Interview Recording Philippa 20:9:21

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**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

suppose, staff, relationship, kids, child, kenny, social worker, work, team, play, bit, feel, important, struggled, thinking, positive, direct, difficult, investment, point

00:00 - Interviewer

Just according to that computer, and the email the staff leaflet, which you'll have seen probably a few times during the consent form, and what I can do is if it's okay, I'll get the consent form off at some point when I'm on campus, that's fine. And good. Okay. So if we start then just did that, that beginning, then the best of what is or what has been, so you can draw in the past, as well as current stuff that you think has worked really well, or has worked well, in terms of helping kids to recover. And it can be anything that you think you mean, you're obviously in this role as a manager. So you see, obviously direct practice, you're involved in daily practice, but you're also involved in maybe other things that allow that practice to happen or... So it's really up to you in terms of what kind of things you would pick out, that, that make a difference for these kids?

00:54 - Interviewee

Okay, I think probably the first thing for me would be about the relationship, people managed to build with the kids. And so I think at first, like, when a child first comes in, there's not best focus straight away. For me, I feel like of, like, Oh, this is what we need to do to help this child recover. This is like really, to do this. And we need to make sure there's direct work done, and there's almost as slow start for the child coming in. And that allows that getting, like that relationship often to happen. And I feel like, that's really significant. I feel like so obviously, like, my previous role as a social worker, and there was just all this fast paced, like, this is your case, now you're dealing with us, like, you know, get in there, do this work. And there was never that same time to build relationships. And I suppose, allow the kids to learn to trust you. And that's, that's something that I suppose is pretty not new to me, but just that, that speed in the pressure of having to get these bits of work done. Isn't there the same? And so I think that's something that's, I think, that most of the staff are really invested in that time and that relationship. So yeah, to get to know them, and to give them space, I suppose for it to be on their terms, rather than right, we are trying to build a relationship here, you know, work with us as a much more, I suppose. Child-led thing that that happens through play and stuff. So that's suppose that the first bit that Yeah, I think is really positive that. I suppose another maybe not. I don't know I can't say much for other organisations in the sense but, for like, certainly in social work, that was very different. And it was something that I missed being there, that it was just all very, you get in your whatever, bit of work, it was that you had to get done done. And, and, or you had to do this visit that. And you're only allowed to do one visit a month, because that's what the CSO says. And you're, you've got enough on your plate without doing any more. So that was the bit that suppose that I really struggled with in social work, that feels not the case at [org]. And certainly think in [Bungalow 1] there's a real team kind of approach to working with all the kids. And that as almost, you know, sometimes you can end up feeling like you're working against people, rather than, you know, the challenge being the children that you're working with. And I feel like [bungalow 1] got a really nice team supportive feel to it that allows the staff to really focus and have that energy within the kids rather than it being within the adults, any kind of conflict in the adult relationships, you don't really see that. And I think that's probably a really special thing to have in a team that's in such a job that's getting high, intense, you know, people have been in, people have been brought up differently and have different values and all are trying to get to the same place. But because I suppose that can quite often cause conflict. And I don't feel the team in [Bungalow 1]. There's that conflict that's stopping the relationships from building and stopping the adult focussing on the children and so yeah, Really important thing that they've got that

05:03 - Interviewer

why do you think that is then in [Bungalow 1]? Because as you say everybody even in [bungalow 1] for everybody works there, you know have been brought up differently. A and have had different experiences - what is it that allows that to become less important there or workable or?

05:21 - Interviewee

Andrew, I think if I could put my finger on it. It would have made certainly future roles I'm sure much easier. I don't know, I don't know what it is that the staff are a bit of an older team. And suppose there's a bit more maturity in there that that in other teams, there's not but I don't think like even the staff that are younger within that team have almost come in. And that's been their experience. So that's kind of how they roll, which I'm sure in other settings the younger ones going in they could be influenced like that. And I had a conversation with [another manager] the other day about this stuff. And how sorry, at uni I was doing the whole should residential childcare workers be educated degree level? And we've had a bit of a debate. Yeah, I can a [another manager]'s obviously got a really different point of view from me, which is fine. And but obviously, you know that would that take away some of that bitchiness that some of the staff that are I don't know how to say this without sounding like really judgy. And some of the staff that are less educated, I would say are the staff that are more of that kind of cycle of bitching and stuff that can happen in the workplace, not in [Bungalow 1] I must say. And but we were debating that as well, like with that. I suppose if they've got that can a deeper knowledge of what we're doing here, if they've got that deeper knowledge of the theory, theoretical side of things, that almost you've got more of a focus on then rather than any kind of stuff that goes on in the workplace. That? I don't know. I just seems to be less.

