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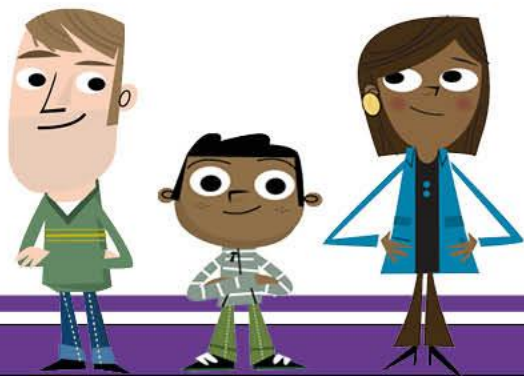




# Relentlessly Restorative Relationships:

How we are working together with children and families

8th October 2024





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An opportunity for observations and questions





# Children and Families Court Advisory and Support Service

- Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) – a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Ministry of Justice. We are the largest employer of children’s social workers in England.
- We work with more than 140,000 children each year, and independently advise the family courts in England about the welfare of children, what is safe for them and in their best interests.
- We operate in accordance with the law set by Parliament (Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000) and under the rules and directions of the family court.
- We work with around 47,000 children on 16,500 applications in the public law system – where a local authority has serious concerns about the safety or welfare of a child, and their family/parents are not able to protect them and safeguard their welfare.
- Our duty is to:
  - Safeguard and promote the welfare of children,
  - Provide advice to the court,
  - Make provision for children to be represented,
  - Provide information and support to children and families.







## Together with Children and Families

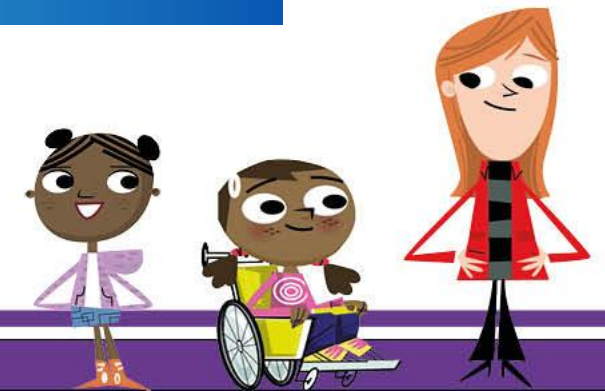
- The name for Cafcass' relationship-based practice framework.
- The framework sets out our values, how these values work in practice and the materials we use to sustain and improve the effectiveness of our work with children and families.
- It is founded in relationship-based practice, listening to families and children and using relationships to enable positive change.
- Together was developed collaboratively with colleagues across Cafcass and formally launched in September 2021.
- The Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB) have also advised and reflected with us, and will continue to be involved, as our practice and improvement is evaluated.





