

## My Working World: Stories of Change



Practitioner + Family/Whānau

### Partnership to facilitate whānau-led practice with families

**Problem**  
Child at risk of being excluded from early childhood centre as he was hurting other children. Older brother also at the centre, staff describe brothers relationship as 'horrendous'. All 5 children been involved with Ministry in the past with little engagement with mother.

**Intervention**  
Whānau parent worker 'thought about importance of connecting and being felt as supportive to build a partnership'. Initially encouraged mother to 'talk about whatever she wanted', 'it was important to talk about our connections and know about her whānau relationships.' 'Asked mum to bring me up to speed' and asked her what she would 'like to happen'. Asked her 'if it was ok to get the lie of the land from the centre' and explained that it would be 'normal for them to have a slightly different picture, because they are standing in a different place'. Invited mum to join an IY programme to help connect her with other families and leaves mum with the IY book. Accessed funding to get additional support for boy in centre. Coached and modelled with mum to communicate with kids when there is fighting or conflict, this occurs in the moment.

**Outcomes**  
Developed a plan in partnership with both mother and centre that worked for everyone to get him and keep him in centre. Mother fully engaged in developing the plan and 'made some goals for herself to support her son at home by playing with him for 10 minutes each day, this led to her independently contacting the hippie-coordinator who supported her. She read the IY book about parenting and said to the worker 'Oh my god, that book is revealing. I've cried! I wasn't looking out for my boy. The older ones would whack him all the time, I stop that now.' On the 3rd visit mum said 'it's like a whole different family-everyone is so much calmer.'

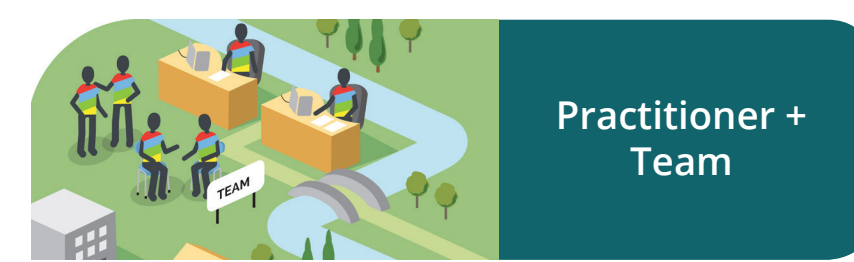
**Self-identified Practice changes**  
We're all on the same waka going down the same river. I built a relationship with the mother by being interested in her and not just talking at her about her child. I found out what the mother wanted instead of going in with my pre-made plan in my head and saying here this would be really good. I was careful with my language and stayed inviting rather than me paddling the waka in my own direction and on my own. Putting myself out there and modelling managing disagreements with mum, rather than just being the big I am and managing the behaviour for her. By thinking about the compass and reflecting, I could really think about whether it was helpful for the family - is this serving them or me?

How did their knowledge change?  
How did their practice change?

**Roles**  
The whānau-worker describes taking a particular path into the engagement process by being supportive & connected 'talk about our connections and her whānau relationships'. She describes staying attuned and facilitating the conversation to retain the mother leading the work 'what would you like to see happen?', Also by seeking permission to 'get the lie of the land from the centre'. She moves gently into influencing offering her a book and place in an IY programme, and by modelling and sharing the process with mum in 'managing the boys behaviour.'

**Empathy**  
She remains closely connected to mums feelings, attuning and holding previous experiences in mind - she is using empathy to approach the engagement. She communicates this by acknowledging the differences that are likely to arise 'normal for them to have a slightly different picture) and dynamically navigates not only the relationship with the mother but also with the centre staff, this enables a highly responsive approach to the system and leads into planning that addresses the problems highlighted at the beginning.

**Sense-making**  
She considering the constructs that are floated in the services about the mother and actively reflects on this and how to start from a position of empathy. She described partnering as 'working things out together, whether its with a mum, or my colleagues or the wider team, I'm not on the waka alone, its much better to have everyones bits and pieces together.'



Practitioner + Team

### Partnership to facilitate whānau-led practice in the team

**Problem**  
The team works with complex families and often get overwhelmed and stressed with the work. They come to me and 'vent' for an hour, often leaving without any resolution and in high emotional states.

**Intervention**  
Manager in a rehab service supporting a multi-disciplinary group of staff. Busy case review day with a distressed practitioner presenting, I would normally tell her to hold onto what she needed to 'offload', but instead offered her a 'Thinking Caps'. We only had 10 minutes and so I facilitated the steps, really insisting that she identify the issue, rather than ranting about the family. When we got to step 3, I was genuinely empathic, she looked relieved and was able to then empathise with the family.