07:20 - Interviewer

Yeah. Yeah, that's I mean, I suppose that's an interesting question about what what that is. Is there something about the degree or is there something about the kind of person who does a degree? I don't know. Yeah. So you've got me you're drawing me

07:38 - Interviewee

as an interested one, and like [another manager] and I like debated it out, because [another manager] hasn't been to Uni. so, like, [another manager], I suppose I think I upset [them] a wee bit actually, until really, I kinda really went and explained, like my kinda thinking behind that, and yeah, certainly not in every case, I would see. And actually, I wonder how, like, certainly, for the younger ones, I feel of the people that I've been through that seem to have left, so I keep having some hanging up. I don't know if you can hear that is less. Certainly. And there's just more of a focus I think the ones that have been uni, the ones that have like the will have been working towards the kind of Hnc I suppose. But that kind of deeper, deeper knowledge. I don't know I feel sometimes they can appear to me as more invested and, in the kids. So yeah, I'm certainly for the degree.

08:40 - Interviewer

And do you think then, because obviously I know that there are there is training that happens in-house, you know, in terms of the DDP one DDP two consultations, and there's quite a fair, there's a fair bit of theoretical stuff in terms of attachment and stuff that you think it needs something bigger.

09:00 - Interviewee

And I think that's amazing. I think they've been stuffs amazing. And I think you know, most given everybody that can a solid knowledge base for working with the kids, I think it's so important actually think like, without that, things would be probably much more difficult and much more difficult in the sense like what we're talking about that people are coming from different value points and stuff. But I think that training almost works you in of who you're going to go with the kids and have a better understanding of your story. So understand why things affect you in certain ways. And I think without [Consultant A], yeah, [Consultant A] is so important and what we're doing and and not just the the initial training or the level two training, but the sessions that we have with that as well. I think any gripes or anything always come out in there and don't get me wrong, it can be a really difficult session. Like sometimes I've left feeling upset before. But that was, that was in [Bungalow 2] and upset, but ready to start afresh almost. And that can just give you a better perspective on. I suppose it gives you a safe space to have things out. And so [Consultant A] is a massive part and I suppose helping us be in a place to support the children and recover. And which I think in most residential, you've not got the same sense of that we've not got that same security. And I think [Consultant A]'s way, and how she can hold the situation. I'd love to know how she does that work in meetings and stuff. And but she, I suppose you're just provides a safety within that. That really lets everybody open up and be honest. And even when it's difficult to be honest. Yeah, that space is there to do that. Yeah.

11:05 - Interviewer

Yeah. So that's, that's she, she's providing this kinda, almost like a group supervision type session that she didn't feel. Yeah, yeah. So. So yeah. So it sounds like having having spaces to reflect is important for this work to allow you to help children in to recover. So that sounds like those. There needs to be stuff in place for staff in order to allow them to do this type of work. Is that a fair?

11:37 - Interviewee

Absolutely, absolutely. And actually, it was something that I felt when I was at, over in [bungalow 2], and that the team struggled with it struggled to have that I suppose, open, oh that worked really well, tonight, actually, that never works. Why does it not work? Like what can we do tomorrow night to make that better, because that never work tonight. So I had organised like and set up, that's almost like when the kids went to bed, there was almost like an adult reflection, but it was almost like the SAT down together. And I suppose, It was part of the shift's planner on that, I kinda introduced that because I don't want to add something else. And that the work, they were having to... Excuse me, another bit of paperwork, but another something they had to do, and they've always got a really busy night. And but this sat them together and all agreed. They all gave their positive report worked well tonight, each individual person and then collectively as a group, they would reflect and think about what they could have done better. And, and I think like a lot of the staff are really reluctant to start with, again, because it can be difficult to have these conversations, I suppose. But it's through time that ended up working really well and almost gave the staff a kinda, a safe place to have those chats, when things were going quite well like, Oh, we've still got this to do, let's think about what went well, and then give them that opportunity. have those discussions. Whereas I suppose if you were having those discussions outwith that, this is this is our time for reflect as people people can sometimes get their back up a bit erm, and think that they're almost being criticised or whatever, when that's not the case. Like we just need to be able to, I suppose be open to that reflection. So yeah, that worked well over there, have not felt the same need to put it over in [bungalow 1] To be honest, because the staff are quite good. They just doing that naturally staff or they will sit down together and talk about what was really difficult that night and if there's anything they can do to improve that tomorrow and stuff. So I've not felt like I need to implement it in [bungalow 1].

