

Dynamics of Citizen and Frontline Worker Leadership



An action research project commissioned by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and undertaken by an inclusive team of researchers from Diversity Matters, exploring the changing dynamic of frontline and citizen leadership, and what this means for skills development, the workforce and for organisations.



January to April 2015
A record of the project with emergent findings and conclusions.

Groups researching their personal stories to draw out the learning and themes for further inquiry

- East Ayrshire Feb 2015



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About the Project

This action research project commissioned by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) explores the changing dynamic of frontline worker and citizen leadership, particularly with the move to Self Directed Support (SDS). Our findings highlight what this means for skills development, the workforce and for organisations.

The Social Care (Self-Directed Support Scotland) Act 2013 aims to fundamentally change the relationship between people who are supported and people who provide that support, putting choice and control at the heart of social services¹. This change has significant implications for leadership within care and support relationships, and in particular, the way that frontline and citizen leadership roles interact.

Citizen leadership is about how people have power, influence and responsibility to make decisions. Both citizen and frontline leadership have been described as encompassing particular qualities, behaviours and attitudes, including vision, creativity, collaboration, self-leadership, motivation, and the ability to inspire and empower others².

Action research is an approach to research in communities that emphasises participation and action. Within this type of process, "communities of inquiry and action evolve and address questions and issues that are significant for those who participate as co-researchers" (Reason and Bradbury, 2008)³. Action research involves actively participating

in a change situation, whilst simultaneously conducting research. In this case we also used the SDS principles related to Collaboration, Involvement and Informed Choice, to help shape the research method and process. We aimed to

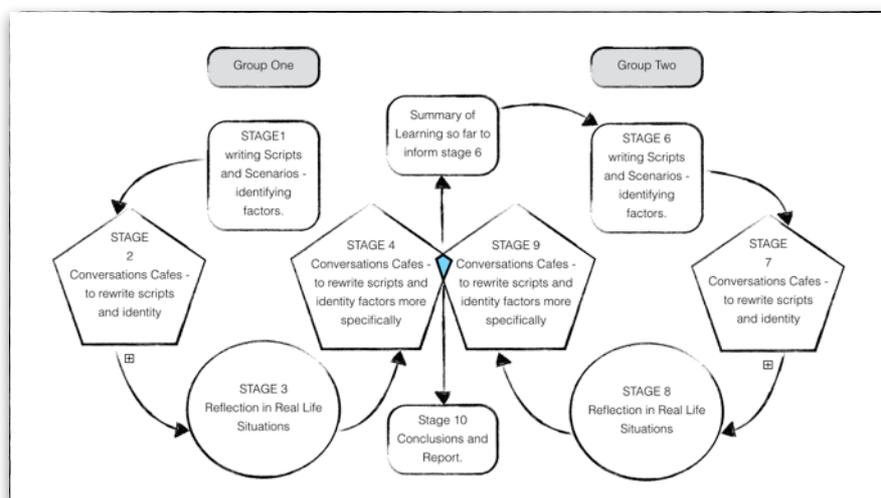


Figure 1: First attempt at structuring the research project

structure our research using the process in Figure 1. We modified this plan (Figure 2) in order to use an opportunity to work with other groups.

We used a software application to group themes and factors and so were able to increase the number of iterations in the reflective stages of the research process.

Essentially, we used feedback loops and iterations to deepen learning with a series of different mixed groups of front-line workers and citizens.

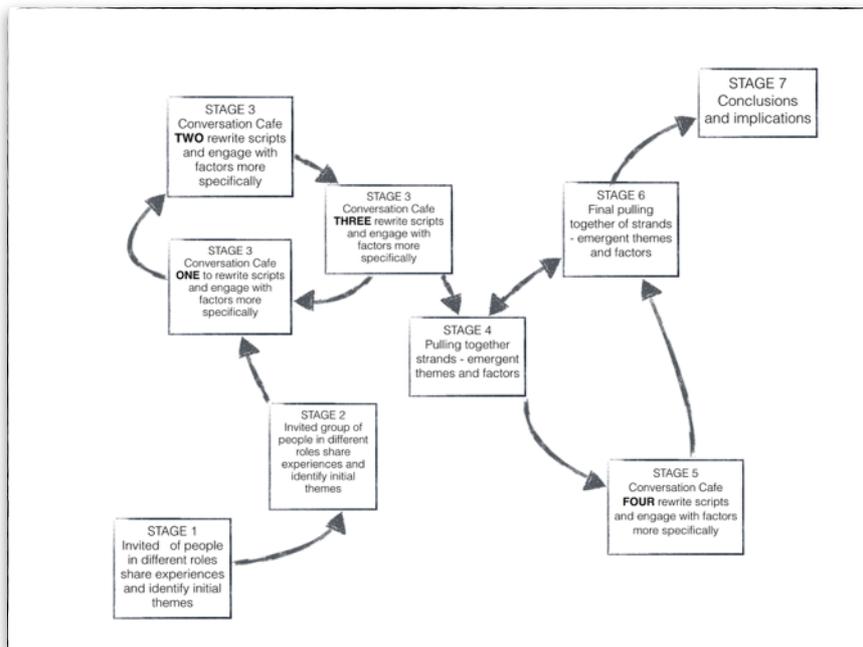


Figure 2: Stages followed in actual project.

A focus group helped identify emergent themes around leadership by reflecting on their personal experiences. Then, a smaller team designed an array of scenarios that could be acted out as dramatic scenes so that future groups could see them and interact with the theatre.

We used this Forum Theatre⁴ approach in

order to enable participants to

contribute their own reflections and learning, identify the factors that contribute to leadership and highlight the challenges.

Through this facilitated engagement with the scenarios we hoped that participants would be more able to make a link to their own experience or practice in the past and hopefully use their learning to influence their future practice and make concepts of leadership more accessible.

We based our approach on an underpinning attitude and methodology called Deep Democracy⁵ which aims to create the conditions that make it more possible for all views and opinions to be expressed.

At the start of each session we talked about the diversity of our team, presenting ourselves as an inclusive team with different communication and support needs. It was our intention to facilitate a process that creates a welcoming atmosphere and through the use of careful facilitation tools to deepen the learning and reflection process within the research.

The research team

We started as a team of six but two participants who came to our first session expressed a wish to stay on and help with the project, this increased the size of the core team to eight (in a way these two people became leaders in the moment, identifying their passions, interests and potential contribution and acting proactively.)

