

Collaborative communication skills

National outcomes framework , strengths based practise , **Rhoda Emlyn-Jones**

Strengths Based Practice

- Outcome focused public services
- Collaborative communication
- Exploring personal outcomes
- Supporting a skilled workforce

National Outcomes Framework: Key element of the transformational change

A Shift from:

- Heavily process driven interactions that lead staff to a particular style of conversation in order to answer the questions the organisation asks of them
- Responding to the needs of the system at the expense of spending more time listening and understanding the person and family



To:

- A series of **empowering conversations** designed to understand each unique set of circumstances and a system that supports that approach e.g. relevant paperwork, IT systems and management decision making processes
- Skilled, thoughtful conversations that focus on resolving the service user dilemmas, collaborating in establishing sustainable outcomes, maximising autonomy, independence and strengths

Context

Person centred care is a core concept for us all:

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act

Requires that we:

- ▶ Ascertain and have regard to the individuals views, wishes and feelings
- ▶ Identify the outcomes that the person wishes to achieve
- ▶ 'What matters to you'

Principles underpinning reform :

- ▶ Three key principles all have major implications for the type of work context which can support the implementation of the Act.
- ▶ **Principle One:** Working relationships with person/families are paramount. This requires the organisation to create the opportunity for frontline workers to develop relationships and to manage them constructively.
- ▶ **Principle Two:** Thinking critically and maintaining a stance of critical inquiry is essential. Again the organisation in its processes and culture creates a work environment that encourages critical thinking and values the contributions of their skilled staff.
- ▶ **Principle Three:** Work needs to be grounded in everyday experience. A policy or practice that looks great on paper needs to show it works for the families and staff who experience it.

Your interest in today

- ▶ What particularly interests you?
- ▶ Brief introductions and discussions, share your thoughts

Social services wellbeing act!

- Where does a sense of wellbeing come from?
- Relationships
- Feeling loved
- Feeling respected
- A Sense of purpose
- Making a useful contribution
- And sometimes the little things in every day that makes life feel worthwhile
- Outcomes?
- Its much more than an academic process

So our response needs to be holistic

Move away from traditional problem focussed, service and task focussed plans to holistic approaches that focus on the person and their networks/family, understanding the unique identity of each person and situation. To enable them to live as fulfilled a life as possible and achieve a sense of wellbeing.

The changes people face are challenging

How we think about something effects what we do!!!

Imagine

- ▶ A change you are thinking about making
- ▶ Work/Life balance
- ▶ Eating
- ▶ Exercise
- ▶ Parenting
- ▶ Supporting elderly parents
- ▶ Make a commitment!!!!

A bad start!

- ▶ How do you feel about the issue now?
- ▶ How do you feel about me?

Changing things is never easy

- ▶ Our starting point
- ▶ Understanding the challenges people face

Empathy and Understanding

Step 1: Good things about staying the same	Step 4: Good things about making the change
Step 2: Not so good things about staying the same	Step 3: Not so good things about making the change

The most important elements of good communication?

- ▶ Empathy
- ▶ Warmth
- ▶ Clarity about concerns
- ▶ Recognition of strengths

Skilled and Sensitive Conversations

- ▶ The only way you can Ascertain the most meaningful things for people is through sensitive conversations.
- ▶ Staffs understanding of persons needs
- ▶ What's important to them

- ▶ And have regard to:
- ▶ Listen to and value the insights from service user, family and worker
- ▶ Regularly reflect on change? Respect the insights and act upon them
- ▶ More emphasis on what worker and family can achieve when the work together
- ▶ Less exploration of what people cant do, more emphasis on what they want to do

