

Over A Brew Session

28 July 2023

Signposting

CURATORS
OF CHANGE

directors of
adass
adult social services
eastern region

connecting innovating improving





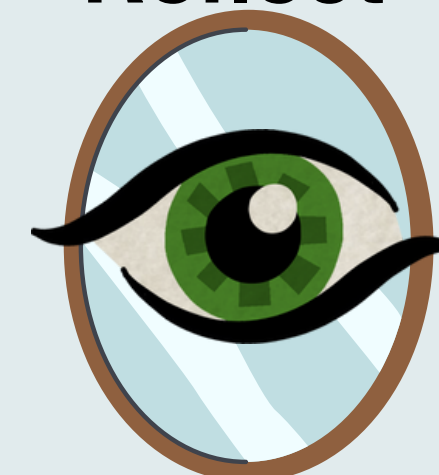
Guide

Grab a brew



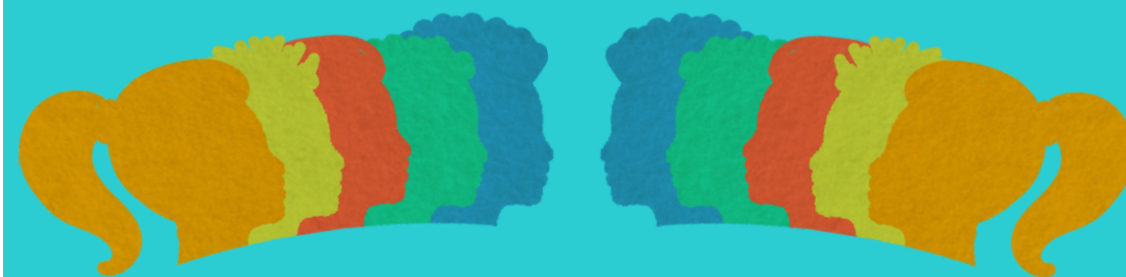
Once you have your brew,
ask someone to be the timer

Reflect



Each person has time to think
about the questions for ONE
minute

Have your say



Each take it in turns to say
your response
(TWO mins each)



Use the rest of the time to
reflect on what's been said
(no fixing)

Still got some time?



Talk about:
What's not been said?
What are your lasting thoughts?

INFUSED WITH THE CAMERADOS PRINCIPLES

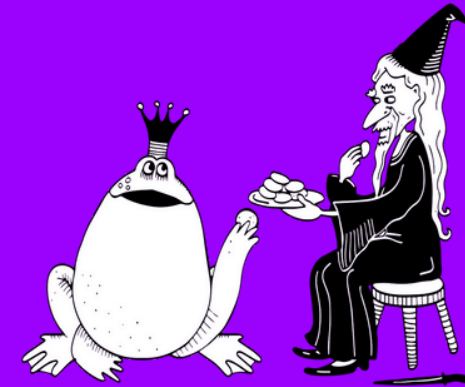
**MIX WITH PEOPLE WHO
ARE NOT LIKE YOU**



**ASK SOMEONE WHO IS
STRUGGLING TO HELP YOU**



**NO FIXING - JUST BE
ALONGSIDE ONE ANOTHER**



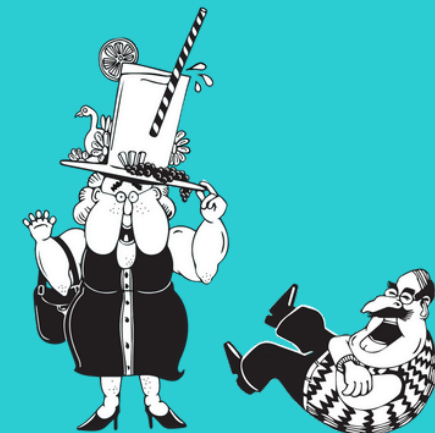
**IT'S OK TO DISAGREE
RESPECTFULLY**



**IT'S OKAY TO BE A BIT
RUBBISH SOMETIMES**



**TO BE SILLY IS TO
BE HUMAN**



Sabotaging Signposting

- The group completed an exercise about the possible ways that signposting could be sabotaged to stop people getting the information or advice they needed.