Stage One: Identifying Initial themes

The initial exploratory session took place in East Ayrshire, with help and support from the Community Brokerage Network and the Self Directed Support team from East Ayrshire Council. The objective was for people to reflect on their own lives and experiences before and after SDS and to generate stories and research themes that we could use to develop scenarios about Citizen and Frontline Leadership. These scenarios would then be enacted at future events to help others reflect and identify the factors that makes leadership possible or more likely.

Over 20 people with a broad range of background and experience were involved in this first session, including support workers, social workers and other frontline workers and/or (as some are in or have been in dual roles) people who have experienced a range of services, including those for children and families, people with disabilities, mental health, older people and addiction services. We shared stories and drew out the learning. The graphic of post-it notes above shows some of the themes that emerged and these included:

- **Values** and Vision are important - especially in the worker.
- **Positive Feedback** - the importance of giving and receiving positive feedback and encouragement to everyone in the process.
- **Dissatisfaction** - including anger about what is not working or not right.
- **Right Relationship** - including feeling really connected with the other person, knowing there is care and people are being real and honest.
- Feeling **treated** and listened to **as an individual** - Being treated and seen as an individual and not as a 'type', supports curiosity and shows interest.
- **Wrong Relationship** - including being patronised and judged.
- Presence or absence of **negativity** was seen to have an effective - being too interested in negatives is counterproductive and/or being negative about the chance of meeting outcomes (a psychological equivalent of the nocebo⁸ effect).



Designing the dramatic scenarios and storytelling

- East Ayrshire Feb/March 2015

- Right **information** - having the basic information at finger tips makes a big difference - lack of clarity leads to uncertainty.
- **Curiosity and Openness** - including time being taken to get to know and discover the real problem.

Stage Two: Developing the dramatic scenarios

The team, with the help of a smaller group of local brokerage and SDS team members explored the emerging themes from Stage One and then constructed three scenarios in different formats to include the learning. We decided to present the three scenarios in different formats, to allow for a variety of styles of engagement and a range of follow up questions. (see Table 1 below).

The first was a straightforward piece of theatre where two men enacted a person-centred planning⁹ situation to help one of the men identify the outcomes they could work on from articulating a bigger dream.

The second was a ¹⁰forum theatre format, allowing participants in the focus group to direct and also take part as actors within the frame of the scenario so that they learn first hand how to change a situation. The third scenario was a reflective dialogue where two people remembered how they had taken the lead as worker and citizen.

The reason for the three different scenarios and formats was to allow for the diversity of different learning styles and to allow for different perceptions within the focus groups.

Table 1: Summarising the scenarios and follow up questions.

Scenario	Summary of the Scenario	Follow up Questions
1. On vision and steps to action.	One man who has a disability label acted as a role model and used leadership to help another man to articulate his vision and dreams for what he wants, asked questions to deepen the reasons for the things the man hopes for and highlights the needs for first steps. We then asked follow up questions (see right).	Who was leading? At which points? How did you know there was leadership? What would you do in their shoes? Any other thoughts?
2. A situation where a parent is identified as not coping.	A frontline worker interviewed a single-parent in their own home about how they are managing when it has been reported that their children have not been attending school on time. This was run in a forum theatre format. It was played through once and then a second time. In the second run through the focus group was encouraged to shout STOP and redirect the action or step into one of the main roles and act it differently or even add another role.	What was altered when people either stopped the flow/ added in advice or acting in the place of the original actors? What are the differences? Any other thoughts?
3. Two people remember how they were able to take the lead.	A man who has used SDS in order to change his life explained how he felt able to lead and the different factors he thought had made a difference. A worker who helped at the initial meeting also talked about their perspective.	What was at the heart or essence of that story? What helps each of the storytellers feel in control and able to lead? Any other thoughts?

Stage Three “Conversation Cafes”

First Cafe

In this section of the report and in order to show the pattern that we followed in the later events, we have included a detailed explanation of the first cafe session. This first ‘conversation cafe’ was hosted in Auchinleck East Ayrshire, on 25th February 2015 with help and support from the Community Brokerage Network and the SDS team from East Ayrshire Council.

As mentioned above, the objective was for people to reflect on and get involved in small theatre pieces, forum theatre and storytelling (which we developed from the themes identified on the previous week) - and from this to bring out their own experiences and draw on these to identify factors in leadership. The themes are written as they were summarised and described at the event, in order to give a flavour of the depth of the discussions that took place.

Yet again the group attending had an interesting mix of backgrounds; as users of services in the criminal justice system, addiction services, special education, children's and families services, older people's services, mental health and learning disability.

There were a mixture of service-user roles and/or as family carers, as sons, daughters, brothers and sisters, friends and parents. Other roles include brokers, social workers, support workers, occupational health, counselling, psychotherapy, and advocacy - apprentices, trainees, workers, managers, co-ordinators and facilitators.

Again, many people had more than one role, e.g. they may have a professional role and also be someone who has used services and/or is a carer or family member of someone who is using SDS or social care support.

Feedback from those who attended

Great scenarios	Helped get a real focus	Amazing what came out of it
Helped us get a meta-position	Inspiring	Great way to learn and explore
We covered a lot of ground	Very thought provoking and on so many levels	
Perfect examples	That was bl**dy brilliant that was!	

Group one Scenario One

The focus group watched the first of the three scenarios, In this scenario a person with a disability label facilitated another person who needed support to dream about their future. The idea was to help everyone focus on exploring leadership from different angles. The follow up questions were:

- Who was leading?
- How did you know?
- What would you do in their shoes?
- What would you do next?

The following themes emerged from the groups answers and reflections.

G1S1 Theme One - Establishing the Relationship

Included behavioural and attitudinal factors : ..

Being confident in giving eye contact, being comfortable with the other person, having a good tone of voice, friendly

Being engaging

Showing a genuine interest creates comfort

Steadiness and calmness

Believing in the other person

G1S1 Theme Two - Establishing Solidarity

Being in their corner and believing in them

Knowing you're in control

Leading on the subject at hand

Being very focused

Being present for the other person,

Showing yourself

Explaining what you will do,

Modelling - doing something first and then inviting the other person to do it too

G1S1 Theme Three - Establishing a Solid Plan (making it real and possible)

Get it down on paper (the dream) so it is visible, exciting and engaging

Life coaching - dream big, break it down, facilitate that in the person

Helps the person to imagine how the dream can happen and then find the tools to help, maybe they already know and just need encouraged

Remember why the dream is important

Use networks to make the person visible

Unusual content made us curious

Not stereotypical and also subtle and clear

Group One, Second Scenario

The second scenario used a format based on forum theatre methodology. A scene based on a real life story is acted out and then after time for reflection the same scene is replayed and anyone in the focus group can become one of the actors at any time and explore the role from the inside out and even take the scenario in a different direction. This allows people to get multiple perspectives and to feel into the roles and experience more deeply. The follow up questions were

- What was altered when people either stopped the flow/ added in advice or were acting in the place of the original actors?
- What are the differences?
- Any other thoughts?

