

A Trauma-Informed and Rights Based Children and Young People's Participation Self-Assessment Tool



	Requirements for the organisation/service	Key Questions for Consideration		Trauma-Informed Questions for added Consideration	
<p>Space and Place. Make space and a place for me</p>	<p>Provide a safe and inclusive space for children to express their views</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do we regularly seek children and young people's views? 2. How have we made safe and inclusive spaces for children and young people to share their views? What makes these safe? How has the physical environment been adapted, if necessary, to facilitate children and young people's participation? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Has the sensory environment been considered? What can you do to make the physical space feel/be safe? b. Have meetings been scheduled at child friendly times? c. Have children been able to bring people they feel safe with? d. Have you allowed enough time? 3. How have children and young people's diverse needs and backgrounds been considered? 4. In your research or evaluation team has diversity and representation been considered? 5. How have children and young people's cultural safety been considered? 6. What steps have been taken to ensure that all children and young people can participate in ways they can and want to? 7. What considerations have been given to the ways in which the relationships that are important to children and young people can facilitate their participation? 8. To what extent do children and young people understand their rights? 		<p>Trauma impacts the brains and bodies of children and young people. It impacts their memory, their attention and their regulation or arousal. Children's understanding of themselves, of others and of relationships can be shaped by their experiences of abuse and violence. For these reasons the creation of safe space and place using trauma informed principles is essential.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do our staff know about trauma and its impact on the capacity of children and young people to meaningfully engage in participative processes? 2. How have we made it possible for children and young people to participate safely? 3. What principles are shared across the organisation that informs how children and young people are responded to? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. For example, how does the knowledge that trauma impacts nervous system regulation impact the design of focus groups or service delivery? b. How does the knowledge about trauma impact on memory formation impact the timing, nature and regularity of feedback data collection with young people? 4. To what extent are the rights of children and young people to safety understood and enacted by staff in the organisation? 5. Are our service spaces experienced as safe by children and young people? How do we know? 	

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<p>Sharing and Showing</p> <p>Help me share and show my views</p>	<p>Provide appropriate opportunities that facilitate children and young people's expression of their views and perspectives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How have children and young people been given the information / support they need to form a view? 2. To what extent do children and young people know that they do not have to take part? 3. How are all children who are capable of forming a view given the opportunity to express it? 4. What are the range of ways in which children and young people can express themselves in participatory and evaluation processes? 5. How have the differing abilities of children and young people been considered in the way they offered opportunities to express their views and perspectives? 6. How can children and young people shape the ways they participate based on their interests and priorities? 7. How do we provide children and young people with opportunities to participate in our service delivery design or feedback? Aim for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Open invitations b. Regular intervals c. Relational contexts, and d. Independent options e. Creative methods 8. Have we made it considered rewarding lived experience participation? 		<p>Children and young people who have already experienced trauma may need more support to express their views.</p> <p>Particularly for those with statutory involvement who may not have had much experience of being given a voice, being supported to develop informed views or to share views and have them be given due weight, it is imperative that services consider having easy to understand resources and staff able to support as needed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Throughout service provision, how can children and young people raise the things that matter to them about our service? How do children know about this? Have we made it clear that we encourage feedback and that this will not negatively impact the service they receive? 2. How do we provide materials that support children and young people, their parents and carers to learn about their rights in a simple way? 3. Do we have specific staff who children know they can go to if they have feedback, questions or complaints? How do they know them? How do they find out how to contact them? 4. Do we have opportunities for children and young people to help shape and improve our service delivery based on their lived experience? 	

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<p>Listening and Believing</p> <p>Listen and believe me</p>	<p>Ensure that children and young people's views are accepted and communicated to individuals with the responsibility to listen and consider the implications of feedback</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the organisation have any dedicated roles designed to listen to children and young people? How do these roles work? 2. Have children and young people been given the message that the organisation is ready and willing to listen? How? 3. What do children and young people know about who their views are being communicated to? 4. How does the organisation communicate that children and young people will be believed no matter what they say? 		<p>Broken and blocked trust is an emergent property of relational trauma. Systems, agencies and workers will need to work harder to demonstrate they value children's views, by providing them with an audience who are able to listen well and effect change.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do your staff feel confident in their ability to talk to and ask children for their views and opinions? 2. Do your staff know how to demonstrate active listening skills? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Receive b. Appreciate c. Summarise d. Ask 3. Use a feedback model in each session that ensures accuracy and understanding. 4. Has effort been made to build and earn trust with vulnerable children and young people? 5. Does the audience include trusted and safe adults and workers who can support them and assist them to communicate their wishes? 	

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<p>Valuing and Mattering</p> <p>Value my sharing and show me my views matter</p>	<p>Ensure that children and young people's views are acted upon, where appropriate.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How are children and young people given the message that the organisation takes their views seriously? 2. What is the evidence that demonstrates that children and young people's views have been considered by those with the power to effect change? 3. How will/do you explain to children and young people feedback and reasons for the decisions taken and influence they have (or don't have)? 4. How do children and young people know that they matter to the organisation? 		<p>Children and young people have the right for their views to be given due weight. Children who have experienced the trauma of abuse and violence have rarely been afforded this right, and because of this, it is important we hold ourselves accountable to ensuring we have processes and procedures in place that embed their voices and views into our work. In turn, these should lead to impact and influence.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are children's views a requirement in case notes or file note taking? 2. What policies, procedures or Quality system actions ensure action on children's feedback? 3. In projects, wherever possible, invite young people to help with the analysis. 4. Close the loop with all the participants by letting them know what the outcomes were, even if a policy or service solution was not achieved. 5. If appropriate, consider finding a way to celebrate if the initiative was successful. 6. Remind children and young people of the complaints process. 	

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<p>Bonding and Belonging</p> <p>Create ways for me to connect and belong.</p>	<p>Ensure that children and young people know that they are part of an ongoing process where they join other children and young people to provide feedback to the organisation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does the organisation promote the experience that children and young people have the right to speak up? 2. To what extent do children and young people know that other children and young people like them have been involved in the participation process? 3. Why is it important to the organisation that children and young people feel that they belong like all other children who receive a service? 		<p>It is important that children and young people understand that all feedback is welcomed, and that the organisation has an ongoing culture of positive, constructive feedback management in which children's views and expertise are valued. In this way, children and young people may be able to overcome the narratives gained through abuse and trauma, where children's views and emotions are seen as less important or punished when they inconvenience adults.</p> <p>By creating an overt culture of inclusivity and solidarity, where children and young people see the words and views of others like them shared and championed around them, displayed on walls, shared in meetings and included in media, traumatised children and young people will come to trust that their own voice will be valued also.</p>	