Don't ask what someone wants at any point

Give them so much info they will be lost forever

Make assumptions about the person

Provide in an inaccessible format- be that visually or language

Don't provide any follow ups / check ins

Signposting where internet or computer is required

Hide information deep in the labyrinth of a local authority website, and make sure links don't work

Disregard family / carer input

Jargon

Conflicting / inconsistent messages

Don't consider if it matches the persons requirements

Not listening to what's needed in the first place, then signposting to the same old, same old ...

Not valuing a person as an individual

THE EXPERIENCES SHARED IN THE DISCUSSION FOCUSED ON:

**CURATORS
OF CHANGE**

**31 people
attended the
session to
share ideas,
insights and
views... Over a
Brew**



1

Benefits of signposting

2

**'Feelings' that being
signposted inspire**

3

Pitfalls and Challenges

4

**Action ideas that might help
improve signposting**

1

Benefits of signposting

- Signposting can potentially provide benefits when carried out effectively. We heard that it can:
 - Support with holistic assessment
 - Help people connect the dots
 - create opportunity for learning and connection making
 - Minimize people being unnecessarily drawn into service
 - With early IA, support people before crises occur



A benefit of signposting is helping people connect the dots - seeing what's available in terms of advice and guidance for folks. The more you know, the best you can choose.

Benefits are to support with holistic assessment and support and improve independence and wellbeing

Signposting minimizes people being unnecessarily drawn into services

One benefit is that early I&A and signposting is that it can support people before crises happen

Signposting creates the opportunity for learning and connections

Benefit of signposting - sometimes can mean that we meet other people, potential allies, living in similar circumstances.

The piece of signposting that worked really well for me was being told about the Partners in Policymaking programme - life-changing in terms of building confidence and connections

2

Feelings that signposting can inspire

- Poor signposting elicited a wide range of feelings that might not be obvious
 - Hopelessness
 - Helplessness
 - 'Done to me'
 - 'dropped in a maze'



My confidence levels have been totally shattered and messed around with my local authority which is not how it should be

Something that is done to me!

Like being dropped into a maze but with a list of Ikea instructions

A bit hopeless

Sense of feeling helpless - not being able to help people.

I also have EDS and CPTSD as well as the Autism and signposting is a nightmare

The impact of receiving poor information and advice is sobering.

Weirdly taking advantage of people when they are at their lowest - shocking

For me has been useless, for the system I suppose it saves money

Desperate to make a difference for people - this needs to come through to make practice changes.

3

Pitfalls and challenges of signposting

- Signposting can inspire negative feelings for both people seeking support and the workforce..
- Structural and system issues can add extra layers to problems.
 - User unfriendly websites
 - Reliance on scripts
 - Unintended consequences of 'prevent and delay' policy
 - Poor communication in and across large organisations and systems
 - Complex hierarchy within organisations

I sometimes suspect its 'Prevent and Delay' (services take up) approach - which is seen as a good thing... rather than finding the right support, early

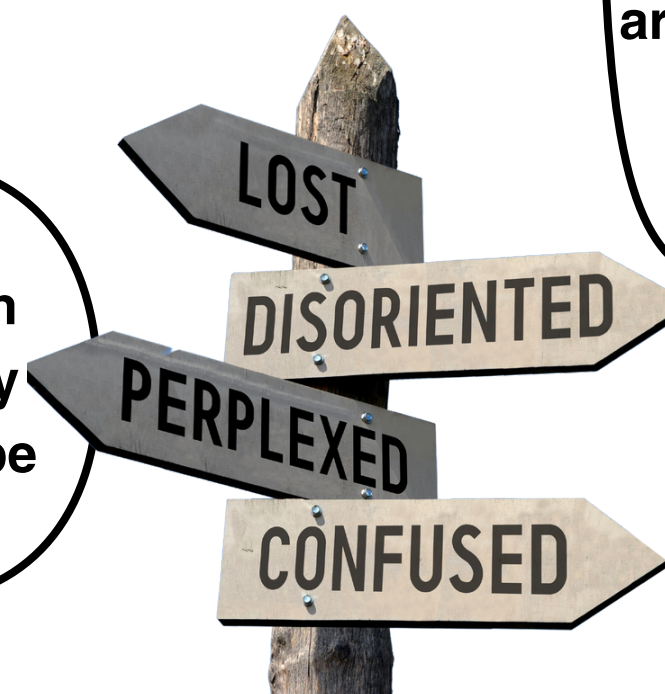
Hierarchy in the organisations doesn't help - and sometimes the only way to cut through is going down the route of formal complaint! Think of the time we could save if we didn't do that!