After reflection and facilitated dialogue the following themes emerged...

G1S2 Theme One - Personal Awareness in the worker

Awareness of potential for dominating conversation and not learning about the real issues

Importance of time to answer and to reflect

Awareness of leading questions like “Are you not coping?” or “You obviously need help?” which then lead to a lowering of energy, lack of focus in the other person (e.g. similar processes researched in other fields like stereotype-threat¹¹ or awareness of micro-inequity¹² signals have similar effects)

Awareness of own feelings of power or vulnerability

Feeling prejudiced, defensive or fearful but not aware of it

Awareness of the unconscious scripts you may be working to

Sense of hope and being calm about the crisis

G1S2 Theme Two - Behaviours in the worker supporting leadership

Spirit of welcome and building rapport

Not being too formal

Giving reassurance that person can follow their own ideas

Not being stiff - Not being superior (unconscious behaviours related to self-awareness above)

Don't have a script but have an overview of the whole situation

trying to make sure people do not feel that they are a burden

G1S2 Theme Three - Advocacy, Solidarity with others in same position or networks

People find other folk in same situation and support each other

Good to have thought of a plan - or be part of a group doing this

A great question is "What will help the key people get stronger and more able to lead"

People having an ally or an advocate

Compassion and empathy - trying to see things from the other point of view

G1S2 Theme Four - Support and preparation

Ask good life questions!

Be real

I can follow my own ideas

Already thought of the plan - or is part of a group doing this

Support to explore what the person is really interested in - not just basic support otherwise there is small picture thinking not bigger picture

Group One, Scenario Three

The final scenario was presented in a story telling/narrative format - the story was told and then the group could interact with the storytellers and research further into what happened, how leadership was taken and what helped or hindered. We explored the following questions..

- What was at the heart or essence of that story?
- What helps each of the storytellers feel in control and able to lead?

G1S3 Theme One - Self awareness - awareness of resilience, positive view of self

Strength, will and determination

Knowledge of self

Backing of family

Aware of own resilience and personal power

Humility and personal feeling of vulnerability - being aware of who you are

G1S3 Theme Two - Behaviours related to self-awareness

Able to set the example by trying something new and showing it so that others can learn and follow

Awareness of stigma -don't fall for the stereotypes

Honesty and truth

**Conversation Cafe
format,
participants
engaging with and
reflecting on
scenarios**

- Auchinleck, March 2015



Flexible with money and not too much bureaucracy or it is off-putting
 Being straightforward and direct
 Asking for help from people
 A deep respect and understanding for the situation - which is essential for Right relationship

Some of the main learning from the first day

Table 2: Summary of present and absent leadership

	Leadership is present	Leadership is not present
Individual citizen or family	A person or family that is resilient or self aware can grasp SDS quickly and given the right conditions (?) they can just take the lead and run with it	If a person or family doesn't grasp SDS it means they need support to find their power and resilience , become more aware of it and then they can - that's all!!
Front Line Workers	A worker can take the lead, help the other person to take the lead or share leadership when they have enough self-awareness of their own power, purpose and a clear overview.	If a worker can't take the lead or help others to do so then it wasn't so obvious what they needed. It might be that they need to be clear of their role, to have more self-awareness, to be more aware of how to create alliance and work in a team with the person or family

Second Cafe

Again this took place in East Ayrshire. Building on our learning from the first cafe and to aid reading we have refined the themes and collated those from each scenario together. In summary there were eight themes.

Basic preparation and knowing how you think.

Don't let stigma control your thinking
 Get the background and be prepared
 Be aware of assumptions
 Be okay in yourself and know your own dreams and aspirations
 Know your comfort zone but don't always expect to be in it
 Be aware of your own body signals and communication - including tone of voice

Confidence and responsibilities

Lead but not with leading questions
 Be direct about difficult things but be sensitive
 Be intentional
 Take ownership

Making connections with the other

Be personal
Be yourself and share dreams
Share tea and coffee
Get the right environment
Get the timing of things right
Be warm and welcoming

Right relationship and bringing out the best in others

Be engaging and be real
Feeling understood
Human not bureaucratic
Open questions
Know how to coach
Find out what matters most without jargon
Ask bigger questions e.g. what would it take for this person to figure out how to solve their own problems and address their fears successfully

Think about what makes a good life and what really matters

Ask the right questions
Keep an eye on the future at all times
Don't be afraid of ideals

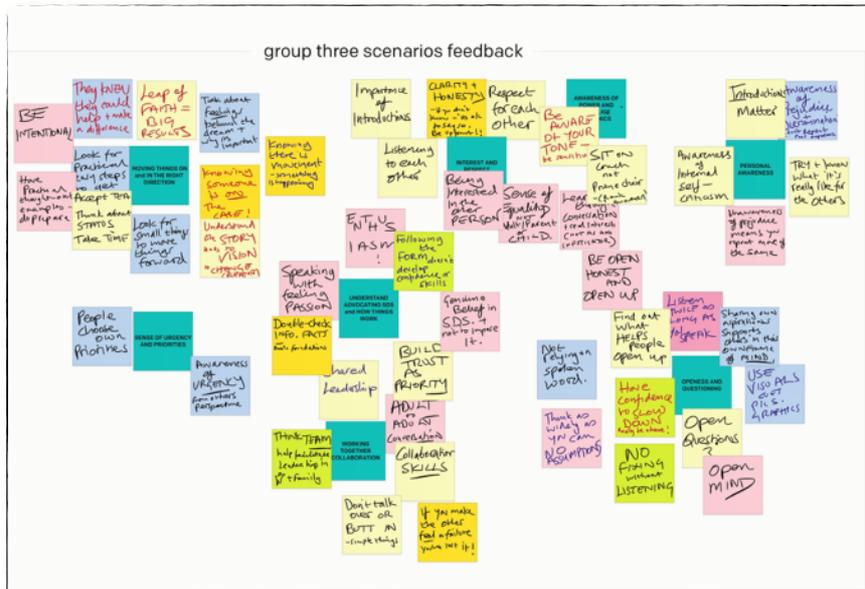
Being able to work together

Agree the problem together before moving on
Listen and don't own solutions
Share some personal information
Awareness of collaborating around risks and not being afraid of them
Ensure time to prepare
Ask friends and family to be involved
Get buddies if needed

