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# **CAMERADOS** PICTURE BOOK

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MOVEMENT AND HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

# HEY CAMERADO WELCOME TO OUR PICTURE BOOK

(BY THE ASSOCIATION OF CAMERADOS)

We really hope this book gives you a sense of what the Camerado Movement is about and if it makes your brain buzz enough you'll want to get involved, start behaving like a camerado in your everyday life, perhaps wear our badge or even set up your own Public Living Room.

## WHAT'S THE CAMERADOS MOVEMENT?

It's a growing number of people from Baltimore to Blackpool who get through tough times by looking out for each other because let's face it as humans we all go through difficult days or weeks and we don't always want services or professionals to get involved.

Camerados think what we need instead is a camerado; someone who notices we're struggling, is alongside us maybe just for a moment, who let's us talk, doesn't try to fix us, doesn't judge us when we're being a bit rubbish, accepts us for who we are and is ready to see the funnier side of life. But here's the magic bit, when you're a camerado you feel better too because helping someone else lifts you out of your own problems. It's a win win!

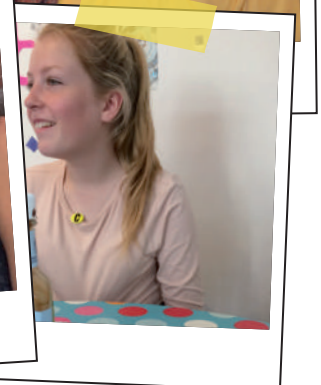
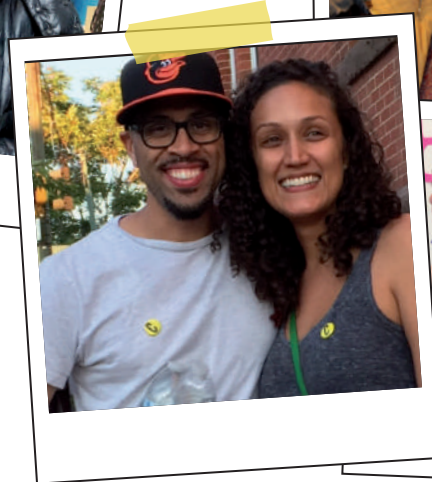
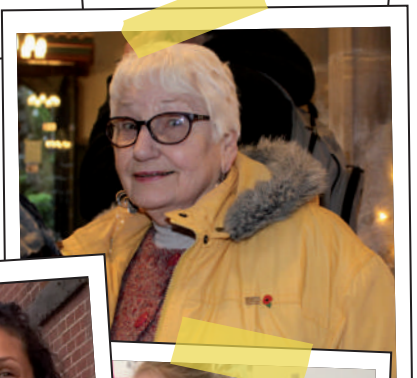
The movement is young, growing and learning all the time, so we've made loads of mistakes getting this far and much of what this book contains has been learnt through trial and error, scratching our heads and putting the kettle on. Being a camerado in your every day or even setting up a Public Living Room isn't always

straight forward but what we have learnt is that the principles in this book really do make a difference to behaving like a camerado and the tips section is here to help you get going and feel confident about what you're doing when setting up a Public Living Room, even if it's just a one-off pop up.

We're constantly learning what happens when people start looking out for each other so who knows what this book will say in years to come. So we would LOVE YOUR stories and input too, please get in touch at [office@camerados.org](mailto:office@camerados.org)

Grab a cuppa, curl up and meet some of the folk who already call themselves camerados, learn all about our Principles and pick up Tips on how to set up a Public Living Room. Then hopefully you'll send for your free **Camerados badge** or '**Public Living In A Box**' kit from [office@camerados.org](mailto:office@camerados.org)





## CAMERADOS PRINCIPLES

As we said earlier we've made a lot of mistakes setting up and growing this movement and we've learnt a lot about being a camerado. Whether you're just wearing the badge and being a camerado in your everyday life or setting up your own Public Living Room we've learnt the following principles really help us, especially when things get difficult. So always bear them in mind.

PRINCIPLE **#1** If we see someone struggling...we ask them to help us.\*

PRINCIPLE **#2** No fixing each other's lives...we are just alongside each other.

PRINCIPLE **#3** It's ok to be a bit rubbish...we share our failures without worrying.

PRINCIPLE **#4** We mix with people...who don't look and think like us.

PRINCIPLE **#5** Remember to have fun...it keeps things human.

PRINCIPLE **#6** When we disagree...level with each other respectfully.

\* Creates purpose, self-worth and gets people out of their own worries.

We don't want to preach at you but if you're gonna be in the movement or slap the "Camarados" word on your public living room or wear the badge we ask that you bring these principles to life. They're pretty high level so shouldn't interfere with making things your own and being who you are.





