



Community
Circles



Wellbeing
Teams



Circle
Family

Social Pedagogy, Leadership and Digital Relationships

Embedding social pedagogical ways of working and exploring psychological safety within virtual ways of working

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The purpose of this innovation project is to consider the following question;

How can I work in more social pedagogical ways, providing great support and leadership at a time when geographical restrictions and technological shifts, have led us to rely on digital relationships rather than face to face connections?

The focus of my innovation project had always been to explore ways of working together, using digital means, that supports us to live our values, embed social pedagogy, create meaningful belonging, build authentic and trusting relationships and a place of psychological safety where colleagues can flourish in their roles. At the time of writing this project, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the way we work, with a far greater dependence on digital connections and how I support and connect with colleagues. Rapid organisational change and learning alongside high levels of uncertainty currently dominates much of my role and has consequently impacted on the lens through which I see the project and my original research question. While many of my working relationships rely on digital means and will continue to do so, the pandemic has created an additional view for exploring psychological safety with virtual teams. In order to engage in a meaningful and purposeful discussion around digital relationships, I intend to adapt the focus of the innovation project accordingly to reflect the psychological, organisational and technological impact of COVID-19 in relation to the original question.

The aim is that my learning throughout this innovation project will lead to new ways of working, support development of resources and guides, strengthen my confidence and skills as a leader enabling colleagues and Circle Family to flourish.

Introduction

My role is Community Circles Lead working with Community Circles and Wellbeing Teams. Community Circles are a national charity who partner with a variety of organisations helping people stay connected to whatever matters to them with the support of their local community www.community-circles.co.uk. Wellbeing Teams are a radical new model for delivering homecare and support, doing whatever we

can to help people live well and be part of their communities www.wellbeingteams.org. The work we do is underpinned by our values; compassion, responsibility, collaboration, curiosity, creativity and flourishing. I also support the development of Circle Family; a partnership between Community Circles, Wellbeing Teams and HMR Circle. Circle Family is our offer to local communities, a program of monthly events and activities, helping people connect around shared interests and creating opportunities for relationships to flourish <https://www.community-circles.co.uk/get-a-circle/circles-family/>

Community Circles and Wellbeing Teams partner with a variety of organisations and local authorities, our work takes place throughout the UK which can create a challenge around geography and a barrier in terms of face to face relationships. The Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions have increased the need for digital relationships, where previously in-person meetings would have been possible. I rely on digital means, such as Zoom and Slack, to support working together, coaching and mentoring colleagues and we operate as self-managed teams. Self-management is emerging within a variety of organisations and industries and there is a growing interest of the benefits of self-management within health and social care. For self-management to be successful, according to a recent Leadermorphosis podcast with the remote team from Hack and Paint (Leadermorphosis 2018), there needs to be a focus on building deep relationships which leads to trust. According to Edmondson (2019) creating psychological safety is essential for supporting learning, innovation and growth in the workplace and is the key factor in employees' level of satisfaction. I want to explore how this can be created effectively with virtual teams.

According to Amaechi (2020) "Groups and teams are not the same thing." He states that people who work together know job roles, where to go to find information and each other's accountabilities, yet often "they are strangers to each other." A 'team' is radically different to a 'group' in that a team has insights into the way people work together, an almost intangible connection that is not written in a policy or procedure, rather an understanding that comes from authentic relationships. According to Amaechi (2020) one of the things that makes teams amazing is "the insights into the way each other's minds work, the insights into the kind of and depth of experience above and beyond their job description." Relationships are at the heart of all we do

and in my own work I want to be able to create a space for a flourishing team that supports our individual and team values. “Meaningful connections are vital to our psychological and physical wellbeing. So much so, in fact, that many scientists now believe it’s impossible to be healthy *unless* we feel connected to others” (Friedman 2014 p 105). I’m curious to explore within this project how, when we work in different location across the UK, can I support the team to create a space of psychological safety when virtual working is the norm; how does this impact on our relationships and what ways of working and documents can support our team development.

When considering the concept of meaningful belonging, Rothuizen and Harbo (2017) discuss the process of ‘bonding and bridging’ (p17) focussing on the role of the social pedagogue when working alongside a person. Bonding refers to the sense of belonging through building self-confidence and self-esteem, while bridging refers to the shift where the individual becomes part of an inclusive community. The concept of meaningful belonging and indeed social pedagogy as a whole, isn’t only for people we support but a way of being and connecting with those around us. There is much written about social pedagogy and the way of working between the practitioner and person supported; I want to consider embedding social pedagogy in the way we work alongside colleagues and how a social pedagogical approach should be embedded into our DNA. As a leader I want to be able to create a space where colleagues feel a sense of meaningful belonging, to their work and to each other; supporting individual development through building confidence and an inclusive community where relationships are reciprocal and supportive.

My curiosity and interest in learning about relationships and virtual working has been present for some time, as for a number of years my role has been supporting organisations in different parts of the country. Previously, travel has afforded occasional opportunities to meet together in person with remote colleagues but since the Covid-19 pandemic virtual working has become the new norm; so the question of embedding social pedagogy into the way we work, providing great leadership and building relationships without face to face contact feels more urgent in current times. Learning is a central concept of social pedagogy, a stretch from comfort to learning zone without tipping into panic zone provides great opportunities for growth. This often requires a conscious decision to move into the learning zone. However, the

pandemic has shifted circumstances beyond our control, creating a liminal space of 'betwixt and between' a phrase coined by Turner (1987) to represent the space between what was and what will be. The shift hasn't been a conscious decision to move into the learning zone, rather a situation imposed on us by forces outside our control. Liminal spaces can be times of uncertainty but also times of opportunities and possibilities, a time to step into the learning zone and lead with courage. The path from comfort zone to learning zone can be difficult to manoeuvre and is different for everyone. The learning journey is captured in this quote from Viscott;

"If you want to feel secure do what you already know how to do. But if you want to grow...go to the cutting edge of your competence, which means a temporary loss of security. So, whenever you don't quite know *what you are doing know that you are growing...*" Viscott (2003, p.89)

Edmondson describes psychological safety as a "climate in which people are comfortable expressing and being themselves. They are confident that they can speak up and won't be humiliated, ignored or blamed" (2019 p xvi). Psychological safety is creating a space where mutual trust can thrive and people can be honest and caring at the same time. According to Edmondson (De Smet 2020) "For many people during the pandemic, the explicitness of the *physical* lack of safety has been experienced as a *shared* fear, which has allowed them to be more open and intimate and more able to voice their thoughts and concerns with colleagues." Has the shared experience of the pandemic and liminal space provided opportunities for deeper relationships? There was certainly a feeling of common experience, a collective shift to learn new ways of working, an urgency to respond differently and a focus on each other's wellbeing through the creation of a 'wellbeing check in' channel on Slack, where we could openly share our feelings and explore our individual and shared experiences. Psychological safety, what it is (and what it isn't) and how we achieve it will be explored further in this project, also reflecting on the impact the pandemic has had to the way we work and the importance of relationships.

It is hoped that learning from this project, the challenges and opportunities brought by the pandemic and this liminal space that I find myself in, will support further

opportunities for curiosity, reflection and new discoveries, as well as developing leadership skills and exploring the shift in skills required for virtual working.

Through this innovation project I want to explore social pedagogy as a way of working, describe key concepts and how these are currently embedded into how we work and where we can develop further, delve into the opportunities and challenges of remote working and consider my leadership role for supporting our Circle Family Team to flourish.

Chapter One

Methodology and Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the methodologies used within this project.

According to the sociologist Connell, research is “simply collecting information and thinking systematically about it.” (1975, in Wadsworth, 1997:6). Crotty states that the first step towards research would “typically start with a real issue that needs to be addressed, a problem that needs to be solved, a question that needs to be answered” (Crotty 2003 p13). My real issue was borne out of my experience of supporting and coaching colleagues virtually using digital means through video calls Zoom and the messaging app, Slack. The geographical distance of where I am based and where work has taken place means that conversations, training and support is often via Zoom. While technology allows for connections across geographical barriers and time zones, I was interested to explore how social pedagogy and psychological safety can be embedded when my working relationships often rely on digital means. Virtual working was already my natural way of working and the Covid-19 pandemic added a new dimension and layer of complexity to how we work, creating a liminal space which is explored in further chapters.

According to Crotty (2003) there are four elements of research which inform one another; epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods. Epistemology is the study of knowledge questioning how we come to know and what counts as knowledge. This sits alongside ontology, the study of being and deals with matters of reality. Both ontology and epistemology inform our theoretical perspectives and subsequently influence research both in choice, design and application of methods. There are two major positions responding to the ontological debate; realism and idealism. Realism is based on the perspective that an external reality exists independently of our views and understanding, while idealism comes from the perspective that reality is only knowledgeable through the human mind and social constructed meanings. Working in the world of social care with a passion for social pedagogy and social justice, my Haltung has developed through my experiences, deep rooted values about how we should live and support each other

within communities that feel welcoming and inclusive. Whilst aiming to be open minded and consider other debates, my *haltung* draws me to consider the meaning of the world around me through a lens that supports a stance of idealism and I recognise that I struggle to consider a viewpoint of realism which feels in conflict with a social pedagogical presence. My *haltung* is what makes me who I am, a skin not a jacket, my way of being that influences how I see and act in the world and to be an authentic social pedagogue means embracing my *haltung*. Axiology is a branch of philosophy which is specifically concerned with the assessment of the role of the researcher's own value on all stages of the research process, identifying that values will always affect how research is conducted. My *haltung* will always steer me towards idealism which serves as a better fit to a social pedagogical stance.

When considering epistemological perspectives, we are faced with the opposing paradigms of positivism and interpretivism. Positivism is grounded in the notion that the social world can be studied using the same logic and processes as those used by the natural sciences. The positivist view gives little weight to the factors that make us uniquely human, such as free will, choice and emotions. Social pedagogy is being part of and supporting people's wishes, hopes, fears and beliefs; walking alongside people and enabling them to find their own path towards a good life of their choosing. It's not only about *what* we do but the *way* that we do it, developing relationships and recognising what matters to people. It is the value driven nature of social pedagogy, our humanness and individual historical streams that lead me to feel at conflict with the views of positivism. Mclaughlin (2012) suggests that if we took a positivist view where "social phenomena could be classified, correlated and measured...the world would become predictable and with predictability comes the potential for control" (2012 p 27). Whilst we strive for positive outcomes for the people we support, we do this alongside people, recognising the person as the expert in their own life, with humanity and without control. The stance of positivism feels alien to working in a social pedagogical way.

At the opposite end of the epistemological paradigm is interpretivism, based on the view that people and society cannot be studied in the same way as the natural world. Society, which is described as a product of the human mind from an interpretivist view, is subjective and emotional and requires different models of explanation than

the natural sciences. The interpretivist view doesn't seek to gather statistics or facts but rather researches what determines human experiences, such as choice, experiences and values. A major criticism of positivism from an interpretivist standpoint is that positivists reduce all that makes us human to a set of statistics. From an interpretivist viewpoint axiology would consider that research is value bound, the researcher cannot be separated from what is being researched and so will be subjective.

A key difference between positivism and interpretivism is the ability of people to interpret their own experiences. Unlike atoms or molecules of the natural world, people can "talk about, explain to others or justify their actions. Knowledge is then not something 'out there' to be discovered, but something derived and created from the experiences of the social actors" McLaughlin (2012 p 29). We cannot escape our histories, experiences and our unique perspectives about the world we live in and so reflecting on my own values I am drawn to an interpretivist perspective which feels more congruent with my *haltung*. Hermeneutics supports us to consider a person's life from their perspective, "how a person's reality is constructed, rather than being an objective fact or undisputed reality." (Jacaranda 2015 p 41). According to Nohl (1879 – 1960) "realities are influenced by experiences, social context and views of the world." (1949 cited by Jacaranda 2015 p 41). An interpretivist approach has congruence with social pedagogy when exploring the uniqueness of what makes us human. However, interpretivism is not without its criticisms. Interpretivist research has been criticised for a lack of reliability and that the ontological view is subjective rather than objective which suggests that outcomes from such research are influenced by the researchers own beliefs and interpretations which leads to bias. From a positivist view, quantitative methodologies are highly valued, whilst qualitative methods are favoured by researchers with an interpretivist stance.

