

i Reflect

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*Putting learning, development and good practice
into the heart of Camden Adult Social Care*

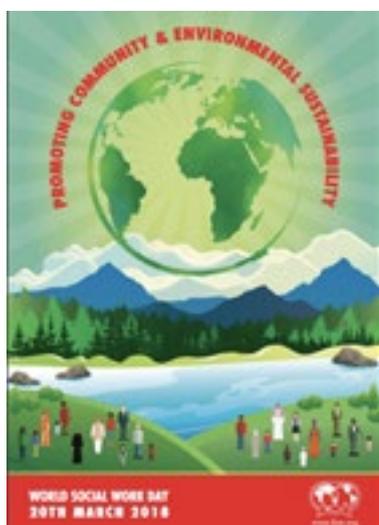


World Social Work Day

It is World Social Work Day on 20 March 2018. We are holding a joint celebration of social work with colleagues from Children's Services on 21 March; we like to be fashionably late..

The event will take place from 9.00 - 10.30am at 5 Pancras Square in rooms 10.10 and 10.11. Breakfast will be provided.

Martin Pratt, our executive director, will say a few words and we will be showing you some short films, celebrating the diverse and global nature of social work. The theme of this year's day is '*promoting community sustainability*', something which chimes with Camden's ethos across adults and children's services.



The event is an opportunity to get together informally and celebrate what we do. There will be some activities (with prizes) to get you talking to colleagues that you have not met before. There will also be a "free to enter" raffle with numerous prizes.

Social work means different things in different countries and all practitioners who work in social care and therefore do "social work" are warmly invited to this celebration on 21 March.

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A week in the life of...

Richard Lohan is the accessible information officer in Camden Learning Disabilities Service (CLDS).



I'm one of the lucky ones who look forward to going to work so Monday mornings are not so bad.

Today started with some problem solving around our speech and language therapy team's need to share large files with Islington. This is best done via Egress Switch using the **create package** function and selecting the **Camden LFT server** option. There is no easy way to de-jargonise that last sentence but trust me, the process itself is super-easy!

Next comes a request from Ben, our lovely physio, to offer his new colleague an induction to accessible information, something I do with all new CLDS staff.

I will spend most of today working on easy read resources for our sex and relationships group (easy evaluation forms and certificates for participants) and re-editing the short promo film I've just made for [Planning Together](#), Camden's learning disability Partnership Board.

I need to add a reference to our clients with complex needs (PMLD, profound and multiple learning difficulties) who struggle to have a voice at the meetings and rely on family carers to advocate for them. For those who don't know, the Partnership Board

is an opportunity for people with learning disabilities, family carers, Camden staff and other providers from all sectors to meet up every few months and try to find solutions to identified problems.



It's wiki update week. [Camden's public wikis](#) are individual accessible websites that tell people about our services and about activities for people with LD in and around the borough. They are designed to be easy-to-understand and cover things like housing, personal budgets, safeguarding, education and sport. Wikis can also be used to hold person centred support plans – these are always private but can be shared securely via the wiki software. They are a great way of capturing the voice and aspirations of some of our harder to reach clients and are currently provided free of charge to both services and individuals.

Lunch – last night's macaroni cheese. I'm always impressed when people bring in their own food, saving maybe £100 per month whilst at the same time eating something healthier than a sandwich (unless you brought in a sandwich). I'm not very good at it yet – I keep forgetting to make enough dinner to allow for tomorrow's lunch.

After lunch I gave our new physio, Jane, her accessible information induction. I used to plan these sessions but I've done so many now (hundreds) that I just wing it. I'd like the induction to be a conversation but I have so much to say that it turns into a monologue – useful, informative, hopefully inspiring but possibly overwhelming!



I'm on annual leave today but I'll tell you what I did anyway!

My eldest child came over because she wants to finish off a track I helped her record late last year. I have a home studio in my living room and spend a lot of my free time making music. I've recently come to realise that music is my mindfulness, whether playing, writing or recording. I also play with a covers band, [The Loops](#), and we have a gig on Saturday, a 50s themed 40th birthday party in Henley.



Here's a list of what I've done/ will do today in case you're wondering...

9-10 – responded to emails from yesterday and today

10-11 – accessible information induction for two medical students

11-12 – re-edited a Plain English text of a supported housing licence agreement for a service development manager; edited a poster for a floating support event for a commissioning manager; sent a pic of Netherwood day centre to a colleague

12-1 – had a chat with our specialist support manager; set up Mac for some film editing this afternoon; created some more images in Photoshop for our sports and exercise wiki

1-2 – quick visit to Pret to grab a sandwich (still failing to bring in my own lunch!); re-visited edit of recently made promo film in order to reflect customer feedback; checked the news online...