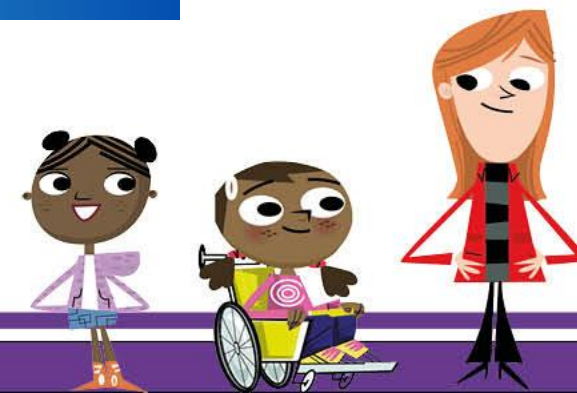
# RELATIONSHIPS

Build Maintain Repair



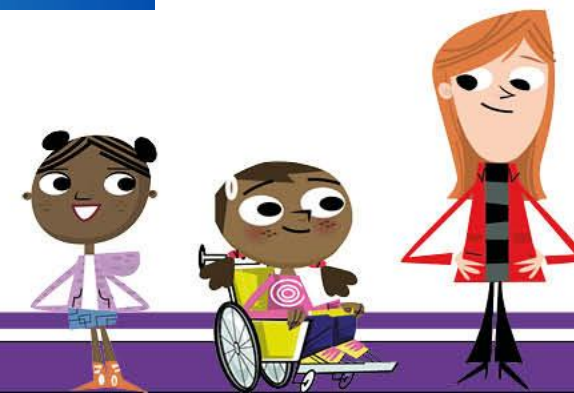


# CONNECT Before CONTENT





VALUES LIVED  
NOT LAMINATED





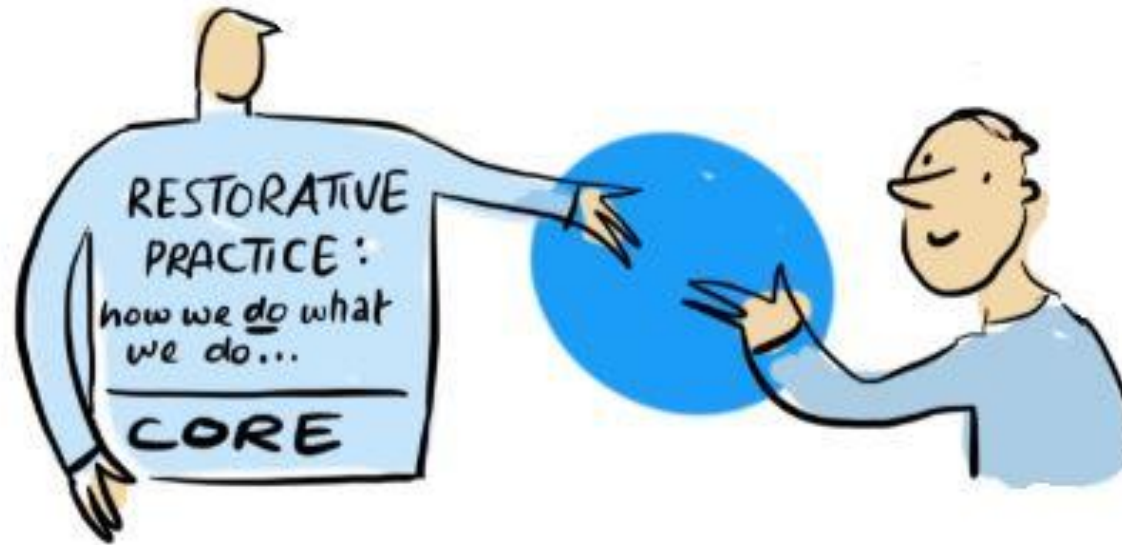


# COMMON SENSE **ISNT** COMMON PRACTICE





# Relationships

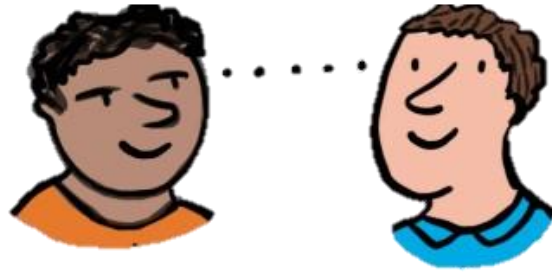




# Connect before content



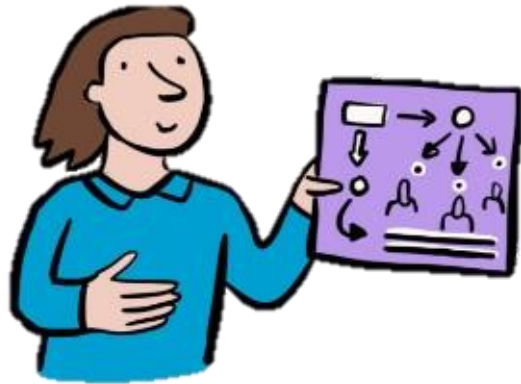




Believing in respectful  
relationships



Holding children and families  
at the heart of our practice



Decision making is  
clear and reasoned

What's important to you?



Being happy  
with my mum  
and  
playing piano!

Wanting to know more about you  
and what is important in your life



# Our values



Always looking for the  
strengths and risks







# Common Practice





## The difference restorative approaches have made in my work, a practice example.

- **Background to Simone:** she had involvement with children's services herself throughout her childhood due to neglect, parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and physical abuse. She had lived with foster carers and in residential care.
- She left care aged 16 to live with an older male who she had 8 children with. All these children were the subject of public law proceedings and were adopted.
- The concerns for the children related to domestic abuse, parental substance misuse and concerns relating to maternal mental health.
- **Background to my role with Simone:** I had been the guardian for Simone's 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> babies and recommended adoption. When Simone had her 9<sup>th</sup> baby, I was allocated as the guardian.

What are your initial thoughts?





## What did working restoratively look like with Simone?

- Prioritising building a trusting relationship.
- Being objective and challenging bias.
- Listening with the intent to understand.
- Celebrating strengths whilst also being clear on issues of risk and safety.



## The Background

1





## The Background

1



## The Impact of the above

2



## What I did

3



# The Impact

01

Collaborative working  
With parents and  
family members at  
all times.

# The Impact

**01**

Collaborative working  
with parents and  
family members at  
all times.

**02**

A build-up of a trust  
over time and a real  
sense that we are  
All working for the  
children.

# The Impact

**01**

Collaborative working  
with parents and  
family members at  
all times.

**02**

A build-up of a trust  
over time and a real  
sense that we are  
working for the children

**03**

The children's views  
were clear and  
heard at all times



# The Impact

**01**

Collaborative working  
With parents and  
family members at  
all times.

**02**

A build up of a trust  
Over time and a real  
sense that we are  
Working for the child

**03**

The childrens views  
were clear and  
heard at all times

**04**

Both parents were able  
To reach an Order by  
Consent.

This was the end of all  
proceedings



## Observations and Questions



 feels like  
the way Cafcass does things

It feels  
natural

We believe in  
it as a way of  
being and working



Everyone  
knows it's  
here to stay

We  
understand



It's about our culture, it's how we  
do things around here





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