These views will then influence the methodology and methods chosen to gather information about the issue.

Reflecting on the opening statement from Connell and the systematic search through literature, my first reading led me towards people who are leading the way in self-

management, psychological safety, leadership and new radical ways of working (Laloux 2014, Lowe et al 2017, Edmondson 2019, Scott 2019). I was also keen to explore the learning and experiences from individuals and organisations currently navigating new ways of working through self-management (Sanderson 2019, Corporate Rebels 2020, Gill 2018, Enlivening Edge 2020) and how this influences my leadership role (Johns 2016, Brown 2019). Quantitative information has supported the data of remote working (Buffer 2020, Office of National Statistics 2020) and I am interested to explore the qualitative information that supports how we work. Empirical research from such sources as Science Direct has provided interesting findings relating to remote work, while articles from Enlivening Edge share learnings from radical organisations and blogs from such sources as Medium have shared anecdotal accounts of leadership and remote workers experiences. A common phrase within social pedagogy is “it depends” because people, situations, circumstances and experiences are all unique which supports us with a richness of learning. As Hamalainen states “an action is not social pedagogical because certain methods are used but as a consequence of social pedagogical thought” (2003 p 77). Exploring a variety of literature offers a wide range of material to support pedagogical thinking, however I am mindful that some books have resulted from empirical research whilst other material contains anecdotal reflections. During the pandemic there has been a plethora of blogs about remote working and leadership skills required to support remote teams and while this has offered a variety of literature, I am mindful that these are anecdotal accounts not necessarily widely held facts. I am also drawing on my own learning, reflections and experiences of how we work in a self-managed way and what we need to do differently to embed social pedagogy and psychological safety.

However, considering a social pedagogical approach, it is the stories, experiences and reflections that support us to further embed working in this way. “In his analysis of the Government-funded social pedagogy pilot project’s evaluation report (Berridge et al., 2011), Smeeton (2011) argues that the impact of social pedagogy can be best captured through narratives. Narratives convey meaning not just through the stories people tell but also in the way they tell them, the words and metaphors they choose, the examples they draw on to bring their stories to life. (Eichsteller and Holthoff

2012 p 3). Reflection is an important part of social pedagogy, reflecting on our practice and people's experiences through the stories they share.

Scharmer (2020) talks about Charles Darwin and how he would record information that would disprove his theories. I recognise that I'm not always willing to go to the uncomfortable space where my Haltung feels conflicted, however keen to reflect and act on what I am hearing and experiencing within my role.

Having an appreciation of ontology, epistemology and axiology has strengthened my understanding of the research process. I am confident that social pedagogy lends itself to an interpretivist approach and that narrative will play a significant role in this project. However, this enquiry has also highlighted the importance of exploring wide ranging knowledge and literature to ensure my own bias and values do not dominate the interpretation of any findings.

Chapter Two

Wellbeing Teams, Community Circles, Circle Family and Social Pedagogy

Within this chapter I want to explore the way we work within Wellbeing Teams Community Circle and Circle Family, the processes and structures that support us and the congruence with social pedagogy.

Social pedagogy is an “ethical, theoretical and practical approach to practice, training, education and policy, addressing social issues in a broadly educative way (because it is more than schooling) and can work in tandem with justice and welfare approaches” (Petrie et al, 2006). Social pedagogy is concerned with wellbeing, learning and growth, working alongside individuals in a holistic way to support them to fulfil their potential, and also with communities to enable participation and inclusion. The term social pedagogy was first defined by German educator, Karl Mager in 1844 who believed in the holistic view necessary to support people to live well and, as explained by Charfe and Gardner (2019), recognising not only the person’s sense of self but also the influences of family, friends and the wider community. Social pedagogy is not only *what* we do but *how* we do it, underpinned by theories to support a way of working which flexes and adapts, depending on the individual and circumstance, to support positive change and wellbeing. Social pedagogy is the ‘how’ of social work. Social work in its broadest sense is the ‘*what we do*’ to support people; a whole range of services including, amongst others, children’s services, residential care and home care. Social pedagogy is ‘*how*’ we do this; enabling people to have what matters to them in their life, providing great support, relational practice and supporting people to be part of their communities. For me, learning about social pedagogy was a lightbulb moment, a way of working based on a rich European history, underpinned by theory, practical concepts with an ethos and language that gave direction to my work and supported my own values (see appendix page 51). The holistic nature of social pedagogy, the strength-based approach, the unconditional regard for the value of all human beings (Petrie, 2006) has much synergy with the way we work at Community Circles and Wellbeing Teams and with my own values. Equality is at the heart of social pedagogy, not a theory to implement or to do to people, rather an approach that supports power with, not power over, that influences not only our work but the way we live. Social pedagogy is a skin, not a jacket; a golden thread that weaves through how we support people,

build relationships with colleagues and fulfil our purpose in the world. According to Eichsteller, (2009 cited 2012) "Social Pedagogy is not merely how individual practitioners should work, it is also how the team, the organisation and the wider system need to function as an interlinked system, based on similar principles, philosophies and visions." To lead change, social pedagogy needs to become our way of working, influencing our whole behaviour. Social pedagogy is not a process to implement or solely an approach for the people we support but rather an "art form, [not] a skill to be acquired, social pedagogy is expressed through the professionals Haltung" (Eichsteller 2012, p5).

Haltung is a German word which roughly translates as ethos or mindset. Haltung is about how we "guide our actions by what we believe in and how our values cause us to respond in a certain way. Haltung is fundamental to social pedagogy because it demonstrates the importance of the professional being authentic" Barton (2019). According to Charfe and Gardner, Haltung can be imagined as a compass that guides our actions and behaviours, towards a way of working underpinned by "profound respect for human dignity" (2019). Haltung is not something to adopt for a given situation but rather an ethical stance we take based on our deep-rooted values. Social pedagogy is not merely a pair of hands which delivers an action, rather a way of being, bringing our whole, authentic self to our relationships and how we live. For me, Haltung is reflected in our values; the fundamental beliefs of a person or organisation, the guiding principles which determine behaviour, the stuff that warms your heart and is a natural fit to how we live and work. I want to be able to work where my values are nourished, where I have a sense of belonging and can create meaningful belonging with colleagues, where their personal values are nourished, they have joy at work and their wellbeing is supported. I want to be a leader who enables others to be the best versions of themselves and not feel anxious that working as a remote team prevents building authentic, trusting relationships.

Wellbeing Teams are underpinned by a set of values;

Compassion actively hearing and sensing other's thoughts and feelings, being kind, and finding empathetic ways to support individuals and each other to achieve positive outcomes.

Responsibility initiating ways of working that dignify everyone at the same time as holding self and others accountable for actions and attitudes in relation to our shared purpose and values.

Curiosity feeling energised by discovering new insights, learning, finding answers to questions and wondering at the world.

Creativity capacity and ingenuity to respond appropriately to seize opportunities without needing to be directed or instructed by others.

Flourishing creating the conditions for thriving that reflect aspirations, remove barriers to connection and ensure people choose their own way forward.

Values are not simply a group of statements or a poster on the wall of an office but rather living statements which reflect our beliefs and the behaviour we want to see; they represent how we walk the walk and bring our whole selves to work.

Here are the beliefs about the world, social care and the people we support that shaped these values;

- We believe that loneliness should not be an inevitable consequence of getting older
- We believe that older people can live well at home and be contributing members of their community
- We are passionate about older people living well in communities where everyone matters

Sanderson (2017)

Le Fevre (2017) explains how beliefs and values lie deep within our unconscious mind; "values are energy laden ideas that sit in the limbic area of the brain where there is no language. The limbic functions in terms of what it feels rather than what it

‘thinks’ or ‘knows’. Together our beliefs and values function as a kind of background operating system. This gives us an internal autopilot sense of how the world works and where we fit in so we can develop our own shorthand ways of navigating everyday events.”

Beliefs, morals, ethics and principles are often interchangeably used alongside values which can lead to confusion; morals are our adopted views on what is right or wrong, ethics are an agreed code of behaviour within a group, while principles are the basic rules for how things work (Le Fevre 2017).

If we consider an iceberg, what we can see above water is the behaviour (*what* is done) and the attitude (*how* the behaviour is done). What is not visible is what lies underneath the water, our values and beliefs. “Our beliefs about the world prompt us to value certain things above other things” (Le Fevre 2017) which together drives our behaviour. Our Wellbeing Teams values are our behaviour guide and influence the way we work to support people well and also how we work together with each other. Our values shine through in our team agreements and are evident in our accountabilities to each other.

As well as our organisational values, we each have our own individual values and research shows that people who are consciously connected with their priority values are better equipped to lead with authenticity and suffer less from stress than people who are unaware of their personal priority values (Le Fevre 2018). My own top value is that of belonging which is described as having a place or sense of home and to experience belonging and acceptance. My need to have a sense of belonging is at my very core, whether with family or colleagues through work. I want to be able to explore meaningful belonging and create a space where geography isn’t a barrier to supportive, authentic relationships and my leadership role isn’t compromised through lack of face to face connections. All our colleagues complete their own individual values inventory through <https://www.minessence.net> which influences their one page profile and together we explore what needs to be present in their role to nourish their values.

Thinking back to the iceberg, our values and beliefs which lie below the water line are not visible to those around us. It is the role of the social pedagogue to consider what cannot be seen yet needs to be understood, to work in a holistic way to build authentic and trusting relationships. The German philosopher and educationalist, Herman Nohl (1879-1960) developed the theory of hermeneutics, which is concerned with individual interpretations and how we construct our own individual reality. Our perceptions, interpretations and realities are influenced by our histories, experiences, social context and views of the world and hermeneutics supports us to consider and understand a person's life from their viewpoint. According to Johns (2004) an experience is not an isolated event; it is always an historical event placed within the journey of the person's life experience. Gadamer (1900-2002) introduced the concept of historical shaped consciousness or historical stream which is our understanding developed through the history and culture that shapes our lives and relationships with the world. Wellbeing Teams and Community Circles recognise the rich history and experiences that are unique to each individual we support and consider their historical stream when exploring together what matters to people, what they want to achieve and what good support for them looks like. Working in this way extends to our colleagues; exploring histories through completing work timelines at induction, developing one page profiles to reflect what matters to individuals and what matters to us as a team through our team plans. Whilst working virtually in different locations doesn't allow for office coffee conversations and the shared office space chit chat which supports informally building relationships over time, the values that underpin our work and the way we work puts relationships at the heart of all we do, caring deeply for our colleagues is our default setting. I will be further exploring our current practices that support how we build relationships and how we can develop further in subsequent chapters.

Completing individual values profiles go some way to exploring what matters to colleagues, we explore what has worked and not worked with previous roles through completing our work timeline and this information is brought together in our Team Plan. Part of our Circle Family Team Plan draws our individual values together and we then identify, based on our values, what behaviours we want to see and our agreements to each other. For example, one of our team values is sharing, listening and trust; "to actively hear and sense another's thoughts and feelings, to express

your own thoughts and feelings in a climate of trust” (Minessence 2020). This has influenced one of our team agreements; “We will listen to each other’s thoughts, feeling and ideas with open minds and open hearts. We share our mistakes with each other, actively contributing to creating a culture of shared learning, transparency and trust and contribute to #winoftheweek and #Fridayfailureandlearning channels on Slack.”

