



# From Fragmentation to Coherence through Collaborative, Constructive Communication

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The 'Who Works!'  
Methodology





# Who is Akani?

The name 'Akani' is a combination of the Director's two children's names, reflecting the commitment to ensuring humanistic, people-focused approaches throughout everything we do.

Paul Olaitan, Akani's Director has developed an extensive career in children's services and NHS transformation.

A youth worker by profession, Paul developed a clear commitment to promoting the value of relationships as the core transformative element in service provision throughout his career in both statutory and non-statutory services to children, young people, families and communities.

More recently, Paul has worked alongside the NHS and ICSs, supporting them to develop more collaborative approaches to working with their partners – further developing his relationship-focused approach to support practitioners break down professional, organisational and sector barriers.



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# Current Activities Include

- Forming an inquiry panel looking into the death of a child – here we have been asked to write the final report and in particular, ensure the panel, through our Who Works! methodology, moves beyond surface level findings and explores the systemic barriers that often get in the way of communication and information sharing.
- Supporting the police, local authorities and children's care homes come together to improve responses to children who go missing and subject to risk of criminality and exploitation
- Working with an international bank to support their European Leadership team develop more responsive approaches to help their workforce thrive
- Working with a primary care network (PCN)-led community development initiative in Surrey to help local community groups strengthen their voice and confidence in leading the development of neighbourhood care services.
- Supporting adult social care staff across east London develop the clinical care capabilities necessary to meet the holistic needs of their residents



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# Creating the space for collaborative, constructive communication

Our Leadership, Strategy, Structure and People (LSSP) approach encourages an effective balance across these essential elements, avoiding the traditional overemphasis on transactional and restrictive structural responses.

- Leaders agree the vision for provision across services and professions, promoting effective collaborations, and importantly, explicitly communicating the permissions for people to work across organisational and professional boundaries.
- Strategies are agreed to effectively accommodate and deliver the vision, in particular utilising knowledge- and learning-based strategies to promote reciprocal learning and the 'learning organisation/learning system'.
- Enabling structures are created through Collaborative Knowledge Networks, promoting the delivery of the vision through interprofessional/interpersonal engagement and interaction.
- In these spaces, leaders agree a format for engagement – such as caseloads or communities of practice/interest.
- Through these CKNs, participants build the necessary interprofessional and inter-organisational understanding, respect and trust to move beyond siloed working.
- The result is reduced frictions and fragmentation, limiting the gaps in communication and practice that often lead to poor outcomes for staff and service users.



**Collaborative Knowledge Networks (CKNs) established for caseloads and interagency collaborations to support experience and knowledge transfer that embeds practice coherence**



### **Setting the vision for collaborations**

and giving permission to work across boundaries.

