The Innovate Project
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Researching youth, risk and complexity

safer young lives research centre

A workshop facilitator's guide for consulting young people about local safeguarding panels

Planning and facilitating a workshop with young people about how to make multi-agency safeguarding panels that address extra-familial risks and harms more inclusive of young people's views

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Overview

What do young people think about safeguarding panels to protect young people from extra-familial risks and harms (EFRH)? Often, young people are not present at panels in which they are being discussed. If you are involved in such panels, it is important to ensure that they centre young people's experiences, feelings, and needs. This short guide helps you plan and facilitate a workshop to consult with young people about what they think of these types of meetings and how these panels can be made more inclusive of young people's voices.

Method

In this workshop you will show young people a video of a fictional safeguarding panel. We (researchers from the Innovate Project, who are also part of the Contextual Safeguarding Research Programme at Durham University) created a short video of a fake safeguarding panel for young people experiencing EFRH. We wanted to show young people what these meetings were like. We wrote a script based on our experiences of observing many of these types of meetings as part of our research. We acted out the script and recorded the video with the help of colleagues.

The language in the script for this fictional panel is directly inspired from our observations of meetings. Direct quotes from our observations have been used but some details have been changed for anonymity. For this workshop, the language overall was toned down.

We tested this workshop with members of the Young Researchers' Advisory Panel (YRAP) at the Safer Young Lives Research Centre, at the University of Bedfordshire. With support from the YRAP, we adapted this workshop and developed this guide. YRAP also supported us to develop more resources for professionals which can be found on the Innovate Project website's resources page.

In this workshop you will show the video to young people and facilitate a discussion about their reactions to the video.

This guide

This guide should be read before you start planning the workshop. It outlines key things to consider during three stages:

1. Planning and preparation
2. Running the workshop
3. Next steps

Some of the content of this guide draws from the 'Consulting young people and parents' guide developed by the Contextual Safeguarding Research Programme.

The accompanying slide deck and videos are to be used in the workshop. While we have included as much instructions and detail as we thought would be helpful, it is crucial that this guidance is adapted to your own context and that you plan this workshop carefully.

Planning and preparation

Ethics

The safety and welfare of young people is the priority. It's important to make sure that, before they take part, young people understand what will be involved, feel safe, and that the appropriate ethical arrangements are in place. Only include young people in this workshop if you are confident that it would not result in causing any harm. As part of this you should consider:

- Who is suitable to take part – is it better for them for be consulted on their own?
- Watch the videos ahead of time to ensure there is nothing that the group could find upsetting or distressing.
- Gaining informed consent – make sure young people have read and understood the information about the consultation.
- Ensure they know that participation is entirely voluntary, know how their information will be used, are aware of what they are consenting to, and how they can change their mind if they want to withdraw from the consultation at any point.
- How to minimise risk of harm through participation and providing a safe space.
- Safeguarding issues that may arise and how to respond to them.
- Making sure people who take part have support available after the workshop.

Consent and confidentiality

To give consent young people need clear information sheets and consent forms explaining the workshop activity and that their engagement is voluntary. Parental consent will also be required for some young people, dependent on your organisation or local authority protocols. As a research team we gain parental consent for young people under 16.

Trauma-informed

Young people should feel safe to participate. Consultation is not about asking about their own experiences of harm.

Rights

It is important that young people are aware of their rights in relation to their information, how it is stored, and their right to withdraw from the consultation if they want to.

Remuneration and feedback

It is important recognise the contribution of young people financially or through vouchers. It is also crucial to plan how you will keep young people informed about the consultation and its impact.

- Before you begin, familiarise yourself with the materials. We have developed documents to help you decide which young people are suitable, where to hold the consultation, and how to facilitate the workshop. Begin by thinking about who to involve in the consultation process and if it's safe to do so. Use the risk assessments to help you.
- Appendix A provides a checklist that should be used before, during, and after the workshop.
- Appendix B is an example risk assessment for understanding whether it is safe for individual young people to participate.
- When you approach young people, provide them with information sheets and consent forms which talk about what the workshop is about (Appendix C, and D are example information sheets and consent forms). Please note that young people might prefer to receive these forms and give consent via email – in that case, you should send them electronic versions.
- Before the workshop young people need to have seen the information sheet (Appendix C) and confirmed that they would like to participate (Appendix D). For young people under 16 years old, parents need to provide their consent. If this is the case, you will need to create a new information sheet and consent form for parents (they might also prefer online versions).