Know how to make things happen

Small changes need small steps
Don't jump too quickly to fixing things, make sure you know the real issues first
Look for small realistic steps

Third Cafe



Post-its being used to help constellate themes from the third cafe

- East Ayrshire March 2015

In total there were seven themes

Personal awareness and respect for the other

- Have an open mind
- Awareness of your own self-criticism
- Awareness of prejudices
- Sense of equality
- Be open to try new things
- Think about what life is like for the other
- Clarity and honesty
- Be really interested in the other
- Sense of equality
- Have a conversation not an investigation

Openness and questioning

- Listen twice as long as you speak
- Find out about what matters to others to help them open up
- No fixing without listening
- Think widely and have no assumptions
- Use visuals and whatever it takes to inform and engage people
- Share your aspirations with the others
- Have the willingness to be open yourself, helps others open up

Understanding SDS and advocating how things work

- Passion and enthusiasm
- Accurate, have a genuine belief in and knowledge of how systems can help
- Double-check facts

Working together in collaboration
Build trust as a priority
Adult to adult conversation
Think Tea! (the small graces matter)
Help facilitate relationships with all
If you make the other person feel a failure you have lost it

Sense of agency

Awareness of different priorities and urgency
People choose own priorities

Moving things onto the right direction with intention

Practical thought through examples
Look for small things to move forward
Trust sometimes needs a leap of faith
Understand dream and story
Know somebody is on the case

Stage Four: First summary of the factors

We convened a meeting of the core group and invited a few members from the SDS team in East Ayrshire to consider the factors that had emerged from analysing the themes. This process of gathering and processing the information and findings helped consolidate our learning. The main headings in Figure 4 below are described briefly here.



Figure 3: First attempt of a graphic of themes

Being well prepared

All parties need to have some knowledge of SDS and the system, having some awareness of what might be possible so that they can share examples.

Know yourself

This covers such things as, awareness of self confidence, role awareness, stereotyping and prejudice.

Know your Power

Being aware of any power differences and how communication is working between you and the others involved.

Right Relationship

This is the recognition that there needs to be a fundamentally respectful and ethical relationship between services and the people they assist i.e. “right relationship”. And that individuals recognise that they can personally embody “right relationship” ethics in how they relate to people, regardless of the way the systems of which they are a part behave.¹³

Practically taking the Lead

Our sense from the feedback of the groups was that this is more likely to happen when the factors mentioned above also happen - it encompasses taking responsibility through action, asking hard questions and staying engaged when it gets tough.

Working Together

Involves the ability to invite and welcome support and contributions and collaborative skills

Having Allies, Networks, Solidarity and People on your side

Including the ability to welcome help, know you need it, ask for it, or just knowing you are not alone - without this it's hard to sustain leadership.

The next steps - making something happen

This is the 'doing things' part, if people don't know what the first small steps are then the bigger steps seem impossible

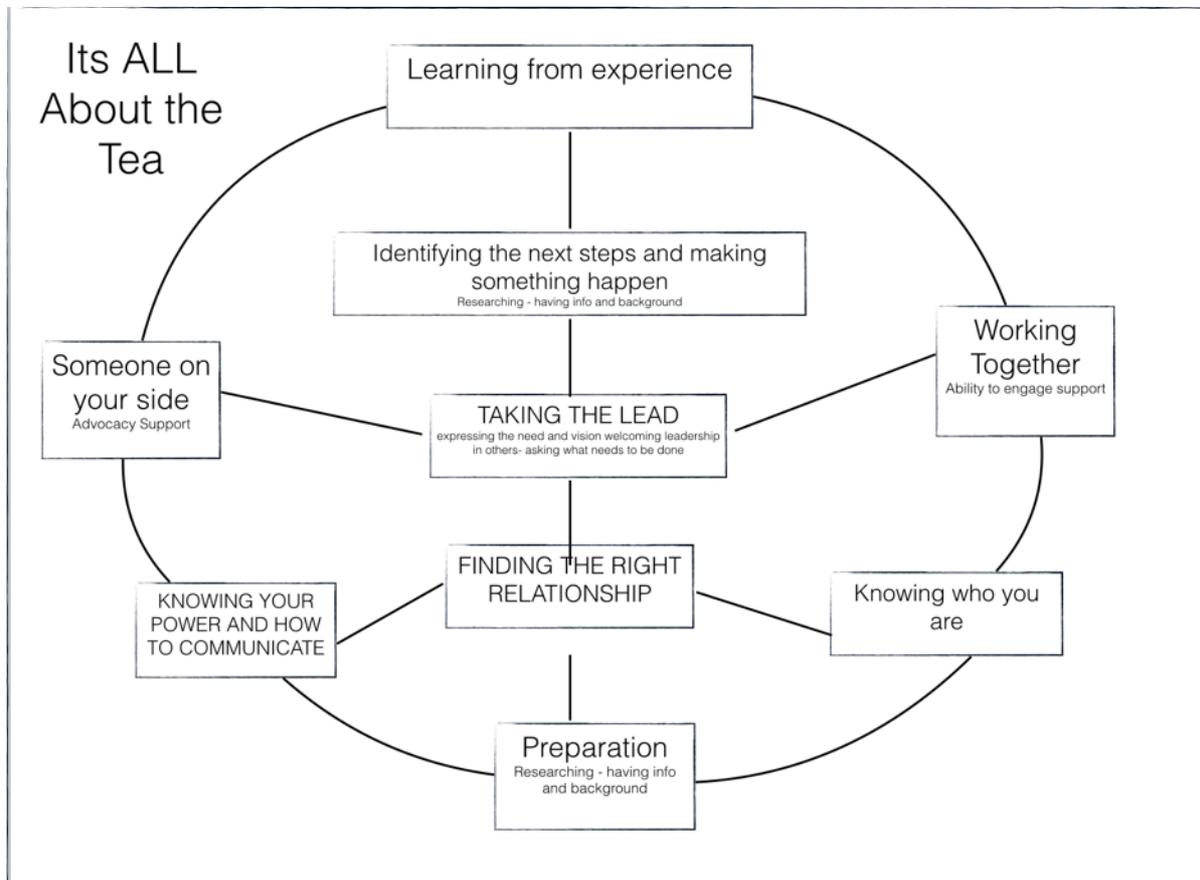


Figure 4: A graphic made during our analysis of our learning at the mid-point

reputation, don't expect people to not have been hurt and that they may be suspicious and take this into account.