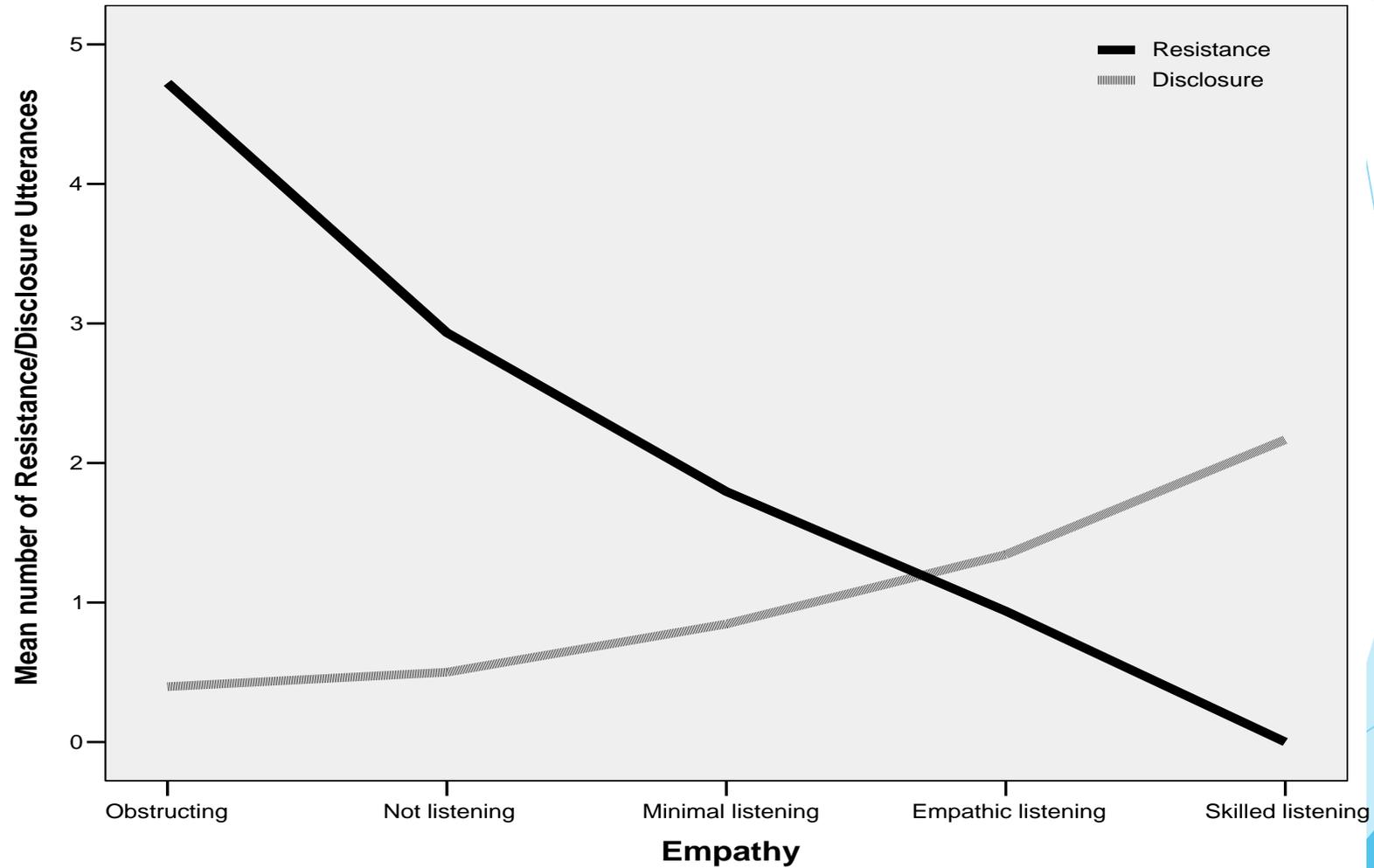
Relationship based practise

- How we think about something affects what we do about something
- Our approach to the issue affects the outcome
- We are engaged in a **dynamic process** , in any encounter between a worker and a family member there should always be **two people learning !**
- The result needs to be 'self empowering' for the family
- The goal to gain **insight** as well as information.