Running the workshop

The workshops has three parts:

1. Introduction (10 minutes)
2. Video activity (45 minutes)
3. Close (5 minutes)

Instructions for the facilitator, links to the videos, guiding questions for discussions and timings are included in the workshop slide deck. Each part covers the following:

1. Introduction

- **Welcome & introductions:** introduce yourself and let others in the group introduce themselves.
- Optional warmup activity (this could be a good idea if the group doesn't know each other well)
- **Overview of workshop**: explain what the workshop is about and remind participants what you will do with the information. Outline the structure of the session. Remind participants they won't be asked to talk about their own experiences.
- **Consent & Confidentiality:** Explain that everything that is shared in the workshop is confidential and under what circumstances information would need to be shared.

2. Video activity

- Introduce the activity and explain how the video was made.
- Play the three clips and facilitate a group discussion.

3. Close

- Thank participants for their contributions and give them compensation for their time (e.g. a voucher or gift card).
- Tell them what next steps are and how the information will be used.
- Remind them how they can withdraw if they want to.

Next steps

Here are some suggestions of things you can do to ensure that the views of the young people that you have consulted in the workshop are central to informing the development of safeguarding panels for extra-familial risks and harm:

Action plan

Take time to reflect on what young people have said and create an action plan based on this, which you return to regularly as a panel/organisation to reflect on as part of an ongoing process.

Strategic application

Which strategic leaders or forums will benefit from hearing what young people have said? Consider which ones to attend to share your findings with to inform strategic change and use these as a foundation to consider how young people can have increased engagement at strategic level.

Practice application

What changes can you make to safeguarding panels in the short and long term and how can you incorporate findings into regular training and/or resources?

Managing feedback

The best time to undertake consultation is before you start developing a new approach to how running safeguarding panels for extra-familial harm. However, if you conduct a consultation once a process has begun, you may receive challenging responses. It is essential that you take on board what participants say and start learning from this process, and in the future, engage young people and families throughout the development process.

Feedback proceses

Feedback processes are crucial for valuing participants' contributions and will enable further conversations about how the work might develop. Think about the best way to feedback to those who participated and how you can showcase the changes you've made that reflect the suggestions and feedback that young people and their families have provided.

Appendix A - Facilitator's check list for workshop

Prompt questions	Y/N	Possible action?
Venue		
Have you consulted with participants about where they might like to meet?		
Is the space you're using private?		
Could attendance at the venue be exposing or stigmatising for participants?		
Is the space comfortable? Can you do anything to increase comfort?		
Is there equipment to play the video?		
Participants		
Are all participants known to you?		
Are all participants known to each other?		
Are there potential challenges predicted with group dynamics?		
Think about whether people could be emotionally triggered by the things that are discussed in the workshop, if, for example the video reminds them of past experiences. For group-based consultations you will also need to plan for how you will respond if the topics under discussion surface challenging attitudes towards gender, ethnicity and sexuality. Think carefully about these things when preparing the workshop so that you feel equipped to respond during the sessions in a way that is safe and restorative.		
How will emerging conflict within the group be responded to and dealt with?		
Have all participants had access to information about the workshop prior to attending?		
How will participants be thanked for their time and contribution? E.g. vouchers or gift cards which can be spent at a wide range of outlets.		

Prompt questions	Y/N	Possible action?
Is there an established group-based agreement? Do you know what will happen if it is not followed? If the group is already established you could refer back to this agreement at the beginning. If the group brings together young people that don't know each other well, you could establish a basic group agreement at the beginning of the session.		
Confidentiality		
Are you aware of the young peoples' rights to confidentiality and any parameters around that?		
How will these be explained to the group and managed?		
How will you respond to any unanticipated disclosure in a group setting (both in terms of supporting the person making the disclosure AND supporting those present)?		
Travel		
Is it safe and easy for participants to travel to/from the venue?		
Are there any resources available to support participants to travel to the venue?		
Have you planned refreshments: snacks, meals and drinks?		
Timing		
Does the timing of the project activity prevent anyone from attending?		
Staff & additional resources		
Are additional staff needed before/after or during activities?		
Do you need any additional resources to help create a safe space or respond to distress?		
Do any potential participants require any specific resources, e.g. wheelchair access; a prayer room; a space to take medication?		

Appendix B - Risk and needs discussion guide

Young Person	Comment
• Is the young person aged 12-18? • Does the young person have existing relationships with other potential participants through the service for group based consultation • If not: the service considers it safe to bring participants together who do not have prior knowledge of working together	
Access and communication needs	
• Details of communication preferences and requirements • Any translation of young people's information materials required? • Anything else you should be aware of to ensure young person can participate meaningfully and safely?	
Remote participation needs	
• Specific access considerations for remote/online participation? • Specific wellbeing risks/needs for remote/online participation?	
Safety Needs	
• Potential for emotional distress? If so, could this be mitigated? • Risk of someone finding out about involvement & this leading to potential harm? • Negative impact on any therapeutic/support work? • Interfere with any current legal processes? • Specific risks in online environment? • Specific risks in group environment and/or due to group composition? • Anything else practitioner should be aware of to ensure sensitivity of approach?	

