

Co-Production - how are you doing?

A self-reflection tool

We are pleased to introduce this self-reflection tool for co-production - we hope you find it useful!

It is designed for Local Authorities, local services and local people to think about how things are working where they live and/or work. It uses the 4 key principles of co-production that Edgar Cahn wrote about in his book, *'no more throw-away people'*

Recognising people as assets

Valuing work differently

Promoting reciprocity

Building social networks

Co-production feels a bit like the 'new black' – everyone is talking about 'doing it'!! BUT there are lots of different thoughts and ideas about what it really means.

We are clear that when we talk about co-production, we mean how services and local people can work together in a genuine partnership to design and deliver services and support. **It is definitely NOT just asking people what they think!**



We will look at each of these 4 key principles in more detail and then you can think about how well you are working towards them where you live or work. For each of the key principles we have given suggestions of how things might look if....

You really haven't got this....

You've got the basics....

You're getting there....

You're doing REALLY well....



RememberIt is not designed to be just another set of boxes for you to tick. Only use it if you want to make things better... so there is no point in not telling the whole truth! It is useful to get the perspective of several different people so you really do get a clear picture of what is working well and what you need to change.

You could think about a particular service or support, an organisation that provides services, or try and take a snapshot of Council or Health services.

About the words we are using

Throughout this document there are particular words that we have chosen to use:



Why are we using ‘we’....

This is about all of us having some responsibility for how things are – services, society, us as individuals, the media.

People who need extra support

All of us get some support in our lives (unless you can fix your own car, boiler, TV and broken ankle!). We talk about people who need extra support as shorthand for people who might live with an illness or long-term condition, are disabled or older, or use any health or social care services

Families

We use the word families to mean the people in our lives who are there because they care about us and don't have a paid role in our lives. This is usually our blood relatives but might include other people who are really close to us.

OK..... now have a look and see what you think!

Idea one - treating people as assets and using the skills and strengths they have to design and run services

What this is about

This is about how we see people who get extra support in their lives from services. Often, when someone needs extra support, their illness or impairment becomes all we can see about them. We forget that someone might have a physical or sensory impairment that means they need help to get up in the morning, prepare food, get around, but they are also a daughter, a friend, an artist and a passionate member of the Green Party. We also forget that, even when someone lives with an illness or impairment, they have skills and talents that the service might be able to use and have a wealth of experience to offer you and your organisation.



‘I’m Kathy – I’m 35 and I live on my own. I use a wheelchair and get help from my PA with lots of practical stuff like getting up, cooking and getting out and about. I live near my Mum who is starting to experience some memory loss, so I like to make sure I see her several times a week. I love painting and I sometimes sell my work at a local craft fair. My real passion is the environment and I’m an active member of the Green Party – one day I might even stand as an MP!’

You really haven't got this if.....

- You think and talk about people who need extra support as problems – victims, patients, service users, clients, customers
- You and your organisation believe you are the experts in delivering your service
- The persons illness or impairment is the most important thing your service considers when planning support



You might hear people in the service talking like this...

*'Our service users are all **very vulnerable** so we have to be careful about what we can **let them do**'*

*'We try really hard to give **our customers** the support they need but some people just don't want to be helped '*

*'You have to remember that **these people** really **can't do very much for themselves**'*

*'We only work with people with complex autism – that's **our specialism**'*

You've got the basics if.....

- You understand that, when people need extra support they do know a bit about the support they need in their lives and what they know can help make things better for others
- You listen to what people tell you about what works for them and they have **some** say about the way the service is designed and delivered;
 - Service User forums
 - consultation events
 - People talking about their lives and experiences in staff meetings and away-days

You've getting there if.....

- Your ways of working include people who use the service in different ways like helping run training, being part of service planning groups. People give feedback that you listen to and act on
- People who use the service are formally involved in recruitment and training of staff
- The way staff work demonstrate on a daily basis that you listen to people, value what they have to say and the skills they bring as human beings and as people who are experts in their own lives

You're doing REALLY well if.....

- Your ways of working demonstrate that you value the contribution that people who use the service make as equal to that of the paid staff
- People's lived experience AND their broader life experience is central to how the service is run
- How the service is designed and run AND evaluated is lead (individually and collectively) by people who have lived experience



You might hear people in the service talking like this...

'I've made the money work for me through self-directed support – I'm always happy to talk to other families about how it might work for them. I know that's so much better than talking to a care manager'

'We're really hoping to start a Flamenco dance session – Kate, who has just started using the day service is a fabulous dancer and she says might be up for setting up a group'

'We were really struggling with the back office systems until Sarah joined the Personalisation Board. She is the service user representative for mental health but she's also a computer scientist and that's just who we needed to get the computer programmes working for us'

What stage do you think you're at?

What is the evidence?

What are people doing or saying where you live/work that show which stage you're at?



Would you score yourself **RED**, **AMBER** or **GREEN**?

What do you want to change?

Now you have some good evidence for how well you are doing and you have given yourself a score, you need to think about what you want to do to start changing things for the better.