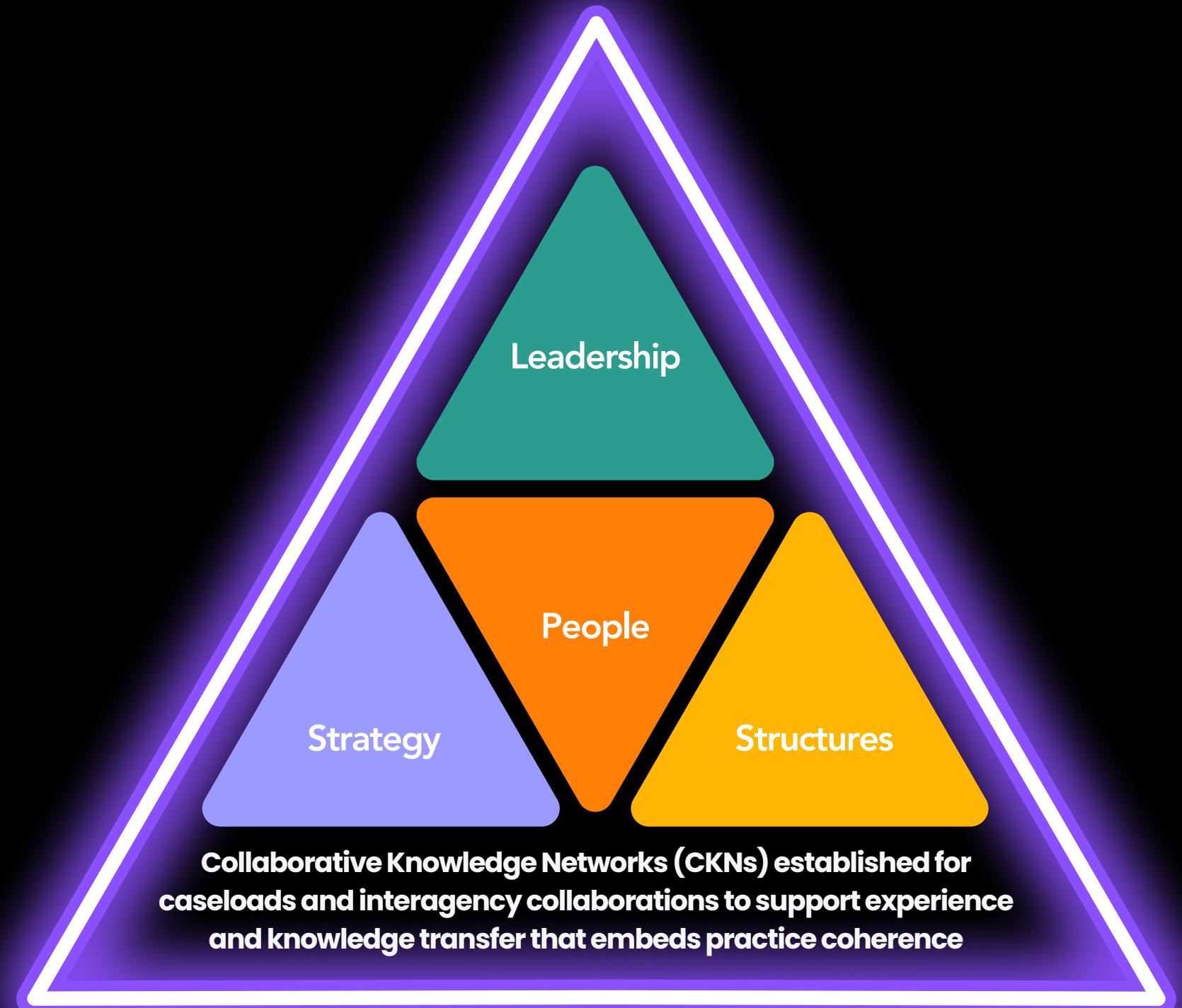
### **Collaboration**

Embedded through knowledge and learning strategies: 'the learning organisation'.

Bringing education, CSC, youth justice, targeted provision, VCSE, health, CYPs/families, Adult SC and communities into unifying conversations.

### **Collaborative Knowledge Networks**

Creating spaces to enable people to recognise the value of their own agency, and use this as a platform to meaningfully and productively engage across professional and organisational boundaries – focusing on collaboratively achieving the vision.



Appreciative, critical and curious thinking, developing relational practice  
Goffman (1956); Lang, et al (1990); Launer (2018); Bannear, (2023)



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# A sample Collaborative Knowledge Network (CKN) for Collaborative, Constructive Communication

