

Over A Brew Session

29 September 2023

Creating Spaces for good
Co-production

CURATORS
OF CHANGE

directors of
adass
adult social services
eastern region

connecting innovating improving





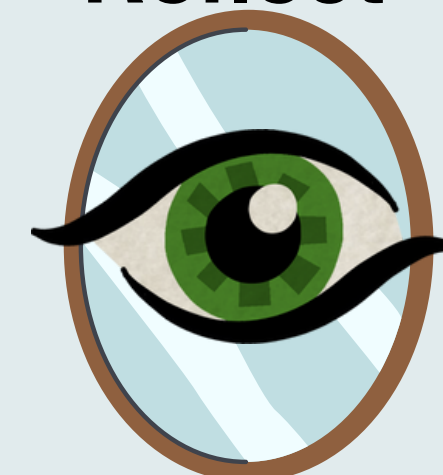
Guide

Grab a brew



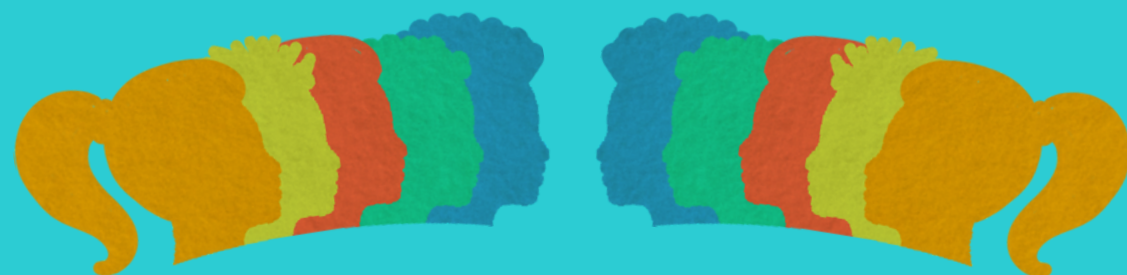
Once you have your brew,
ask someone to be the timer

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

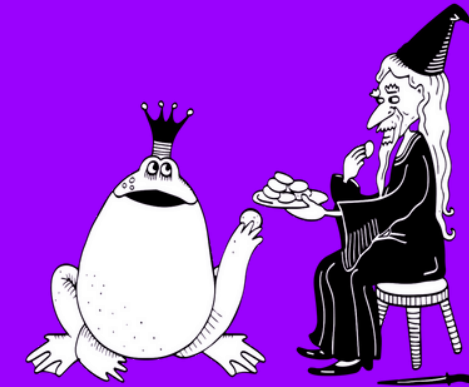
**MIX WITH PEOPLE WHO
ARE NOT LIKE YOU**