It's a good idea to do this in 2 parts:

- 1) Get down as many ideas as you can – nothing is too silly or too impossible. It's best to do this with a group of people so that everyone can share their ideas
- 2) From this list, choose 2 or 3 things that you think you could really do that would make a difference. Work these up into an action plan that shows what, who, when and how

Idea two - valuing work differently

What this is about

This is about radically changing how we define 'work'. We usually think about 'work' as something we do that earns money. This idea in co-production helps us think about 'work' as anything that is activity we need; looking after children or elders, running a home, being part of Neighbourhood Watch are all activities that we need but none of them are rewarded with a wage.

The principles of co-production remind us that we need to see and use the gifts and skills people have to offer; we also need to find ways to reward this 'work' in ways that are not just about paying people in cash.



Timebanks are a key way of making this idea work. For more information go to the Time banks UK website:
www.timebanking.org

Jane is currently living with her 2 young children in a hostel for women fleeing domestic violence. The hostel supports a Timebank and all the women are expected to contribute 5 hours a week doing jobs around the hostel and in the local community. They can then 'spend' their hours on support (like child-care) within the hostel or on some local services like the cinema.

The Core Economy

We have 2 economic systems:

MONEY drives activity

This is all the private and public sector organisations that do things in exchange for money. It includes the services and supports provided through health or social care.

Family, neighbourhood, community drive activity

This is all the unpaid activity that is driven by our hearts and minds, our care and compassion and love for people close to us. It is the work we do to bring up our children and look after our wider families and older people. It is the things that build communities. It is the **Core Economy**

Economists estimate that at least 40% of economic activity takes place in the Core Economy and is not reflected in the Gross Domestic Product. This means that women who stay at home to raise their children and run their homes are technically unoccupied!



You really haven't got this if.....

- There is no way of recognising any contribution anyone brings to the organisation, other than through the formal payroll
- People who use the service are not able to contribute to its development because benefit rules mean they can't be paid
- There is no flexibility in how the service is run for either staff or clients to recognise the other roles they have as, e.g. parents, family carers, community leaders



You might hear people in the service talking like this...

*'We have to make sure that there are **clear boundaries** between staff and clients and that includes our volunteers.'*

*'People are **placed in our service** because of the support they need - **our job** is to make sure that they get that support.'*

*'We like to find opportunities for people to do some volunteering **if they are capable**. We always give people a **certificate so they feel valued**.'*

You've got the basics if.....

- People can join the service-user forum and get rewarded for their time by having their expenses paid and a notional £20 attendance fee
- People who use the service contribute their time and skills as volunteers and this is recorded and celebrated on a regular basis

You've getting there if.....

- The way the service is run respects and supports the full contribution that staff and people who use the service make - both to the service and to the wider community. Staff working hours are flexible to enable them to fulfil other roles and support hours are also flexible to enable people who use the service to make positive contributions

You're doing REALLY well if.....

- ◎ Staff, Board members and people who use the service are actively encouraged to be members of the Time Bank that the service supports
- ◎ The Time Bank operates both within the service and works into the local community.



You might hear people in the service talking like this...

*'Part of the recording system we use is to make sure we **record and value the contribution** people make to the service.'*

*'We know that the service would not run as effectively as it does if people did not **contribute their skills and experience.**'*

*'The **Timebank** means that people can work for the organisation on a regular basis and get that **work recognised** for what it is.'*

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Idea three - promoting reciprocity or 'give and get' so that people who use services have a chance to 'give' as well as 'get' support

What this is about

This is about making sure that people are not just seen as, treated as, or expected to behave as 'people who need help'. Support that works in this way builds on people's assets and expects everyone who gets support to (at some point) offer it to someone else. Everyone needs to be needed and valued; feeling needed and valued builds our self-esteem and makes us stronger – and less likely to be that big 'problem' for services to sort out.



'I'm Pete – I have lived with Diabetes since I was 15 years old and I'm 45 now. Over the years I've got a good understanding of my condition and how best to manage it – my priority is to live life without diabetes getting in the way. I get support from the Diabetes clinic and recently I've joined a scheme where I give support to someone who has recently been diagnosed. It's great – I can tell it like it really is and also offer very practical and emotional support. I've even started playing golf with one of the guys I've met!

You really haven't got this if.....

- Your service's 'duty of care' and 'client confidentiality' are driving forces in how you work
- Management of risk precludes you encouraging people to support each other or support others in the community
- You believe that only paid staff have the necessary skills and expertise to offer information, advice or support



You might hear people in the service talking like this...

'We have to remember that we have a duty of care towards our clients'

'Our job is to help clients with their problems - we are the professionals and their needs are complex and require a professional response'

'Our service users are people who need support. We can't ask too much of them or make too many demands'

'We don't encourage our clients to talk to each other – we can't be sure they'd give accurate information and we do find it tends to make them more unwell or exacerbate their own problems'

You've got the basics if.....

- People are allowed to support each other but it is not actively encouraged
- Some clients who present less risk are supported to do voluntary work with carefully selected organisations as part of their care plan
- You recognise that people need to contribute and you have a rota of jobs that people are allocated to

You've getting there if.....

