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Advocacy for children and young people with disabilities and emotional needs – young people’s advice about hearing their voice (Maxine Cole, Triangle)

Stream 3 of the wider project: Gathering feedback and measuring outcomes and change with Children and Young People with Learning Disabilities (LD)
Good practice example from ‘Hearing the Voice’ of children and young people with moderate, severe or multiple and profound learning disabilities

We were interested in hearing about helpful ways to listen to the ‘voice’ of children and young people with moderate, severe or profound and multiple learning disabilities. When we say ‘voice’ we mean communication, in whichever form works best for the child or young person.

We asked people to write a summary of what they are doing and send it to us. Below we list summaries of what people did, what was helpful and what were the barriers. The summaries contain lots of ideas that can be applied to working with children and young people of different ages with a range of complex needs across the levels from own life, through service development, training and research and community and cultural change.

Find more information here:

<https://www.corc.uk.net/outcome-experience-measures/feedback-and-outcome-measures-for-children-and-young-people-with-learning-disabilities/>

Good practice example from 'Hearing the Voice'

Gathering feedback and measuring outcomes and change with Children and Young People with Learning Disabilities (LD)

WHAT I DO

I met with 3 groups of young people in their lounge at their residential home in Sussex. The young people communicated in a mix of speech, sign and writing. I spoke with 6 young girls and 6 young boys all aged between 13 and 16 years old. I told them I had been asked to help with a project called 'Hearing the voice of children and young people', that I would like to ask them 6 questions, and they would get a voucher for their help and time. I told them I would write their answers into a report and it will not say their names.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

I told and showed the group there are no right or wrong answers. All young people showed me thumbs up.

1. 'HOW DO GROWN-UPS LISTEN TO YOU?'

- I asked 'Listen well?', 2 young people agreed.
- One young person signed 'meeting' 'talk about flowers outside' – they had asked to plant flowers in the garden and had.
- One young person communicated, 'staff had not worn masks when I asked them to'.
- 2 young people said 'in keywork'.
- One young person signed 'signing'

Other comments included:

- 'On Monday evenings I attend the students meeting'.
- 'Looking at us'
- 'Answer me and wait for me to answer and then they reply'
- 'No right or wrong answers'

2. 'WHAT HELPS GROWN-UPS LISTEN TO YOU?'

- 'I don't know'
- 'When you ask for help, they listen to you and then do it'
- 'I asked to help with laundry and they listened and I did'
- 'Having visuals', 'being able to sign', 'using voices', 'writing' and 'ipads'
- Adults suggested:
- 'They ask you questions and you chose which bit to answer', 2 young people agreed.
- 'Good meetings', 2 young people nodded

'Repeating sentences and staff start sentence and young people finish it'

Good practice example from 'Hearing the Voice'

Gathering feedback and measuring outcomes and change with Children and Young People with Learning Disabilities (LD)

3. WHAT DO GROWN-UPS DO THAT'S GOOD? (WHEN THEY LISTEN)

- 'They give me time to talk'
- 'Help us if we have asked'

The group thought this was the same question as above

4. WHAT DO GROWN-UPS DO THAT'S BAD? (WHEN THEY LISTEN)

- 'I don't know'
- 'Wearing masks as I can't hear them or its delayed', 3 young people agreed.
- 'If someone doesn't listen to me, I feel sad'.

'Nothing', most of the group agreed with this.

5. GIVE PEOPLE ONE TOP TIP TO LISTEN BETTER?

- 'Give me options' eg this or that or something else.
- 'Use my name'
- 'A quiet room'
- 'One to one'
- 'Use symbols, signs and words'
- 'Use feeling cards'
- 'Don't wear a mask'
- 'Listen properly and hear what I say', two young people agreed with this.
- 'Please help me sometimes when I ask'
- 'Signing', 2 young people agreed with this
- 'Choices'
- 'Make eye contact'
- 'Be helpful'
- 'Talk to me'

Good practice example from 'Hearing the Voice'

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6. HOW HAS COVID BEEN FOR YOU?

- 'Quite stressful as I have not seen my family yet.'
- 'I had it so I was worried but I had no symptoms.'
- 'It was OK'
- 'Bit hard because I have not seen my nanny who lives abroad.'
- 'All rubbish', 2 young people agreed
- 'A little bit rubbish'
- 'Schools been shut so good to have time off school'
- 'Can't play with friends'
- 'I don't understand the different bubbles at school where I can't play with my friend but I live with him here.'
- A young person signed 'sad', thumbs down, 2 young people agreed .
- 'I am tired of Covid'
- 'Covid is not good it's bad'