Wrap around support needs	Y/N
• What level of wrap-around support is required (i.e. telephone or in-person) • Is there someone within the organisation who can provide this support? Is there a conflict of interest (please state) • If not, will it be safe and possible to commission an external partner/agency to provide the support? • Is the worker willing to actively follow up with young person or parent/carer after all interviews to see if they are ok? • Are there any additional forms of follow-up support required – who could provide this?	
If consultation is conducted in person	
• Is there a local risk assessment (please include) • Transport or workshop space requirements • Potential need for third party to be present during workshop • Anything else researcher should be aware of to ensure a child or young person can participate meaningfully and safely	
Consent	
• Is young person assessed as able to provide informed consent if information is given in appropriate format? • Are parent/carer/ guardian consents required? Anyone under 16 , or where it is appropriate to for older young people (i.e. if learning disabilities) • Any risks associated with asking for parental/carer consent? • If parent/carer/guardian consents are required, can the worker facilitate getting this? • Have you explored digital ways to obtain consent if this is preferred by the young person/parent/carer/guardian? (e.g. signing the form electronically and returning it via email)	

Appendix C - Information sheet (young people)

Young people spend more time outside their home than they did when they were younger. For example they go to school, travel on public transport, see their friends in parks and shopping centres. Most of the time they are safe in these places, but sometimes they can be harmed.

When young people get harmed in spaces outside of the home, professionals hold meetings to talk about the young people they are worried about and to create safety plans to make young people safer. Often young people don't take part in these meetings and so it can be hard for them to have a say about what happens in there. But it's really important that these meetings prioritise what young people think and feel.

Researchers who are looking at how professionals respond when young people are harmed outside of the home have made a video of a pretend meeting to show young people what these meetings are like. The video is about a fake young person named Kyle. In this workshop you will watch the video and you will have a chance to talk with other young people about how the video made you feel, and what you think professionals could have done differently.

What will taking part involve?

Before the group you will need to:

- Read this information sheet
- Complete the consent form **[DETAIL ABOUT HOW TO RETURN IT]**
- **[ADD IF RELEVANT]** - read the privacy statement/any documents explaining how information will be stored

During the focus group you will:

- Watch a video (broken down into three short clips) of a pretend panel meeting and take part in a discussion with a worker and the other young people in your group.
- **[SPECIFY HERE IF YOU PLAN ON AUDIO-RECORDING THE SESSION IF AGREED BY EVERYONE INVOLVED]**

After the session:

- You will be given **[SPECIFY]** to thank you for your time and contribution.
- You will receive feedback about how your contributions have been used.

Do I have to take part?

No! It is totally up to you whether you want to take part. If you do take part it is also up to you what you tell us. We won't ask you for personal information and you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to. If you've said something during the workshop that you don't want included in the notes that's fine. Please tell your worker as soon after the group as possible.

What will you do with the information I provide?

If you do take part, we will store the information you share very carefully in a password protected file. **[ADD DETAILS OF HOW AUDIO-RECORDING WILL BE STORED IF NEEDED]**

We will use what you tell us to improve the way we keep young people safe. We won't use your name, the name of your organisation or anything else that would reveal who took part.

If you have any questions about the project, you can contact the project directly: **[CONTACT DETAILS]**

Complaints: If you are unhappy about how you are treated as part of the meeting observation, or anything else to do with the research, please get in touch with **[NAME AND CONTACT]**

Appendix D - Consent form (young people)

Before you participate in this focus group, we need to be sure that you are happy to take part in our project. Please read or listen to these things and tick the box if you agree. If there is anything you're not sure about, please just ask. Please put a X in the box to confirm that you understand the statements:

I know that the research project is about keeping young people safe from harm that happens outside of the home	
I am being asked to take part in a focus group discussion with other young people **[ADD IF RELEVANT - that will be audio recorded using a secure device]**	
I will be asked questions about how watching the video made me feel	
I can stop participating at any time or change my mind about you using what I tell you, if I let you know up to two weeks after the workshop	
You will use what I tell you to help develop your work but you won't use my name or anything that would let people know that it was me	
If I tell you that someone (including myself) is being hurt or is in danger, you will have to tell someone to get help	
I can talk to a worker if I have any worries or questions after taking part	
I understand that the information shared will be saved in electronic format and will be saved in password protected folders that only the project team can access. The folders will be deleted when the team no longer needs them.	
[ADD IF RELEVANT - I have received a copy of the privacy statement]	

I confirm I would like to take part in this workshop: Yes No

Name:
Age:
Signature:
Name of worker:
Signature of worker: