

**Community Educational Psychology Service**

Educational Psychologists work with others using our knowledge of psychology to promote positive change and well-being for children, young people and families in Suffolk



# Which Tool? Decision Matrix

## What inclusive process most fits your situation?

Process	Futures Planning	Professional Team only	Planning with Child & Family	Story so far needs telling	Problem Solving Focus	Restorative	Involves Peer Group/Natural (unpaid) support	Theory Building	Emotional Insights needed	Goal setting	Action Planning
<b>PATH</b>	★	★ Service Path	★				★			★	★
<b>MAP</b>	★		★	★		★	★				★
<b>Circle of Adults</b>	★	★		★	★			★	★		★
<b>Solution Circle</b>	★			★	★						★
<b>Insights &amp; Solutions Circle</b>	★		★		★			★	★		★

**Suffolk Inclusion Alliance:** Working to support inclusion and participation in Suffolk  
 Please contact **Claire Darwin** at [claire.darwin@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:claire.darwin@suffolk.gov.uk) if you would like to find out more about collaborative problem solving and person centred planning to support inclusion and participation

## Which Tool? Key

**Futures Planning:** Planning around a child/young person or team/service that takes the long view. Where might they be in 10 or 20 years?, what might they be doing? Who will be in their life? And – ultimately – What would a good life for them look like? This kind of planning typically involves groups being encouraged to build vision or to dream for and with the child.

**Professionals only:** Meetings where no family members or the focus person are present. Sometimes open dialogue is essential between involved professionals without the family being directly involved. This is important when there are serious concerns but no direct evidence in areas such as child protection. There are also many times when professionals are contradicting or disagreeing with each other. These processes allow professionals to build consensus and a shared understanding around a problem situation and agree strategies. The tools are structured and tightly facilitated leaving no space for lengthy and rambling discussions. Teams/services may also use these processes in service planning meetings, however it is useful to consider whether and when you could involve service users in planning activities.

**Planning with child and family:** In the course of these processes the child, immediate and extended family members and friends will be present and actively encouraged to participate. The planning will be respectful and focused on the child's views and ideas, the plan will be 'owned' by them. The aim in such processes is for the young person to be surrounded by people, who love, care about or who are in a relationship with them. Other professional stakeholders will of course be present but these tools are not meant to be another kind of review meeting or case conference. They are person centred and it follows from this that the people who spend most time with the focus person will get to speak the most.

**Story so far needs telling:** The process will allow the story, the narrative of the child's life or service history to be told from the point of view of all present. This is not a clinical history-taking, it is about respectful listening to their meanings, their truths. The highs and lows – the happy and the sad – all listened to and recorded. The person will be asked to speak first followed by others who know them best. In some situations, such as transition stages for young people, newly involved people need to hear and learn from the family story so far.

**Problem Solving:** There will be a process involved to directly tackle a problem or situation that has become stuck or is very hard to understand. Participants will leave with first steps and ideas as to what to do next as well as an improved understanding of what is going on. These tools aim to activate the creativity of the group and to generate shared understandings. At best these processes will generate solutions, greater in depth understanding and shared theories.

**Restorative:** Processes which have at their core the concept of 'making it right', restoring relationships when harm has been done. Popularly known as Restorative Justice, there are a number of other restorative processes that share the same underlying constructs. Mediation, circle time, restorative conferencing all involve active listening, exploration of feelings and who has been affected with attempts to restore and resolve at their heart.

## Which Tool? Key continued

**Involves Peer Group:** The approach will deliberately harness the potentially positive influence of a person's peer group by actively inviting participation. For example other children/young people may be enlisted to form a team or a circle around a vulnerable or challenging individual. Friends and acquaintances may be invited to join the person as they engage in long term planning.

**Theory Building:** The process will involve deliberate attempts to build theory, share understandings or hypotheses about what is going on in a situation of concern. Alternative narratives or stories about what is happening will be shared to help participants understand at a deeper level and to better inform strategy selection. There is no competition for the best theory just a naming of a range of possibilities allowing professionals with different backgrounds to share their knowledge and experience.

**Emotional Insights needed:** Participants need to understand the emotional elements of what is happening more clearly. These tools will help to clarify the young person's emotions and help process the feelings being evoked in the practitioners.

**Goal setting:** The tool will involve sensing achievable goals or directly setting objectives for the future. The usual parameters for person centred goal setting are, "Is this positive and is it possible?"

**Action planning:** Direct, owned and describable actions will be asked for, not good intentions or ideas for other people to do. Action planning will be specific with individual's responsibilities and timings spelled out. For example, "Who is going to do this and by when?"