**KENZIE BEING A CAMERADO IN CAMDEN**

# PRINCIPLE #1

If we see someone struggling...



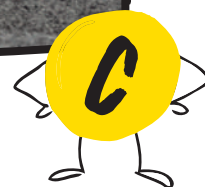
**WARNING! CHARITY CAN MAKE PEOPLE FEEL RUBBISH!**



...we ask them to help us.



IT LETS THEM  
KNOW THEY ARE  
VALUED AND TAKES  
THEIR MIND OFF  
THEIR WORRIES





# PRINCIPLE #2

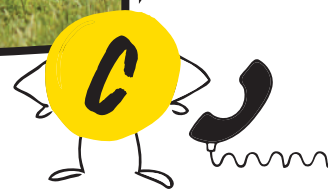
No fixing each other's lives...



**...we are just alongside each other.**



**LISTEN MORE  
FIX LESS**





# PRINCIPLE #3

It's ok to be a bit rubbish...





**...we share our failures without worrying.**



**IMPERFECTIONS  
CAN BE PERFECT**

**C**

# PRINCIPLE #4

We mix with people...





...who don't look and think like us.



DIVERSITY...  
NOT JUST A  
DANCE GROUP!





**PRINCIPLE #5**  
**Remember to have fun...**



...it keeps things human.



LAUGHTER  
IS THE BEST  
MEDICINE



# PRINCIPLE #6

## When we disagree...





...level with each other respectfully.



## **NOW FOR THE PUBLIC LIVING ROOM SECTION WITH TIPS TO HELP YOU ON YOUR WAY**

Although being a camerado is a mindset thing that you can carry with you everywhere, some folk like to meet up with others in their neighbourhood.

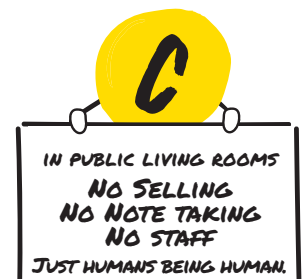
**We call these places Public Living Rooms.**

For some it's a relief to have somewhere to go on a tough day where nobody is trying to sell you something and nobody is trying to fix you. You can go and just "be" and get out of your troubles by being good company to someone else.

**Public Living Rooms come in all shapes and sizes depending on what local folk want to do.**

Some Camerados regularly around a table in a friendly cafe once a week while others have spaces fully dedicated 24/7, do whatever suits you and your community.

You can see opposite some examples from parks to hospitals, university buildings to libraries, they're popping up everywhere.



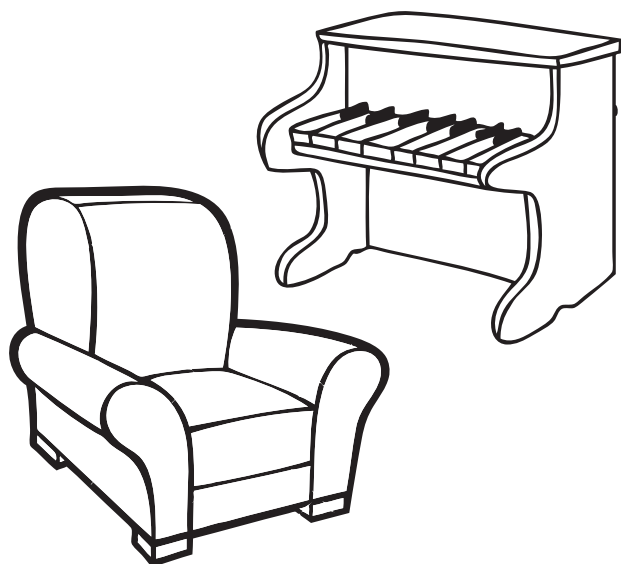




## TIPS!

Over the next few pages we want to share the do's and don'ts we've learnt over the last 3 years. This will help you set up your own Public Living Room, creating the right vibe and giving you confidence to get started and just give it a go.

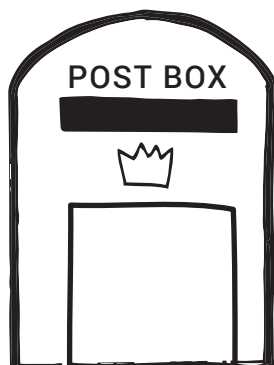
There are **3 elements** that we've found need to be there to create a space that seems - magically! - to encourage people to look out for each other, on the level, without power games, and in a safe and happy way.



### 1. ENVIRONMENT

Whether you're creating the environment yourselves or you are in an existing space the look of the place is what's going to make people feel they are NOT in an institution, but somewhere relaxing where they can be themselves.