Focussing our skills

- We notice people for the problems they face not just the problems they cause
- We notice peoples abilities to alter their course
- We focus on their hopes and aspirations
- We notice the ability people have to offset their own risk and concerns
- We notice the strengths of families/groups/units and support what's important to them building on their resilience

Empathy Client defence and Disclosure



Investment in skilled listening from the outset

- Builds trust
- Increases disclosure
- Reduces defensive behaviour
- Decreases 'hidden harm'



Conversational Traps

- Expert trap
- Power trap
- Problem solving trap
- Question and answer trap
- Yes-but trap
- Blaming trap
- Labelling trap
- Confrontation trap



The essence

- Collaboration
- Listening and evoking
- Respecting autonomy

Principles of effective communication

- Listen and Express Empathy
- Explore concerns and aspirations
- Expect natural defensiveness
- Support the persons sense of their abilities
- Avoid Arguments and confrontation

Effective practitioners

- Do
- Make a commitment
- Stay calm and purposeful
- Build hope
- Stay focussed on the most difficult issues
- Acknowledge the challenge
- Explore others hopes and aspirations
- Respect others skills, knowledge and expertise
- Try to avoid
- Rescuing, advising, telling or 'doing to' rather than 'with'

Core Skills

- Ask **O**pen minded questions
- **A**ffirm: notice and reflect strengths and challenges
- Listen **R**eflectively
- **S**ummarise

Reflective Listening

- A reflection is a statement not a question.
- Reflections help to engage the client in a 'reflective space.'
- They help to engage the client in connecting with their own insights , understanding themselves better.
- They can express content, feeling and meaning

The power of reflection

If you are reflecting you are focussing on their world, their thoughts, their dilemmas.

As opposed to:

asking questions designed by the system which may or may not be relevant or meaningful

or

making suggestions or offering advice from our perspectives.

It is a vehicle for your intuitive understanding.

Your professional intuition

- Hard thinking.....
- Trying to connect
- At an emotional level
- At a meanings level
- Carry that thought in a statement
- The recipient connects with their own feelings and meanings at a deeper more empowering level

The conversation matters

“my mum died suddenly last year, my dad has been drinking ever since, I want to drink and forget too but I need to take care of my sisters”

14 year old girl

How to connect with her?

Demo

- In pairs
- Discuss
- What you heard?
- What you think s/he means?
- What you think s/he feels?
- What her values and drivers are?
- What its like to be her/him?
- Paraphrase in your own words and offer a brief statement on any of the above
- This is your professional intuition at work, deepen as conversation progresses

Asking Questions

- Open,
 - Thoughtful
 - exploratory
-
- Strategic Key questions

Summarising

- A focus on key issues
- What are the strengths/skills and motivators you have noticed
- What actions have **they** decided to take
- Empowering summaries

Skills Practice

In threes with people you know less well

- Speaker : discuss something from your own lives
- Listener: listen to meanings & feelings paraphrase reflect, notice strengths & affirm,
- End with a summary.
- Try not to ask questions or provide solutions
- Observer: keep time. Watch the interaction

Allow 5 minutes for practice and 5 minutes for debrief.

Swap over so that everyone has a go in each role.

Observers give feedback

start with the Speaker, then the Listener, then the Observer

Break



Notice & reflect on strengths

Notice the persons strengths and resources

Rooted in observations and evidence

Not praising but:

Offering

- Statements of appreciation and understanding
- Builds self efficacy
- Strengthens and builds your working relationship

Noticing strengths Exercise

- In pairs, discuss a challenging case that you worked and ultimately went well
- Discuss with partner
- Listen for the speakers/workers, character, strengths, principles and values
- Summarise and feedback affirmations rooted in evidence and observations

Feedback

Something that struck me from today

Welcome back
Day 2

Key questions at referral

Early conversations

- Cross professional agreement, at Referral,
- MDT's, Core groups etc.
- Outcome conversations, exploring endings and strengths at the beginning makes it possible for people to succeed

Example key questions:-

What are the **priority** needs for this family/family member?

What **specifically** concerns you?

What have you noticed when things are going well?

What do you hope for in terms of **behavioural** change ? Short term? Medium term? Long term?

What would the person/family be doing differently in 3 months time if things were improved ? If you were less concerned?

What would you specifically want from us?