There are further processes and ways of working that support us to be authentic, bring our whole selves to work and create a space of psychological safety, which will be explored further, however it is also the time and commitment spent to get to know the people you work with, care personally about them and learn more about their historical stream that makes them who they are. This can further influence the role of the leader being adaptable to provide person centred support to team members.

Haltung and values are the foundation of the way we work; our moral compass which underpins what we do to support people well and how we support our team members. We operate as a self-managed team and I want to explore this way of working and consider how the practices can support psychological safety.

Laloux (2014) began to explore the evolution of organisations and how they operated, coding them by colours based on previous work by Wilber (1996); red represents organisations built on fear and led by command; amber represents organisations with formal roles within a hierarchical pyramid; orange is characterised by achieving profit and growth with a focus on beating the competition, while green represents a classic pyramid structure with a focus upon culture and empowerment. The next stage in evolutionary development is Teal. Teal organisations embody self-management, enable people to bring their whole selves to work and have an evolutionary purpose. Self-management is characterized by “a lack of traditional hierarchy and bureaucracy” (Dignan 2019) and according to Lee and Edmondson (2017) self-managing organisations “radically decentralize authority in a formal and systematic way throughout the organisation”. According to Laloux (2015) surveys show that “companies are places of drudgery, not passion or purpose” and this is reflected through all levels of organisations, “not just the powerless at the bottom of the hierarchy” but also leaders experiencing a feeling of emptiness despite a front

facing view of success. “All of us [are yearning] for better ways to work together - for more soulful workplaces where our talents are nurtured and our deepest aspirations are honoured (Laloux 2015). Chris Rufer, founder and CEO of self-managing organisation Morning Star shares that, “our way of doing things is driven by our philosophy: people are productive when they are happy; people are happy when they have control over what they do” (Gino & Staats, 2014 p 4). New ways of working are emerging, a shift towards “soulful workplaces where teams can thrive, incorporating self-management, bringing our whole selves to work and talking from the heart (Laloux 2014). Self-management is a natural fit to how we work, where wellbeing and relationships are at the heart of what we do and the foundations for social pedagogical practice, with a focus on mindsets, trust, culture and values supported by processes and systems for efficient working.

Laloux (2020) shares that there are five key processes of self-management; decision making, roles rather than job descriptions, transparency of information, performance management and conflict resolution. Holocracy is our chosen system for supporting self-management, a process for bringing “structure and discipline to a peer to peer workplace...designed to offer an agile organisational structure, efficient meeting formats, increased autonomy to teams and individuals and a unique decision making process” (Lowe et al 2019 p 148). In self managing organisations decisions are made through clear processes, rather than layers of hierarchy. The advice process is one way we use decision making underpinned by trusting adult to adult relationships, recognising that we have a collective purpose to act in the best way based on the purpose and values of the organisation. There needs to be a space of psychological safety to be successful in supporting this way of working where conversations are clear and kind. Within Wellbeing Teams, Community Circles and Circle Family, rather than static job descriptions roles are fluid, linked to overall purpose reflecting the gifts and talents of the individual and considering where and how people want to develop, shifting from comfort zone to learning zone. In order to support transparency of information, we use google docs that all team members have access to. In traditionally hierarchical organisations, information is shared in order of importance, often diluted as it reaches people at the bottom of the hierarchy; within a Teal organisation everyone is important. Performance management is another key indicator of a self-managing team. According to Brogan (2018) “conventional

performance management relies on defining performance against specifications, objectives and numerical goals then holding people to account for the fictions these create.” Within the world of work we can’t reduce our efforts to numbers and plans so we use confirmation practices developed by Easier Inc that supports us to “hold ourselves to account – to be responsible – for the value [we] create” (Brogan 2018). Confirmation practices drill down the detail of our roles, providing a set of statements that reflect our purpose. Using reflective practice and coaching we can clarify what success would look like, explore any barriers or challenges and develop meaningful actions that moves us towards success. Bandura (1997) talks of self-efficacy which refers to a person’s capacity to exercise influence over their own life and their capacity to make positive changes; social pedagogical practices supports this. Confirmation practices are a way of enabling team members to develop self-efficacy and lean into the learning zone. “The enabler role is paramount in social pedagogy” Stephens (2013 p53) where good leadership enables people to become the best versions of themselves. Conflict resolution is the final of the five key indicators of self-management. In self-managing organisations disagreements are resolved through the conflict resolution process. Currently, our team is small and any perceived conflict is raised as a tension through our weekly tactical meetings, supporting us to ask for what we need and remove barriers to moving forwards (Holocracy 2020). We also use compassionate communication, “a way of communicating that leads us to give from the heart” which is “founded on language and communication skills that strengthen our ability to remain human, even under trying conditions (Rosenberg 2015 p 3). According to Laloux (2020) “traditional communication is cold, only from the head, it’s short and transactional and is mostly one way, this new world that we are going into...it somehow doesn’t fit” and he asks how can we have “authentic, real, fast ways of communicating?” Slack, a messaging app, supports us to have efficient, transparent communication and our team plan records how we can best communicate together. The use of compassionate communication, recognising our preferred ways to communicate, team agreements based on our values and the systems we use, all support us to communicate from the heart with the aim of building authentic relationships.

Within this innovation project, considering relationships and psychological safety, I will be drawing on key concepts and theories within social pedagogy; how the

Diamond Model (Eichsteller & Holthoff, 2012) can support colleagues to flourish in their roles, how through Pestalozzi's concept of Head, Heart and Hands (Eichsteller et al., 2014) we can develop a culture of bringing our whole selves to work, how we can build authentic relationships supported by using the 3P's (Jappe, 2010 cited in Charfe and Gardner 2019) embedding a culture of clear feedback that supports us to grow, and how compassionate communication can support us to connect and empathise with each other.

The Diamond Model (Eichsteller and Holthoff, 2012) describes one of the core principles of social pedagogy, "the unconditional value of human beings" (Jacaranda 2015 p44-45). The Diamond Model is so called because it represents the potential to shine within us all; "diamonds, like humans, are not always shiny and polished but all have the potential to be" (Charfe and Gardner 2019 p47). Social pedagogy can support people to shine and the Diamond Model focusses on four key areas to enable this; wellbeing and happiness, holistic learning, relationships and empowerment. Wellbeing is described as a long lasting sense of physical, emotional and mental wellbeing, whilst happiness can be described as the emotion of a present state. According to Layard "happiness requires a sense of belonging – not just to your family or your workplace, but also to your local community more generally" (2020 p193). Meaningful belonging, as mentioned previously, is a key concept in social pedagogy and also a prominent individual and team value within Circle Family. Within the Covid-19 pandemic, our work roles have shifted where we are currently not supporting face to face connections but creating opportunities for virtual connections through our Circles Connected Facebook Group and all of our working relationships are via Zoom and Slack. This liminal space has shifted our sense of belonging, created challenges where we feel less connected, to the people we support in our local communities, yet also created opportunities for creative ways of working and reaching a wider audience through Facebook. Morgan (2012) talks of threshold concepts that occur within liminal spaces; "a gateway or 'portal' to a new understanding" (2012 p 4). The defining characteristic of a threshold concept is that it is transformative "resulting in a significant shift in the perception of a subject" (Meyer and Land 2003 p 4). The liminal space created by the pandemic created a shared challenge within the Circle Family Team of exploring new ways of working, learning what could be achieved to support virtual connections and also learning

more deeply about colleagues as individuals and the importance of nurturing our relationships to provide mutual support, not only for work purposes but for our own wellbeing and feeling of belonging. Relationships have always been important; this liminal space within the pandemic crisis has created a deeper recognition to be intentional to nurture our relationships, having social time with colleagues via Zoom is an example of how we are acting on this intention.

Remote working raises challenges about experiencing a sense of belonging; our connections can be limited to Zoom calls where we can only see head and shoulders of our colleagues. As suggested previously by Edmondson (2020), the pandemic has created a shared fear and understanding, certainly my experience is that Circle Family colleagues felt a deeper sense of belonging when we had to consider new ways of working within current conditions that reflected our purpose and also to intentionally consider our own wellbeing and sense of belonging. Virtual working within the pandemic has nudged us to be more intentional to our relationships and to be mindful of our own and each other's wellbeing.

As well as wellbeing and happiness, included in the Diamond Model are also the concepts of holistic learning, relationships and empowerment. Holistic learning is the "process of realising our own potential for learning and growth...a lifelong process involving head, heart and hands (Pestalozzi)" (Thempra 2020). Circle Family is a new offer to support local communities, inspired by previous work by Hilary Cottam (2018). There has been much learning but particularly as a result of the pandemic where our natural way of working and connecting people was no longer available to us, the learning curve was steep, requiring us to think about our strengths and assets, how we could contribute and reflect together about what was working and not working. Our underpinning culture and the processes of self-management have enabled us to share ideas, contribute together and share our gifts without hierarchy or need for permission.

Relationships are central to the Diamond Model and at the heart of what we do within Circle Family, building positive relationships through every connection. In realising these core aims of the Diamond Model, social pedagogy promotes positive experiences. Trevithick (2003) in her writings about relational practice, shares her

thoughts about energising and de-energising experiences. Negative or de-energising experiences, in her view, can lead to defensive responses from a person with the aim of protecting themselves, whilst an energising experience can support further self-efficacy, motivation and growth. These experiences are explored within the context of relational practice and how the practitioner can build authentic relationships when supporting people to make positive change. The principles of relational practice, energising and de-energising experiences can also be considered in team dynamics. My own previous experience of working in a large bureaucracy, within a blame culture, where micromanagement was the norm led to many de-energising moments. Trevithick (2003) notes how de-energising moments can lead to defensive responses and a lack of emotional energy for future experiences. My own de-energising moments in work situations have left me feeling demotivated and I am aware that when my value of belonging is not nourished, my defence response is to withdraw. I am conscious within my leadership role to support energising moments and reflect together with colleagues about what needs to be present within their roles to support this. Using individual values is one way we explore having more energised moments by asking how can we nourish your values, what needs to be present in your role and are these showing up in your one page profile as important to you? Creativity, fantasy and play are present in one colleagues individual values so recognising and supporting her to work in this way through sharing graphic information is important. Work histories are also part of our team plan at Circle Family, where we record our work timeline and from previous experience, what has worked well and what hasn't worked well. This is used within induction to identify who will be a good fit for our team and how we work. Also, through working together, to create an environment where people can flourish, building on what works well and avoiding the practices that didn't work well for people. Considering the core aims of the Diamond Model and the goal of positive experiences, I want to embed practices into the way we work such as clear and kind feedback, compassionate communication and bringing our whole selves to work to support psychological safety and a flourishing team.