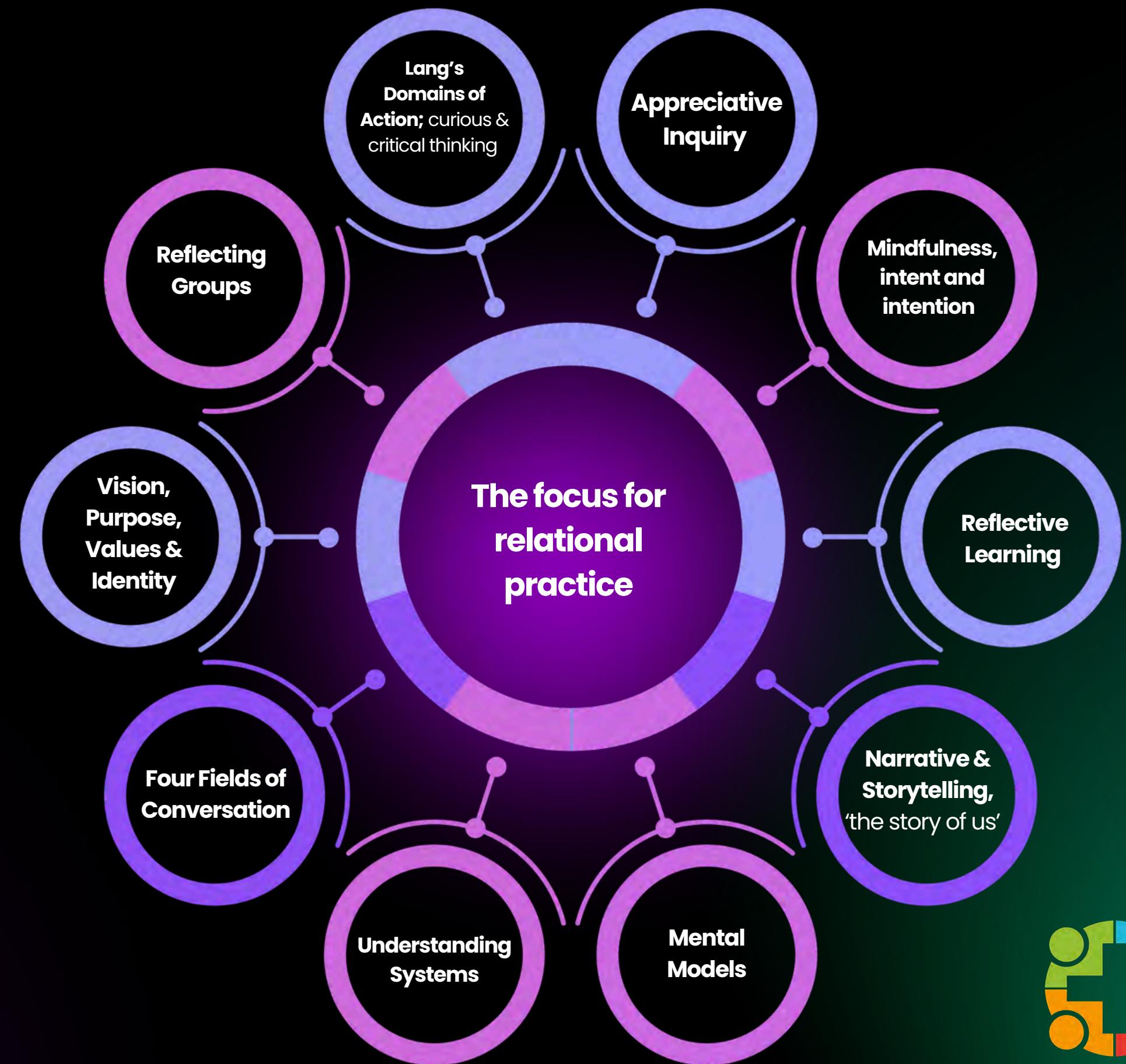
- There's widespread acceptance of the need for relational, asset- and strengths-based provision and organisation. However, there's little activity around how to achieve this in a meaningful and accessible way that relates to peoples lived professional and service experiences.
- How do you implement this in schools, GP practices, VCSE community groups, care homes, local authority children's services and large NHS Trusts?

## Collaborative Knowledge Networks

- Established approaches celebrate inflexible structures, which become the story, the be-all-and-end-all. But structures alone can only take you so far.
- Sustained shifts in productivity and improvement require **reciprocal learning** and **co-production** to create the engagement, empowerment and enablement of your most precious, creative and productive resource – the people both accessing and delivering provision.