**Outcomes**  
I was able to safely contain the emotional fallout experienced by the practitioner and model partnering when someone is really very emotional. She felt listened to and was assisted to move out of the whirlpool so she could complete the work required for the day. In the past I have had feedback that the team member might feel hurt and not listened to, now its the opposite and its fast, so partnership working can be demonstrated and experienced. I hear the team talking about how they are doing 'Thinking Caps' all the time which is much better than what we did have 'under or above the line conversations, that were often just venting and not helpful and not great to be a part of or hear.

**Self-identified Practice changes**  
I now have a framework that allows me to manage team members safely and underpinned by the partnership compass when they are in a heightened emotional mind. I dont have to remember and so I dont get drawn into the whirlpool, which can happen if I'm busy or tired, or leave them drowning which is worse.

How did their knowledge change?  
How did their practice change?

**Roles**  
By using the Thinking Caps framework the manager is able to facilitate the process of partnering in her team at times of high emotion. She is prompted to be purposeful '10 mins, insisted that she identify the issue', facilitates the process with fidelity, which has a 'containing' effect, she is influential in keeping the practitioner to the tasks, using empathy to decrease her arousal which enables the worker to then empathise with the family. The worker has an experience of being connected with and the entire process feels supportive in a reciprocal way 'I was safely able to...' 'she felt listened to and out of the whirlpool'.

**Empathy**  
By choosing to use the Thinking Caps the manager is activating empathy for herself and the practitioner. She uses empathy with the practitioner to both reduce her arousal and activate her capacity to empathise with the family, this dials down her emotional state further and she is able to engage her thinking sufficiently to 'get out of the whirlpool and get on with the day'.

**Sense-making**  
The manager describes construing the 'Thinking Caps' tool as a way to partner with a staff member, by making sense of what is needed in the moment for the practitioner and either withholding herself or giving at cost to herself and the team meeting, she is able to use the framework to navigate with the partnership compass.



Practitioner + Network

### Partnership to facilitate whānau-led practice across the network

**Problem**  
An interdisciplinary team working together for 6 months were becoming overwhelmed in developing a pathway in relation to a specialised intervention in order for a child to leave hospital safely. The pathway was developed with the best interest of the child were central but without whānau. The professionals all contributing their expertise.

**Intervention**  
Head of service (HOS) in health attended the meeting to get them 'back on track'. Facilitated the discussion, drawing through everyone's 'point of view'. 'What is the outcome you (each professional) are wanting'; 'what about the family perspective'; 'who needs to be involved in decision making?' Facilitated conversation led to collective decision.

**Outcomes**  
The pathway starts with the questions to the family and is a decision making tool to be used with the family not a risk-management plan. Policies linked to be drawn on rather than front and centre. There is a mtg between professional and family to work through pathway Group explicitly stating a 'going forward will hold the family at the centre of any work'.

**Self-identified Practice changes**  
'Actively valuing partnership and collaboration between professionals and families.'  
'Family centred thinking and decision making.'  
'Empathy to build and sustain partnership across the system.'

How did their knowledge change?  
How did their practice change?

**Roles**  
HOS deliberately used the Partnership Compass in this meeting, she said the intentional way she facilitated this meeting was helpful as she had a navigational tool she could use, she said this enabled a 'sharpening' of her practice. Prior to going into the meeting S had orientated towards the role of being purposeful ('get them back on track'). In the meeting she was both facilitative in an exploration ('facilitated conversation') and influential with the purpose ('developing a pathway') and returning to purpose ('collective decision').

**Empathy**  
HOS used empathy to both navigate the discussion tuning into the problem and by inviting empathy in the group members in relation to the families for whom they were developing the pathway, this arguably generated empathy toward the families, that enabled the professional group to develop a pathway that would further promote partnership with the family ('pathway as a decision making tool rather than a pre-set plan'). Moving the families into the drivers seat and the experts into the navigation seat ('policies to be drawn on'). This modelled partnership in the network with the family at the centre, marking a change across a range of professionals ('going forward will hold the family at the centre of any work')

**Sense-making**  
HOS describes making sense of how to approach this meeting by using the 'constructs' of partnership in My Working World, 'actively valuing partnership and collaboration' and makes sense of the components of the partnership compass, starting with 'empathy to build and sustain partnerships across the system.'