A golden thread that weaves through social pedagogy is the deep regard and unconditional value of everyone. There is no age limit to contributions and we recognise that everyone has something to offer. The concept of head, heart and

hands is central to social pedagogy and is recognised in the way we support people, for example Imogen, who originally reached out for support and now hosts a reading group (Community Circles 2020). This is not only for the people we support but our natural way of working, encouraging our colleagues to bring their whole selves to work and recognising the contributions they can share through their gifts of head, heart and hands. Head, heart and hands is a concept developed by Pestalozzi (1746 – 1827), a Swiss educator who believed holistic learning occurs through using our head, heart and hands. The head is recognising our knowledge, the heart considers our emotions and values and hands symbolise our actions. Pestalozzi advocates the use of all three when working in a social pedagogical way. Within our work supporting older people, the *head* is reflected in how we use our knowledge about person centred support and the effects of loneliness, our *heart* is our values and deep respect for people while our *hands* deliver compassionate care and support enabling people to live well. For our colleagues, we recognise their gifts and talents, explore together their passions and how they can make a contribution. Colleagues complete a document “Gifts of Head, Heart and Hands” to identify what they are interested in, where their passions lie and the talents they have. We also use a “Future Focus” document where we record what future experiences we would like to explore, areas to grow and develop and recognise where we can make a contribution. Recognising and supporting gifts of head, heart and hands is one way of bringing our whole selves to work and bringing joy into our workplace. These documents help us to consider what joy at work for individuals look like, where we can provide support and encouragement and highlight any learning opportunities. Within work “joy is not just humane, it’s instrumental” (Perlo et al 2017 p 4). Considering the work we do to support people to live well, feel connected and have joy in their lives, we cannot deliver what we do not have, so building joy into our roles is essential. According to Deming (1986 cited in Perlo 2017 p 6) “Management’s overall aim should be to create a system in which everybody may take joy in [their] work.” Joy in work, he believes, is a fundamental right and it is up to leaders to ensure that colleagues can enjoy that right. Perlo (2017 p 8) uses the analogy of ‘pebbles in your shoes’ to represent the tensions that get in the way of what matters to individuals when considering joy at work. Our self-managing practices and tactical meetings support these tensions to be easily raised and addressed. Larger organisational issues or ‘boulders’ (Perlo 2017 p 8) may be more complex to address

where the organisation is hierarchical, however a self-managing organisation has clear processes and systems to support autonomy and clear communication. Nevertheless, the processes within self-management are only effective when there is a foundation of trust and psychological safety within the team which supports transparent communication and confidence of team members to speak up without fear of blame or recrimination, which I will be exploring further in later chapters. Joy is not a static state and it's important to reflect with colleagues that they continue to have joy in their roles, particularly during the pandemic when roles have shifted significantly. We use the person centred thinking tool, 4 plus 1, (Helen Sanderson Associates 2020) to explore what we have tried, have learned, are pleased about and concerned about which supports us to think about what to do next. Team reviews also support us to identify what is important to us, what good support looks like, what's working and not working, which supports future actions and updating our team plan as necessary. I am also exploring a range of questions for gauging feedback about colleagues' joy and enjoyment of their role based on Gallup's Q12 questions. (see appendix p 55)

A further social pedagogical concept which is congruent with the way we work within Wellbeing Teams, Community Circles and Circle Family is the 3P's, again recognising relationships as a key resource when working in a social pedagogy way. The 3P's; professional, personal and private is a Danish concept developed by Jappe (2010 cited in Charfe and Gardner 2019) which recognises the three areas of self when working alongside people. Professional refers to our working roles, drawing on knowledge, theory and experience informing how we work together and support people. The professional recognises "the value of inserting the personal strand in our practice" and as relationships are at the heart of social pedagogy practice, there is a recognition of "sharing a sense of who we are as individuals working alongside others" (Charfe and Gardner 2019 p 39). Personal is the part of ourselves that we share to support the building of authentic relationships, reducing imbalances of power and connecting with others on a human level. This information can be seen through the use of one page profiles, where we share what people appreciate about us, what is important to us and what good support looks like. One page profiles aren't a tell all document, rather rich information relevant for people around us to know, dependant on the audience and who the information is shared

with. The 3 P's, as with the one page profile, recognises the private self, the part of us that is only shared with those closest to us. What we share depends; on the context, the relationship and the experience. The professional, personal and private is unique for each person and situation and constant reflection is needed to consider appropriate boundaries whilst being open to developing authentic relationships. The 3 P's is evident in the way we work through the use of one page profiles and how we bring our whole selves to work. Through the pandemic and the shift in ways of working to use virtual means rather than face to face to build connections, it has been interesting to reflect on the three spheres of professional, personal and private. While face to face groups have been on hold, Circle Family has moved to supporting connections and keeping people entertained through a Facebook Group Circles Connected. A conversation about childhood hobbies uncovered a common theme between our members for tap dancing. This led to me sharing a weekly video of my tap dancing. Virtually bringing people into my home to watch my dancing was made possible by the shift in boundaries created by the pandemic. The liminal space encouraged a new way of working and creativity and a different way of sharing my personal self. The shift to virtual working and an increase use of digital tools has led to a shift of boundaries between the professional, personal and private. When workers were office based there was a clearer distinction between the professional and the personal. Now through the use of technology, we are connecting with colleagues in the own homes via video calls, an invitation (maybe reluctantly) into people's personal space. Within a leadership role it's necessary to consider colleagues feelings about the blurring of boundaries between the professional and personal sphere, letting people know that it's sometimes unavoidable and okay that dogs, cats, children, partners or washing up are visible on calls. A leader's role is to support people to be the best version of themselves, supporting them in their current circumstances with trust and compassion.

Bringing our whole selves to work is part of how we live our values and build authentic relationships, which is supported through the use of one page profiles, recognising the contributions through gifts of head, heart and hands and the personal element we share when considering the 3 P's. According to Stepper (2017) "We don't need to shed our individuality when we come to the office. 'People are our greatest asset' only if we let them be real people, only if we let ourselves be our true

selves.” The concept of bringing our whole selves to work can be traced back thirty years ago to Kahn’s (1990) work about employee engagement which depended on the sense of self within work roles. Part of Kahn’s work explored psychological meaningfulness, “feeling worthwhile, useful and valuable” in roles where they could make a difference, a reciprocal working relationship (1990 p 704). He states that psychological meaningfulness was experienced when people had rewarding interpersonal interactions and I’m sure that that is achieved when we are supporting groups and face to face connections with the people we support but conscious that this could be lacking in current circumstances and recognise the need to support such relationships when we are working virtually.

‘Bringing our whole selves to work’ may have different meanings for different people; for some it’s about being authentic with your identity and not having to downplay particular aspects of who you are, for others it might be the freedom to say what’s on your mind or talking about your personal life. As previously described, self-management is a core element of a Teal organisation along with evolutionary purpose and wholeness. Laloux (2020) defines the concept of wholeness as “how people can show up whole, [where organisations] create a space where it’s safe enough for people to show up as themselves.” Creating this space to show up whole leads to “extraordinary vibrancy” with “creativity, energy and passion.” (Laloux 2020) For this to occur a space of psychological safety is needed where people feel comfortable and confident in bringing their whole selves to work. Some critics of bringing your whole self to work (Clark 2018, Harris 2019) share that it can leave too much room for interpretation and confusion and suggest that behaving the same at work as at home is a pointless notion. Gubbala (2018) shares that wholeness can be misinterpreted to mean “unleashing our conditioned emotional responses and patterns on others” which can lead to an “emotional wild west.” Compassionate communication helps to avoid this and supports effective communication which is essential for developing positive relationships that are congruent with social pedagogical values. I disagree that the concept of bringing your whole self to work is about having the same behaviour within work as at home; the 3 P’s shows us that we have the professional, the personal and the private area of our lives, where the boundaries can flex depending on what feels right for the person and the context. Likewise, one page profiles share rich information about what matters to a person

and what good support looks like, where the person is comfortable with the information they share, which may change dependent on the audience; what is needed to be shared at home isn't necessarily needed to be shared at work, it depends. In order for wholeness to occur, Laloux (2020) recommends clarifying what the invitation to wholeness really means within your organisation and how you want this to show up. Within Wellbeing Teams, Community Circles and Circle Family bringing our whole selves to work is using the gifts of our head, heart and hands, sharing our professional and personal selves to build authentic relationships with the people we support and our colleagues and living our values by how we show up and walk the walk. The risk of not bringing our whole selves to work is continuing to support the hierarchy and power imbalance between the professional and the person supported, not fulfilling our potential to lean into our creativity and not being authentically pedagogical. According to Stroj-Rullo the Covid-19 pandemic has nudged us towards wholeness, "we simply don't have a choice to not bring our whole selves to work anymore, because work-life and life outside work have started to blend." The challenge is to create a space of psychological safety where wholeness can flourish.

Chapter 3

Psychological safety; what it is and what it's not and how we achieve it

The purpose of this chapter is to explore psychological safety; what it is and what it isn't, why it is important, how we are currently developing a space of psychological safety and what is needed to go further and deeper.

Psychological safety is defined as “a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking” (Lowe et al 2017 p 48). Psychological safety can be traced back to organisational change research of the early 1960's (Schein and Bennis 1965) identifying the need for psychological safety in managing the anxieties and uncertainties around organisational change and considering the learning anxieties that employees can face. In 1990 the work by Kahn considered employee engagement, recognising the importance of meaningful belonging and psychological safety. The work of Edmondson (1996) further tested the concept of psychological safety identifying that it enables “team learning behaviours and team performance” (2019 p 13). Edmondson's work influenced Google's Project Aristotle, research to explore what makes some teams thrive and others fail. The research was led by Rozovsky (2015), who together with her team studied 180 teams from across the organisation. Early feedback failed to identify particular factors that produced thriving teams, “we had lots of data, but there was nothing showing that a mix of specific personality type, skills or backgrounds made any difference” until they started to explore the concept of psychological safety; this led to the discovery that “even the extremely smart, high powered employees at Google needed a psychologically safe work environment to contribute the talents they had to offer” (Edmondson 2019 p 41). Other factors alongside psychological safety also supported team performance including clear goals, dependable colleagues, personally meaningful work and work that has impact, however according to Rozovsky “psychological safety was by far the most important...it was the underpinning of the other four” (Rozovsky 2015). Considering Project Aristotle's findings within my own work; clear goals are underpinned by our purpose supported by our confirmation practices, delivering our accountabilities to each other by doing what we say we will, doing work that nourishes our values and using gifts of head, heart and hands and making a difference through building relationships and

developing contributions to our local communities. It is however the presence of psychological safety that underpins the other factors and without it the other four factors alone won't be as effective in creating a flourishing team.

A space of psychological safety exists when people feel they can speak up, share ideas and ask questions without being punished or embarrassed; a place where they are equally confident to share mistakes, failures and learning moments without fear of blame as they are to celebrate successes in a supportive team without fear of envy. "Psychological safety is present when colleagues trust and respect each other and feel able – even obligated – to be candid" (Edmondson 2019 p 8). A ground rule within our meetings is that 'there is no such thing as a silly question' which is hoped will invite questions for clarity if needed. While permission for that question to be asked is given, it will only be asked if the person feels confident and comfortable to do so, the writing of a ground rule can *support* an environment of psychological safety but it doesn't *produce* such an environment; psychological safety is developed by developing shared expectations, how we invite participation, how leaders respond to what is heard.

In order to fully understand psychological safety, let's consider what it is not. Psychological safety is not about being nice, it's doesn't equate to an environment of ease or comfort or an avoidance of difficult conversations because it's easier. Brown (2018) recognises the avoidance of tough conversations as one issue that gets in the way of brave leadership. There is a "norm of 'nice and polite' which leads to diminishing trust and engagement, passive aggressive behaviour and back channelling communication" (2018 p 8). The use of compassionate communication supports us to have conversations that are clear and kind, using language and a process for speaking truthfully while caring deeply. Scott (2019) suggests a process for feedback, 'Radical Candour,' caring personally while challenging directly, recognising that trust is built on relationships, where you "bring your whole self [to work] and care about each of the people who work [with] you as a human being" (p 9) whilst also recognising leadership qualities to enable people to be the best versions of themselves and supporting holistic learning and growth within the learning zone by challenging directly and giving feedback which is clear, worthwhile and affects positive change and growth.

Psychological safety isn't based on personality characteristics, extroverts don't naturally have it because they are confident to speak up. It's a space where everyone feels comfortable to speak up and where a leader recognises when to draw people in to participate and how to respond. Relationships are key and understanding how to invite participation will depend on the person. A leader needs to recognise when all voices are equal and respond to draw people in when necessary.

Psychological safety isn't about reducing standards. Psychological safety "enables candour and openness...and is conducive to setting ambitious goals" (Edmondson 2019 p 18), creating an environment where mistakes are learning opportunities. When psychological safety and standards are both high, this creates a learning zone where collaboration, learning and innovation can take place.