- Staff facilitate peer support groups that enable people to share their ideas and expertise in a formal and safe setting
- When new people come into the service, they are allocated peer supporters. These are all people who have been selected and have had training about their role and what it entails

You're doing REALLY well if.....

You recognise that, if people don't have the chance to 'give back', no matter how good the service is

Part of the staff's job description is to facilitate & encourage people to support each other.

Everyone who uses the service has a valued role in giving something back and you know that the service and staff will never have all the answers and nor should they.



You might hear people in the service talking like this...

"As part of getting to know people who join the service we ask about what their passions & gifts and then they are offered a buddy of someone with similar interests who will help them get to know the local community & others who use the service. Everyone is expected to become a buddy to at least 1 person"

'We ask everyone who goes through the Self Assessment Questionnaire if they would be prepared to support one other person to write their support plan'

'Everyone who is part of this service is expected to make a contribution – based on their skills and gifts. Its part of the agreement they sign.'

'Paid staff and people who use the day centre work alongside each other to cook lunch – everyone does their bit.'

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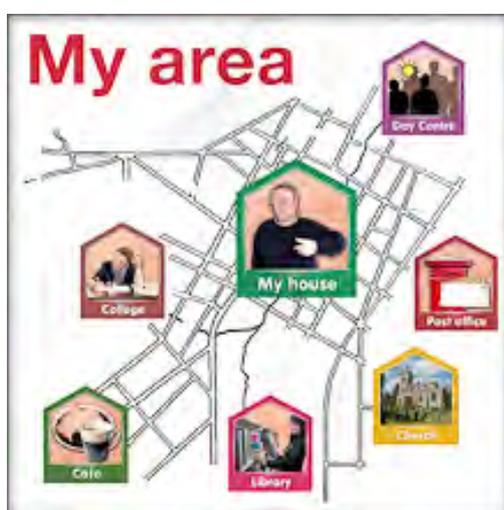
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Idea four - building social networks so that people get more connected.

What this is about

This is about remembering that people build and sustain communities and you have to be present to be included. Services need to play an active role in supporting people to become or stay part of their local communities – NOT cut them off from any but paid contact.



'I'm Vera – I'm 78 and I live in sheltered accommodation in a small town. I moved here 3 years ago when my daughter emigrated to Australia and I was really worried about making new friends at my age. I needn't have worried as I've probably got more friends now than I ever did! I have my own flat but we all sign-up to doing something to help our local community. I help with the flowers in church every week and help bake buns for the sale we have every week. We have a communal lounge that we open twice a week for local mums and dads to come with their toddlers – they really bring a breath of fresh air. I've got particularly close to one young woman and Mia her daughter – Mia's like a grandchild to me, which is lovely as I miss my daughter so much.'

You really haven't got this if.....

- Acting professionally in your service means understanding and keeping clear professional boundaries between paid staff and clients
- You have policies that mean anyone who comes into the service, or who clients go out with must have an enhanced CRB check.
- Where your service is located and how it runs is not relevant to the wider community.



You might hear people in the service talking like this...

'Helping people make friends is not our job. Our service users find it hard to make friends and they're very vulnerable to exploitation.'

'The Code of Conduct is strict about staff keeping work and family life separate. We don't want inappropriate relationships to develop.'

'The most important thing for us is to recruit staff who have the right qualifications in care work – nothing else is really important.'

'People in the local shopping centre don't understand our clients so its best to keep them doing activities within the day centre'

You've got the basics if.....

- As a service, you get involved in some community events
- Clients are invited to get involved in clubs or societies that you know are welcoming
- The service has a programme of external volunteering opportunities that people can get involved with, e.g. Maintaining the gardens, helping in the kitchen
- You invite local people and services to the summer fete and Christmas party

You've getting there if.....

- The policies do not stop people maintaining or making friendships & relationships in the local community.
- Some people get involved in local clubs, societies or events.
- There are clear rules for how the staff should respond if they share an interest or passion with someone and could help them get involved
- You welcome people to volunteer in the service in a range of ways and actively encourage

You're doing REALLY well if.....

The service & everyone who uses it are seen as active ordinary members of the local community – a resource not a separate enclave.

Supporting people to have friends & relationships outside the service is seen as the biggest success.

The policies encourage staff to use their personal networks to help people build theirs.

You are clear that we want the organisation to be an active part of the community. To do this we make it part of everyone's job and in all our organisations plans.



You might hear people in the service talking like this...

'One of the main roles for staff is to help people get much better connected. We know that the service can't get people a life so we work hard to make sure that we get to know and use the local communities and networks. If we can help people make friends then they need less support from staff and that's better for everyone.'

'When people in the service are getting to know new people or trying new things, we take a pragmatic approach that enables that person to manage any potential risk alongside staff.'

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More information?



Useful websites

New economics foundation

www.neweconomics.org

Time banks UK

www.timebanking.org

The Asset based Community Development Institute

www.abcdinstitute.org



This self-reflection tool was written by Samantha Clark and Tricia Nicoll. We would welcome your comments as well as your stories of using co-production where you live or work.

Samantha@inclusionnorth.org

Tricia@tricianicoll.com

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