NURTURING & WEAVING NETWORKS

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

Ideas to improve the impact of our networks and support those who lead them.

Self Management week 2023

Background and context to the session.

The [Nurturing and Weaving Networks Special Interest Group](#) was set up following the Network Weaving Learning sessions offered by Q. The ideas and resources shared during that learning it was felt would be of interest to others. With June Holley's permission and working with others a new set of resources went into co design to share. For more information on the work of June Holley and colleagues check out [Network weavers](#)

Through many events, conversations, active learning sessions a suite of resources were produced to help support networks and network leaders. We would like to thank [Supporting Q Connections Fund](#) for their support in enabling this to happen and to everyone who helped us get to this point and to all those who will go on and use the materials including the Health and Social Care Alliance (The ALLIANCE) who worked with us on this project.. You can download the materials [HERE](#)

The suite of resources includes.

The Curiosity poster
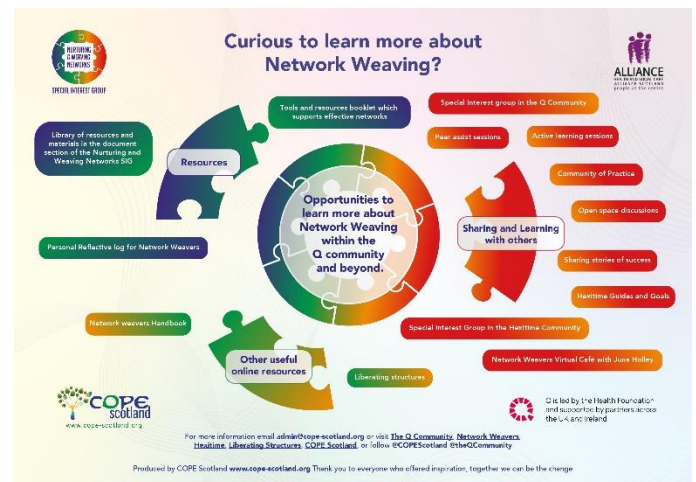
A simple tool to invite curiosity about learning more about network effectiveness, network leadership and network weaving. Full size PDF is in the download of materials.

A validated self-assessment to help identify areas for action.

This assessment is available online [HERE](#) It is an editable PDF which you can complete, save and then refer back to at a later date, if this has meaning for you.

The self-assessment was developed using the most common network challenges which emerged from

conversations with many stakeholders. However, you may have one which is not included and there is space to add that if this has meaning for you.

We are showing Jpeg images of materials here, online they are full size and can be enlarged.

A tools and resources booklet offering ideas on places to find out more about the issues identified. This includes.

Curious to learn more about Network Weaving?
Building relationships
Evaluating your Network
Finding the time
Generating Ideas
Hassles with Hierarchies
Ideas to action
Inclusivity and Diversity
Network Mapping
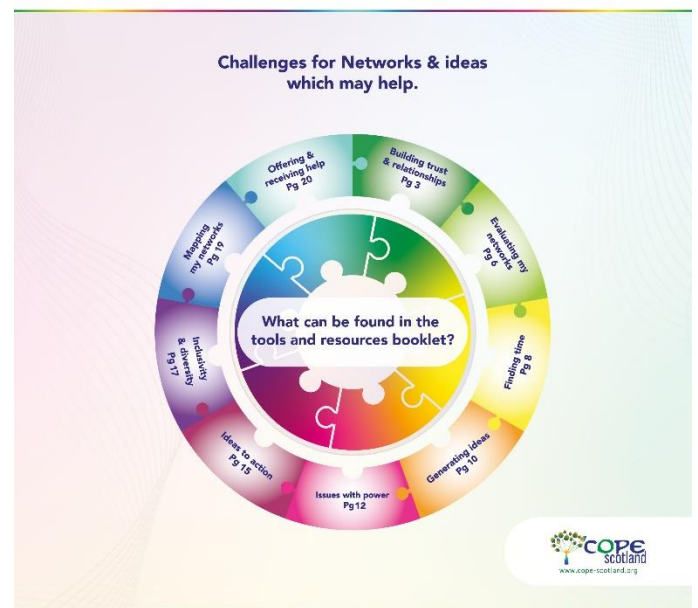Peer Support asking for and receiving help as well as offering it.

A reflective workbook offering a CPD log for those leading networks. Contents include.

Chapter one: Ideas on how to use this workbook.

Chapter two: Understanding my role as a Network Weaver

Chapter 3: Relationship with myself and others

Chapter 4: Understanding my Networks

Chapter 5: Motivating & energizing my Networks and me

Reflective Practice Workbook

Understanding my Networks and my roles within them

COPE scotland
www.cope-scotland.org

Glisted by the Health Foundation and supported by partners across the UK and Ireland