According to Clark (2020) 'inclusion safety' is the first step towards creating psychological safety, creating a sense of meaningful belonging based on a shared purpose, nourishing people's need to feel accepted. Edmondson (2019) shares the need to 'set the scene' framing not only what we do but how we do it, building a culture and leading by example where openness and transparency is our natural way of working. According to Edmondson (2019) "research shows that lower-status team members [in a hierarchy] generally feel less safe than higher status members" (p15). Hierarchy can reduce psychological safety. Operating as a Teal organisation, using the processes of self-management and bringing our whole selves to work supports a good basis for developing a space of psychological safety. Our use of one page profiles and team plans support the development of meaningful belonging.

The next step is inviting participation, where the leader creates an open space for reflection, living into our value of curiosity and framing questions of genuine interest to invite dialogue, where we feel energised by discovering new insights and learning together. The space for participation needs to be mirrored by good listening. Scharmer (2020) states that listening is the source of great leadership and recognises four levels of listening; listening what we already know which confirms our opinions and judgements, listening from the outside and noticing differences with an open mind, listening from within with empathy where we see through another person's perspective. The deepest level of listening is "listening from source" (2020)

with an open will, connecting with an emerging future, deeply connecting with who we are and who we want to be. The leader's role is then to act on what is being heard. Productive responses are characterised by three elements; sharing appreciation, framing failure as a learning opportunity and clear responses for when values of the organisation aren't upheld (Edmondson 2019).

Lowe et al (2017) consider team coherence when developing psychological safety, recognising how relationships or values fit, being conscious of tensions. A sense of coherence, or lack of, can be evident in meetings where agendas are overfull, or time isn't sufficient. There may be signs that the team is not in agreement but this is left unaddressed, "trust and safety slowly degrade as a result" (Lowe et al 2017 p 53) As stated previously, it is the role of the social pedagogue to consider what cannot be seen yet needs to be understood, reading between the lines of behaviour, recognising emotional clues. People who know me well know that it is written on my face what I'm thinking and if my words don't match my body language, know to check in with me to explore deeper. Although this is shared on my one page profile (see appendix p 53) knowing this comes with time to develop a relationship and recognising such behavioural cues can be more difficult when relationships are virtual and conversations are via Zoom. Using the stress and support tool can share additional information, the detail is dependent on the richness of conversation and the space for listening.

Lowe et al (2017) suggest that there are no hard and fast rules; experimenting with ways to encourage and support interpersonal risk taking is the way to develop psychological safety, the key is being open to trying and learning without fear of embarrassment or punishment.

Chapter 4

Virtual working and digital relationships

The purpose of this chapter is to explore remote/virtual working and digital relationships; what is the data about remote work telling us, what are the benefits and challenges of remote working and how can we build flourishing digital relationships and spaces of psychological safety, exploring what needs to be different with remote teams as opposed to teams that share office space.

The term remote working and virtual working are used interchangeably, describing colleagues who work together but are geographically dispersed and have little if any, face to face time together, mostly relying on virtual methods of communication. According to the Oxford English Dictionary the word 'remote' means "far, distant, removed, set apart, separated." This definition is the opposite of the team relationships and meaningful belonging that I want to support, so I will be using the word 'virtual' to describe how we work.

My role working with Wellbeing Teams, Community Circles and more recently developing Circles Family has involved virtual working for a number of years. Our work involves partnering with a variety of organisations and local authorities across the UK so much of my work is via digital means, using Zoom for video calls, Slack and emails for written communication and occasionally phone calls.

According to the Office for National Statistics (2020), for the 12-month period from January to December 2019, out of the 32.6 million people in employment, around 1.7 million people reported working mainly from home which represents just over 5% of the total workforce in the UK. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic this figure has risen to 49.2% in April 2020. Between 2012 and 2016, data from the Office of National Statistics shows that the number of UK workers who are working remotely has increased by nearly a quarter of a million over a decade. The State of Remote Work Report from Buffer and AngelList (2020) highlights the benefits of virtual working as flexible schedules, flexibility to work from anywhere, not having to commute, being able to work from home and time to spend with family. The top challenges for virtual working have remained the same for the past three years; communication,

collaboration and loneliness (Buffer 2020). Buffer recognise that the challenge of loneliness may not be a product of virtual working, rather a wider societal issue but I am interested to explore how colleagues within virtual teams can build a sense of belonging and feel connected to each other.

One of the defining features of virtual teams is that communication primarily occurs through virtual tools (Gibson & Cohen, 2003). We currently use Zoom for weekly tactical meetings and other meetings when necessary and Slack for messaging, either group or individually. Kirkman and Mathieu (2005) suggest that 'informational richness' is required for good quality communication, with email being low in richness however, videoconferencing tools are "defined as being nearly as rich in informational value as face-to-face communication" (p 584). Within Circle Family team, colleagues work different hours and manage their time flexibly dependant on their role, local requests of people supported and home commitments. Zoom meetings require a time that suits everyone and asynchronous communication is via Slack. Within our Team Plan we record how we can best communicate together, recognising individual preferences, for example feedback, whether via conversation or written, also considering best times to share information that needs responding to, conscious that 18% of respondents (Buffer 2020) find it difficult to switch off and have a balance between home and work when home is also the workplace. Zoom is great to be able to have face-to-face conversations virtually, however there is a need to be mindful to the subtleties of body language when we are only seeing head and shoulders of each other. Recognising subtleties comes with time for developing relationships; it would be useful to record in our stress and support document (see appendix p 54) how shame, armour, defensiveness or hurt can show up in our facial expressions (Brown 2018) and how we can use compassionate communication to address this. Slack feels a personal way of connecting via message, information can be streamlined in relevant channels, though I am conscious that although it is the teams preferred way to communicate, rather than email, feedback has been that Slack messages can be blunt and may exaggerate difficulties in communication where people have different learning styles. Communication is measured at the ear of the receiver and is only effective when it is understood. Kayworth and Leidner (2000) suggest that communication misunderstanding increases more in a virtual setting. Macintyre and Salas (1995) suggest the use of closed loop communication

as beneficial for virtual teams, where the sender follows up once the message has been received to ensure it has been fully understood. We use a Trello board to record actions and decisions, checking for clarity that information recorded is understood during our Zoom calls, we need to be mindful that communication via Slack has the same clarity.

“Teal organisations are built on trust” (Laloux 2014 p 80) and building trust requires vulnerability of the leader and having a people positive attitude where we believe that everyone is doing their best work. Micromanaging not only doesn’t fit with our values and ways of working but also suggests a lack of trust resulting in a withdrawal of psychological safety. Marlow et al (2017) suggest that within virtual teams an unusually high volume of communication may have a detrimental effect on performance and it is the quality not quantity of information that is important. Marlow et al (2016) also suggest that trust is higher in virtual teams when initial face-to-face meetings have taken place. Hack and Paint (Leadermorphosis 2018) support this view stating that the success of their virtual team is making space for face-to-face opportunities where relationships can deepen. In pre-Covid times, recruitment and induction would have been supported by face-to-face connections but this hasn’t been possible during the pandemic, however it has given us the opportunity of a shared experience that has provided a space for more intimate relationships.

Achieving good communication within a virtual team requires video calls, the next best thing to face-to-face, getting to know people well to recognise subtleties of body language and making sure that everyone has a voice and is included. Written communication is also essential and Fried and Heinemeier, co-founders of Basecamp, project management solutions for remote teams, suggest that “being a good writer is an essential part of being a good remote worker...and a remote leader” (Lew 2020). Quality not quantity is the key for effective written communication and I’m conscious that clarity in written communication is something that I need to improve, based on feedback from colleagues. Huston believes that virtual working can actually be good for communication; “remote work makes the problems of work more explicit and then we can set out deliberately to address them...we think much more deliberately about how to build ourselves as a team, how to make sure we are communicating well [and] documenting things clearly.”

Considering collaboration as one of the top challenges for virtual teams (and also one of our values) how do we make sure that we do this effectively, living our values, supporting our principles of self-management and not leaning into the role of manager? We use google docs for transparency that everyone has access to and where documents can be written collaboratively and synchronously. Using the reflective tool 4+1 questions, we agreed as a team to record our thoughts asynchronously by the end of the week. The learning was that doing it individually meant that the reflection didn't feel collaborative. I had leapt in to record my thoughts first, leaving others not recording their reflections as it had already been done. The learning from this is that in future we need to use google sheets or Mural while connected on a Zoom call so that there is equal collaboration. Lew (2020) suggests that it is not only about picking the right tools to support online collaboration but also using the right processes, how meetings are structured to include everyone's voice, how we live our values, particularly collaboration, curiosity and flourishing. It is important that our values are evident through our behaviours and that we regularly reflect on this. Creating a space of psychological safety where everyone feels comfortable and confident to speak up and share ideas can support effective collaboration.

Considering loneliness, mental health charity Mind (2020) has highlighted that remote workers may be at a higher risk of feeling lonely and isolated through lack of social connection that an office space can provide. However, although you aren't socially isolated in a busy office, you can still feel lonely. Working in a shared space with people around you doesn't necessarily create a feeling of meaningful belonging.

Inceoglu says that the risk of loneliness may be reduced when the whole team work in a virtual way, "feeling isolated is certainly a risk of remote working but if everyone is in the same boat then you already feel a sense of connectedness." (Hannah 2019). This would suggest that meaningful belonging is not necessarily achieved through the physical proximity of relationships but *how* the relationship is developed and how we show that we care deeply for another person. The tools we use such as one page profiles and team plans support this but it is *how* they are used that develops the relationship and supports psychological safety.

Chapter 5

Leadership and reflection

The purpose of this chapter is to consider leadership, what is understood by 'leadership', the challenges and (surprising) opportunities of the pandemic, explore the resources and guides that have been developed through the learning from this project and my role within a virtual team.

According to Brown (2018) a leader can be anyone who takes responsibility for finding the potential in people and processes and has the courage to develop that potential. A leader's role is not based on hierarchy, rather a way of working that recognises the gifts and talents of team members and creates opportunities for people to flourish, to support a space where people can grow and become the best versions of themselves. As well as supporting this flourishing space, within the pandemic there has been a need for resilience, both at an individual level and an organisational level. Individual resilience considers the ability of the individual to adjust to adversity, to step into the learning zone with an open mind and adapt to the situation. Organisation resilience considers the organisations capacity for responding to the changes that cannot be avoided. Prior to the pandemic, our processes of self-management supported a space where ideas could be shared, where all views were valued and listened to, where tensions could be raised and addressed and where relationships were based on mutual trust. Considering the effects of the pandemic, within time of crisis there is a need for collective leadership, a space for collective sense-making that supports the space for organisational resilience and a shared vision for recovery. The space for discussion and sense making was already present when, together with Circle Family colleagues, we had to consider shifting our work from face to face to exploring how this could be achieved virtually. Our organisational resilience felt perceptible. According to Halton (2019) the role of leadership is to understand and attend to what might be going on below the surface for individuals, so that they can better navigate through the period of turbulence. This draws us back to hermeneutics and the historical stream and the role of the social pedagogue to consider what cannot be seen but needs to be understood. The space for discussion, sharing of ideas and trust had been built in advance through our working practices and relationships and this new liminal space

of shared fear (Edmondson 2020) helped us to develop a deeper space of psychological safety. However, on reflection I'm conscious that I didn't pay enough attention to what was going on under the surface for colleagues, being mindful of their wellbeing and considering their personal resilience, instead focussing on a sense of urgency for new ways of working rather than addressing colleagues' feelings and circumstances. Supporting emotional resilience requires a person centred approach within a leadership role and having a reflective space is important but even more so during a time of crisis when learning feels steep and fast. This reflection led us to revisit our one page profiles, consider how our values are showing up and develop our team plan, including how we best communicate together and how we want to receive feedback.