Welcoming, inviting and involving the right people/family support

Including openness to possibilities, looking for allies, realising when people are alone and need support, not thinking you have to do everything yourself.

Getting things done, making things happen together

Including identify and taking steps in right direction, asking not being afraid to ask what can be done to move things on and who could do that, believing that people can solve their own problems, don't think you have to do it all yourself.

Identifying the Factors, Our Learning and Conclusions

How is Self-Directed Support changing the leadership relationship between people who are supported and front line workers?

During the research process we learned that expectations are slowly changing for some groups of people. The requirement that SDS is a collaborative and involving process means that people are beginning to expect more involvement and engagement, the evidence for this is clear in the themes raised by people in most of the cafes.

The first three cafe events took place in East Ayrshire, this area was selected because Diversity Matters /Everyone Together was already known and trusted in the area. From experience and from public events and discussions we know that the local authority in East Ayrshire has a deep interest in learning about SDS and is committed to putting the principles into practice. This is evidenced by their commitment to encouraging staff and people using their services to learn about SDS together and requiring the involvement of people using services in workshops and events as well as in the SDS process.

It is also obvious in their commitment to assisting with this research by booking rooms, informing people of the events and ensuring that members of the SDS team were present in order to learn from the participants as well as engage with the research.

Against this background, the examples emerging from personal reflections and in the experiences of participants are likely to be in the forefront of SDS practice in Scotland. The experiences were mixed and not always positive but the people involved were able to see change happening and so able to reflect on their situations as learning experiences which they were keen to share with others. We heard and observed the raised expectations of the people present - two examples are below.

One man and his son described the family experience of SDS assessment for their son as mechanical and unrelated to the family which meant that it did not feel collaborative, the son enjoyed the assessment experience but it did not fully take account of what he needed however he said that after giving that feedback the response had been more positive and he felt more collaborated with.

One woman with a progressive illness talked about being given a wheelchair that was two cumbersome for her busy lifestyle, she took pictures of her sporting activities and asked to be re assessed. She was given a new lightweight chair and was told that the first one was assigned because “that is the style of chair we usually give someone your age with your diagnosis”

There were other similar stories around the assessment process and generally the feedback or request for the professionals to think again was well received by the professional. This feedback sometimes had to come from an advocate, community broker or a professional e.g. peer mentor to the assessor. This is reflected in the factors noted below.

Our hypothesis is that the conditions of SDS set the ground for raising expectations and for listening differently. After many years of evaluating services the main concern has always been the failure of those assessing for or delivering services to really listen to the person and their family about what is needed or to fail to draw out the real needs.

Our experience in this first part of this research was subtly different and, of course is limited by the relatively small number of participants. The difference is that professionals appear to be trying hard to listen to what people want, they may not succeed for all sorts of reasons, and below we list the factors in play, but in the groups we worked with in East Ayrshire there was a general feeling that really sincere attempts were being made to change the way things work.

It was also clear from participants that the experience of seeing change happen for people and hearing the stories of change, helped them to think differently and expect more.

Many examples were offered by participants of their own experiences a couple of examples were:

One man had used £200 to buy a golf membership, this had changed the person's patterns of behaviour around drug and alcohol and offending. He felt that being trusted to know what would work for him was an important part of the process as was the honesty of the worker about what was possible.

Another participant working as a broker had been involved with a young man with a learning disability buying an accordion and the life changing events that came from that purchase. These included, increased self-confidence, status, new networks and more.

Front line workers and citizens felt empowered by hearing the stories and also by seeing the difference those pilots had made. An emerging theme was that when shared leadership emerged the stories were more empowering.

The fourth group offered a different set of learning as can be seen from the themes above. This group was selected because they were in different areas of the country and also came from the Gypsy/Traveller communities. We were able to approach them because we had met them already and had good contact with the MECOPP project workers who are trusted by them.

This group of people knew about SDS but during the research process we discovered that their distrust of services and of workers was deeply rooted and is a result of the prejudice and discrimination experienced by people on a daily basis. For these citizens expectations were low and although some SDS experiments have taken place and been successful they are not yet of sufficient weight to assist the community members to generally feel more hopeful about service change and its accessibility.

The participants stories were hard to hear because they evidenced often extreme examples of prejudice and the long history of those stories make asking for assistance very difficult and work to keep expectations low. Because there has been some piloting of SDS with people there are cautiously optimistic signs that change might be possible but this need to not only to be shared as stories within the wider Gypsy Traveller communities but people need evidence that the 'pilots's will be continued by mainstream front line workers in Social Work departments.

Participants asked for practical evidence of more significant and longer term SDS arrangements that are tailored to the culture of the Gypsy Traveller group. People spoke about stereotyping on both sides that is perpetuated by the negative stories that circulate. A couple of examples of these stories were:

A mother having to move from a trailer to a house before being offered services appropriate for her child's needs. The services could have been provided in the trailer but this was not seen as an option by professionals. But moving to a house caused the mother to be feel disempowered and depressed.

A family in extreme need having to wait two years for an assessment that did not deliver any assistance that would work for the family and their culture.

We believe that although this is an extremely marginalised group of people their contribution to the research helps us to really understand the basic requirements of relationship that are needed to underpin leadership between frontline workers and citizens. On the other side some of the positive 'pilot' examples are

One woman who cares for her very disabled mother asked for help some time ago and was offered a day service place, this would not work as the lady does not like to be indoors and so as part of the pilot the daughter bought a historic Scotland membership for £67. This means they can have days out together for a whole year and visit places without having to worry about the entrance fees. This gives mother and daughter the opportunity for enjoyable time together exploring new places and helping them both cope with the difficulties of everyday life.

Another gentleman who is cared for by his elderly wife, has mobility problems and lives rurally needs her to drive him everywhere even the 0.5 miles to the shops or health centre. He purchased a second hand motability scooter meaning that he is independent more of the time and his wife is able to have short breaks at home.

The challenge is for the local authorities to carry these innovative examples forward and redress the negative experiences of the communities.