How shall we keep in touch as things progress?

Engaging families

Early strategies to engage

- If a professional was coming into your life , invited or otherwise, what would you want from them?
- What would they be doing that would make you think...?

“we have hope here, we will invite them back.”

First contact

Q Tell me a bit about what's been happening?

- Reflection examples “you have a lot on your plate”
- “your under a lot of stress”

Q what concerns you most?

- You can manage this... but ...this feels too difficult

Q On a day when things are not so bad what do you notice happening

- There are people around who care and help

Q If things were a little bit better what would that look like

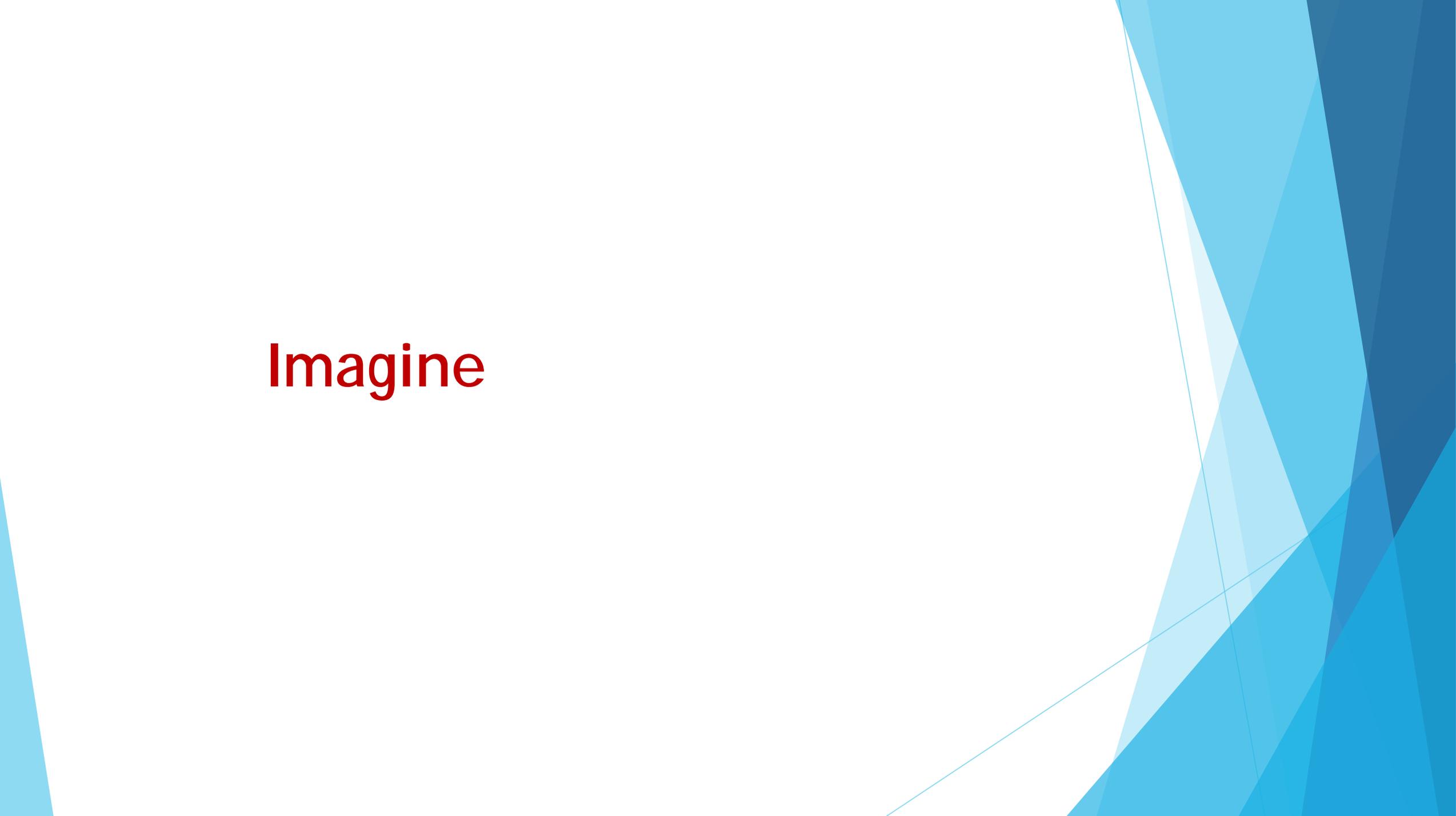
- You have a clear picture of how to improve things

