

Power Threat and Meaning in Services

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Aims

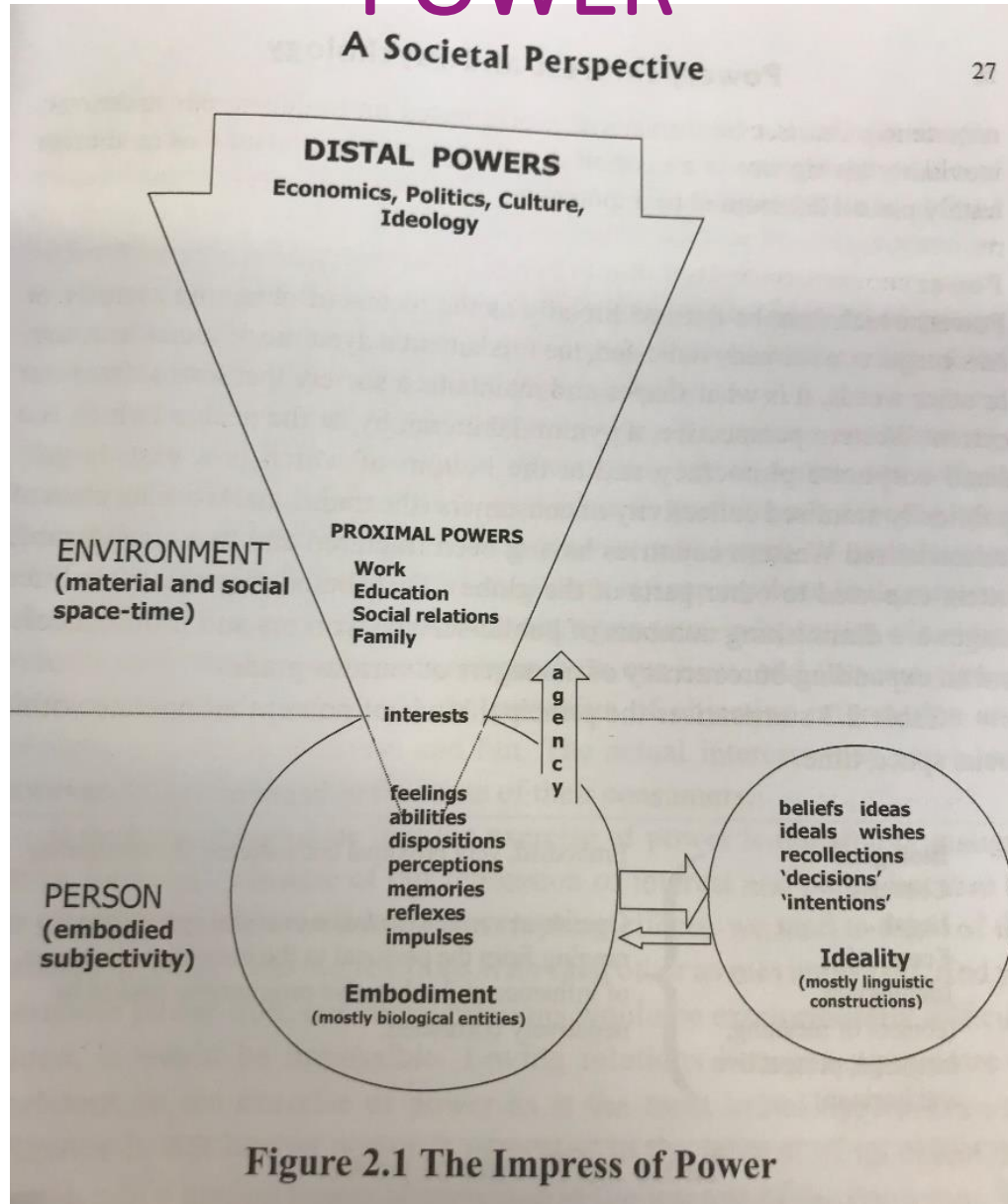
Section 1 – WHAT IS GOING ON

Section 2 – WHAT THEN MUST WE DO

Key assumptions of PTMF

- There are serious problems with the use of diagnosis
- Bad things happening, especially in childhood, can have serious negative psychological effects for the people involved
- Adversity, trauma and distress are the result of power imbalances and abuses of power
- Narratives are the best way of accessing meaning
- Services need to be trauma informed

POWER



Key Questions

1) What has happened to you?

