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The Future of Croydon's Mental Health Forum?

Sarah Burns, Head of Communities (shared)
www.cvalive.org.uk @CroydonVA

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Housekeeping

- Fire exits and facilities
- @CroydonVA
- Please silence your phones, Ipads etc during the session
- Workshop finishes at 12pm

Introduction

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Discovery interview:

Find someone you don't know and conduct a discovery interview:

- Your name
- Your role/interest and (if applicable) organisation
- Why you came along today

5 minutes each interview (I'll prompt to swop over)

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Agenda

- Historical context of Croydon's MHF
- Challenges/opportunities
- What is ABCD?
- How ABCD works
- OST- what's the future?
- Film
- close

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Croydon Voluntary Action promotes, supports and develops effective voluntary action, community development and community involvement for the benefit of the whole community within the London Borough of Croydon. As the key local umbrella infrastructure body serving all Croydon's communities, we run a wide range of services for small groups, social enterprises, larger charities and volunteers at all stages of development.

Croydon's Mental Health Forum

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- Launched in June 2004
- 127 members (passionate citizens, carers, service users, VCOs)
- Working in partnership and campaigning to improve MH services and to bring about better quality of life for all.
- 6 x network meetings & 6 x steering group meetings
- Representation on strategic partnerships

Challenges/Opportunities

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- Avoid duplication:

- Hear Us, MH Service User Group, improving the quality of services in Croydon.

- Imagine Mental Health, improving the lives of MH service users

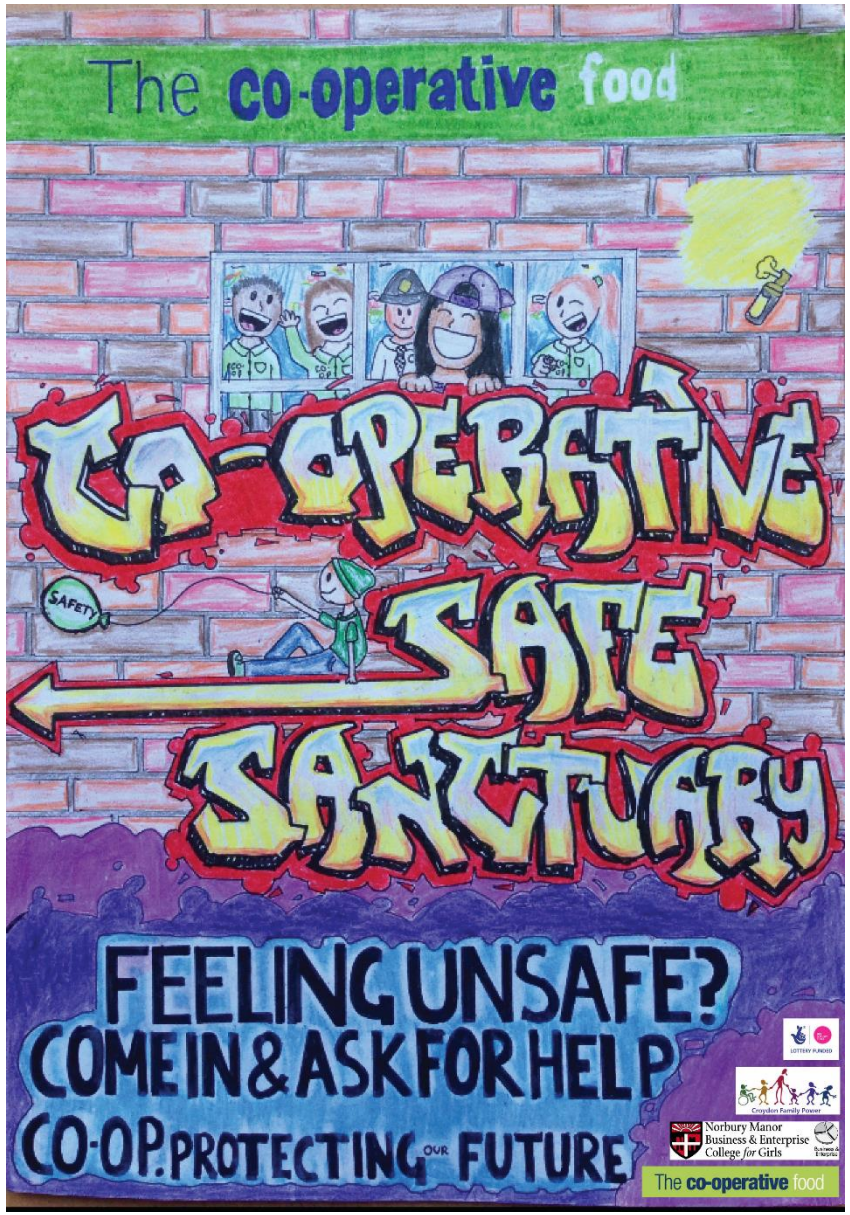
- Clarity of purpose- what do we want to do?
- Who's MHF?
- What support is needed?

