Creative Lifestory Work

For children who have been removed from the care of their birth family and suffered placement breakdowns or transitions, their life history can be extremely fragmented, leaving the child and young person feeling lost and with no sense of belonging (Perry, 2012).

Creative Lifestory work is a therapy service that supports a child or young person to explore, question and make sense of their past events of their lives. Children and young people are supported to understand their early life history in a safe space, alongside their caregiver. The purpose of this approach is to help children and young people reflect on the journey they have taken so far and understand who they are today, so that they have the chance to move forward with confidence in who they.

Before working directly with the child, information is gathered about the child's life from Children's Services as well as current and past carers or families, depending on individual circumstances. The Life Story Work develops a timeline of life events, information about birth history, significant moves, significant people, and stories or anecdotes about the child.

Sessions take place on a regular basis. Life Story Work is child-led; building rapport and creating a sense of safety is the focus of the first few sessions. Play and creative approaches are used to help children and young people express their thoughts; the process integrates the child's feelings about their life as well as the facts.

Life Story Work takes the child through their timeline. The structure begins with the present as it is important for the child to understand and feel safe in the present before moving towards the past. Age appropriate information is shared dependent on the child's development, it is a unique and individual process.

Life Story Work helps children understand their history whilst creating a narrative for thinking about the future. It helps build resilience and increase self-worth and self-esteem. A Life Story Book is created with the child/young person as part of the work but often it is the process rather than the end product which is of of great importance

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