.

Appendices: Components can be found at tbfoundationforScotland.org.uk
What we hear from the stories and experiences – the insights of children and young people who consented to sharing their feelings and experiences with their trusted worker.

A group of nine practitioners with Evaluation Scotland to look at more effective ways to collate, reflect and analyse stories shared by children and young people.

**Key Findings**

We need to improve our skills in listening first, our own assumptions need to take a back seat.

We need to give the time, space and support to enable children and young people to share.

Critical first step is helping children and young people understand and manage change.

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**Component 1:**

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**Component 2:**

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**Component 3:**

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**Component 4:**

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Key findings and recommendations of gaps to be addressed

Designed a Blueprint for collating stories in young people’s own words:

- A text support service - for support in crisis and day to day.
- A phone based app - to share stories, reflect and connect with others.
- A website - to access further information and track journey.

Young people were inspired by the possibility of sharing their story helping others.

Young people said they were happy to share if they knew why and who it will be shared with.

- How to share - in a way that is accessible to us and we have control over our story.
- Who to share with - directed by the young person but people who they will have contact with eg a teacher.
- Why share - it is important as it could help me and other people...

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Children and young people growing up with problematic parental substance use may understand their parent’s conduct as a normal part of life

(Mackay, 1999)

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*All references can be found in the Appendices of the full resource*