The Skills



- Open minded questions
- Affirmation statements, notice strengths
- Listen Reflectively
- Summarise in an empowering way

Imagine

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the frame, creating a dynamic, layered effect against the white background.

Skilled staff work with the feelings that lie behind the behaviour

behaviour

- Refuse to cooperate
- Avoid appointments
- Minimise the problems
- Make things up
- Argue
- Passive agreement

feelings

- Shame
- Guilt
- Fear of judgement
- Fear of consequences
- Fear of Vulnerability
- Panic

Lowering defences in Practice

- What do you see and experience in your practice?
- Behaviours
- Feelings behind the behaviours
- Top tips for lowering defences and engaging?

Strategies for lowering defences

- Resist hitting it head on
- Try not to take it personally
- Acknowledge the feelings
- Empathise, Accept, Reflect and Explore
- Shift to strengths based conversation
- Emphasise personal choice and control
- Avoid argumentation

Break



Helping people get unstuck

Using strategies. Sets of questions designed for a specific purpose

- Questions are skills for direction
- Reflections and affirmations are skills for depth
- When we use a set of questions we need to underpin them with reflections and affirmations
- Be intentional and purposeful

Help people think & talk

- Speaker be willing to talk about an issue that you are wondering how to address but have been considering changing
- Listener ask “What’s happening? Can you tell me a bit about the issue?”
- Reflect and summarise

continued

Listener: "What is helpful about...[current behaviour]?"

Reflect, reflect & summarise.

Listener: "What is *not* so helpful about...[current behaviour]?"

Reflect, reflect & summarise.

Summarise overall "So on the one hand... but on the other...."

Open question

Listener to ask “Imagine it is 2 years down the line & things have not changed - what’s the *worst* thing that could be happening?”

Reflect, reflect and summarise.

continued

Listener ask “Imagine it is one year on & things have changed - what would that be like, what is the best thing that could be happening?”

Reflect, reflect and summarise.

Summary

Listener summarise.

HIGHLIGHT the strengths & challenges but also statements of insight, determination or commitment .

Follow summary with “Where does that leave you?”

Decisional Balance exercise

As the worker you 'guide' your service user through the balance sheet process.

Decisional Balance Sheet

<p>Step 1: Good things about staying the same</p>	<p>Step 4: Good things about making the change</p>
<p>Step 2: Not so good things about staying the same</p>	<p>Step 3: Not so good things about making the change</p>

Break



Achieving **Sustainable** Change
ASC Ltd.

ssia

Social Services Improvement Agency
Asiantaeth Gwella'r Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol

Outcome framework

- Strengths
- Priority risks
- What is the most important thing they are trying to avoid happening?
- Good enough outcomes
- (behaviourally described)

Step 1. Strengths

Think of a Service user you know well

- Group: explore and draw up a strengths map with them
- Internal strengths of each family member
- Interpersonal strengths across the family/network
- Environmental

Step 2 . Priority risks & contingency/ safety plans

- ▶ Consider together
- ▶ What would the person/ family/network describe as the
- ▶ **Priority risk**
- ▶ If they were going to put a plan in place to manage that risk
- ▶ Who would do
- ▶ What ?
- ▶ when ?
- ▶ where ?

Step 3. The best Outcome they can achieve .