The themes and learning from this research project may be used to help local authorities understand how to do this.

How is it changing?

The research has helped us to understand that SDS is impacting positively on leadership, that when approached in a principled and thorough way there are conscious attempts to share leadership, learn what makes it work more effectively and then put it into practice. In other areas or for other groups - especially for those people who are part of marginalised groups it is likely that the experience is more mixed and may not yet have changed. The range of experiences shared by the participants in the research has helped us to draw out a range of factors that promote effective leadership and that range from basic principles to more subtle behaviours.

The factors and conditions that promote effective frontline and citizen leadership, and support positive outcomes for individuals using services

This section incorporates learning from all the cafes and meetings to explore themes and check data.



Graphic taken from our presentation of the findings where the factors are represented by an image of a tree

- East Ayrshire Feb 2015

Below is a summary of all the learning under each heading. Many of the themes might appear obvious, however part of our learning is that often people neglect the obvious for a

Find the Right Relationship

Make the right, ethical connection with the other person

Be warm

Be open, genuine and honest

Share information about yourself

Be really interested in the other person

Someone on your side.

Know you have back up and are not alone, that there are others who think you are reasonable

Know who your allies are

Know that there are others a few steps away even if you don't know how to get to them yet

Know others will look kindly on your decision

No blaming !!



More visible qualities and factors in leadership

- Graphical representation of more core themes

Working together.

Team work, means no one person has to do all the jobs

Sharing Roles

Excite or interest other people in what can be done

Share the work, realising that different people have different skills and everyone can contribute.

Collaboration skills- know how to engage and try to bring out the best in others

Be willing to not know everything

Willingness to take the lead

Be willing to take a risk

Its OK not to know all the answers and to go ahead anyway

Be brave

Believe in what is possible and what can be done

Taking the lead

Express what is needed

Express what needs to be done

Welcome and bring out leadership in others
Have a sense of responsibility and /or urgency

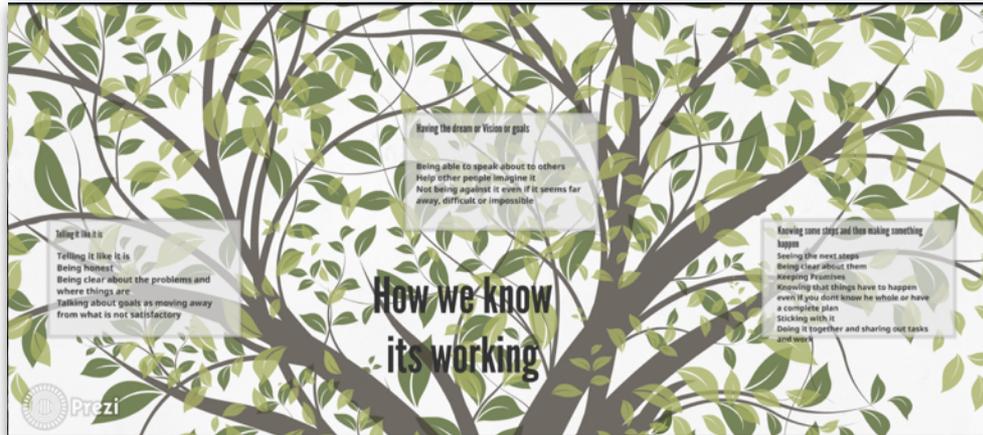
Telling it straight, being real

Tell it like it is, don't gloss over difficulties

Be honest

Be clear about the problems and where things are

Talk about goals and aspirations as well as how to move away from what is not satisfactory



How we know
it's working

Dream, big picture, thinking about a good life

Be able to speak about the future, risk being aspirational

Don't be against it as an idea even if it seems impractical, difficult or impossible, explore it anyhow

Be clear that it may not be possible but welcome it anyway

Know the next steps

Seeing the next steps

Be clear about the steps and who will do what

Keep all promises

Know that things have to happen even if you don't know the whole picture or have a complete plan

Work out even a small thing that can happen and make it happen to build trust

Stick with it

Do it together and share out tasks and work, even if you think you can do it all yourself don't!

Review and overview of themes

Front-Line Leadership¹⁴ has been explained to workers in the following way

“As a frontline worker, your leadership skills can make a real difference to the service that you deliver, and to the outcomes that the people who use your service achieve. There are many ways in which you might show leadership at the front line. For example:

- *Using your initiative to support individuals and families to achieve their goals*
- *Inspiring colleagues to think differently*
- *Supporting others to learn and develop.*

”and it encompasses qualities such as self-leadership, motivational and inspiration skills, empowerment, creativity, collaboration, innovation and vision.”

The themes that emerged from the research suggest that not only do workers need particular skills but also that the deeper attitudes held by workers need attention. These deeper attitudes or metaskills impact on the way in which we use our skills. For example, someone who has the metaskills of deep interest and curiosity in people can ask direct questions in a manner that people do not feel challenged by, i.e., because of the metaskills the other person feels that the questioner is interested in them (as opposed to feeling interrogated or suspicious).

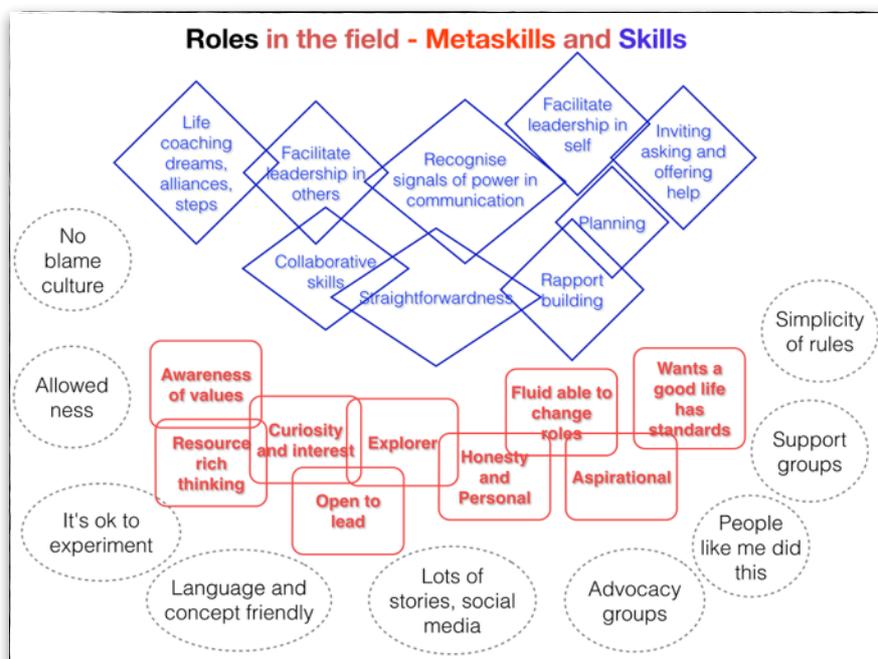


Figure 5: Roles in the field - Skills, Metaskills and Pre-conditions.