13:53 - Interviewer

Yeah, yeah, so these different, different structures and I suppose it goes back to the first thing you talked about was relationships and you were talking about the relationship with the kids but relationship seems to be coming up. Now in terms of relationships between staff members, relationship in teams, relationships between managers and stuff through and and at the start there you were talking about having the time to develop relationships? Yeah. Okay, that's a that's a process that that happens over time.

14:26 - Interviewee

And it can take a can take a long time, especially for the kids that have come to us having experienced 20 odd foster placements before those relationships and almost that there's an unwillingness at points from the kids that come in to trust adults that are here. So that relationship building back can take a long time. And the social workers I suppose that are accepting of that and not pushing too hard for us to be doing this. specific pieces of work, I feel like get better outcomes for the kids. Because we can do the work, we can do the work, without the relationship, I suppose, but you're you're going to get a much better result by by sticking in there. And that being your constant, like the bit you're concentrating on initially, and just being within, with them with them in their space. And, yeah, it's definitely not given enough credit for, outwith I don't think, just that opportunity to build relationship... I was reading something actually, yesterday, I think it was for uni. I think what it was, and it was about like, it was about relationships and that, like, definitely want to see if that's something that you'll have used before. But it was really interesting...

I don't even know how to say the person say his name, Kara. baggy, looks like a South African name or something. So it's professional issues, and child and young child and youth care practice. That was a really good that was I suppose breaking down all the bits, the relationships and the bits that you've got to do and stuff. Interesting. And I was thinking actually, that I should be sharing that with the team at team meeting just, again, getting them to reflect on, especially with [one of the children] coming in how that's all in that relationship building stuffs going?

16:38 - Interviewer

Yeah, yeah, cuz you mentioned a few things. And early on there and in just when you were talking there as well, about the relationship, that you could do the work without the relationship - it sounds like the, the work or the direct work I think you referred to. So there are, there are pieces of practice that have to be done. But what actually works well is if you just get to know these kids and for them to get to know you. And you mentioned specifically, in their space and in their life space. And you mentioned play. Yeah. Really early on, when I asked you the question, as well. And I wondered if you wanted to say about more of it, that, about how that looks

17:19 - Interviewee

and and relation, the relation, building that relationship? Yeah, yeah, I certainly, like certain things, like my staff and requests, the ones that I'll get down to the kids level, which is what most of the staff will do that people want. Like, some people are much more, I suppose able to do that than others, they're the the staff that the kids will go to more, they're the stuff that the I suppose that the kids feel safe with to open up when there's disclosures and stuff like that made that it's usually those members of staff that will be down with the kids at their level playing games, I think play is so important for for the kids, because, you know, quite often that they'll come to us and they'll not have had those opportunities before. And but some of them are still really young. [one of the children] just coming in [is] 7. Like, there's not that same want or willingness to play computer games, like some other kids, so there's lots of that lost, I think, and just for kids in general about how their their focus has been on a computer game or whatever. And don't get me wrong, I think there's, there's time for that. And it almost works. Like when you're trying to speak to kids, like in the car would, when you've not got that direct face to face time when you're sitting playing a computer game with a child or, you know, they will open up so definitely there's time for that stuff. But I think that play in using your imagination and letting the child be lost in their wee imagination is so important. And you see, you do see a lot of that, you know, down in the woods with the guns and the, you know, trying to think what else that the cops and robbers on the bikes and, you know, like all that kind of thing that other kids and that's when you see them at their happiest I feel when they're back and that kind of sometimes you need to teach them as well, sometimes you almost need to teach the kids that come to us how to play, because they've not got that there's not what that ability isn't. There's not what the early stages stuff that you would learn in nursery, about the turn taking and you know, all that stuff, and and allowing them to be lost in their imagination. And so I think there's a lot of that the staff are really good at introducing and like almost teaching the kids how to do these things. And it's something I suppose that that Lynn's work has really brought back to the kinda forefront of what we're doing. [Another worker]’s stuffs been really positive and it's had a really positive impact on the team, and that's been a focus, and play being something that we're thinking about more often and not been a focus of it, let's get, let's get through this shift without any issues. Let's allow the children to be children and play and make memories and stuff. And we'll deal with things. Actually, if they can't manage the ending of that. Not, we'll just not do it. And so, yeah, [another worker]’s works been really positive, I think can have a massively positive impact on the team. And however, I always think that there's room for more, there's room for more of that stuff from one and the work that she done at the start of her post. Like she was in [bungalow 1] for a couple of weeks. And then she was to go to [bungalow 3] and then she was for a [bungalow 2] and and I feel actually her having a more of a focused time, and one of the houses would have made a bigger impact, probably. So yeah, I'm hoping that that that will kind of pick up again, and