Working in a social pedagogical way invites the holistic approach of using our head, heart and hands; the head represents the knowledge we use, the heart considers the emotional connection, our relationships and compassion while our hands signify the action we take. In times of crisis, the liminal space that is created can support the emergence of ideas and creativity, new opportunities for different ways of working, which can be seen through our Facebook Group, 'Circles Connected'. Head, heart and hands highlights the need to be adaptable to how we work (Charfe and Gardner 2019) yet within a time of crisis, the presence of risk and anxiety can lead to the heart being squeezed out of our practice as we search for order and familiarity. This reflection has in part steered my leadership role to consider how I use my knowledge, how I use my heart and how I act in a holistic way that feels authentic with my individual Haltung and our team values. Recognising that heart had been absent in some of the ways I was showing up, has influenced our team agreements with head, heart and hands now equally visible.

Bringing our whole self to work is not only focussing on the gifts we can share but also recognising, as a leader, our vulnerabilities and mistakes and being authentic to share. Vora (2018) states that, "Real leadership is rooted within our own deeper self, our past conditioning, cultural background and the demands of a given context. It demands a layered conversation and systems thinking within a given context." In essence, effective leadership requires the sharing of ourselves through effective communication. Wholeness also invites flaws, sharing when we have got things

wrong and learning from mistakes, considering how we shift from armoured leadership to daring leadership. (Brown 2018)

Asking for help, admitting mistakes and seeking feedback are all the kinds of behaviours that can pose a threat depending on the response (Brown, 1990) which is why people in organisations are often reluctant to disclose their errors (Michael 1976) or are unwilling to ask for help (Lee 1997), even when doing so would be beneficial for the team. Psychological safety is the space where such conversations can take place. Edmondson states (1999) that team psychological safety involves trust, yet goes deeper, describing a team built on interpersonal trust and mutual respect where people are comfortable being their selves. Psychological safety needs to be team wide rather than an individual perception and considering the work of Bandura (1982) around self-efficacy, a space of psychological safety is apparent when people are comfortable to speak up without fear of retribution and also confident that they will be listened to and responded to, creating group-efficacy through shared learning. The Progress for Circle Family Connectors document (see appendix p 60) was initially developed as a way to support self-efficacy for colleagues, a self-assessment process to recognise strengths, learning opportunities, areas for support and focus for next steps, a document that could support people to grow and flourish in their roles. This document also serves as a way for shared learning between colleagues, recognising individual gifts and talents and exploring collaborative ways of working, building our group-efficacy.

When thinking about our existing space of psychological safety, our self-management processes, for example, raising tensions in a tactical meeting, supported us to feel safe discussing work related issues but yet there still felt a gap, a wearing of a 'work mask' that didn't quite support being immersed in a psychological space. "To scale daring leadership and build courage in teams and organisations, we have to cultivate a culture in which brave work, tough conversations, and whole hearts are the expectation, and armour is not necessary or rewarded" Brene (2019 p36). Whilst also being conscious of the 3 P's and recognising our professional, personal and private selves, I recognised we needed to delve deeper, considering what we already have in place that supports embedding social pedagogy and psychological safety into the way we work and also what we

need to do differently and plan next steps. This reflection has led to the development of resources considering joy at work, measuring psychological safety and 'implementing social pedagogy and psychological safety within Circle Family.' While the 'stress and support' tool has been used previously, my content now includes how armoured leadership shows up for me and what colleagues can do to support me. I am mindful that when relationships are based on digital means, conversation is limited to head and shoulders, however, as with all pedagogical practice it is *how* we invite participation, *how* we invite challenge, *how* we build courage and *how* we respond that builds psychological safety. The resources developed are the foundations of psychological safety, *how* we use them builds the space. Relational connections are an essential leadership quality, particularly during times of crisis to support resilience (Teo et al 2017). According to Brown (2018) the skills that underpin daring leadership, such as "adaptability to change, hard conversations, feedback, problem solving, ethical decision making, recognition [and] resilience" (p 43) are born from vulnerability and it is the leader's role to lean into vulnerability to support colleagues to join them on that journey. "Leaders must either invest a reasonable amount of time attending to fears and feelings, or squander an unreasonable amount of time trying to manage ineffective and unproductive behaviour" (Brown 2020 p27) Recognising our own fears and feelings is the start of building authentic relationships, developing trust and creating a space of psychological safety, inviting colleagues to join the journey.

Conclusion

The purpose of this innovation project has been to explore working in a social pedagogical way and embedding psychological safety with virtual teams when there is a reliance on digital relationships. The Covid-19 pandemic has had huge implications for the way we work and connect with colleagues and has impacted the lens through which this project has been viewed. This paper has explored Wellbeing Teams, Community Circles and Circle Family, our purpose, values and processes, considering concepts within social pedagogy and how they are currently embedded within the way we work. I have explored the concept of psychological safety, considered virtual teams and reflected on my leadership role. The learning from this innovation project has led to the development of tools and resources for further embedding psychological safety and social pedagogy into our way of working (see appendix p 56) and through reflection, strengthened my confidence and leadership skills. According to Gilrane, following Google's study into remote working they were "happy to find no difference in the effectiveness, performance ratings, or promotions for individuals and teams whose work requires collaboration with colleagues around the world versus Googlers who spend most of their day to day working with colleagues in the same office." (Razzetti 2019).

In current times, we have the technology and tools to support virtual connections and while home working and connecting virtually has been the norm for some, the pandemic has created a huge surge towards virtual working for an increasing number of people. Connection, trust and psychological safety can be developed with virtual teams, *how* it is embedded is crucial, the environment to support these conditions is not necessarily a building, rather a space where open communication about challenges, concerns, learning and caring deeply for each other is able to thrive.

As stated previously it is the role of the social pedagogue to consider what cannot be seen yet needs to be understood, to read between the lines, to hear what isn't said. Working virtually can add an added complexity when we see only see a person's head and shoulders through Zoom rather than face to face working. Building trusting and authentic relationships take time, willingness and commitment and it is values,

ways of working and leadership which support this to happen, not an office space. I think our way of working, our guiding purpose, underpinning values with supporting structures and processes create a space for psychological safety to be present and together with ongoing reflection about the way we work and caring deeply for each other, will support this to flourish.

Psychological safety is something we feel, which can be supported by the structures, guides and resources that guide our way of working, however psychological safety is not a static position; it flexes and shifts depending on the current context and situation. For me the key ingredient is *haltung* and how I feel when my values are nourished; I have a deeper feeling of psychological safety when I have a greater sense of belonging and meaningful belonging can be equally present with digital relationships when we focus on how to build and nurture them. The way we work, focussing on relationships, using compassionate communication and daring leadership, supported by the principles of self-management provide a great foundation for psychological safety but it is our behaviour and actions, showing that we care deeply and striving to build authentic relationships that creates the space where candour and growth can flourish. Psychological safety is not fixed, nor guaranteed to be maintained without reflection and while we are exploring ways of measuring this (see appendix p 58), the validity and accuracy of responses about psychological safety is dependent on psychological safety itself, a Catch 22. Psychological safety takes effort, a way of working underpinned by a transparent culture with regular reflection to consider who is participating, who is withdrawing, what are the tensions that are being raised and what is being heard and felt.

As George Bernard Shaw once said about communication, 'The problem with communication... is the illusion that it has been accomplished'. This too could be said about implementing psychological safety and social pedagogy, "because it is an ongoing process of developing at a professional, personal and practical level. Because the world around us changes, the people we support change, our teams change, and we ourselves change, so must social pedagogic practice." Thempra (2020)

According to Edmondson (2019 p21-22) psychological safety is not enough to create flourishing teams, “leaders must motivate people to do their very best work by inspiring them, coaching them, providing feedback, and making excellence a rewarding experience.” “Who we are is how we lead” (Brown 2018) and I hope that my values of belonging, sharing, listening, trust, collaboration and prophetic vision are evident in my leadership role.

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Appendix 1 Individual Values

Top 10 Values - Cath Barton 6 February 2018	
Your Top 10 values are listed (in priority order) below.	
	<i>Family/Belonging (100)</i> - Having a place or sense of home. To be devoted to people you consider family and to experience belonging and acceptance.
	Search/Meaning (92) - The inner longing and curiosity to integrate your feelings, imagination and knowledge in order to discover your unique place in the world.
	Independence (85) - To be free to think and act for yourself, unrestricted by external constraint or authority.
	Sharing/Listening/Trust (77) - To actively and accurately hear and sense another's thoughts and feelings. To express your own thoughts and feelings in a climate of mutual trust.
	Friendship (69) - To have a circle of close friends.
	Self Worth (62) - To know that I am respected and esteemed by those who are important in my life.
	Expressiveness/Joy (54) - Sharing thoughts and feelings openly, joyfully and spontaneously.
	Education/Knowledge (46) - Engaging in ongoing learning to gain new facts, truths, principles and insights.
	Collaborative Individualist (38) - Commitment to societal transformation through both individual independent action and a cooperative network.
	Prophetic Vision (31) - To perceive, with such clarity, global issues of social justice, human rights, the ecology, etc. To communicate your vision in relation to these issues in such a compelling way that people are empowered by it to take action.

LEGEND:

Control Values are associated with organizing the world around you so as to get things done.

Relational Values are associated with relating to others so as to function effectively in relationships, teams, organizations, society and eco-systems.

Developmental Values are associated with creating that which has not existed before. They are values of change, evolution and transformation.

Potentially **Satiable Values** are shown in italics. The more you satisfy these values, the less priority you will place on them.

Values in normal text are potentially **Insatiable Values**. These are most likely associated with your passionate pursuits and/or with your identity.

Appendix 2 Team Values

Top 10 Values - Community Circles 22 Jun, 2020	
Your Top 10 values are listed (in priority order) below.	
	<i>Friendship (100)</i> - To have a circle of close friends.
	Equity/Rights (73) - Acting in ways which demonstrate and encourage the fair and equitable treatment of all people.
	Sharing/Listening/Trust (71) - To actively and accurately hear and sense another's thoughts and feelings. To express your own thoughts and feelings in a climate of mutual trust.
	Community Support (69) - To have, or to create, cooperative groups of peers with shared values that provide mutual support and enhancement of each other.
	<i>Family/Belonging (69)</i> - Having a place or sense of home. To be devoted to people you consider family and to experience belonging and acceptance.
	Equality/Self-Determination (68) - To appreciate the equal value of all people and everyone's right to be their own person.
	Intimacy (68) - To regularly share your thoughts, feelings, fantasies and realities mutually and freely with another.
	Human Rights (65) - To create a global society where all people have access to resources such as food, habitat, employment, health care and a minimal practical education, as their basic right.
	<i>Self Worth (65)</i> - To know that I am respected and esteemed by those who are important in my life.
	Independence (58) - To be free to think and act for yourself, unrestricted by external constraint or authority.

LEGEND:

Control Values are associated with organizing the world around you so as to get things done.

Relational Values are associated with relating to others so as to function effectively in relationships, teams, organizations, society and eco-systems.

Developmental Values are associated with creating that which has not existed before. They are values of change, evolution and transformation.

Potentially **Satiable Values** are shown in italics. The more you satisfy these values, the less priority you will place on them.

Values in normal text are potentially **Insatiable Values**. These are most likely associated with your passionate pursuits and/or with your identity.

Appendix 3 One Page Profile

Cath Barton

cath@community-circles.co.uk

@CathC_Circles



WHAT PEOPLE LIKE AND ADMIRE ABOUT ME

- Loyal
- Motivated and enthusiastic
- Open minded and determined
- A good communicator
- Respectful
- Always see the positives
- Passionate about person-centred approaches

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO ME...

- My family, Gary, Ellen and Zachary, having tea together, holidays and fresh air
- Our six year old beagle, Buddy
- Big family time with brothers, sisters-in-laws, nieces and nephews
- Exercising three times a week and going to the gym with Zac on Saturdays
- My role with Wellbeing Teams and Community Circles, being part of making a difference and seeing great outcomes for people, families and communities
- Seeing the bigger picture and knowing my role within this, being clear about what is expected from me and those around me, clarifying actions
- To have a safe space for deep conversation that supports me to learn and grow
- Completing my Masters in Social Pedagogy Leadership
- That we seek solutions rather than focus on problems and develop actions to move forwards
- Connecting with people and developing great relationships
- Having a good work/home balance, being flexible including working from home, working evenings and weekends when necessary
- Hearing from others and being part of a wider community through Slack, Facebook and Twitter
- Having honest feedback that helps me improve what I do and develops my skills
- Learning new skills and feeling stretched but not overwhelmed
- Reading every day, always keen to hear book recommendations from others

HOW BEST TO SUPPORT ME...