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CKNs are transformative, facilitated and enabling, supporting the cultural leap from safe, yet limiting structural spaces into the necessary yet less certain space of human interaction as the transformative vehicle.

CKNs bring structure to the act of social, cultural, cognitive change.



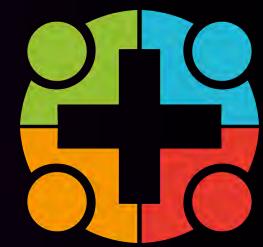
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# How collaborative knowledge networks can help you develop relational practice

Collaborative knowledge networks take place at the locus of practice, not set aside as yet another thing for people to do. In this sense they are at once a model of practice delivery and improvement.

To develop your collaborative knowledge networks, we will:

- Agree the programme of change/locus of practice
- work closely with stakeholders to establish the issues
- individually and collectively gather views and aspirations
- bring people together to agree visions and metrics
- support the building of productive and progressive interprofessional relationships and understanding through our collaborative knowledge network approach



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**AKANI**  
COLLABORATIVE  
SOLUTIONS

**What's the challenge,  
issue, aspiration?**

Context-setting through desk research and stakeholder mapping and engagement

**What's the current  
thinking?**

Conducting our own leadership, strategy and operational structure surveys

**What's the unifying vision  
for development &  
improvement?**

Facilitating a visioning workshop(s) to inform a unifying approach alongside agreeing metrics

**What's the narrative for  
development and  
improvement?**

Establishing and agreeing a communications and engagement approach that brings voices into the conversation

**What's the capacity to  
collaborate amongst  
practitioners and communities**

Conducting our Collaborative Capabilities survey to set a baseline to measure progress against

**What's the potential for  
replication?**

Deliver our impact report setting out inputs, processes, outputs, benefits and lessons learned

**What's the potential for  
collective growth? Collaborative,  
Constructive Communication**

Create one or more of our Collaborative Knowledge Networks as a space to develop and embed the required transformation



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# Participant Feedback

Participants described the sessions as **“refreshing and much-needed,”** helping to shift both perspective and practice across teams. Several noted changes in how people communicated and took responsibility, with one participant sharing, **“I’ve noticed a change in the team. Before they’d come to me with problems to fix — now they tell me what’s happened and what they’ve done to resolve it. Just keeping me informed.”**

Others spoke about renewed connection and purpose:

**“It’s never felt like a team, but now I feel fresh enthusiasm that we can go forward together.”**

The sessions were consistently described as impactful, with attendees saying they felt inspired, informed, and supported: **“Thanks for delivering such a great session,”** one wrote, while another said, **“This has been an amazing experience.”**

There were also personal takeaways: **“Access to such great quality training is a privilege I’m grateful for,”** said one, while another called it **“really interesting, honest, and transparent.”**

Together, the feedback speaks to a shared sense of growth — relational, professional, and practical — and a collective readiness to continue the work.



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# Signature Who Works!



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## MicroGames for Macro Change©

Designed to surface system insight, shift relational dynamics,  
and be deliverable in 30 minutes or less



### The Power Shuffle

Reveals hidden power dynamics through movement.



### The Relational Weather Forecast

Surfaces emotional climate using shared metaphors.



### The Postcard from the Future

Envisions services where relational practice is the norm.



### One Rule to Break

Challenges unhelpful norms through creative defiance.



### Fragments of Practice

Weaves together lived relational knowledge.



### The No-Permission Shift

Builds agency to act without needing permission.



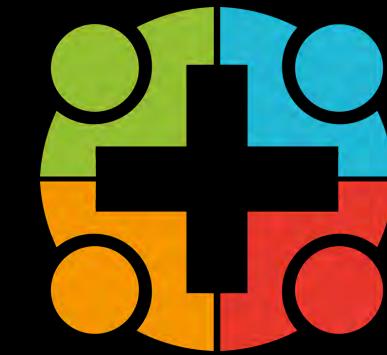
### What I See That You Might Not

Shares overlooked insights to build empathy.



### Working Relationally, Right Here

Models relational practice in real time.



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