



CREATING CONNECTIONS

How working in partnership with other
services can support people on their journey



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Introduction

At Future Pathways, our relational approach is woven throughout our work. It underpins how we support people and how we commission support from Delivery Partners.

In this booklet, we:

- share more about our relational approach to working with other services and what this looks like in practice.
- encourage reflection on how this could be adapted in other service contexts.
- describe our relational approach to evaluating the impact of our partnerships with other services
- explore how taking an outcome mapping approach can enable and support this.
- share what we have learned about the impacts of our relational approach for people with lived experience of in-care abuse and neglect and for other services.

This resource is designed for people who are interested in:

- Developing a relational approach to partnership working over time
- Demonstrating the impact of working relationally with partners
- Learning about how partnership working can contribute to personal outcomes

About Future Pathways

Future Pathways supports people who experienced abuse or neglect when they were a child in the Scottish care system. We support people with lived experience to lead full, healthy and independent lives. We aim to achieve this by:

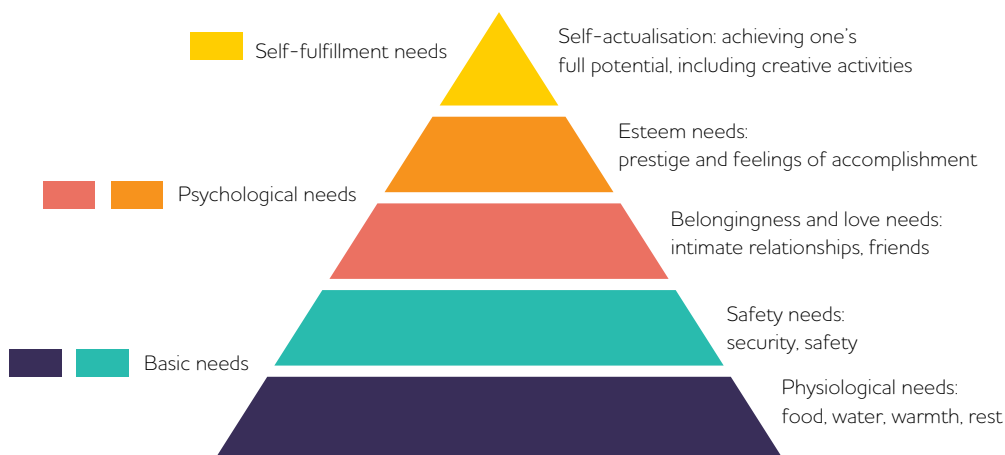
- Raising awareness of the support available so that people with lived experience can access this.
- Supporting people to identify what matters to them now and in the future
- Helping people to access a broad range of supports and resources to improve their lives and achieve their personal goals.
- Driving continuous improvement through consistency and quality standards across our service.
- Optimising the support and resources that people registered with us access at our service and at others.

Future Pathways is delivered by the In Care Survivors Alliance. The Alliance comprises four partners: Glasgow Psychological Trauma Service, Health in Mind, Penumbra Mental Health and the Scottish Government.

The Alliance was set up in 2016 as part of the Scottish Government's wider strategy to address the legacy of historic abuse in Scotland. Future Pathways is fully funded by the Scottish Government.

Meeting people's needs

People's outcomes can be influenced by their needs and circumstances. So, it can be helpful to reflect on what types of needs you and your service are meeting. For example, at Future Pathways, we consider Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a core indicator and framework for unmet needs. This highlights how physiological needs (such as shelter), and safety and security needs (such as health), must be met before other kinds of needs (such as a sense of belonging) can be fulfilled.



For example, if a person is not able to access food and safe shelter, their behaviours and outcomes are more likely to focus on meeting their immediate needs, rather than considering the longer-term changes they want to make in their life. If support must be focused, by necessity, on responding to basic needs then it is not always possible or appropriate to focus on growth-related outcomes. At Future Pathways, we bear this in mind when putting support in place.

How Future Pathways supports people

At Future Pathways, each person works alongside a dedicated Support Coordinator and is supported to develop a tailored support plan which outlines how the person will be supported to progress their outcomes. Everyone's outcomes are different and so support is tailored to each person. Support might look like:

- purchasing a service(s) such as counselling from our extensive network of Delivery Partners
- accessing our Discretionary Fund to purchase items and/or some short-term services
- signposting, referring, and supporting people to engage with existing services such as statutory and third sector services

You can find out more about how we support people on their journey in our latest short video:



What is a relational approach?

A relational approach is a way of supporting people that focuses on the interactions we have with people, rather than seeing support in a transactional way. A relational approach involves acknowledging that relationships:

- are complex
- fluctuate
- are influenced by many factors

It is important for Future Pathways to take a relational approach given that we support people who experienced abuse and neglect as children in the Scottish care system. For some people, developing trusting relationships with services can be an important outcome in and of itself. This supports people to develop and sustain connections with other services – outwith Future Pathways – that can meet their needs. In addition, by working in a relational way with other services and with our Delivery partners, we can respond to people's needs and outcomes in a more flexible way.

