

**MAKING IT  
HAPPEN**

# ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## *Learning Resource Pack*

Developed through learning with and alongside  
our wonderful communities in East Sussex

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Section Two: Start Small

Section Three: Build Relationships

Section Four: Make Connections

Section Five: Support communities to take the  
lead; communities need allies.

### **Section Six: Equality and Social Justice**

Section Seven: Lead by Stepping back

Section Eight: Demonstrating the value of ABCD

Section Nine: Evaluation



[making-it-happen.org.uk](https://making-it-happen.org.uk)

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# EQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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# What does it mean in practice?

**"ABCD FOSTERS A WORLD WHERE ALL PEOPLE THRIVE. ABCD HELPS PEOPLE USE THEIR GIFTS TO WORK IN THEIR COMMUNITIES TO DISRUPT SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION AND REGENERATE POWER IN NEW, CREATIVE AND EQUITABLE WAYS."**

ABCD Institute

This section includes tools to encourage deeper thinking about who is or isn't present within a conversation and who is or isn't being listened to.

There is practical guidance and tools to encourage better practice in engaging with seldom heard groups, plus examples from the work on the ground.



# Tools

The tools in this section aim to support the engagement of all community members, especially marginalised groups. They seek to encourage equitable opportunities for people to identify, access, and contribute their assets, and to foster inclusive participation, power-sharing, and collective decision-making.

## Equality Asset Mapping



## Working to Strengths



## String Connection



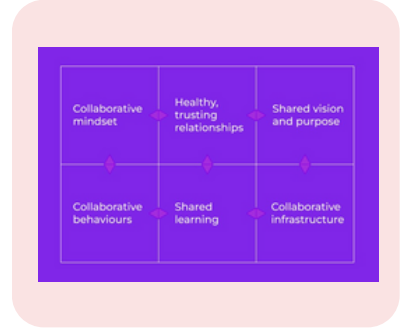
## Basic inclusion steps



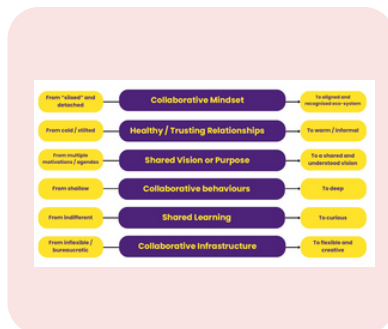
## Brave Spaces



## Collaboration Foundations



## Collaboration 6 Shifts



# Equality Asset Mapping

Some people are less likely to engage with formal services or organisations, and some are less confident about engaging with people who have a different background, culture or outlook.

A key part of our approach within Making it Happen has been to **work alongside people, to focus on their interests and priorities** and to maintain informality and practical connection. We also sought to **work to the strengths** of the people, groups and organisations who might have stronger relationships with those individuals we were not already reaching. To ensure we were thinking as broadly as possible about who and how to make those connections, we undertook an equalities asset mapping exercise.

We challenged ourselves to consider everybody who may be less likely to connect with us. We spent time thinking about who we were already connected with and which groups or organisations might already exist that have different connections to us. **We considered gaps and thought about who else was out there that we could build relationships with.**



# Equality Asset Mapping

We took, as a starting point, Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the 2010 Equality Act to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

## **A “protected characteristic” is defined in the Act as:**

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality);
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- marriage and civil partnership.

## **East Sussex County Council also considers the following additional groups/factors:**

- Carers;
- Literacy/Numeracy Skills;
- Part time workers;
- Rurality.

## **Making it Happen also included:**

- Socio-economic inequality;
- Digital exclusion.

We used the table (on the following page) to map the assets we were aware of, locally and across the county, against each characteristic with a view to building a connection (or strengthening our connections with them) and to identify gaps in our knowledge.

