

PRACTICE TOOL 2

EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Child Safe Organisation National Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions that affect them and are taken seriously.

Empowerment and participation are critical elements of creating an organisation that is safe for children and young people. It is particularly important for children and young people who have experienced trauma through exposure to FDV because they can be at greater risk of further abuse. They may also find it more challenging to speak up and to believe that adults will take them seriously.

Children and young people's needs are more likely to be met when organisations actively seek and support their involvement in the services provided to them, and how these services are provided. This occurs at both an individual level (eg active engagement in their case planning) and at an organisational level where children and young people are involved in planning, developing, implementing and evaluating service delivery.

The reflective practice questions in this Practice Tool have been designed to encourage conversations and reflection on how staff and organisations as a whole can prioritise the voices of children and young people in service delivery and practice.

To start, choose as your focus two or three questions which are most relevant to your service. It's also a great idea to start with your areas of strength, and then move on to those areas where you think your practice requires further development

This tool can be used to think about your practice as an individual or with colleagues in a team meeting, or during one-on-one supervision.

Consider the following questions and prioritise the ones you think will benefit children, young people, yourself and other staff the most.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

How are children and young people encouraged to be involved in decisions that affect them?

Do we provide regular opportunities for children and young people to be involved in planning activities, outings, holidays, and equipment choices? How do we know they are successful?

Have we consulted with children and young people on what sort of planning they would like to be involved in.

How do we monitor the effect of new strategies on children and young people?

How do we seek feedback from children and young people on how satisfied they are with our services? How is the feedback used?

Are children and young people aware of our Child Safe Code of conduct and what role did they play in its development?

How do we communicate the outcome of any consultations with children and young people; and the service as a whole?

Do we seek feedback from children and young people and their mothers/carers to see if we are meeting their cultural/inclusion needs? What more can we do?

How do we engage with the children and young people to find out what is important to them?

Have children and young people developed their own Child Code of Conduct and is it regularly reviewed?

Have we allocated a budget and resources to support children and young people's participation and empowerment?

Are support services such as helplines accessible to children and young people without them having to ask?

How can we measure the effectiveness and impact of our actions? What can we do with this information?

What practical strategies do we use to support children and young people understand their rights?

What are the challenges and barriers to empowering and consulting with children and young people in our organisation? What more can we do?

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