The diagram here (figure 5) shows the range of skills (blue) identified in the research and underpinning them are the attitudes or metaskills (red) needed. It is the interplay of both skills and metaskills that we believe leads to ease with a leadership role. The other factors in the

diagram (dotted lines) are the environmental or background conditions or organisational messages that make a difference.

Implications Emerging from the Research

Overview

SDS invites a different approach to leadership. Because the principles require collaboration¹⁵ there is a real opportunity for leadership to be supported in both parties. Participants in the research often pointed out that it needs to be embedded in the dynamic of the relationship rather than following the older concept that assumes leadership is held by one person; usually someone who has more structural (hierarchical) rank like a manager or official.

Challenging belief systems

A useful concept is the idea of the psychological 'edge' or boundary (or belief system both conscious and unconscious) that underpins and affects our decisions. For example, a family may feel unable to take the lead as they have a belief system that power lies further up the hierarchy within the social work or health organisation. This makes it difficult for the family to lead even when they are invited to do so (because the invitation goes against a lifetime of experiences that reinforces the existing 'edge'). If a similar belief system is held by a worker, for example, that their manager is the leader, then the interaction between the worker and family will lack any leadership in the moment and decisions will be deferred elsewhere.

However, SDS is designed to promote collaboration between two or more people by devolving decision making to those who have the biggest stake in the decision so non collaborative belief systems need to be challenged in all the partners.

Time, space and guidance

One thing that can help is for someone to explain the process, and also to give space and time to explaining the possibilities that exist. This can help break down the limiting belief systems and allows the individual or family to cross the psychological edge or limit and step into leadership.

Another thing that helps is when families or individuals have the knowledge, vision or can "see" what other people have done in similar situations, then they have a model, examples of possibilities and patterns of engagement that can give implicit permission to take the lead.

Good examples and models

Clearly devolved decision making

Thirdly SDS requires managers and the organisational culture and processes they work in to really devolve decision making and so ensure the worker and individual or family can actually agree what needs to happen and then be able to implement actions speedily and follow up quickly. The research showed that quick actions build trust, slow or delayed decisions weaken trust.

Fourthly, independent, advice, brokerage or peer to peer groups have

Independent advice

an impact on leadership when their alliance with citizens helps solidify, justify or validate ideas (including the bottom line - see below)

Trust and willingness is dependent on the worker

Our learning suggests that leadership cannot be stepped into by any of the participants in whatever role they have (in a sustainable or effective way) that can be appreciated by others unless there is trust and a willingness to work together. This seems to be more likely if the frontline worker addresses the following:

- Their awareness and ability to build rapport and help themselves and others feel at ease - the social graces, civility and relatedness are major factors
- Ensuring they have basic information about what is possible and how to make some next steps
- If the worker is positive about SDS it makes a positive difference
- The more the workers have to delay by saying I have to go back to my boss the less trust is likely and the more suspicious people become
- If the worker has prejudices or unconscious feelings then these are often picked up by others who will then not follow or collaborate so readily, patronisation can kill the process
- If the individual is seen as a problem only and a more positive resource rich perspective is missing then a 'right relationship' will not develop.
- If the "good life" or positive outcomes are not explored or known then the person may be seen from a deficit rather than capacity perspective
- If the the worker is attached to having the answers or doesn't listen deeply enough to the answers of all the people involved then people feel unheard and disempowered and are more likely to withdraw
- Openness to involving others and seeking the best inputs from the most well informed people (including family and friends) is also a part of this.

Additional implications for frontline workers

The list of factors above can be seen as a guide for what is needed. Workers need assistance to learn or refresh their skills in relationship building and to attend to each of the factors.

Metaskills and attitudinal awareness

However as described above it was also clear in the research that the metaskills are equally or more important. These deeper attitudes link with skills that work together to make leadership possible or to enhance it. So it becomes essential that the worker can self-reflect and that they are interested in their attitude, belief systems and any bias as well as being clear about their underpinning values.

If a worker is unaware of their prejudice, for example if they assume all gypsy travellers should be living in houses because it is 'better' for them then, even though they are well intentioned and try to do their best they will not be able to build a trusting relationship or really collaborate using SDS because they will be unable to hear what makes good life for the family or person because of their own belief systems.

Awareness of personal capabilities

The research information indicated that real leadership emerges when people feel confident in each other and in their own capabilities. The themes above relate to the 'personal capabilities'¹⁶ already developed by the SSSC some years ago. It seems to us that increasing personal awareness in the areas we have described will aid the ability of workers to take leadership and/or encourage it in others and to fulfil these capabilities (Vision, Self-Leadership, Motivating and Inspiring, Creativity and Innovation, Collaborating and Influencing and Empowering.)

It is difficult for those who are more used to the idea of leadership as a hierarchical role to understand that it is fluid and can move between people. Comments arising from the forum theatre scenario suggested that it is more important that it is present between the people directly involved and can be shared rather than that it is present in one of the parties.

Therefore encouraging people to reflect on what leadership actually is will be helpful and many of the participants and researchers gave feedback that the dramas were a good way to learn, people talked about being able to see what leadership meant. That they could recognise themselves in the scenarios and see what could be different in how they acted.

Leadership as a contextual role not only a hierarchical or personal quality

The implications for people who are directing their own support

The implications for people directing their own support are subtly different but require some of the same interplay of skills and attitudes we identified above.

Not an option but a necessity

For some individuals and families, leadership is not optional -it has been the only way they have been able to obtain the service they need. For others the sharing of leadership will also be a new idea and difficult to adopt because of a different, but also powerful set of belief systems built up over time.

Two frequent suggestions that emerged during the forum theatre were to show people what is possible *through the use of good examples, stories, video etc) and/or to enlist allies or others who can support. In

Examples, models and allies

the same way as described for workers, citizens require help to challenge their existing world views and belief systems. For SDS to work well some families sometimes need support to share leadership with workers. It may be a new idea for people that leadership can shift and that it is less lonely if it is shared.