- Make sure I write things down, to do lists, appointments, agreed actions...
- Know that what I am thinking is written all over my face, if this doesn't match with what I am saying, please check further with me
- Give me a deadline for when things need doing by, calendar reminders in advance work well
- Staying in touch by email and Slack works best. I prefer to use Zoom/Teams rather than phone calls
- I really appreciate honest conversations and detailed feedback about my role and the support I give. Let me know what's working and not working and how we can best work together
- Have time together with colleagues each month to reflect and share ideas

Appendix 4 Stress and Support Document

Stress and Support			
What makes me most stressed	How do I usually react to being stressed	What helps	
		What I can do	What I would like you to do
<p>Feeling overwhelmed with a huge to do list</p> <p>Not being clear about what's expected of me</p> <p>Colleagues not completing agreed actions and not asking for support</p> <p>Having a few long days one after another</p> <p>Not connecting with colleagues every week and feeling isolated in role</p>	<p>Lots of sighing</p> <p>Being busy without getting things done</p> <p>Short tempered</p> <p>Not sleeping well</p> <p>Rewriting to do lists</p> <p>People often say my mood is written on my face and doesn't match with what I am communicating verbally</p> <p>Slack messages are blunt</p> <p>I shift blame and don't take responsibility</p>	<p>Write to do list with priorities, have started using a bullet journal</p> <p>Be clear about actions and deadlines with colleagues</p> <p>Schedule regular tasks, put reminder on phone</p> <p>Plan preparation time for webinars, articles</p> <p>Plan time for exercise and swimming</p> <p>Plan time back in diary when have worked long hours</p> <p>Use confirmation practices to prioritise focus and actions</p>	<p>Be clear about actions and deadlines</p> <p>If you're not able to complete a task by the deadline, let me know in advance and what we need to do differently</p> <p>Be clear and honest about what's working well and not working</p> <p>Work together to develop what would success look like</p> <p>Ask me what my week looks like</p> <p>Check in with me if my words don't match my body language</p> <p>Check in with me if you notice I am responding in a way that shows I feel stressed</p> <p>Check with me that I have been swimming and am making time for exercise</p>

Appendix 5



Circle Family Team Questions

- Do I know what is expected of me at work?
 - Am I clear about what success looks like?
 - Do I have a clear plan?
 - Do my confirmation practices help me focus my priorities?
 - Are the resources and guide useful for my role?

- Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work?
 - Postcards, membership cards, badges
 - Other resources?

- At work, do I have the opportunity to use my gifts and talents?
 - What gives me joy and nourishes my values?
 - What supports me to have the best day?
 - Am I using and developing my gifts and talents?

- In the last week, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?

- In the last week, have I received feedback that helps me grow in my role?

- Does someone at work seem to care about me as a person?
 - Do you feel supported?
 - Do you have good work/home balance?
 - Do you feel connected with your colleagues?

- Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
 - Are you getting the support you want and need?
 - What's your future focus?
 - What support do you need to achieve this?

Inspired by Gallup's Q12 questions

Appendix 6



Implementing Social Pedagogy and Psychological Safety with Community Circles and Circles Family

	What are we currently doing?	How do we go further?
Haltung	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values in recruitment • What needs to be present to nourish your values? • Are your values recognised in your one page profile? • Organisational values, behaving in ways that support these • Team values, recognising and living our team values through our behaviours • Team plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being clear and giving feedback when our haltung is wrinkled • Reflections of values and behaviours
3 P's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One page profiles • Engaging through Facebook Group • Team Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop one pager about 3 P's • Recognising boundaries
Relational Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday get togethers • Wellbeing Check in • Team Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review team plan • Team review • Five Ways to Wellbeing Plans
Head, heart and hands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing our whole selves to work • One page profiles • Future Focus and gifts to contribute • Exploring where and how we can contribute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop one pager about head, heart and hands • How can we support learning opportunities?
Diamond Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress for Circles Connectors document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop one pager about Diamond Model • Five Ways to Wellbeing Plans

Common Third	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to learn together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop one pager about common third
Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four plus one • Circle Family Progress Document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving feedback that is clear and kind, caring personally and challenging directly to enable people to be the best versions of themselves • Summative and formative feedback • Create one pager about radical candour feedback
Learning Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action for happiness course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring new opportunities and how comfort, stretch and panic show up for us
Compassionate Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Plan • How we best communicate with each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building this into our feedback • Developing skills through compassionate communication club
Psychological Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share fails, learning and wins through Slack channels • Being human and sharing vulnerability through one page profiles, stress and support • Coaching and challenge through confirmation practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be more personal, more use of random channel on Slack to develop relationships • Be more curious, time to connect deeper, weekly Fika • Curious questions • Clear and kind feedback developing radical candour approach • Regular reflection • Psychological safety rating questionnaire

Appendix 7



Measuring Psychological Safety

- If you make a mistake on the team, it is often held against you

Strongly agree

Strongly disagree

- Member of this team are able to bring up problems and tough issues

Strongly agree

Strongly disagree

- People on this team sometimes reject others for being different

Strongly agree

Strongly disagree

- It is safe to take a risk on this team

Strongly agree

Strongly disagree

- It is difficult to ask other members of the team for help

Strongly agree

Strongly disagree

- No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts

Strongly agree

Strongly disagree

- Working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilised

Strongly agree

Strongly disagree

To be completed live via mentimeter

Taken from Edmondson, A (2019)
*the fearless organisation,
creating psychological safety in the workplace
for learning innovation and growth*



Progress for Circle Family Connectors

Version 1

How to use the tool

The self-assessment tool asks you to look at Circle Family practices, knowledge and skills. The tool helps you to think where you currently are and plan actions to support you to the next step.

Using the tool may identify needs around training and support. You may identify local barriers and challenges which may need further discussion with colleagues and local partners. Working through the progress document may highlight any tensions which you can raise with the Circle Family Team and get what you need to support your progress.

It takes about 40 minutes to complete the self-assessment.

Each topic enables you to score yourself on a scale of 1 to 5:

If you tick boxes 1 or 2 you are starting to look at and act on the topic.

Tick box 3 if you are making some progress in that area.

Tick box 4 if you are making good progress in delivering person-centred support in that area.

Tick 5 if you are delivering truly personalised services and using person-centred practices in that area.

The essence of your role

To create opportunities for people to come together around shared interests.

To develop a range of groups based on the interests of local people and responding to what members are asking for.

To contribute to our Circles Connected Facebook Group to provide a variety of online content.

To develop flourishing reciprocal relationships and build connections in your local community.

The key elements of your role

1. To know the community that you work in and deliver a communication strategy to enable the community to know about Circle Family and how people can get involved.
2. To develop great relationships and partnerships with individuals and local organisations to support the development of Circle Family and community connecting.
3. To map out what groups and activities already exist that people can be signposted to, supported to join and how people can connect with those groups.
4. To find people who would be interested in joining Circle Family, what their interests are and support needed to join groups.
5. To develop groups, events and activities in response to what people are asking for
6. To contribute to Circles Connected Facebook Group to provide a variety of online content for entertainment and connections
7. To find local experts who can share their gifts, talents and interests to host a group or contribute through Facebook
8. To share learning and review the positive difference that Circle Family is making so that we can keep learning and improving.
9. To contribute to our storytelling through blogs, newsletter articles and social media
10. To provide generous feedback to colleagues and partners developing a culture of encouragement, recognition and appreciation.
11. Walking the walk and being a role model for others.

1. Know the community that you work in and deliver a communication strategy to enable the community to know about Circle Family and how they can get involved.

You make sure that local people and organisations know about Circle Family, through co-developing and implementing a communication strategy.

This includes using social media, networking opportunities and various methods of publicity

1. Co-develop and share a communication strategy to ensure everyone knows about Circle Family

1	A communication strategy is not yet in place, and there are no plans for how we will share information about Circle Family.	
2	A basic communication plan has been developed, but this has not been co-produced with the wider Circle Family team or local partners.	
3	A plan has been discussed and developed with the involvement of Circle Family colleagues and local partners.	
4	A comprehensive communication plan is in place and has been shared with colleagues and stored so that everyone has access to it when required. The plan addresses different methods of communication, including social media, storytelling, advertising and developing marketing materials.	
5	Circle Family colleagues know and understand the plan, it is actively used and adapted based on our learning. All colleagues know how they can contribute to the communication strategy, including the use of social media. The plan is used alongside the storytelling guide and using the principles of working out loud	

2. Implement the communication strategy

1	The communication strategy is in place but is not actively used and followed.	
2	The plan is referred to and followed, but there are no target dates and it isn't clear who is responsible for actions.	
3	The plan has targets and clear responsibilities outlined.	
4	The plan changes and develops as we learn, and there is evidence of what has been tried. We have a portfolio of tools that are used for communication with the wider community, including leaflets, adverts, templates and social media pages.	
5	I am able to demonstrate increased engagement with the community and give examples of new connections that have been made as a result of implementing the plan.	

3 Use a range of social media to promote Circle Family and member opportunities

1	There are no social media accounts	
2	There is some social media activity but this is via the organisations page and not specific to Circle Family	
3	Social media accounts have been set up but posts are ad hoc	
4	Social media accounts are being used but I am not confident with this aspect of my role	
5	There are a range of social media accounts with a growing number of reach and engagements. There is a wide variety of resources available to post and I am confident with this part of my role.	

4 Review and evaluate the effectiveness of the communication plan

1	The plan has been produced but has not been reviewed or evaluated in any meaningful way.	
2	The plan has been updated when things have changed, or when new ideas have been recognised.	
3	Review dates and ways of measuring success are included in the plan, and these are reviewed and looked at on an ad hoc basis.	
4	Regular reviews are planned for and arranged. Progress is checked using tools such as 4 plus 1 questions.	
5	Learning from the reviews is incorporated into an updated version of the plan. There are examples and evidence to back up our success measures.	

5 Build connections and relationships using the principles inspired by working out loud

1	I am not aware of the principles of working out loud	
2	I have some basic knowledge of working out loud but not using this in my practice	
3	I am starting to develop my approach to building connections using working out loud and am working through the guidance in the handbook	
4	I am regularly using the principles of working out loud and am starting to see evidence of developing connections and growing the awareness of Circle Family	
5	I am confident to use the principles of working out loud and have regular time in my diary to focus on this. My relationship chart shows increasing levels of intimacy and I am building relationships both locally and online	

6 Develop a range of personas and work with co-production partners to develop bespoke content for our target audience

1	I have not yet thought about developing personas	
2	I have started to think about personas but am not clear on how to develop	
3	I have started to develop personas and ideas about bespoke content but have not yet included in weekly schedule	
4	I have developed personas and am including bespoke content into weekly schedule but have not yet sought advice from co-production partners	
5	I have developed a range of personas for a diverse range of people and am working with co-production partners to develop bespoke content for our audience. Ideas for content is part of weekly schedule and I am reflecting together about the level of success	

2. To develop great relationships and partnerships with individuals and local organisations to support the development of Circle Family and community connecting.