21:10 - Interviewer

She’s working directly with kids or is she working with a staff and because I know she is doing theraplay so....?

21:17 - Intervewee

So she will be I suppose in and around the staff not included in the numbers. So there's not an expectation that she's watching that child, but she's I suppose coming in. And she was picking like specific staff members for a while, like after kinda consulting with us managers about who who needs that push. Who needs that? I suppose that person to what's the word, like almost role model off. And so she would do a lot of any role modelling. And there was, as I said, there was specific staff that she kinda picked out but she would do stuff with the team as well. Sorry, I'm quite dark [video lighting]. And and there was certainly certainly one person that she'd picked to work with, actually has really good ability, really positive abilities. And I'd say that's absolutely one of her strengths play. But she almost get lost, she gets lost in the right, we need to stick to this routine, we need to, this as the rules This is the boundaries and almost as unable to be as flexible. So that was one person that one had picked up and I think that really helped again kinda pulling all that fun stuff from her. But yeah, I definitely think there's there's always more room for for bringing that back to kinda back to the kinda the adults can the forefront of their minds and how they're using that to, play to build relationships. But also suppose how in turn that will help them recover from their trauma and just give them the early experiences that some times have not had.

23:09 - Interviewer

Yeah, certainly. Certainly worked for me building relationships with the kids

23:17 - Interviewee

your football with [one of the children] and was it there was [one of the children] wasn't it. If it was Yeah. Am I right in saying that you'd say that you weren't you weren't you weren't a football kinda guy?

23:29 - Interviewer

But she she is and she was she was struggling with me I think you know, and just in terms of- Who are you, but and was kinda asking and then moving away and I thought yeah, I really don't want to make her anxious. It wasn't really about recruiting her for the research. It was about how can I make her feel? She knows she's given me She gave me a hug a couple of weeks ago nearly bust into tears.

23:52 - Interviewee

Oh, nice. Yeah. Awesome. [One of the children] that footballs obviously paid off.

23:59 - Interviewer

Yeah, and I mean, I suppose. Sorry, I'm going off. This is supposed to be me interviewing you. But I've been thinking a lot about I mean, I've got a typology of different play and play as it's when the kids are seeking out most of the time you know, some I mean, there's some teams looking for quiet time and for comfort and all of that kind of thing as well. But for large part actually, that's what they want to be involved in stuff from and they want a enjoy time with other people and for other people enjoy time with them. That's me, can I get that even starting to get any more analysis mode? What does this play mean? And I think actually therapy or the therapy happens between people rather than me doing therapy with a child. Yeah. By virtue of the fact that we enjoy time together and we laugh playing cops and robbers. I think that that's for me got to be therapeutic hasn't it?