# Equality Asset Mapping Template

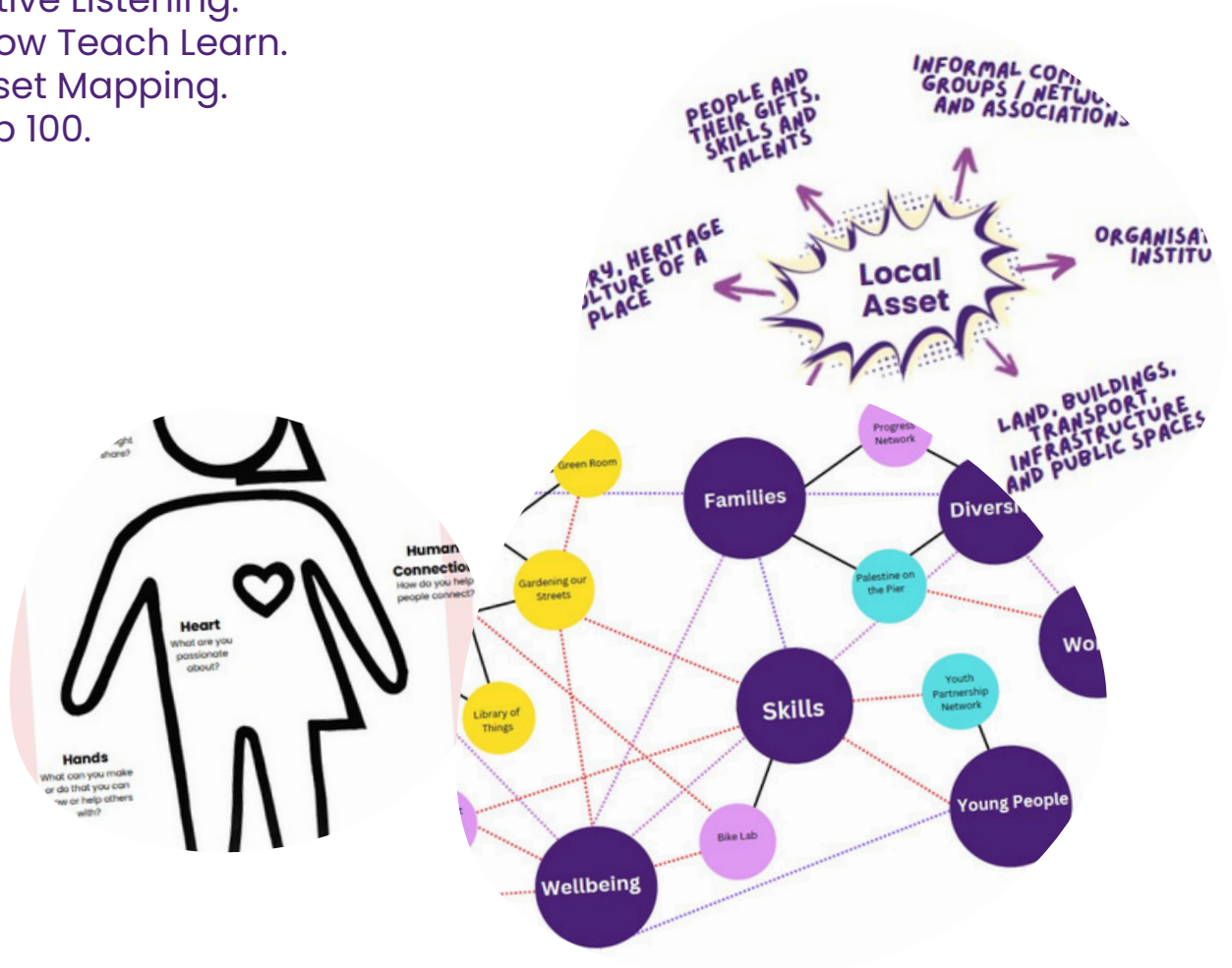
Characteristic	Local Assets	Countywide Assets or services	Connection with this asset? Note on knowledge about / relationship with the asset	The accessibility /provision of this asset

# Working to Strengths

Working to strengths means **valuing the capacity, skills, knowledge, connection and potential within individuals and communities**. It encourages people to explore what they are able to do for themselves, but also openness to recognise where others have complementary skills, knowledge, relationships or resources. It encourages collaboration to support powerful outcomes and lasting positive change.

Tools that are valuable to help you consider what strengths, assets or relationships might already be present, and what else might be needed includes tools such as:

- The Five H's.
- Active Listening.
- Know Teach Learn.
- Asset Mapping.
- Top 100.





# String Connection

## The purpose

The string connection game is intended to illustrate how connections and common ground can emerge from exploration of the things which drive or motivate people, or that they are passionate about. This is a great activity to involve everyone in the room and is a great leveller.

## Preparation

Ask participants to consider the things which they enjoy, that interest them, they feel passionate about or are involved in. This could be explored through an activity like the 5 H's.

## What you need

All you need is a ball of string and space to stand comfortably in a circle.

