

Developing post-incident practice in residential child care one year on



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We wanted to create a bit of a moment, as part of this feedback loop we wanted to share something with you that we thought would be hopefully a helpful representation. Both of what we did at the event last year; a reminder for those who were with us, or perhaps an introduction to it for those who weren't, of the conversation last year and also what emerged, what were the themes that we noticed when we did our analysis after the event? I'm going to take a little bit of time now to talk through the different elements of what came up that day for us.

We started by moving into groups and we looked at the question, 'Why do you think it's important to do some form process with staff or young people following an incident?' And there were a number of themes emerging which I'm going to briefly illustrate now. These post incident moments were identified repeatedly as being crucial in repairing the relationship, which is likely to have been at risk following an incident, with a strong belief in the contribution it makes to learning and emotional release.

Another theme was the importance of considering the array of needs in the moment. For some this is sitting and talking, but for some people they may need other ways of communicating and there are likely to be

different ways of viewing what happened.

There has to be reassurance for the young person that people care. In addition to nurturing, repair and the relationships, it also lets the young person know that they're being fully listened to.

Holding the people involved right in the middle of this as the post-incident process unfolds was also identified as critical, both in the immediate moments and in how the relationships develop and are supported over time.

The question appearing here becomes 'So what? Something has happened. We've worked to address it in a compassionate way', but the synthesis demonstrates itself and the learning behaviours benefiting everyone. How now will the learning benefit the wider setting, not just the individuals directly involved?

Time was one of the most significant themes across the entire session and appeared repeatedly for a variety of reasons and to address a range of issues and not just time, but timing as well. Does your guidance require an initial discussion within a certain time frame?

If so, is that taking full recognition of the needs of everyone involved?

Post-incident support should be for everyone involved and also the management team to recognise and support with any further learning and development requirement. There was a recognition that staff may be overthinking at this point and that providing to support to acknowledge mistakes where they may happen.

And to have that role modelled by leaders for the benefit of staff and ultimately for the young people was significant.

Not surprisingly, in addition to time, culture was the most dominant theme and naturally cut across all of the other themes. A key element to this, which will appear again later, was the issue of holding intention, the role of the post incident process without allowing it to add any sense of erosion of the relationship or a sense of

bureaucratic self-importance.

This big green comment at the bottom of the screen is one I pulled out in particular as it felt like a very powerful summary of the spirit which was appearing across all of the content.

'There's something important about seeing post-incident processes as a form of caring for the people involved.'

Having considered the why of it all, we posed a question about the Who.

'Who are these moments or these processes for post-incident?' And the

overwhelming perspective was that if done well, there should be a whole system benefit to this with everyone being positively affected. That's again something that will appear again a little later.

After bringing this first set of breakout groups to a close as a form of feeding back, we invited everyone to contribute to a Menti to share one key reflection from the discussion which took place in the group. There were obviously very broad comments and to reflect some of them back, there was a contribution about creating the right conditions and culture for people to feel brave in sharing their perception without fear of blame, a reflection on the importance of relationships and the need to understand what has happened. And this is important in terms of recognising incidents are a big deal and we must not become desensitised to this. It's important to remember relationships can improve between young people and staff after an incident through reflection and learning together, and there was some practice sharing going on. As one person commented, it was good to hear that some services are looking at report writing to the young person and not just the Care Inspectorate. There was some other innovative thinking going on as someone reflected on the nature of difficult meetings and the impact they can have on both staff and young people, and a suggestion to explore the idea of having debrief type moments following difficult meetings as well.

We then moved into the next phase of our group discussions and explored the challenges in relation to post-incident processes.

There were some clear systemic issues at play affecting this work, which create a sense of self-perpetuating erosion and the ability to demonstrate consistent values, develop healthy processes, provide consistency for young people and the abilities to stabilise and invest in the workforce. Issues more specific to post incident restraint with the technical demands in relation to completing paperwork or paperwork not being fit for purpose. The role of young people in these processes and their state of readiness. A significant issue in relation to resource and time, which we heard about earlier, dynamics across the sector and a concern about a culture which doesn't yet fully value reflective practice in every instance. At a later point in the process, I read this contribution, which I thought might be important to introduce here. 'In the midst of significant challenge, it can be helpful to keep a focus on the things which we're able to influence and change.'