24:54 - Interviewee

Yeah, absolutely. Like for example, [one of the children]. I really struggled with all the initial You can a build any kind of relationship with a man I suppose that was a very much then has his ASD diagnosis as well that you know that interaction can be really difficult for him. And that the play for him wasn't play as you would expect. It was almost us being like and space together and laughing. And that took for me to be us have a chilli challenge for him to get that with me. But the two honestly, Andrew, my mouth was on fire. My eyes were watering, like my whole like right down was burning. But the two of us were poorless laughing. And so I suppose and that was play but that looked like something really different to what play would look like for [one of the children], when you've got your figures and you're using your imagination and pens. So I think it's that ability, you need that ability to be able to change things up and be playful in different ways. And to be able to build that relationship with certain kids.

26:09 - Interviewer

Yeah, I am. Yeah, yeah, it's I think it's a big. It's a big thing at [org] as well. And I suppose you've got the environment to allow you some choices even on campus with that as well. So there's another thing that you mentioned near the start is where when I first asked that question, you talked about the investment of staff. And it's something that's coming up again and again. I wonder if you if you want to say a wee bit more about what you mean by that. I'm why is it that [org] has these staff are so invested what is that about?

26:41 - Interviewee

I think I think probably the Sorry, my dogs taking a funny turn right now. Maybe go

[Interview disrupted as interviewee settles her dog down]

27:49 - Interviewer

Yeah, that's right. investment of staff their commitment?

27:56 - Interviewee

I think probably, I think a big thing to do that as the like the DDP Training, Andrew, I think there's almost like are a want and willingness with the staff to really get to know, that child's early experience. And when we do that, and will quite often do that, like as a team, I suppose think about, think about that early trauma, and especially when things are really difficult with children, because I think, like at points, you'll forget that and you'll be really focused on the difficult behaviours that the kids are displaying. So quite often at team meetings and stuff, try to go back to let's think about this child story. And I think that kinda provides a more willingness and want to be invested and be with that child through those difficulties. That's like the DDP training, and probably really helps with that as well. And I suppose and that understanding of what those early experiences look like and how they will impact on the child kinda right through their lives or can impact and... I don't know if I have really thought about much why how everybody's... It's not something that I've particularly thought about before, I think the reason that they stay for so long is because of the kids. And because of the because of the relationships that they build with the kids. And it's more often than just these are the kids that I work with, they invest so much time in them that like some of them, I love, love the kids that they work with and stuff. So actually the thought of them not being there and actually like when kids move on and stuff like that, that can be really really difficult for the staff. And as well as the kids that actually they have invested all this time, and I really this is a really significant part of the adults life as well as as well as the kids. So I think it's a really positive thing that that [org] do to encourage those relationships to after the child moved on. And I think that probably, I don't know how it was before, I think without that you wouldn't get as much investment with a staff, they'd be almost worried about investing too much, and that that relationship at some point will be taken away, whereas now there's a real focus. And I don't know how long it's been the case at [ORG], that. Unless, obviously, the social worker says that you're not happy with that, which you're not really getting as much anymore. As much as previously. They want you to continue that relationship, they want you to still be a significant person and the kid's life and it's generally, like I know, coming from local authority. I was a youth justice social worker, at the latter end before I came over, and I had one transgender boy that I worked with, that was amazing, he had so many struggles. And would, when he was struggling, stop eating and drinking three, we'd end up being hospitalised and detained and stuff like that, to make sure that you have the water and stuff and to keep his kidneys and stuff for and, and I was told that I was allowed to visit and once a month, because that's what the CSO said. But actually, I was the only one at that point in his life that he would speak to seemed cruel to me, it seemed so cruel that you would ever put that's what that's worse, you're one visit. One visit that should have lasted an hour. And when I told the family that I was moving on they asked, if we were allowed to like to keep in touch, which I would absolutely have done. And I felt invested in him. And he was invested in me. And that's, you know, to keep that relationship going was so important. I just moved them as well, which was just rubbish time, man. And, and I was told I wasn't allowed to [right]. Um, and I don't know if things like, like the promise and stuff like that would have have more of an impact. And I suppose you would have more of an argument behind you arguing that out with local authority or whoever you're working with, but they were worried about him not building a relationship with a next social worker was how it was put to me.

32:50 - Interviewer

And you're not gonna continue to be his social worker, you're gonna be an other who’s been involved in his life.