What is ABCD?

What might be possible if people focused their attentions on **strengths** more than weaknesses or **opportunities** more than problems?

What can be done

instead of what can't be done?



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Community is about identifying and contributing our assets

How ABCD works……..

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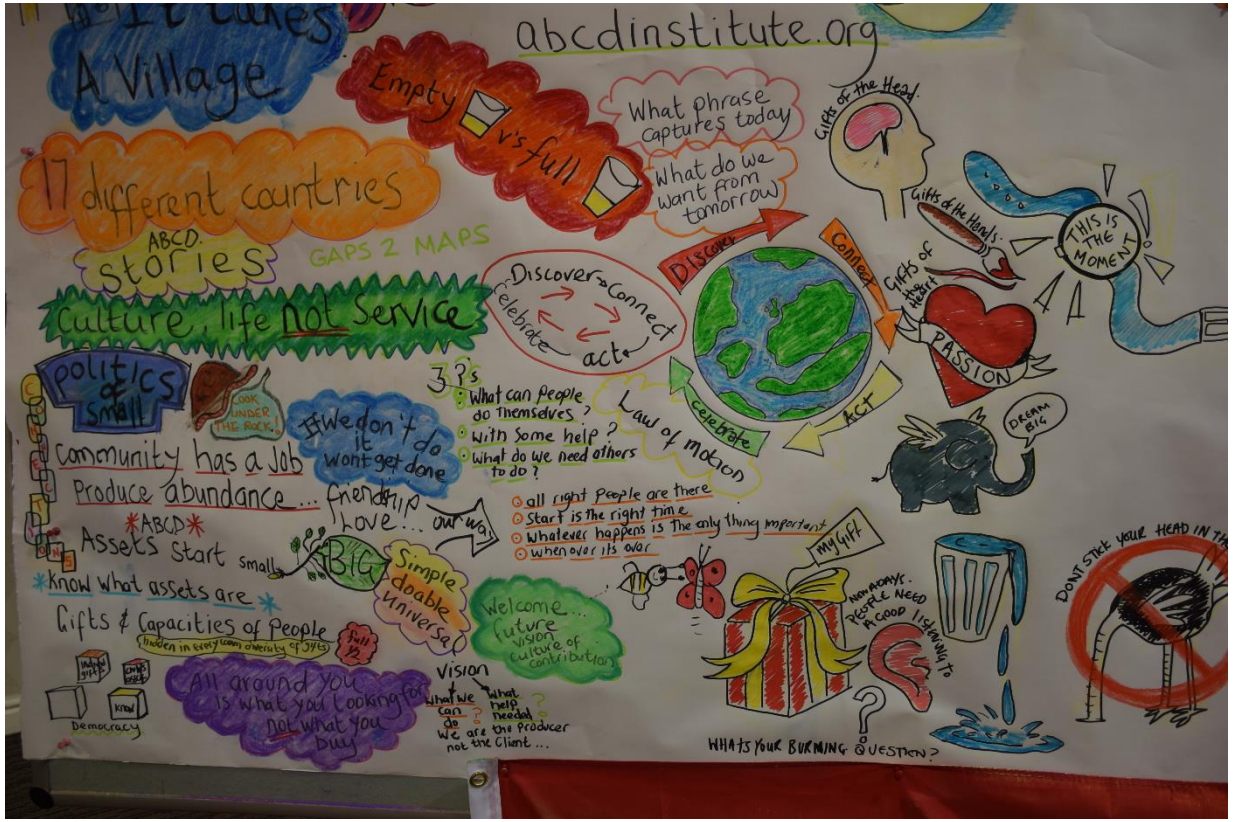

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) brings local people together to make their communities more interesting, healthy, safe and welcoming places to live.