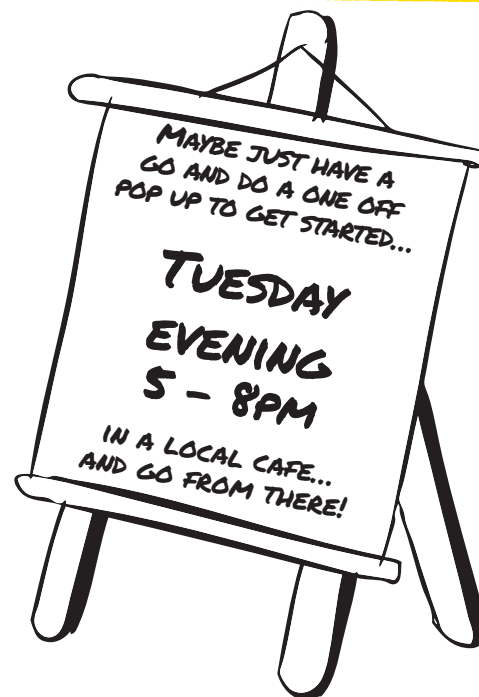


### 3. STORIES

What the Public Living Room is all about really clicks into place when people read each other's stories. It inspires and gives permission to be camerados themselves. Please don't forget this crucial element, honestly we found it to be really important. Also the Association of Camerados can't wait to hear how your Public Living Room worked out, so please send us some of your stories. We love to receive them.

### 2. MESSAGES

No matter if you use a chalk board or poster it's important to communicate in a human way. Try to avoid language and phrases that label people just be informal. ***"Public Living Room - relax, chat and look out for each other"*** has done us proud. Also ***"Be a camerado"*** will do the job.



Please help all Camerados around the world by telling your stories. You are in a global movement now and it's just good to encourage each other on good days and bad!

# TIP #1

Just to get started...



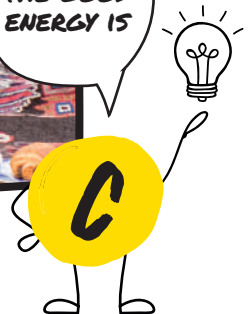


...find like minds



...other football teams welcome

GO WHERE  
THE GOOD  
ENERGY IS



# TIP #2

## Avoid formal meetings...





...order pizza...then everyone will come





## TIP #3

Don't over complicate it...



...start with a pop up





## TIP #4

The enviroment helps...