## What to do

- Ask if there is someone who is willing to share their passion / interest / key motivation and hand them the ball of string.
- The first person shares their story and others in the group are invited to put their hand up if they feel a connection to the theme. Explain that this could be a thought, a feeling, an experience or a skill.
- Keeping hold of one end of the string, the first person throws the rest of the ball of string to person 2.
- Person 2 shares their example and how it connects to the first example, and others are invited to indicate when they hear something which resonates with them.
- Keeping hold of the thread, person two passes on the ball of string to the next person to indicate a connection and so on.
- If the connection falters, someone else can start with a new theme.
- By the end, participants will be in a tangle of string like a spiders web.

## Debrief

- Ask for reflections from participants.
- Key to note is that we all have things in common with other people but they are often hidden. The web illustrates how we are all interconnected with each other. This is a great tool to build relationships and rapport around finding and sharing similarities.



# Basic Inclusion Steps

There are simple steps that need to be considered when trying to reach as many people as possible in a community.

## Basic inclusion steps



Buddy



Childcare



Time of day



Interpreters



Personal invitations



Venue and access



Welcoming with food



Role



Purpose

23

*This simple guidance was prepared by Kaye Duerdoth of the Trust for Developing Communities (with thanks to TDC for allowing us to use it).*



# Brave Space Guidelines

The guidelines on the next page are drawn from **AWARE-LA**. For more information visit: <https://www.awarela.org/>

## What is a brave space?

Accept that some things are uncomfortable to acknowledge and need to be addressed in an honest, open and constructive way. This is particularly true in the context of race, gender, privilege, oppression and roles within them.

Within Making it Happen we have used the guidelines to encourage honest and open dialogue in partnership meetings and events which have brought people together from different parts of the system and across different roles, with varying degrees of power. We've also adopted the principles in training, meetings and events in our work with communities.

### 1. Welcome multiple viewpoints

Speak from your own experience by using "I statements." Ask questions to understand the sources of disagreements.

### 2. Own your intentions and your impacts

Respect each other's experiences and feelings by taking responsibility for the effects of your words. On the other side, if you have a strong reaction to something, let the group know. Be open to dialogue.

### 3. Work to recognize your privileges

Use this space to recognize and investigate your privileges (for example: class, gender, sexual orientation, ability). Honour the different experiences we all bring to this space.



*Continues on the next page*

*continued...*

**4. Take risks: Lean into discomfort**

We are all in process. Challenge yourself to contribute even if it is not perfectly formulated.

**5. Step back**

Share speaking time and try to speak after others who have not spoken.

**6. Notice and name group dynamics in the moment**

We are all responsible for this space. Be aware of how others are responding or not responding. Ask for a “time out” or dialogue if needed.

**7. Actively listen**

Use your energy to listen to what is said before thinking about how to respond. Notice when defensiveness and denial arise.

**8. Challenging with care**

Find ways to respectfully challenge others and be open to challenges of your own views. Think about how to question ideas without personal attacks.

**9. Confidentiality**

Share the message, not the messenger.

**10. Break it down**

Use simple language and background information when necessary. Ask for clarification if needed.

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[www.awarela.org](http://www.awarela.org)