- ▶ **The outcome is the well-defined picture** the service user can describe that represents a realistic hope for them as they go forward in their new circumstances
- ▶ An outcome is not a service , any service is merely a means to an end
- ▶ **It is not measured by the ups and downs of each day**, it is an estimate of where they feel they are in relation to the ultimate outcome

An outcome is not the service

- ▶ The service may include: attending a group, having support from a key worker, keeping health appointments
- ▶ They are all means to an end not an end in themselves
- ▶ The end is described by the service user:

- *"I can ensure my daughter gets to school, I can show her the love I feel through hugs and reading at bedtime I can manage stress without drinking and let my family know when I need help"*
- *"I can reduce the stress on my daughter and stay at home whilst maintaining a link with my friend"*
- *"I can reduce my family's fears and anxiety whilst also spending time on my own and having time in the garden I love"*
- *"I will have come to terms with the loss and the sadness and I will be focussing more on the positives"*
- *"I will be feeling more confident that I can take care of myself and I know the people I can call on if I feel worried or low"*

Help staff to be clear about what an outcome looks like

- ▶ Getting an outcomes approach into practise
- ▶ What does an outcome look like?

Definitions

- ▶ **Resource (or Input):** provision to achieve outcome
Social workers, care staff, therapies staff, health staff, services and equipment
- ▶ **Activity (or Process):** how the outcome is achieved
Skills, empathy understanding communication and knowledge, negotiations skills clear and thoughtful planning
- ▶ **Output:** quantifying activity to produce effect
Numbers of visits, numbers of plans, numbers of reviews etc.
- ▶ **Outcome:**
The impact/the effect of the professional intervention and services on a person or family/community/population
Bespoke goals achieved and embedded into lifestyle change, change in family functioning, realised aspirations

The Outcome

- ▶ **The outcome is the well-defined picture** the service user can describe that represents a realistic hope for them as they go forward in their new circumstances
- ▶ **It is not measured by the ups and downs of each day**, it is an estimate of where they feel they are in relation to the ultimate outcome

Example 1

“I still have some low days but I know that if I talk to my friend Mary it helps me through those, ultimately I can still look out of this window and see the view I love. I can still ring my daughter in Australia and have a warm conversation with her, it can be lonely sometimes but I really like the people who call each day, they know me and understand my sense of humour and of course I still have my postman and milkman who have been calling for so many years I am still part of my community, it’s ok and it’s the best it can be for me.”

Example 2

“My children are much more settled, they are talking more and playing well together. We have meals together and cuddles at bedtime. There are tough days I miss my boyfriend and feel lonely but I remind myself of all the positives we have achieved. This is the mum I wanted to be. I am making new friends gradually and finding ways of talking to people I trust when I feel low.”

Keeping it going, Reflect on progress

Q How are things going?

Reflect and affirm

Q What is the most difficult thing ?

