

Summary of Children & Family Services Conference and YOYP2018



The Church of Scotland
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The Year of Young People 2018 brought many highlights for the Children & Family Services.

It was officially launched by a photography competition by the children, resulting in the publication of the first children's CrossReach Calendar 2019. Events then continued throughout the year, including an interview with the Chief Executive, Viv Dickenson; a visit to Dreamnight at Edinburgh Zoo; watching the building and the official opening of the new education site, Erskine Waterfront Campus; and meeting with John Swinney at the school and at the Parliamentary Event. The children wrote their own stories about these events which were published in the annual CrossReach News magazine.

Another highlight of the year was the Children & Family Services Conference, which took place on 27th November 2018 at 101 Park Street, New Lanarkshire College. The summary below is intended to capture and highlight the reason for holding the event and highlight some of the feedback and feelings that were shared post the event via an online questionnaire.

The main aim of the Conference was to:

Bring staff together: The aim was to bring together staff and volunteers from residential child care, early years projects, prison visitors centres and counselling services. The day provided a valuable networking opportunity and set the stage for further discussions on specific topics within service staff groups and future networking meetings.

Share the film on Resilience: Directed by James Redford, the film is an international documentary that delves into the science of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and a new movement to treat and prevent toxic stress. In 2017, CrossReach Counselling Services purchased the licence to show the film to a select number of audiences. The venue provided the ideal cinema auditorium for the 80 delegates to watch the 50 minute film.

Discuss the concept of Love & Relationships: The principle objective was to provide an opportunity to listen to experts speak about the concept of love and hear service managers illustrate how love is shared within the service areas of counselling, prison services, Residential Care & Education and the Daisy Chain and the Mallard. Everyone needs a Hashtag these days so #CrossReachLOVES seemed appropriate!

The questions of the day asked delegates what they wanted to take away with them? What should the priorities be for Children & Family Services in 2019? And how do we display love with our children, young people and families?

Key speakers:

Judy Furnivall, CELCIS focused on 'Using attachment, trauma and resilience theories in practice: what has love got to do with it?'

Judy spoke on her view of love when working with Looked After children and young people. Questions were asked to stimulate discussion on what CrossReach needs to do to be able to love the children and families we work with.

'Hearing Judy speak on her view of love with clients was my highlight. Food for thought.'

Jade Kilkenny, Community Justice, spoke immediately after lunch and certainly kept everyone awake and on the edge of their seats. Jade highlighted the struggles so many young people in Looked After Care go through, but also how there are definitely positive aspects in the support she received and others can receive.

'The highlight of the conference was Jade, the resilience shown from her in forging her way forward in her life, tells me that there is hope. She ought to be so proud of not only her achievements in the face of adversity, but the ability to stand up and share in this forum. Wow, fantastic.'

What does Love look like in your service workshop: delegates were split in to 8 groups, separating them between services to assist in the networking and varied discussions. Provided with a variety of art materials, pens, feathers, glue and a white board they were given 30 minutes to creatively answer the question (photo first page). The microphone was then passed around the room for each table to explain their display. Each creation was different and each group had focused on a different aspect of Love. Fascinating. The whole approach to the task and to the presentation provided by the service managers on Love in our services illustrated the belief and passion of the staff to continue to strive to make the concept of love more apparent and adaptable for every single child we work with.

'The artistic exercise was fun and it would be good to replicate this in our services with other staff.'

'The interactive workshop after the speech on resilience was very engaging and especially interesting seeing each table create such different impressions of Love and Resilience and answer the question in so many different insightful ways.'

Summary

Naturally the key question after any event is always '*Was it a success?* And '*Will we do this again next year?*'

Initially incentivised by the YOYP 2018 and a way of celebrating all the work that had gone in to it, the title 'Love & Relationships' only materialised during the very final planning stages, literally in the final couple of weeks! As you'll read in the comments below, the overall vote is for this to definitely happen again; that the title of the conference absolutely nailed the need to be more open about our relationships with the children and young people we work with, and everything we have learnt during the Year of Young People 2018 needs to be continued and given space to develop and grow.

More examples of the highlights of the day:

'The Resilience Film and meeting other staff from other services and their presentations on love'

'Being part of a professional day where we were invested in!"

'Everything. The respect. The kindness. The learning. The food! The integration. The advice. The camaraderie. Meeting up with colleagues I have not seen for along time. The cracking movie. Superb.'

'Bringing staff from different services together.'

'Working as a table on a task forced conversation and provided opportunities to get to know each other better.'

'The opportunity to hear an academic speaker on 'Love'.'