Working out a 'bottom line'.

Citizens directing, or thinking about directing their own support need workers that can support them to discover what their 'bottom line' is. We are using this term, 'bottom line' to refer to the absolute minimum standard about how someone behaves when they are with you or in your house. If this is not drawn out and validated and adopted as reasonable then the person will not be able to take a leadership role as they will feel uncomfortable or dissatisfied in the relationship but may not know why. So a leadership aim within the SDS relationship is that the person is encouraged by others (allies, friends, family, brokers) to establish and stand for their bottom line.

Families and individuals also need to be able to understand that leadership is a role and an attitude that a person may only need to step into for a short time. Of course, it depends on the nature of the support, the amount of support needed and the length of time it might be needed for, but in the research it appears that many participants felt that the more crucial and important the support is for an individual or family (they have a much bigger stake in it being timely, specific, efficient and useful) the stronger the imperative to lead.

The time for leadership and for sharing the role

So for many people it is important to also know the following:

- Information of what is possible, how the system works and to know what can be done, having good examples or culturally relevant models that are easily accessible through social media, video, etc..
- To be clear about the outcomes they want and need and to be not to be afraid of speaking them out loud and asking for them to be met - to get to this, citizens may need lots of good examples, narratives, sharing of information through social media, local peer to peer support and other groups to help illustrate possibilities
- To know the 'bottom line' - again to establish this similar peer to peer support and facilitated support from front line workers may be required.
- Awareness of allies and supporters and other people you can ask for or who can offer help, is important - this can be with peer to peer networks, social media or at local events. In East Ayrshire Community Brokers often fill this role.

Implications for organisational support and development

Organisational, cultural messages, procedures and processes are crucial and they act like roles that workers and citizens consciously or unconsciously react to, fight against or experience as supportive and enabling. as a result of the research We consider the following to be most useful.

- The ability and willingness of frontline workers to make small steps happen is key - they need to know they are authorised and can support small changes quickly without later being censured, this process builds trust (see above). Without trust, leadership is difficult. So, the challenge for organisations is how they can facilitate this. One way is to have simple rules and devolved budget authority with clear limits. Participants felt that scenarios that meant simple decisions could not be made easily or implemented quickly had dramatic negative effects on the willingness of workers and citizens or families to take leadership.

**Ability to
decide and
make
something
happen
quickly**

Sharing the good

- The sharing of good practice and having easily accessible examples in the organisation of workers who act as role models for other workers.
- These good examples should also include good examples of partnership, collaboration and shared leadership between workers and individuals.

- Organisations that allow workers to get peer support and networking opportunities may be better at supporting leadership.

**Peer support
and learning**

Tacking prejudice

- Organisations need to have active processes to help workers understand prejudice and discrimination in themselves and in society and how it will often affect their thinking and stifle creativity.

•Organisational messages need to be carefully crafted, literature should be as jargon free as possible and simple pathways need to be outlined and easily understood. If this information is available to individuals and families it makes it more likely that they will step into leadership.

**Simple clear
jargon free
communication
and information**

Devolving decisions - trusting people to get it right

- Our sampling through the focus groups suggests major differences in local authority effectiveness. Trust was emphasised as making an important difference. Organisations need to support workers to build trust and take the time to do it properly. This was seen by participants as a cost effective long term investment and emphasised as a pre-requisite that helps individuals to take leadership.

Final Summary

When Citizen and Frontline Leadership occurs it makes a real difference to the quality of SDS outcomes and the creativity of the support solutions that are agreed.

Organisational procedures, messages, and rules have a powerful impact on the likelihood of trusting relationships occurring, and trust is a prerequisite for leadership and partnership.

Feedback loops are crucial too: The ability to see change happen and for some actions and steps to be facilitated quickly creates a feedback loop which supports leadership to grow. This can be made more likely by devolving decision-making on budgets.

Frontline workers need to understand the organisational context so that they can navigate within it and also communicate effectively to others about it.

Then if they are supported by the wider context and managers or peers, they also need to have awareness of the metaskills (underlying attitudes) that make leadership skills effective (not just awareness of the skills themselves).

Frontline workers have a key role in enabling and encouraging leadership in citizens. First of all the right questions have to be asked by the worker of themselves (How can I enable or encourage leadership in others and myself?). Then, they will also require qualities and attitudes such as openness, honesty, transparency as well as an awareness of power dynamics and of how they communicate in the moment.

Citizens tend not to think of themselves as requiring skills for leadership, they are more likely to identify other needs which are more related to the external conditions for leadership. For example, the need for peer support, or the need for good clear examples, or information and clear structures and procedures. These coupled with the 'right relationship' with frontline workers are the key factors that make it more likely that they can step into leadership effectively.

Notes

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2013/1/contents/enacted>

² <http://www.stepintoleadership.info/frontline.html>

³ Reason, P. and Bradbury, H. (2008) (eds) *The Sage Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*. Sage, CA

⁴ Boal, Augusto. 2000. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. 3rd ed. London: Pluto

⁵ <http://www.deepdemocracyinstitute.org/deep-democracy-explained.html>

Mindell, A. (2002). *The Deep Democracy of Open Forums*. Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads.

⁶ <http://www.communitybrokeragenetwork.co.uk>

⁷ <http://www.mecopp.org.uk>

⁸ <http://www.priory.com/medicine/Nocebo.htm>

⁹ Black, P. (2000) Why aren't person centred approaches and planning happening for as many people and as well as we would like?: <http://www.doh.gov.uk/vpst/pcp.htm>.

¹⁰ Boal, Augusto. 2000. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. 3rd ed. London: Pluto. ISBN 978-0-7453-1657-4

¹¹ Inzlicht, Michael (2011). *Stereotype Threat: Theory, Process, and Application*. Oxford University Press.

¹² <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-superhuman-mind/201304/micro-inequities-40-years-later>

¹³ Kendrick, Michael J. (2003) "The Role of Personal Integrity in Upholding 'Right Relationship' in Organisations, CRUcial Times, Issue 28, November 2003, pp 4-5.

¹⁴ The leadership learning pathway for frontline workers in Scotland's social services at <http://www.stepintoleadership.info/frontline.html>

¹⁵ <http://guidance.selfdirectedsupportscotland.org.uk/practitioners/assessment.html>

¹⁶ <http://www.stepintoleadership.info/frontline.html>