We moved into the final phase of group discussions and focused on the question what is going well?

There were really positive discussions about progress being made with young people with more intuitive, simplified processes in place, taking an asset based approach and the role of specialists in providing support. You'll remember well-being from the 'Why is this important?' element a little earlier. There was a strong emphasis here on the creation of safe spaces, enabling trust and reassurance and the management with teams feeling seen, heard and safe to share. There were discussions about the place of thoughtful trauma-informed discussions and the creative use of journaling as a tool to aid reflective practice.

Some of the ways this is showing itself is through the use of group debriefs and consideration of how handovers, team meetings and other shared spaces can be used to support reflection and learning. And not surprisingly, as we've seen with other elements here, the importance of culture is a key underpinning factor.

The content from the group discussion suggested that there is a marked increase in the number of spaces for reflective practice being generated, which is contributing to culture change and ultimately a reduction in the number of restraints. There's also some evidence that some staff are proactive in seeking out these opportunities to engage with these reflective spaces.

After bringing this next set of breakout groups to a close, we again invited everyone to contribute to a Menti to share one key reflection from the discussion which took place in the group. These included the importance of establishing and maintaining a reflective and supportive culture over a culture of blame.

The recognition that meaningful participation and debriefs requires good relationships, and well-functioning relationships require time. An important reflection is sometimes people don't know how to go about repair or even how to start those conversations. There needs to be a culture of continued reflection, learning and development of relationships and practice with the effective use of analysis.

Before the end of the session this morning, just a reminder that we're going to provide a chance for you to reflect on what you've heard at this point and also to reflect on what we're going to hear from Laura shortly. There was one more element from the event to feedback to today. Before closing the session, we asked people to use Menti to share one thing they

wanted to do as a result of having attended the event. These are the 64 responses we got. Please don't worry if you can't see the detail. This is just illustrative at this point.

And I just want to share some of the thinking which has informed our analysis by thinking about what is required to address technical and adaptive problems.

A technical problem is 1 where the problem is clear, the solution is obvious and it can be done within the resources you have. An adaptive problem is 1 where the problem is unclear and requires further learning to try to define it. The solution is always unknown and requires a process of exploration. And the process requires multiple perspectives operating collaboratively.

An example here might be that you've identified you're unhappy with the paperwork you are required to complete post-incident. The solution is to rewrite the paperwork, which can be done using the existing resources, and you can be given permission directly by your line manager. That's a technical problem.

Having completed the task, which you can only do with something technical, you know hopefully have a better set of paperwork, but you haven't successfully embedded a culture of reflective practice. You've addressed one element or one tool which sits within such a process. There's no single clear solution to the problem of embedding reflective practice, which is what defines it as a problem that requires us to adapt to multiple parts of our system. Adaptive problems are also problems which don't have a defined sense of ever being completed, unlike technical problems.

Which can be completed, such as rewriting paperwork.

Here again, all submissions from the people who attended the event about the thing they would like to do definitely as a result of that session. As I was analysing them, I was doing so through the lens of technical and adaptive problems. Again, don't worry if you can't see the detail.

The green content on the left is technical. This is all comments which were about revising policies, procedures and paperwork.

The blue content on the right represented a range of adaptive challenges which covered cross sector work, working with young people, learning and development, elevating the work as a priority, how we use and prioritise time and the values we demonstrate in our work. And part of the reason I'm not sharing these in huge detail was the these were individual

commitments that people were essentially contracting with, to make to themselves rather than a commitment that they were making to SPRAG as an entity or to a larger body.

I just want to end by saying it's important to recognise that as a residential childcare team in CELCIS.

Capacity is often limited and we absolutely realise that that's true for everyone who is a member of SPRAG and everyone else working across the residential tribal sector as well. But keeping that in mind, I'm going to hand back to Sarah, who will provide a brief update on a technical piece of work which has emerged from this data.

And which through which there has been some progress alongside members of SPRAG. So I'm going to hand back to Sarah. Thank you.