Connect with relevant individuals and organisations who are supporting older people

1 Community Mapping

1	I have not yet begun to think about community mapping	
2	I have made a start to developing a community map	
3	I am collating details of organisations in the local area	
4	I am capturing information about organisations in the local area and what they have to offer to older people	
5	I have detailed knowledge of the local area I am working in and am introducing myself and Circle Family to local organisations	

2 I am building connections with key people in the local area I am working in

1	I have not yet begun to think about connecting with key people	
2	I am starting to gather information about key people to connect with locally	
3	I am making connections with local key people both online and face to face to introduce myself, my role with Circle Family and what we can offer to the local community	
4	I am making connections with local key people and joining networks and partnership events to develop reciprocal working relationships	
5	I am building relationships and growing connections to raise the profile of Circle Family and our local offer. I am a contributing member in local networks and interest in Circle Family is growing	

3 To map out what groups and activities already exist that people can be signposted to, supported to join and how people can connect with existing groups

1 I am mapping the activities that are already available in the local area

1	I have not started to map out the existing events and activities	
2	I am making a start mapping out existing local activities	
3	I am making some progress in identifying existing groups and activities through statutory and formal channels	

4	I am making progress identifying existing groups through a range of formal and informal networks, both face to face and local online groups	
5	I am building a detailed list of events, activities and groups in the local area including statutory, formal and informal backgrounds and recording this information on the CRM, identifying any gaps and waiting lists	

2 I am developing relationships with group hosts and their members

1	I have not yet thought about connecting with local group hosts	
2	I am started to gather contact information about group hosts and best ways to connect	
3	I am making first introductions to group hosts to share information about my role	
4	I am building relationships with group hosts and members and seen as a valuable asset to the local community	
5	I have reciprocal relationships with local groups hosts, sharing information and mutual support, developing a great range of events and opportunities for local people.	

3 I am supporting people to join existing groups based on their interests

1	I have signposted some people to existing groups but am unsure if they have attended	
2	I signpost people to existing events and sometimes receive feedback about their experience	

3	I share information about what is already available based on the person's interests and offer some initial support to join	
4	I support people to join existing groups, exploring possible barriers and challenges and working out solutions together.	
5	I have detailed information about existing groups and relationships with key people to be able to introduce new members. People are supported to join in a way that makes sense to them so that they feel comfortable and have opportunities to make new connections. We reflect together about attending the group and what future support might be required.	

4 To find people who would be interested in joining Circle Family, what their interests are and support needed to join groups

**To have a variety of resources available to share information
Be confident and knowledgeable to share success stories of
Circle Family**

**Know the local area to be able to connect with people who would
be interested in joining**

1 I have a variety of resources to share information about Circle Family

1	I am struggling to share information about Circle Family	
2	I have some resources to share information about Circle Family	
3	I have a range of resources available to share and am gathering some interest	

4	I am sharing information in a variety of ways, with individuals, families and groups and interest is growing	
5	I have a wide range of resources and feel confident to share information about the history, benefits and stories of success about Circle Family	

2 I am finding people who would be interested in joining Circle Family

1	I am struggling to find people who are interested in joining Circle Family	
2	I am meeting some people but not showing interest in joining Circle Family	
3	I am having regular conversations with local people and exploring their interests and what they would like to get involved with	
4	Awareness and interest is growing and membership is starting to increase	
5	Interest and member numbers are increasing from a variety of sources; individual conversations, word of mouth, publicity and signposting from other organisations.	

5. To develop groups, events and activities in response to what people are asking for
Find suitable local venues to use
Set up a Coffee Club for first opportunities for conversation and raising awareness
Respond to interests and suggestions from local people
Promote events locally and via social media

1 I am using local venues

1	I am starting to see what local venues are available	
2	I am struggling to find suitable local venues and not sure where to start	
3	I am using some local venues but not always fit for purpose	
4	I am working creatively with local partners to find solutions to challenges regarding venues and exploring a variety of options for places that meet our needs	
5	I am using a range of local venues for our groups, events and activities which are welcoming and easily accessible, working in partnership and building relationships with staff	

2 I have started a Coffee Club

1	I have started to explore venues for a Coffee Club	
2	I have mapped out other existing coffee clubs so as not to clash with other local events	

3	I have arranged the Coffee Club but not thought about publicity and promotion	
4	I am hosting a weekly Coffee Club and promoting this locally and via social media. Attendance is starting to grow and Circle Family is growing awareness	
5	I am hosting a weekly Coffee Club in an accessible local venue where we are made to feel really welcome. The Coffee Club is of benefit to both the local people and the café and numbers are growing. The café has joined the Chatty Café scheme and is regularly promoting space for conversation and connections. The event is promoted on our Facebook page	

2. I am responding to the ideas and wishes of local people and developing groups based on their interests

1	I have started to think about first events and groups	
2	I am hosting some groups but ideas haven't been co-produced with members	
3	Initial conversations are influencing ideas for groups and starting to connect people around shared interests	
4	The number and range of groups are growing based on the wishes and ideas of our members	
5	I am developing a range of groups, activities and events based on the wishes and ideas of local members, including regular events, taster sessions and ways to contribute to the local community. I am responding to the diversity of our members and creating opportunities for inclusive gatherings. I am consciously creating spaces where people can come together around shared interests and creating opportunities for connections and relationships to flourish	

3 I am promoting the groups and events

1	I am not yet promoting the groups and events in a structured way	
2	I have started promoting some events on the local Facebook page	
3	All events are created and advertised on Facebook and shared across social media channels in line with the comms plan	
4	All events are shared on Facebook and across social media and I am using creative ways to raise publicity locally	
5	I am creating events on Facebook and promoting these through in a variety of ways both online and printed material. I have support from venues to share the events and publicity and awareness is increasing. Photos and feedback from events are shared via social media	

3 I am recording information on the CRM

1	I am not yet recording information on the CRM	
2	I have access to the CRM but am unsure of how and what to record	
3	I am starting to record some basic information	
4	I am recording information but am not clear on how to use this information	
5	I am recording detailed information on the CRM about members, events and partnership working. I am able to develop statistics and reports about the work we are doing	

6. To contribute a range of posts, activities and events on Circles Connected Facebook Group

1 I am contributing to a range of posts, events and activities on Circles Connected Facebook Group

1	I have made an introductory post to the Facebook Group	
2	I have started to think about ways to contribute to the group	
3	I am regularly contributing to Circles Connected but not yet using a variety of graphics and videos	
4	I am contributing a range of posts, events and activities in response to members interests and developing my skills to use a range of mediums	
5	I am contributing to Circles Connected Facebook Group, providing a range of events and activities in response to our members requests and building on my own gifts and talents. I am using a variety of mediums and am responding to members comments, creating opportunities for conversation and engagement. I am delivering number of posts as reflected in my confirmation practices and am regularly reflecting on posts to gauge reach and engagement	

2 I am building the Facebook content into our local offer

1	I have not considered developing the Facebook content for our local audience	
2	I have started to think about Facebook content that will complement local interests	
3	I am developing Facebook content which complements local interests and the diversity of our members as an additional offer to our face to face groups	

4	I am working together with local members and organisations to develop online content for people who may not be able to access our face to face groups	
5	I am delivering a range of content for Circles Connected based on local interests, responding to local members requests and the diversity of our group, using a range of mediums and creating opportunities for connections around shared interests	

7. To find local experts who can share their gifts, talents and interests to host a group or contribute through Facebook
Connect with local experts who can respond to what people are asking for

1 I am connecting with local experts

1	I have not yet begun to think about connecting with local experts	
2	I am recording information about local experts but have not yet had any conversations about hosting events	
3	I am seeking experts for hosting sessions in response to the activities local people are asking for	
4	I am creating opportunities for people to share their gifts and talents both in a paid and voluntary capacity	
5	I am increasing the range of activities we offer and connecting with a variety of experts and to host groups in response to requests both face to face and via Circles Connected. I am managing the budget relating to any expenses and gathering feedback about the sessions	

8. To share leaning and review the positive difference that Circle Family is making so that we can keep learning and improving.

Contribute to regular team reflections and share feedback

Gather feedback from our members and act on what is being heard

Reflect together with local partners

1 I am contributing to team reflections and share feedback

1	I am attending weekly zoom meetings but not yet contributing	
2	I have joined the Slack channel but not yet sharing ideas or views	
3	I am starting to share ideas where I feel confident	
4	I am growing in confidence to share my ideas and contribute to learning together	
5	I am contributing to weekly zoom meetings, sharing what we are learning and providing feedback to colleagues. I am contributing to the ideas channel on Slack, 4+1 questions and team reviews. I am confident we have a culture of trust and honesty to openly share our views and learn together	

2 I am gathering feedback from members and responding to what is being heard

1	I am not yet gathering feedback from members	
2	I am unsure how to go about gathering feedback from members	

3	I have started to gather some feedback but not in a systematic way	
4	I am actively seeking feedback from members in a variety of ways and recording responses in the Circle Family drive	
5	I am gathering feedback from face to face events and via Facebook statistics and responded to what is being heard, sharing information with our members and being transparent in our actions	

3 I am reflecting together with local partners, sharing what we are learning and acting on what is being heard

1	I am not yet reflecting with local partners	
2	I am meeting with local partners and starting to share information	
3	I am sharing information and reflections but this is not always leading to action and positive changes	
4	I am sharing updates, learning and reflections and making progress in affecting positive change	
5	I am regularly meeting with local partners to share updates and reflections, exploring challenges together and finding solutions. I am contributing to local initiatives via community networks	

9. To contribute to our storytelling through blogs, newsletter articles and social media

Share and celebrate what we are learning and achieving through storytelling

Use a variety of mediums to support storytelling

1 I am contributing to storytelling

1	No information is collected for storytelling	
2	There is some basic information collected for stories	
3	I am collecting data, experiences and stories from Circle Family but not feeling confident to develop into blogs or case studies	
4	I am confident in collecting a range of stories and developing into blogs, newsletter articles and case studies and am sharing these in a variety of ways to promote Circle Family	
5	I am gathering a range of stories and case studies which are shared widely, showing the positive difference in the person's life through the support of Circle Family. I am using a range of mediums to convey these stories. These stories are gaining wide recognition for what is being achieved	

10. Provide generous, clear feedback to colleagues and partners developing a culture of encouragement, recognition and appreciation

1 Give generous, regular, specific feedback and appreciation to colleagues, local partners and contributors – on Slack, in person and in other ways

1	I am not giving feedback or recognition to colleagues or contributors.	
2	I give appreciation to people now and again but am not confident in providing feedback on how people can improve.	
3	I am working to make giving appreciation a habit and am paying attention to ensuring that I give encouragement, recognition and appreciation to team members and colleagues. I am able to give feedback to colleagues.	
4	I am generous in giving people appreciation each week in a range of ways. I am developing my skills in using compassionate communication and giving feedback that is kind and clear	
5	I give generous, specific feedback and appreciation to colleagues and contributors ensuring that everyone is recognised for good work at least once a week. I am consciously using the information in our team plan to provide feedback in a way that makes sense to people I use a range of ways to do this eg postcards, Slack messages. I am bold in giving feedback on performance using compassionate communication so that people can develop their skills and continue to grow.	

11. Be a role model. Show that you walk the walk, bring your whole self to work and demonstrate how you are continuously learning yourself and develop a culture of learning and support

1. Be able to share how you “walk the walk”

1	I am not clear on how to walk the walk	
2	I am conscious that my actions need to match to my words	
3	I am consciously acting on what I say and share my learning	
4	I am walking the walk and sometimes share this through Slack or other ways	
5	I am walking the walk and living our values, building a culture of transparency and trust, sharing my own learning, celebrating success and equally when things have not gone well and see these as learning moments. I contribute through #winoftheweek #ffailure on Slack and provide feedback to others	

2 I am confident that I am bringing my whole self to work and using my gifts

1	I am not clear on how to bring my whole self to work	
2	I have not thought about how I can use my gifts and talents within my role	
3	I have started to think about my own gifts and talents and am making my first contributions	

4

I am using my gifts and talents and finding ways to contribute and develop these within the groups, both face to face and online

5

I am bringing my whole self to work and actively using my gifts and talents. I have identified where I want to develop my future focus and am taking steps towards this