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



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



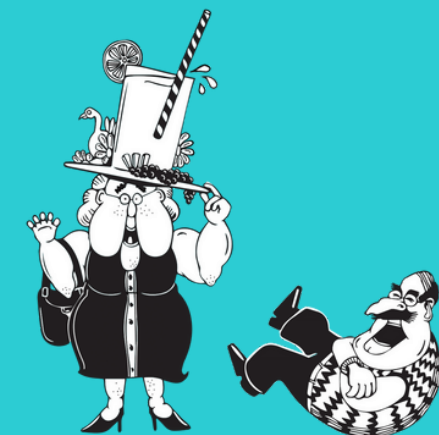
**IT'S OK TO DISAGREE
RESPECTFULLY**



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



**TO BE SILLY IS TO
BE HUMAN**



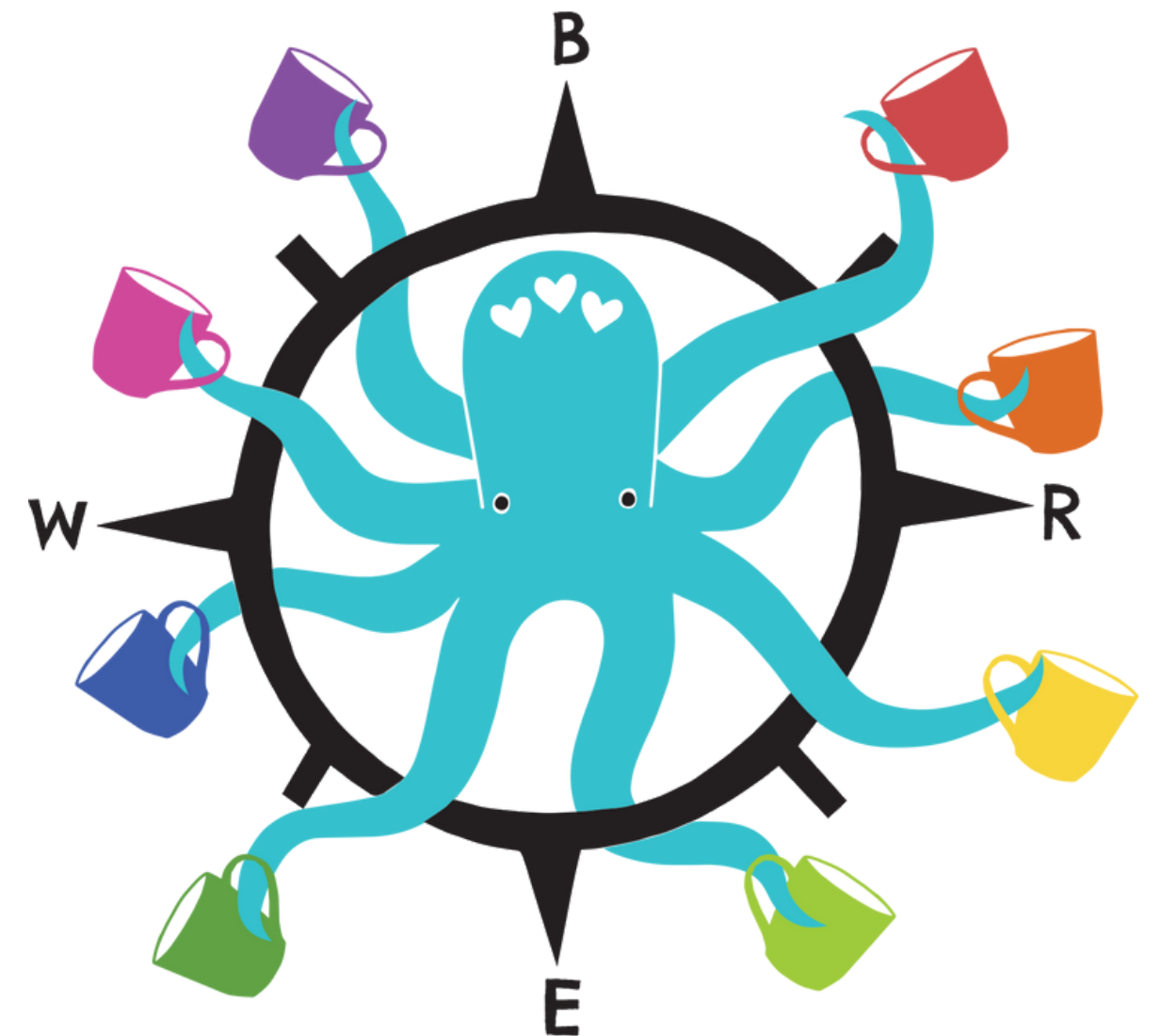
INTRODUCTION

This Over A Brew session was about how we create the best conditions for coproduction spaces

We know its is not always easy to speak up about things that matter to us. This is especially true when there could be a negative outcome, we might upset someone we rely on or we dont feel in a position of power.

As hard as it may be, all feedback is good and active involvement is even better.

In a world where we have started to understand the power of bringing diverse voices together and walking in the shoes of another - it is crucial to facilitate spaces to that are as empowering and effective as possible.



**We heard about specific things
that help create the right
conditions for good co-productive
spaces including:**

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



**1
Practical Factors**

**2
Skills**

**3
Intangible Factors**

1A Practical Factors - to create the best conditions for co-production space

Communicate the why, clearly & in different ways

- People need to know why they have been invited
- Provide people with agenda and information early (if they are useful)

Who to involve

- *'Slice of the system'* - all levels, all roles
- People from diverse communities with lived experiences

Venue / location

- Make sure the location and venue are accessible (give info transport, parking and good directions)
- Create the right atmosphere and layout (seating, lighting, decor) - (fairy lights and sofa picture - not rows)
- Ensure space for wheelchairs and equipment
- Wall space for visual communications