Unless people giving information have great knowledge of local resources they often rely on scripts which identify trigger words - as if every person with a learning disability only wants to be connected to learning disability services.

It is frustrating for people in services signposting as the services being signposted too are over subscribed, not taking people, not helpful - and feeling helpless at not being able to help someone! Trying to fit the signposting to the person rather than the person to the signposting!

Websites are so difficult to address. These are usually managed corporately and it's hard to get change made.

One of things that really resonated was talking about the size of big organisations like Local Authorities-like labyrinths! Inside those orgs it's hard to communicate and get things sorted - never mind if outside, if you don't have the skills and time - BUT are we really here for the people who need the support.



4

Actions and Ideas

- The group had a diverse range of ideas that could improve the process of signposting
 - Improved feedback loops
 - Coproduced commissioning and cross pollination of ideas across organisations
 - More 'human' thinking across workforce, planning and training
 - Workforce Plans need to incorporate time for SWs to carry out roles on a deeper level / conscious practice

Love the idea of putting "relationships" into specifications written by commissioners and submissions written by providers. Don't often see the word "curious" in documents.

There are ways we can be more human in relation to this and connect with people.

As part of our council we regularly do ask for feedback from people we support and we could ask for feedback from people about signposting as an action from today

Principle of not drawing people into services is the right one - and signposting has its place - but it shouldn't be one size fits all. How can we make the process more person focussed - not digital by default? How can we support communities to support each other better - more informally!

If people understood the impact on people they would be more motivated to improve

Trying to ask more about what is important to you

Commissioning perspective - honesty in relationships - making sure we are being transparent and the communication is equal between you. Trying to imagine what it would be like to specify as a commissioner doing the signposting as to what difference that signposting actually made.

Actions and Ideas continued...

Do we need to change the process? I wonder if we need to use more community based staff to build interpersonal relationships and then where Social Worker professional roles are needed, that's when they come in in collaboration with the Community Worker.

Need better cross pollination of ideas in the organisations

Workforce Plans need to incorporate 'time' for SWs to carry out their roles on a deeper level, rather than be so timebound (which could lead to poor information/listening/support)

Commissioning should also be co produced to make things better

SW Consideration of what is 'being shared' and the capacity for the person to act on that information. Move to 'conscious practice'

Importance of checking in with a person on how the experience of signposting feels - this is key to getting better approaches!

Signposting is ok but it isn't 'job done'. A good approach would be for the person signposting to go back and say, 'So, did that place/resource work? What feedback do you have for me?' That way it becomes more of a feedback loop.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Signposting is a commonly commissioned part of service provision underpinned by belief/assumption and feedback that people often don't know where and how to get the help and support they need.

While true - this surface story also helps to uncover deeper questions:

- How effective is current signposting?
 - What does 'quality signposting' look and feel like?
 - Are services just too complex for people to understand and access?
- What can services do to provide more and different information, awareness and education about what they offer and to who?
- How can services and intermediaries better reach and support people and groups least likely to gain the access they need?
- What can be learned from great examples

Examples (e.g. FLAG in Stockport- no longer in operation)

<https://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Browse/Informationandadvice/Informationandadvicecasesudies/Stockport-FLAG-Stockport-Council/>

<https://connectassist.co.uk/blog/the-importance-of-signposting-getting-your-service-users-to-the-right-place-at-the-right-time/>





Thank You!



**Please join us for the next session on
Friday 29th September 2023 for Creating
Comfortable Spaces for Co-production at
a Local Level... Over a Brew!**

**Please visit the Over A Brew web page to
find more information and resources!**

<https://adasseast.org.uk/co-production/over-a-brew-virtual-coffee-sessions>