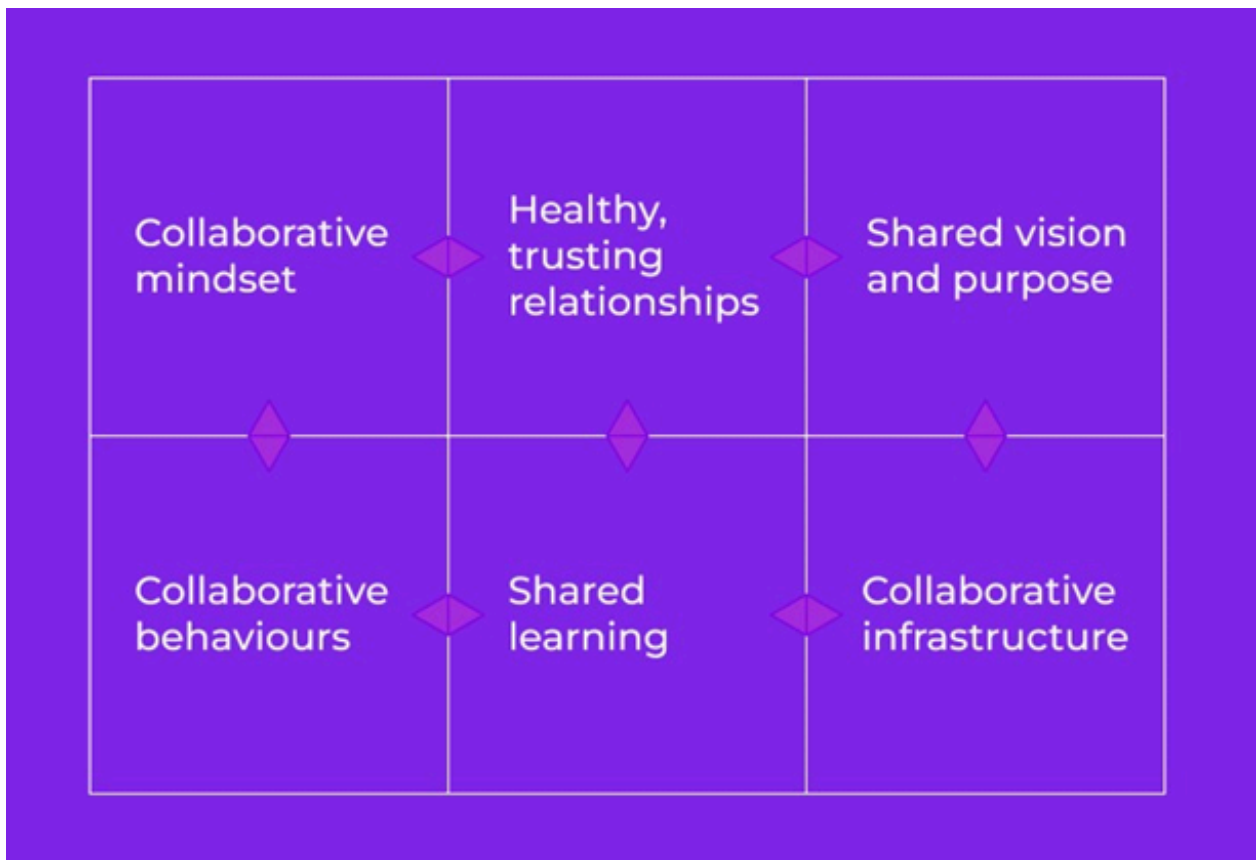


# Collaboration

**"COLLABORATION IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE, TEAMS, OR ORGANISATIONS CREATE VALUE BY WORKING TOGETHER TOWARDS SHARED GOALS. COLLABORATION DEPENDS ON THE PURPOSEFUL DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS, WAYS OF WORKING, CAPABILITIES AND SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE."**

(A Guide to Collaboration, Collaborate CIC 2023)

## Six core foundations for effective collaboration



# The Six Collaboration Shifts

As part of a session to **review the effectiveness of the Making it Happen partnership**, we used the six core foundations for effective collaboration produced by Collaborate CIC to create a tool to help us assess what or if the partnership had evolved or changed over time.

We sought to create a **brave space for honest and open discussion** and challenged ourselves to identify specific examples if we thought improvements had occurred.

*Thanks to Steve Manwaring from Hastings Voluntary Action for developing the tool.*



# String connection

The string connection game was used at an event to **bring together** representatives of groups from across East Sussex to **share ideas and kick start plans** for the development of learning opportunities built around the principles and values of Asset Based Community Development. It's been fantastic to see the games used by groups who attended that session!



# Diversity Resource International (DRI)

## Working to Strengths

In Peacehaven and Uckfield MIH worked alongside Diversity Resource International (DRI) to support participants of **DRI-delivered ESOL classes** to develop ideas based on their interests and priorities. An idea emerged for a recipe book.

The recipe book project led to connections with the Lewes District Food Partnership and other ESOL classes in the area. The Peacehaven group established a weekly cafe at the Hillcrest Centre in Newhaven, and in Uckfield, the group forged great connections with the Volunteer Centre.