32:56 - Interviewee

Yeah. Yeah. So I think that's a massive thing that that's the map encourage that's really positive and just allows that investment or support that allows that allows you to continue that to be invested in that child and and not just be, I suppose that it gets to that point that kids will see they'll quite often come up with things like you only care for me because you get paid for it. Come up with words like that. And I suppose that kind of investment after and more in most cases, the kids know that before they're leaving, but that almost solidifies the idea that actually that's not the case is that they do care about me and that's why they're continuing to see me after and I think in most cases like don't get me wrong COVID obviously significantly gotten in the way of things like training and stuff like that as well. But it's [org] really good I suppose investing money and and time and the staff team support them if further developments or training and things like that that staff will I suppose be I don't know what the words I'm looking for like the what they want to stay with an organisation as well when those opportunities are there. And as I said COVID to the massive impact on that because there was so much training and stuff you know, the first kinda six months that I was at sea map and that's obviously not as much anymore there's lots more online and stuff like that than there was before but I think that's probably a big thing for the staff team as well and being able to continue the work that they do and improve that the work that they do.

34:55 - Interviewer

So that like the the investment in staff through training and support and stuff they Yeah, yeah. And the king of systems in their permissions to develop these relationships. That's Yeah.

35:10 - Interviewee

Yeah,

35:11 - Interviewer

I'm just a conscious of the time because I know that you've got a class I've just wondered then thinking about the future I'll maybe condense the other 3 Ds, and because we're

35:21 - Interviewee

sorry. Too much No, no, like me,

35:24 - Interviewer

no. First question, I'm really a is really the most interesting I think you know, in terms of what actually works for these kids just now. Thinking about the future helps you think about just reframe that? Anything at all that you think that you think may eventually happen, should happen in the future in terms of the organisation in terms of changes that may happen or that you might like to see happen.? I'd love for staff to have [dog barking over things] transcription software is going to have you howling [laughs]

36:21 - Interviewee

once you start out some and one of the things I suppose I would like to see is time for the staff without more time for the staff without the kids feel like a lot of this staff really, are really willing and able to do really good kinda bits of paper work to have a real plan and about direct work on your focus. And it's just about time. But it's time that restricts them, probably I would say. So I think the staff members have got like two day shifts a month or something. And when they've got monthly reports to do and care plan, to update all that kind of stuff, I think some of the bits can get lost, like not lost, but there's just not as much time to invest in them. So things like direct work I've really tried to encourage the staff team to plan direct work. And like I've given them a bit of time to do that, and like the team meeting and stuff. So that I feel like when there's a plan, there's always it's more kind of more likely to take place, it's more, you know, it's like some things can come up. And that's just not possible. But I think for the staff to have a bit more time for planning and things would make a better response, I suppose a better service that they would get from the staff team. In

38:01 - Interviewee

mean, there's quite often time at the end of shift, the staff are exhausted by then, you know, when it comes, it's nine o'clock half past nine, no one's thinking about what direct work you're doing next week. It's an intense shift normally, to to then be be thinking about that. And actually, we had we had lots of hours leftover from erm, because we never got training and stuff. And I was able to allow the staff to use those hours to do this kind of thing to spend an hour to making a photobook up for one of the kids from their holiday or for planning out specific direct work and what's going to be done every week and I think that had a massive impact on the actual work that was done. I just felt like the kids got a bit are a better service that's what I'd like to see more time for them for that and I don't know how that would work or how could it work but I definitely think if we had more flexibility I suppose with the training hours and stuff that that we could use them to get the staff to do what their key child or whatever needed for that point. That was that would be really positive. And I suppose I think in future again, like oh, like I suppose my two things. The team I'm constantly kinda trying to push as direct work and play. Usually the play comes before the direct work but yeah, I suppose the staff having Lynn again and things like that to do more of that kind of role model and and and I'd love to be able to do that myself. And I just feel like times such so restrictive that. It should be someone else coming in and do it I think and I think Lynn's the perfect person For that, she's she's so playful with the kids and stuff that and as I said, our work at the start of the year had such a positive impact on the team in sort of Kenny, just push that to the next level I think would be really important. And the kids really feel the benefits all that.

40:22 - Interviewer

Yeah. Sounds like more time and begins. Yeah. That's great. Thank you very much that says just about the time so I'll just stop