We do this by encouraging new and deeper relationships and by inviting people to utilise their power as connected and caring citizens to work for the common good.

A) It begins with a '**Community Builder**' finding a handful of local people who are known by and who know their neighbours. These people we call **'Connectors'** and their curiosity, energy, loyalty and kindness are the foundations upon which everything else is built.

B) The Community Builder helps the Connectors weave the fabric of the neighbourhood together through hundreds of **'conversations'** with individuals, groups, informal clubs and other social networks. (Care is taken to include people on the margins of the community and to seek out the invisible groups of people who share hobbies, play cards or have keep-fit buddies etc.).

C) These conversations focus on exchanges of 'positive regard' and on **uncovering people's strengths, stories**, ideas, hopes, skills, passions and resources. This new found source of wealth enables the connectors to begin to understand exactly what it is that local people care enough about to work together to change.

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D) People form themselves into **action and project groups**, making sure that between them they have the commitment and all the skills they need to succeed.

The Community Builder shows them how best to exercise their collective power; for example, whether to take action themselves, to hold others accountable or to withhold their consent.

E) The Community Builder and the Connectors cultivate these small groupings and oversee the emergence of some broader, general themes that fully describe the sort of future people want to see, both a vision and a plan of action for their community.

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F) Gradually, as the changes they want happen, levels of competence, mutual trust and self confidence improve. This, in turn, leads to more optimism, higher expectations and a widely shared sense of 'can do'.

G) At this stage, closer connections are made with the wider community, with the local schools, faith groups, businesses, formal clubs, self help, community and voluntary groups. The connectors draw an 'asset map' of all this 'associational life' and of all the local resources, used and unused, that could be mobilised for the mutual benefit of local people.

H) When a real sense of a caring and connected community is evident to everyone, then and only then, are the institutions and professional helpers 'engaged'.

The Future of Croydon's MHF?

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...will rely upon Open Space Technology (OST), created in the mid-1980s by organizational consultant Harrison Owen.

- OST events have no keynote speakers, no pre-announced schedules of workshops, no panel discussions. Instead, sitting in a large circle, participants create their own agenda.
- To initiate a workshop participants propose topics by writing them on large sheets of paper which they post on a wall.
- When participants have posted their topics, a 'village marketplace' begins: participants mill around the wall, choosing their personal schedules for the remainder of the event.

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- Group meetings start immediately. There are no leaders; those who proposed topics act as recorders whose informal minutes form a basis for the report and recommendations, which sum up the work of the group.
- OST is more highly organized than the best planning committee could possibly manage. It is also chaotic, productive, and fun. No one is in control; rather, a handful of simple OST principles guide group activity.
- The most basic principle is that everyone who comes to an OST event must be interested in the topic that draws the group together and willing to take responsibility for contributing to the group activity of creating something out of that interest.

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Four key principles are…

whoever chooses a small group is right for that group
whatever happens is the only thing that could happen
whenever it starts is the right time
whenever it's over, it's over

Another OST principle is the Law of Two Feet: If you find yourself in a situation where you are not learning or contributing, go somewhere else. This principle includes the possibility of assuming responsibility either for moving the group to another level of awareness and participation or for leaving one group and moving to another.

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What is Croydon's Mental Health Forum?

What could it be?

Should it be?

Further information:

www.cvalive.org.uk

www.nurturedevelopment.org/

www.abcdinstitute.org/

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Thank you!

Representation on strategic partnerships

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- Mental Health Partnership Group
- Acute Care Forum
- Healthwatch Croydon
- Primary Care Mental Health Development Group
- Employment Partnership Group
- Talking Therapies Forum
- Carers Partnership Network/Group
- Trust Wide Involvement Group