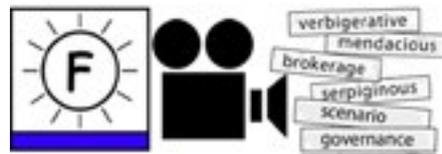
2-3 – more editing: I enjoy making films and editing in Final Cut but it's quite time-consuming, especially if you're a bit of a perfectionist like me. The best advice I ever had from a manager was from the great Frank Earley who encouraged me to follow the **good enough** mantra. I'm not creating art or trying to win an Oscar but just doing my best

to make useful resources that are easy for everyone to use and understand. Much of what we do in Camden just needs to be good enough – whether or not it is, well that's another question.

I'll be popping down to the 5th floor at 2.45 to say goodbye to our long-serving colleague, Valeria. I've worked with Valeria on several different projects and found her to be friendly, reliable, diplomatic and not afraid to speak her mind. ¡Adios Valeria!

3-4 – head down, finish the edit, make the final cut

4-5 – down to 6th floor meeting room to do some filming for a CLDS colleague. I can't remember what we're filming but I think it's to do with client feedback, something we're very keen to capture more of in CLDS. Frank would call this **gold dust**, we just call it **data** these days.



The filming of client feedback yesterday was heartwarming and inspiring, partly because we really seem to have made a difference

to this young woman's life but also because of the way her resilience shines through. I know **resilience** is a bit of a buzz word at the moment and that there is a danger we equate the word with cuts to services but resilience is an essential requirement for life as anyone who has been through hard times will know (all of us, surely?).

Today starts with the easy read version of the supported housing tenancy agreement so here goes...

...well that was fairly straightforward thanks to the summary given to me by the person requesting the easy read version.

I think there's a bit of a conspiracy going on with legal services (all legal services, not just Camden's). The legal profession seems to believe that a document can only have proper legal status if it is more or less impossible to understand and full of jargon and weirdly constructed sentences. Check out [Clarity International](#), an organisation that believes that something can have legal status and be easy to understand at the same time. Radical!

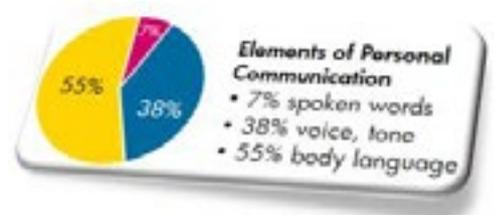


It is not what you say, but the manner in which you say it..

Language and communication in social work conversations

by Andrew Reece

I would expect that most social care and health care professionals will have come across variations on the work of Albert Mehrabian during their training. [Professor Mehrabian's](#) research suggests that only 7% of communication is verbal: to misquote the US medic and part-time poet William Carlos Williams (with a nod to Bananarama), 'It ain't what you say, it's the way that you say it'.



So if voice, tone and body language are your primary communication tools, does it matter which words we choose when having a purposeful conversation with someone?

Banned Words – The Swear Box	
This will help with austerity!! £1 a time	
1. Assessment (£5)	12. Services (£5)
2. Review (£5)	13. Waiting List
3. Respite (£5)	14. Allocation
4. Triage	15. Training
5. Pathway	16. Panel
6. Customer Journey	17. Customer
7. Referral	18. Client
8. Handoff	19. Service user
9. Signpost	20. Commissioning
10. Diversion	21. Front Door
11. Pilot	22. Managing Expectation

George Orwell certainly thought so, creating the concept of 'Newspeak' as a tool of proletarian manipulation in his novel '1984'. But thinking about choosing the right words doesn't have to be sinister. You've probably seen the list of banned words as part of the 3 Conversations Innovations programme, and perhaps you've even thought that this attempt to control language is Orwellian.

A recent article in the Guardian¹ suggests otherwise: choosing words carefully, and understanding how these words are heard by others, can make a real difference to the success of your conversations.

Quoting research from [Professor Elizabeth Stokoe](#), Professor of Social Interaction at Loughborough University, the article explores how reframing a question from 'would you like' to 'would you be willing' changes conversation outcomes. She found that *'phrases such as "would you like to" and "would you be interested in" ... sometimes worked, but "willing" was the one that got people to agree more rapidly and with more enthusiasm.'*

Similarly, we get results if we 'speak' rather than 'talk', and ask if there is 'something' rather than 'anything' else we need to 'speak about'. Words to be avoided as they are more likely to get a negative response include 'just' and 'yes but'.