Give clarity, reduce uncertainty where possible

- Clear statement of confidentiality
- Use plain language and avoid jargon and inaccessible wording

Respect people's human needs

- Serve good coffee and fresh food (Accommodating all dietary needs)
- Provide breaks
- Provide quiet and prayer spaces
- Provide decent close by washrooms
- 'Think about things as if you are organising a party'

1B Practical Factors - to create the best conditions for co-production space

Consider time and timings

- Give people as much notice as possible (with adequate reminders)
- Consider the impact of major holidays and festivals (including non-Christian)
- Sensitively consider how long people can concentrate for together - start times / finishing times that respect travel, family and accessibility '*Don't start at 9am*'
- Create the right amount of time for people to be able to express themselves

Welcome people well

- Meet and greet / ask people if they need anything
- Find out upfront if there are access needs

Consider communication, learning styles and neurodiversity

- Include creative activities
- Use tactile tools such as lego/fidget toys

Value people's time and contributions

- Promptly cover people's expenses
- Pay for contributions, ensuring people have
- access to the right financial advice and support
- Make claim processes easy

Online considerations

Although this did not come up during the session it would be remiss of us not to include a note. This blog from UCL has lots of helpful information.

<https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement/2020/05/06/carry-on-co-producing-part2/>

2

Skills we heard are necessary for good co-production spaces

Being trained in co-production principles

Purposeful design of sessions

- Set the scene
- Create a brave space (aim for psychological safety but this is a high bar especially if the space is an early session)

Facilitation rather than chairing

- Use great communication skills
- Use group commitments to make the space safer
- Support people to have an equitable say (some people dominate, some have positional or perceived power, Some people may seem introverted or inexperienced in groups settings)

Mental health awareness

- Learn about how to be trauma informed
- Supply helplines, check-ins, resources
- Have contingency plans - time out space, low stimulation areas

This space felt uncomfortable... They realize they felt nervous in the space, a good reminder that people feel uncomfortable in the spaces we create - if people feel more comfortable it will be better for everyone!

Everyone deserves to speak for themselves and we must adapt our communication to listen

Need to hear each others stories so that we have that sense of being heard and understood and connection

Be mindful people come with a lot of anger and issues - and not wrongly

How can we make spaces as comfortable and welcoming for as many people as possible = thinking about equity, equality and always learning to make stuff better. Won't fix it all now but always be on the journey - growth mentality



3

Intangible Factors

Have a host not a chairperson

- A facilitator and host can help with setting intentions and agreeing principles to allow space for feelings and disagreements to surface.
- Efforts should be made to welcome these opportunities for growth, but without personalising arguments or resorting to defensiveness.

Set tone and Intentions at the start

Consider how you want to **show up in the space** (if you have the privilege of a level of power and control) . Consider tone and role.

Agree Principles together

- Challenge our assumptions and the assumptions of others
- Take a non-judgemental viewpoint
- Be curious, ask to understand
- Inclusive practice

Feeling sensitive to when things go wrong - not feeling the best way to deal with, how do we manage power dynamics when people are overbearing - lived experiences stories can help as people relate to them, but always the risk of triggering others

Can change through human connection - being more aware of our presence

If we go into an event or a job with a purpose of trying to make the system better then each time you have a meeting you are going to make it better for everyone - one step at a time...

A first principle of management is that people will elevate, or lower, their behavior to meet your expectations. If you think the best of people, they'll respond in kind. If you think less, less will be what you undoubtedly receive.

I would contend that if you want to bring people onside there is more power in assuming they mean well and give them opportunities to learn and grow. For me Coproduction is about moving from us and them to us and us and we can all choose to take the lead in moving towards that.

There were a lot of comments about intent and values.

This is clearly is a complex area that needs attention in coproduction spaces.

People mean well. They don't intentionally make mistakes. And there's no benefit of assuming otherwise

Want to say more about intent - it's better to assume positive intent, creates a more trusting environment - and helps to welcome vulnerability, and to surface the frustration and action!

If you do, you create an immediate barrier to understanding. You satisfy yourself with the easy answer instead of the correct one. And you give up any chance to help someone improve

Individuals in posts - what is the motivator, money, power, care and compassion? How do their values shape the outcomes?