Reflect and affirm

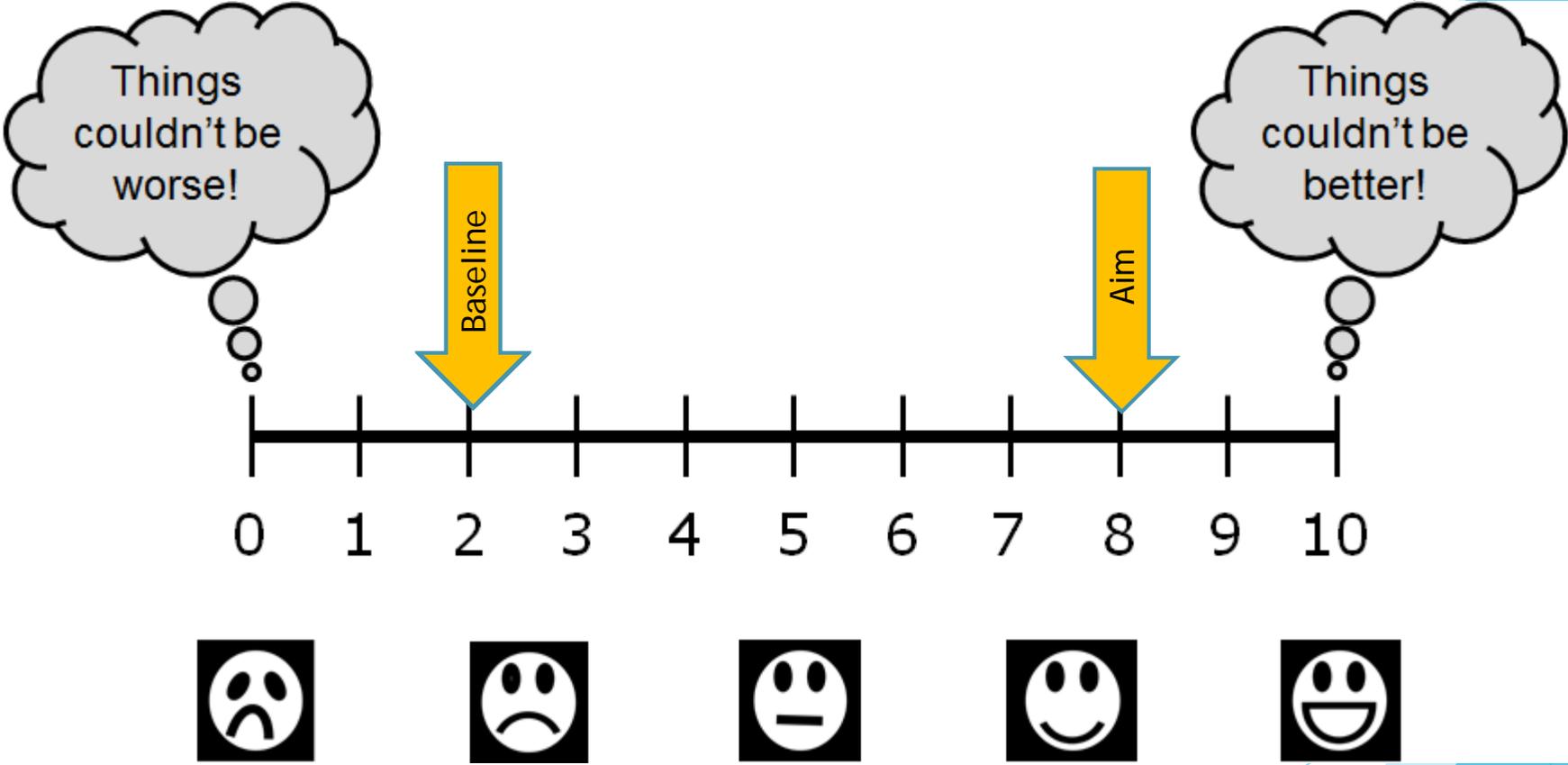
Q What strength are you drawing on to deal with that ?

Reflect and affirm

Q What's the best thing about what you've achieved?

Reflect and affirm

La's measure progress towards outcomes



Endings

- Mark endings
- Celebrate achievements
- Note strengths
- Leave the door open

Break



Reflect on practise

- ▶ 1:1 supervision
- ▶ Group supervision
- ▶ Case summaries on the system
- ▶ Contingency plans well rehearsed with key professionals
- ▶ Etc.

Capturing progress

- Family outcome
- Strengths
- Priority risks (safety/contingency plan)
- What needs to happen?
- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?

Exercise

- One person bring a case
- One person explore the case
- Considering the headings
- One person observe and write down the main issues under each heading
- At the end of the exercise the observer reads out what they have written and agree ,expand or revisit.
- Share and discuss

From good beginnings to best outcomes: summary:

- Listen to where all key people are and get alongside
- Reflect feelings and meanings
- Lower natural defences, build trust-reflect-empathise
- Use key questions to help people explore change
- Reflect feelings and meanings
- Notice strengths, values, beliefs and reflect these
- Resist taking a side in the argument for change
- Consider how to maximise ownership of the plan
- Reflect feelings, meanings, values and strengths
- Assist in articulating and refining outcomes
- Acknowledge challenges and explore choices
- Notice strengths, achievements , autonomy (good enough for me)
- Know when outcomes are achieved and sustained

Next session

- Who
- Where
- When

- Supportive materials

- Evaluations

- Last thoughts
- close