*“This project helped us discover the strengths of the two organisations and the effortless symbiotic relationship we share. The CDWs opened doors for DRI with their knowledge of the locality, connections with the communities and other local assets. DRI with our expertise of working alongside ethnically diverse communities and the relationships we share with them helped expand the connections of the community development workers.” (DRI grant review)*

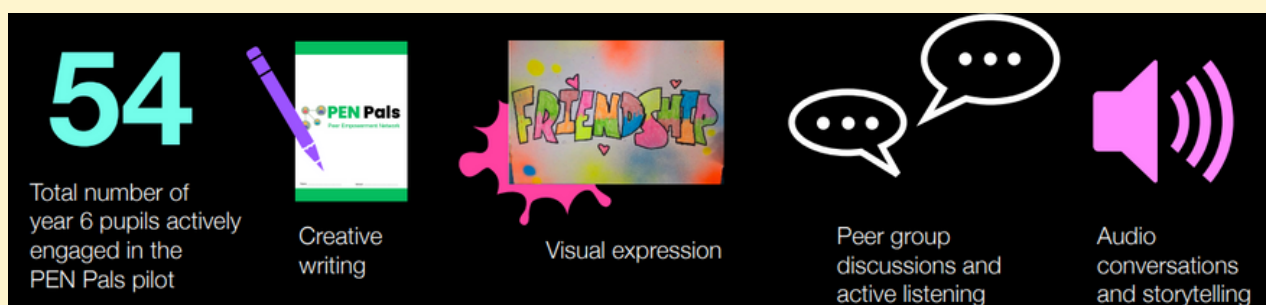


For more info about DRI visit: <https://driorg.com/>




# Make Good Trouble – PEN Pals


Make Good Trouble used a variety of different tools to support children to have open and honest discussions. It was wonderful to see the children taking the lead and the positivity shared within the project.




54  
Total number of year 6 pupils actively engaged in the PEN Pals pilot




Creative writing



Visual expression



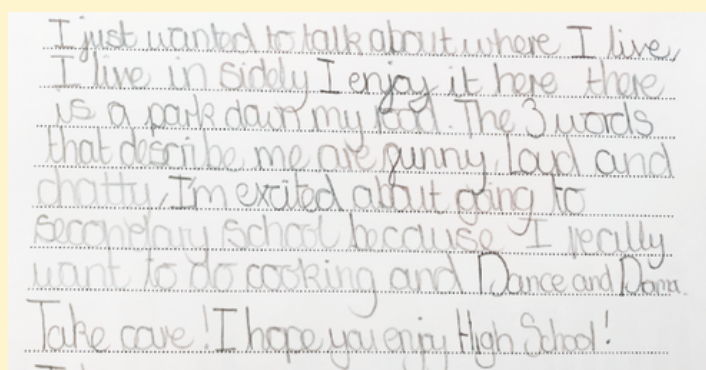
Peer group discussions and active listening



Audio conversations and storytelling

Devolving power and ensuring every voice is heard enables the most amazing ideas and peer support.

When given the opportunities, children naturally pick out assets in their world. We need to continue to nurture this & encourage the asset based mindset to continue.



I just wanted to talk about where I live, I live in Sidley I enjoy it here there is a park down my road. The 3 words that describe me are funny, loud and chatty, I'm excited about going to secondary school because I really want to do cooking and Dance and Drama. Take care! I hope you enjoy High School!



For more info about Make Good Trouble visit:  
<https://www.makegoodtrouble.co.uk/>

# Women of Vision

The Women of Vision Group is a group for women who speak English as a second language.

The group adopted the principles set out in the **'Brave Space'** tools. It meant the development of the group took time as **relationships were built and nurtured**.

Some may assume the time taken was a negative, however this was certainly not the case. People needed **time to build confidence**.

The group has now developed into an amazingly supportive community, whereby **different cultures, cooking and experiences are shared**.

It is only with these foundations, tools and gentle pace that this group were able to develop in this way.



# Neurodiversity and inclusion

A number of projects supported by Making it Happen have involved working with children and young people who are neurodiverse and their families. Taking the time to listen, build trust and work alongside people to understand the specific priorities and to overcome challenges has been central to learning.

## The Hedgehogs Group

This is a group led by young people, including young disabled people and those with additional needs, in Eastbourne. The group struggled to find a suitable venue and they nearly gave up. The CDW persuaded them to try one more venue and this time the building manager spent time with the group, listened to their hopes, but also their requirements, and supported the group to manage safely within the space.

The CDW reflected on the huge switch in morale this experience gave the group. Just being listened to brought confidence, motivation and positivity. Most of all, the group felt valued and trusted.

## Neurodiverse Cafe

In Newhaven, CDWs supported a local resident to set up a cafe for the families of children who are neurodiverse, which has proved hugely popular. Key to the success has been taking the time for families to feel a sense of ownership and belonging.

*“Having a SEN child is incredibly stressful; we need the support and our children need a safe, welcoming, understanding place to socialise (without demands like in school). Please keep it going!” (participant feedback)*