WHAT CAN BE FOUND IN THE REFLECTIVE PRACTICE WORKBOOK

SEPT 2023
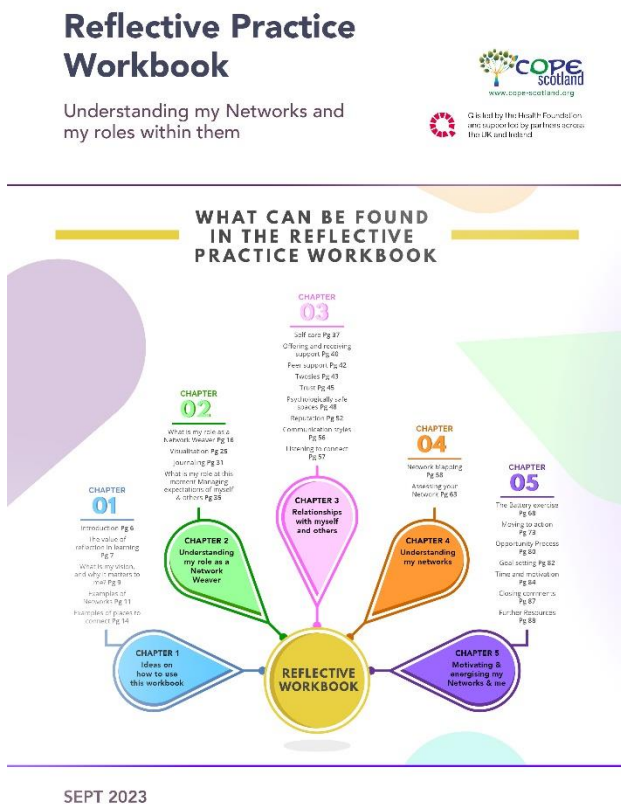
Self-care

Working with others is not always easy, it takes time to build relationships and understandings. Making time for self-care is important. We started the session with an exercise of being in the moment. A recording of this and other ways to be in the moment are available at www.cope-scotland.org e.g. Living in the Now

What do you think?

We took some time to reflect on the following.

'' When we work in a collaborative way with others……………''

Responses included:

- We share the load.
- We can achieve so much more.
- We have a shared purpose and learn from each other.
- We make space for consensus.
- We feel supported and can achieve more.
- We learn new ways of working creatively to share the load.
- We're more likely to succeed.
- Share knowledge, views and ideas and bring different things to the table.
- We gain insights into others and achieve more.
- Work with, as team, exchange information, load.

There was a clear recognition that working together is a good thing for sharing the load and coming up with insights we may not achieve alone.

Yet we also recognised that while we know this is a good thing, sometimes collaborative efforts are not as effective as they could be.

To explore this further we used the Liberating Structure TRIZ. For more information on this and other liberating structures follow this LINK

The session broke into groups and using Jamboards, joined in the following activity:

- Introduce yourselves to each other 2min.

- Using jam board capture the worst possible ways to collaborate 5min.

- Change the colour of the post its to reflect behaviours you have seen/or done yourself 5min.

- Discuss those post its you have seen /done yourself and discuss how the suite of resources may help improve these areas 10min.

- Come back into the main group for reflections on the session.

We are grateful for everyone's contributions,

The following shares the points captured from the Jamboards.

This is the LINK to the Jamboards which were used (and thanks to the Alliance team for technical help. Appreciated)

What emerged were things we can change, here are some of those ideas:

- Offer hybrid meetings for people who cannot attend in person.

- Cover people's expenses who are not paid through their work to attend.

- Create a culture where all points of view are heard.

- Do not make assumptions about what people do, or do not know.

- Collate, a diverse invite list.

- Check in with people and follow them up to see how they felt the networking session went.

- Build a positive networking culture.

- Build relationships, get to know each other.

- Recognize that identifying a challenge is the first step in overcoming it.

- Have clear aims.

- Ongoing engagement with members.

There were other things which those attending had noticed which got in the road of collaboration. Given the time at the session these may not all have turned pink, but there was a sense, we can do something about this. Examples included:

- Networks become academic talking shops and tick box exercises.

- Not outcome focused and lack of action and leadership.

- The technical language used can be a barrier to understanding and engagement.

- Language needs to be accessible and jargon free, but not patronizing.

- Address the assumed hierarchy.

- People holding court and others don't get a chance to speak and share.

- Negative comments made, prejudice, unconscious bias can affect how safe people feel to engage.

- The same people turn up and maybe not the most inspirational of voices.

- Give time and space to enable the voices of lived experience to have the conditions which make membership attractive.

- IT issues and internet access can be a barrier when things are online.

- Misleading information about the network causes confusion.

- Not enough notice is given for collaboration meetings.

- People with lived experience are invited but not given the same minutes, expenses, that paid staff are.

- The groups set up are too vague about what their aims are.

- People not feeling connected and others taking over.

- Fixed expectations and no room for flexibility.

What next?

There was a clear recognition that investing in ideas which made our collaborative efforts stronger was a good idea.

COPE Scotland, with its own resources offered an in-person session to explore ideas further at the Alliance HQ in Glasgow. It was recognized this would need to be either a hybrid event or repeated online for those who travelling to Glasgow maybe an issue. Hilda was happy to do both in person and repeat the session online.

COPE Scotland will also explore possible funding opportunities to offer a more structured learning opportunity around using the materials.

In the meantime, people are welcome to attend sessions organized by the nurturing and weaving networks special interest groups as guests of the Q Community. More information [Here](#)

The next session will be online on 9th November 2023, 12-12.55pm, [Register](#) here. There will be guest speakers and we will be exploring value creation. More information on this [HERE](#)

COPE Scotland are working on an information video giving an overview of the origins of network weaving and the suite of resources. This will be shared on our website. We tweet any new events or materials on X @COPEScotland

We know working together makes sense, and yet, we do not invest enough time in building the conditions and relationships which enable us to achieve all that we can. Network weaving is one set of tools that can help. Who we are as people and the passion we have to make a difference is what drives change. I am passionate about these materials as I do believe they offer some ideas that can help us when we get stuck, to make the most of the energy and resources we have, and to know, we are not alone, there are others who care also. We can all be network weavers.

NETWORK WEAVERS

* Share generously and ask for support often
* Lead with your lived experience
* Focus on opportunities not obstacles
* Cultivate safe and brave spaces
* Communicate with clarity and kindness
* Welcome difference and working differently using technology
* Support others to achieve their dreams and results
* See the humanity in all things and celebrate life

Thank you to the ALLIANCE and everyone who attended today. Your help and attendance was appreciated.

Kind regards

Hilda