Going back to the list of 'banned words', I'm sure we can all recognize the negative implications of our 'old world' vocabulary. My pet hate is 'respite'². The implication that caring for some one is a burden is an insult to all: we need 'respite' from the bad weather or Donald Trump's Twitter feed, a carer needs a break from their caring role.

So 'let's talk, but just as long as I get some respite from any more help in my best interests'. I think that's pretty much covered all Professor Stokoe's negative words?

¹ 'Would you be willing?': words to turn a conversation around (and those to avoid) The Guardian 4.12.2017

² A short period of rest or relief from something difficult or unpleasant. E.g. 'the refugee encampments will provide some respite from the suffering' Oxford Dictionaries.com

The gifts of mentoring

by Laura Gonzalez

When I first started working as a social worker in England, I was lucky to be mentored by the lead practitioner in the team. The lead practitioner's role in my team would not have differed much from the role any other lead practitioner would have taken on today (as that was not that many years ago), if it wasn't for the profound impact that this particular mentor had on me.

Someone dedicating some extra time at work to give me professional guidance in a new and foreign system was generous enough but in addition, my mentor was also a true inspiration to me. If I think about what made him shine, I wonder if it was his communicating style, his advice, his understanding of my struggles. Whatever that was, I am grateful to have been given an opportunity I will always remember.

Being asked to mentor a newly qualified social worker through her Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme was exciting yet confusing as it made me think again about the year when I was mentored myself. I reflected on my own journey from being the mentee to becoming the mentor and what I would want that journey to mean to the other person.

Then the process started and it was followed by a sequence of events throughout the year that led me to my own learning.

Following the conclusion of the ASYE programme, I now understand mentoring as being more of a guiding companion in someone's professional journey not necessarily similar to mine and with this, the acknowledgment of the gifts in sharing



lessons learned. That was truly gratifying as it kept me humble and open to my own professional expansion.

As I was not supervising, the focus was not so much on modelling good practice but on helping someone to remember the knowledge she already had! I enjoyed immensely our sessions together: a free space to empty the mind, to revisit our values, preconceptions and assumptions, being observant of the work we do and their consequences. We have so little time to do this and it is so fundamental to our practice. It puts you back in touch with the passion that brought you and this profession together.

It helped me remember how therapeutic listening empathically to others in this context can be, helping them to feel capable to face their dilemmas. Mentoring over a year gives you the opportunity to learn more about the person in front of you, how they learn, what their objectives are, which in turn will help you adapt your role.

I must confess that on top of my other professional responsibilities, some inherent to the job, the reports that came with the mentoring role would make me lament my plight often.

As you may be thinking of beginning this journey, I invite you to focus a little less on the reporting demands and a little more on the contentment this role will bring to your life. Firstly, you will be helping someone cement their knowledge and skills in this important first stage of their career and lastly you will be meeting the student in yourself all over again.

MENTORING



Speed networking

by Martin Hampton

In November 2017, I attended a speed networking event at Haverstock School with my social work student Aliah Sarwar. During the event, a mixed group of school students sat at tables with business volunteers allocated to each table and had seven minutes to ask questions before we moved on to the next table.

The event had been set up by Haverstock School to introduce their Year 7, 8 and 9 students to a variety of different careers and industries. As year 8 students are in the process of choosing their GCSE options, this event was planned to help them think about careers in social care and social work as well as many other businesses and professions.

We enjoyed the event and there were some very funny moments: 'Social Workers! You are not taking my brother away Miss!' and I was particularly gratified that my Airmax trainers were singled out for praise on three occasions.



Ahsev Merdjan, Vocational and careers education manager, informed us afterwards that the feedback from both the students and staff has been positive and students benefited from their interaction with social workers. They had the opportunity to meet social workers and discuss and explore what it involves, and perhaps get a true sense of what we do in social care. Finally I thought that speed networking is a good way to broadcast different experiences very quickly, or er.. speedily.



Social Work England consultation



Social workers are currently regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) alongside 15 other professions including OTs, physiotherapists and dieticians. As part of the government's continuing reform programme for social work, a new, social-work specific regulator for social workers in England is being established – the regulator will be called Social Work England (SWE).

Like other regulators across the UK, SWE's primary objective will be protection of the public. It will be responsible for maintaining a register of social workers, approving training courses of social workers, operating a fitness to practice system and setting professional standards including ethics. It aims to be "streamlined, proportionate and efficient".