Relationships are, therefore, central to the work that we do. We take time to build trusting relationships with people we support and with other services. This helps us to work collaboratively so that we can help people identify their personal outcomes and help them work towards achieving them. We aim for people to feel understood, heard and valued.

How do we take a relational approach to support?

We focus on building trusting, positive relationships with people accessing support, recognising that sometimes the most impactful outcome a person can experience from support is a constructive, safe relationship with a service that understands and cares about them. Crucial to this is centring our support on people's outcomes and asking them what matters the most to them and what they feel the right pathway to their outcome looks like. For example, when putting a contract in place with a Delivery Partner such as a counselling professional, we encourage the person to reflect on how their relationship with the counsellor feels, and make sure they know they have agency and choice in the process.

We also take a relational approach with our Delivery Partners, and we reflect the trauma informed principles of collaboration, trustworthiness and choice in these relationships. Some of the ways we do this include:

- Encouraging Delivery Partners to work alongside us and the person to work out the best support for the person.
- Regularly reviewing how support is going to see if there might be a need to course correct
- Involving Delivery Partners in our service development
- Asking Delivery Partners for their feedback and we reflect their contribution in our impact story.

Reflective activity – how do you know this is true?

Consider a relationship you have with a partner organisation that is effective. Or imagine what an effective partnership would look like. Ask yourself 'what tells you this is true?', 'How do I know this is effective?'

Think about what evidence you have for this. For example, you might receive feedback from the partner organisation about what works well in the relationship or you might notice that the partner has continued to work with your service over a long time.

What might this evidence mean and are there any gaps in the evidence that you could fill in? For example, could you invite the partner to take part in a survey or an interview about your work together so far?

How do we measure the difference we make?

We take an outcome mapping approach to our service evaluation using these six questions to define, test and refine our theory of change:

- What does Future Pathways do?
- Who do we work with?
- How do people feel when they engage with us?
- What do people learn and gain when they engage with us?
- What do people do differently because of our work?
- What difference does this make?

And we work alongside Delivery Partners to learn more about the impact of our approach. For example, each year, we ask our Delivery Partners to share their feedback about our work together through a Delivery Partner Questionnaire, and through this we have learned more about what our approach feels like for Delivery Partners. From our most recent questionnaire, respondents said that they:

- Felt understood, supported and valued
- Had opportunities to contribute to our development
- Had learned more about people with lived experience
- Were making changes to how they work with people
- Felt that our approach was collaborative

This feedback is supported through individual interviews with Delivery Partners and reflections from our wider team through periodic focus groups.

Reflective activity – how do they feel?

Consider a relationship with a partner organisation you work alongside.

Ask yourself 'If I were making the impact I wanted to make, how would that partner feel when they engaged with me?' For example, would they feel valued, heard, supported? Think about the evidence you have about how your partners feel. For example, are there opportunities for partners to review their work with you or feedback about their experience of working with you?

Consider how else you might gather evidence to check this? For example, recording ad hoc feedback from partners, or gathering this evidence systematically through a regular feedback survey.

Being There - what did we learn?

In our most recent report - Being There - we looked at the prevalence of multiple unmet basic needs among people we support. We also considered the barriers people face when accessing support and how we can help people to navigate these barriers. We found that:



Many people we support have basic needs that are not being met such as shelter or health care needs.



Many people we support face difficult things in their lives, like homelessness, addiction and criminal convictions.



When services work together, this can help people access the right support for them and to build better relationships with services.



It is important that people are heard and believed. When people trust Future Pathways, they are more likely to access support from other services too.

How does our learning shape the difference we make?

What we learned from our Being There report has influenced the approach we take when we are supporting people to access existing services.

We now have an evidence based understanding of some of the challenges people can face, and how we can promote more positive relationships with other services, for example by modelling trauma informed support, and facilitating effective communication between the service and the supported person.

We know that this can make a big difference to people accessing support, many of whom have had challenging relationships with services in the past. For some people this means they can access the right support and start to build more effective relationships with services and professionals involved with their life, giving a sense of self-efficacy and agency in their lives and support.

Find out more

Being There

Being There looks at the prevalence of multiple unmet basic needs among people we support. The report also considers the barriers people face when accessing support and how we can help people to navigate these barriers.

www.future-pathways.co.uk/being-there

Pathways to Change

In Pathways to Change we take an in-depth look at the work of Future Pathways from April 2023 to March 2024. The report gives us greater insight into how we make a real difference, and where there is scope for improvement.

www.future-pathways.co.uk/pathways-to-change

Trauma Informed Practice: a short guide

How you make your work trauma-informed will depend on you and the kind of work you do. In this short guide, we highlight how we can all work in a trauma-informed way. It is based on what people tell us is important to them.

www.future-pathways.co.uk/trauma-informed-practice-a-short-guide

Tell us what you think

We are always seeking people's feedback about any aspect of Future Pathways, including our resources and publications. If you would like to give us feedback about this booklet, you can:

- Email us at engagement@future-pathways.co.uk
- Fill in our online feedback form: [Tell us what you think](#)

Your feedback helps us improve.