But even more importantly, we should assume that people are acting with positive intent because they almost always are

We know that we always have good reasons for our behavior. We never act out of incompetence or malice. The odds are small that we're the only perfect angel out there

The fact that there are people in posts who don't show any sort of caring or compassion - are they in it for the right reason - is it more about power - it becomes about creating spaces for their own agenda

Values

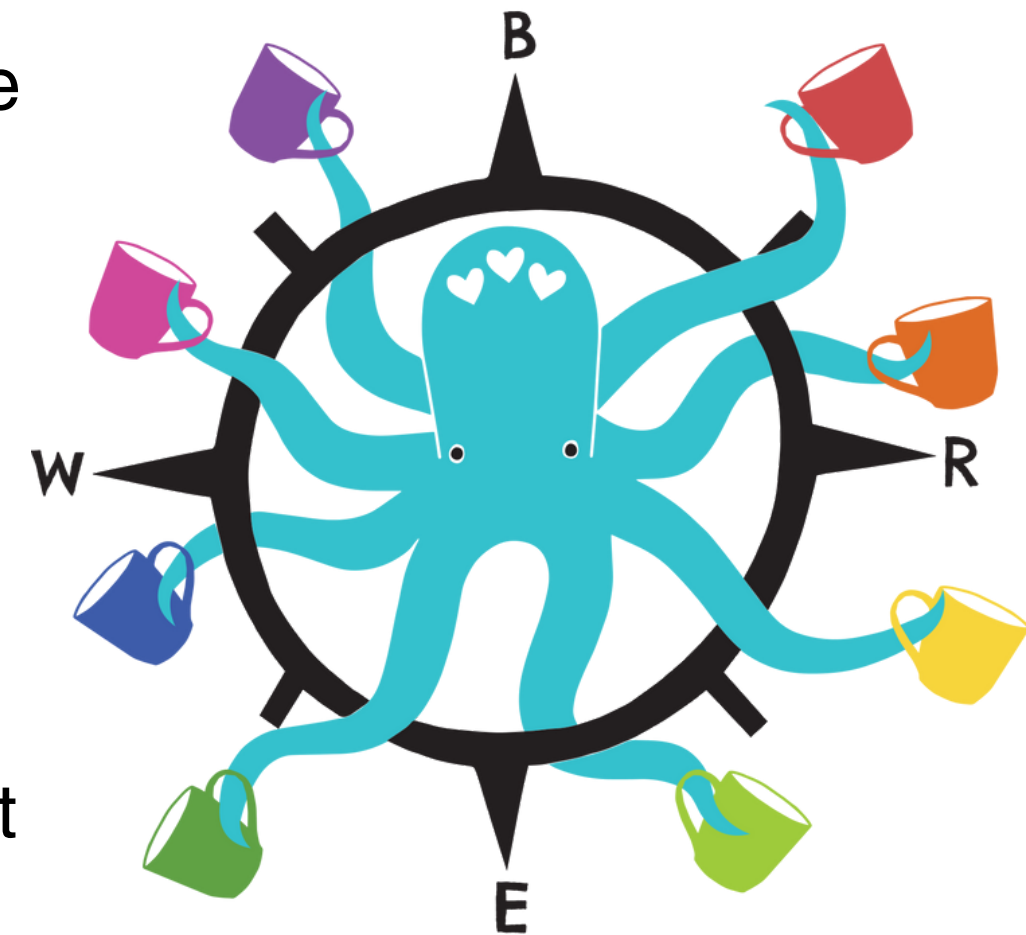
FINAL REFLECTIONS

Coproduction is much more of a journey than a destination.

It will help us reach wonderful places but they may not be the places we expected to arrive at when we started our planning. It is almost impossible to carry out 'the perfect coproduction' approach as we are human and misunderstandings and bias can happen.

When we start from the best intentions, with curious, open (not blank) minds, we are already on the right path. Asking questions to understand more, starting equal relationships early with people and keeping doors open are the fundamental blocks.

We have to be honest with ourselves and look at what 'system' barriers and assumptions our organisations and cultures have built that disconnect us from what is needed. Resources may always be an issue, but this should not impact on our mindsets, tone, communication and intentions.





Thank You!



**Please join us for the next session on
Friday 27th October to talk about Self
assessments; digital and the human
touch... Over a Brew!**