The proposed regulatory framework is described in a consultation launched by the government on 8 February 2018. The consultation asks for views on: the overall approach to creating a modern, proportionate regulatory framework, the specific approach taken in each of the regulatory areas, and likely impacts of the proposed changes. This is your opportunity to influence the change, so please read the consultation.

It closes on 21 March 2018 and can be accessed at:

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/social-work-england-secondary-legislative-framework



Family Group Conferencing

by Sadia Iqbal

Family Group Conferencing (FGC) originated in children services, New Zealand in the 1980s. It was a response to Maori people's concern that their children were over-represented in both the youth justice and child protection systems.



The traditional formal system focused on immediate family while the Maori emphasised the family, clan and tribe involvement in planning for children. In New Zealand, FGC is now enshrined in law in the 1989 Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act. The definition of family in FGC is the individual's network which can include friends and community members.

Since the 1990s, FGC has grown in the UK, first in children services and more recently in adult services. Since 2016, Camden's Supporting People directorate has engaged in over 40 FGCs including 15 safeguarding and 19 support planning.

The FGC meeting has 5 stages:

1. Referral - an independent coordinator is allocated and matched to the individual, (including where possible ethnicity and language)

2. Preparation - the co-ordinator meets with the person and their family, sets out the process, offers advocacy, discusses the 'bottom line' (what is and is not acceptable), and how people can be supported to be involved

3. Family Group Conference

i. Sharing of information - chaired by the coordinator, the social worker shares the reason for the conference such as support planning, safeguarding concern and what the current support plan is. The person and their family share any relevant information they have

ii. Private family time - all workers leave the meeting, the family discuss the concerns raised and identifies resources available within the family and external support required

iii. Agreement of the support plan - when the family has made a plan, workers return to the meeting and everyone present agrees to the support plan and negotiates how it will be resourced. The names of those responsible for tasks and timescales are clarified

4. Monitoring - during the agreement of the support plan, a contingency plan and person responsible for monitoring the progress is identified

5. Review - another meeting is convened and the support plan is reviewed



There are numerous advantages to FGC including support for a person to remain in their home, building partnerships with external organisations and using community resources personalised. The process ties into the strength based approach which leads to creative support planning.

However, when I observed a FGC, what struck me as the most crucial part is the state no longer holds the power to make the decisions. The individual and their family hold this power.

This is a significant shift from traditional social work and problem solving by the state. The family has a shared role and responsibility and can use the power to change lives. This demonstrates that the whole (family) is greater than the sum of its parts (individual/carers).

In a practical way, this can result in more support for carers, using FGC as a Best Interest meeting or as transition planning meeting. This is FGC's distinctive quality and mirrors the uniqueness of individuals and their family. The feedback from people involved in the Camden FGCs has been overwhelming positive and the majority felt they had more control.

In addition, given the large Bangladeshi, Black African and White Irish population in Camden,

the FGC offers an ethnically sensitive process which respects the person's cultural and religious norms. This is emphasised within the features of FGC, such as having lunch together and prayer/meditation time at the start of the meeting. The process offers a more effective way to engage with marginalised groups in Camden.

Measuring the effectiveness of FGCs is challenging and currently there is no information on long-term outcomes, prevention and delaying use of services or the need for allocated workers. This information will be collected over the next year and it will offer evidence of the positive benefits of FGCs and highlight the challenges for the future.



"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts" Aristotle

Reflective practice in supervision by Reetha Hussain

"Take care of staff and they will take care of the community"

Staff stress and anxiety is a real phenomenon within adult social care. People often feel overburdened with cases and describe themselves like being stuck in a rat race constantly trying to complete their work. The wellbeing of our staff is vital in ensuring the best services are delivered to those in need in the community.

Staff health and wellbeing can be supported by good quality supervision. Supervision is integral to the development of social care professions, representing its core commitment to reflective practice. Camden recognises the pivotal nature of reflective practice, and as a result has aided the development of reflective practice sessions as well as core training for staff. Research in Practice for Adults (RiPFA) recently delivered training on supervision and reflective practice. The sessions

focused on: what does good supervision look like; analysis and critical reflection; integrating an action learning approach to reflective practice; and using formal supervision to support reflective practice.

The training has equipped practitioners and managers to apply the reflective aspect of supervision in order to improve practice and support staff in their work. It has also provided useful tools to use when looking at supervision and reflective practice.

In conjunction with this training, teams are now running reflective sessions where difficult cases are discussed. Staff can also access Reflective Peer Group Supervision sessions that take place 6-weekly: please contact me for more details at reetha.hussain@camden.gov.uk.