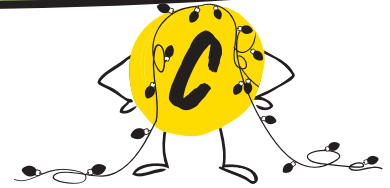




...make the space human

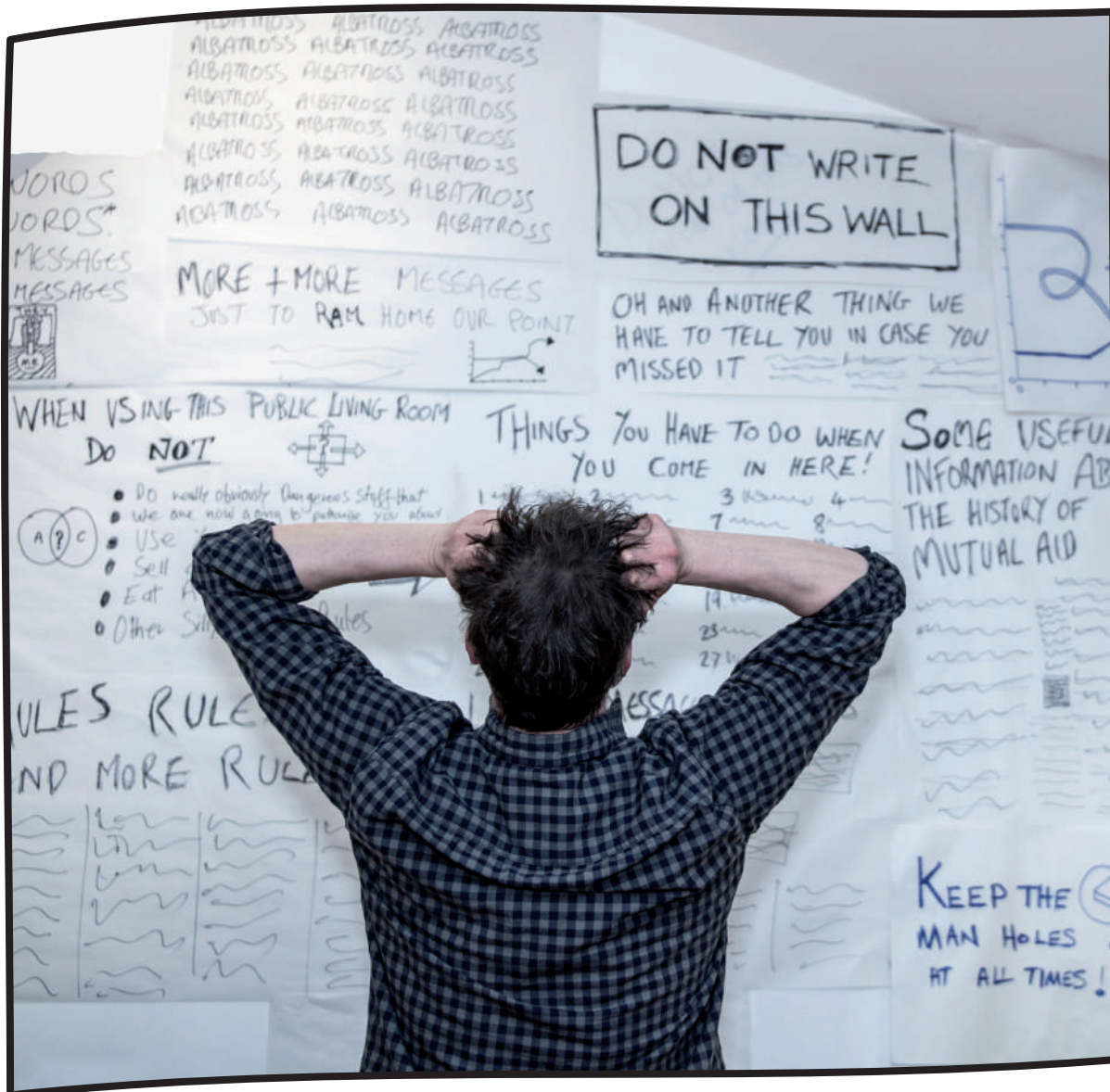


FIRST  
IMPRESSIONS ARE  
IMPORTANT



# TIP #5

Too many messages feels like shouting...





...keep it simple



LESS  
IS  
MORE





## TIP #6

If you're feeling like a control freak...



...leave...amazing things will happen



SPLIT THE  
RESPONSIBILITIES

NO  
DICTATORS  
HERE!





## TIP #7

Share your living room stories...





...it helps to inspire others and spreads the word.



LET'S GO  
GLOBAL



## **TIP #8**

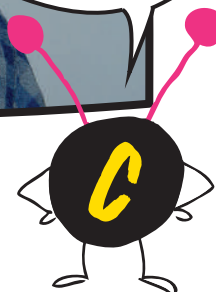
**Things can go stale...**



...find ways to surprise & mix it up!



THE **WOW**  
FACTOR  
COUNTS







This picture book has been made by a small team of people called the Association of Camerados who support the movement. **We inspire, resource and connect camerados everywhere.** We really hope this book has made you want to join the movement, either by wearing the badge and looking out for each other during your everyday, or with the help of the kit start your own Public Living Room. Whatever you choose to do, please tell us your camerado story, via our [office@camerados.org](mailto:office@camerados.org) email address because we really want to hear from you. It's the only way we know you're out there!



NCS OXFORD



Get in touch at  
✉ [office@camerados.org](mailto:office@camerados.org)  
to order your badges  
and help spread the word.

## CAMERADO STORIES FROM THE MOVEMENT



Please be a **Camerado** and tell us what you would put in a cafe that brings comfort to people who are isolated or having a rough time.

If it wasn't for this place I'd be stuck at home and wouldn't have met so many nice people. It gets me out. I've got depression, this place gives me a break. I can have peace and quiet or I can talk to people. There's no life for me without communicating with people I love it.

Thanks!

A lady came to the Public Living Room as she'd moved to the area from China so didn't know many people and she wanted to develop her English. A very lovely man who used to teach English at a local school, offered English lessons to this lady in the living room, she's now started chatting to people and had the confidence to join a craft group making items to sell for the local children's hospice. (Blackpool)

I would like to say thank you camerados for making me a better person I have so many friends and I feel so much better about myself because of that. (Sheffield College)

What a lovely place to sit and just be! When a member of your family gets admitted into hospital its a very scary place to be....I actually work within the hospital and am still finding it scary! Here's hoping this lovely area helps the families and staff who need it. (Rotherham)

Two strangers sat together chatting in a Public Living Room and they both realise they are going through a tough time, they've arranged to go to Mind together next week and support each other. How amazing is this. Totally blew me away at how quickly they had realised they could help each other, no prompts from anybody needed either.



#CAMERADOS

 camerados.org