(How is power operating in your life?)

2) How did it affect you?

(What kind of threats does this pose?)

3) What sense did you make of it?

(What is the meaning of these experiences to you?)

4) What did you have to do to survive?

(What kind of threat responses are you using?)

How did this affect you?

- What kind of threats does this power pose:

Relational

Emotional

Social/community

Economic/material

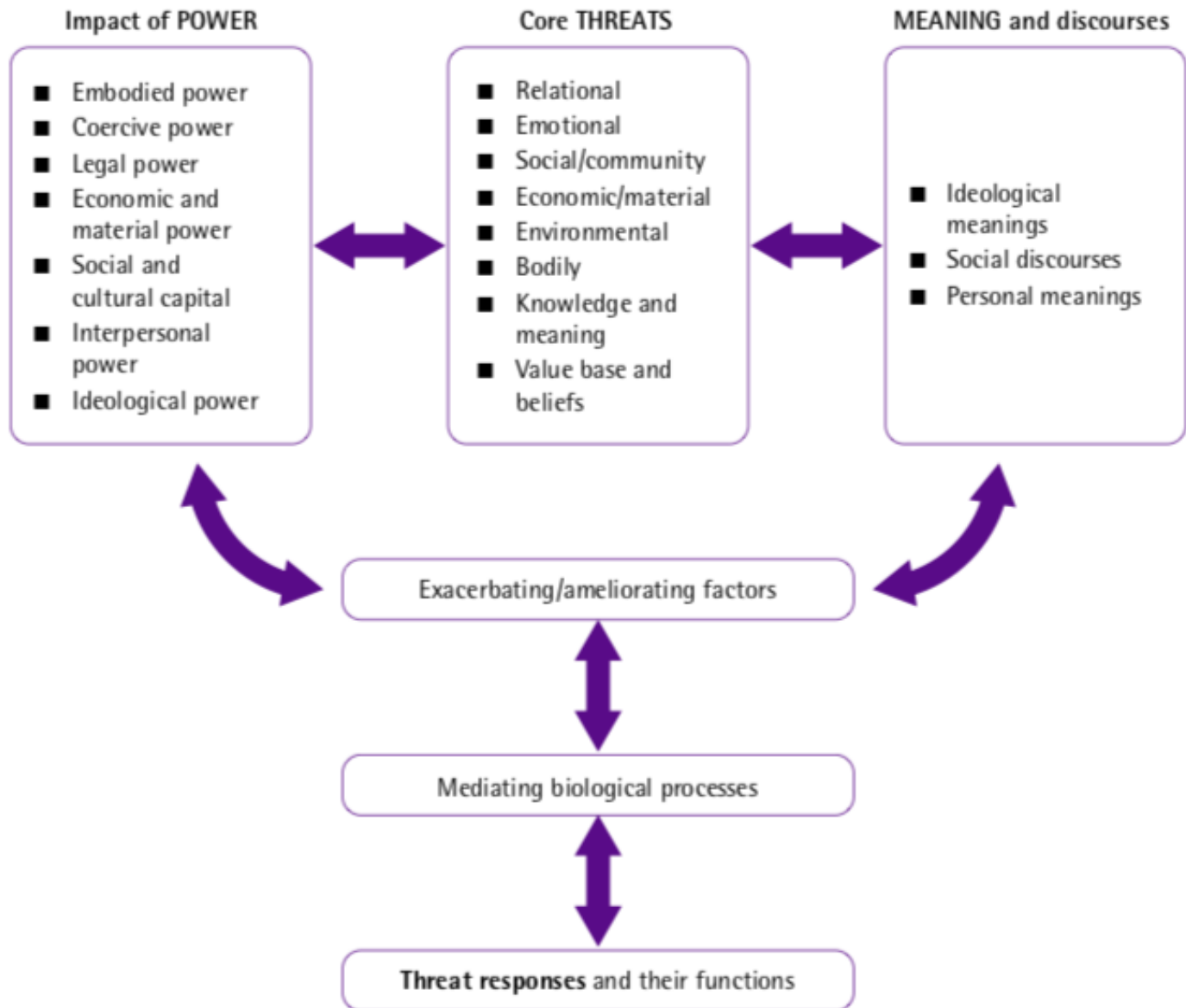
Environmental

Body

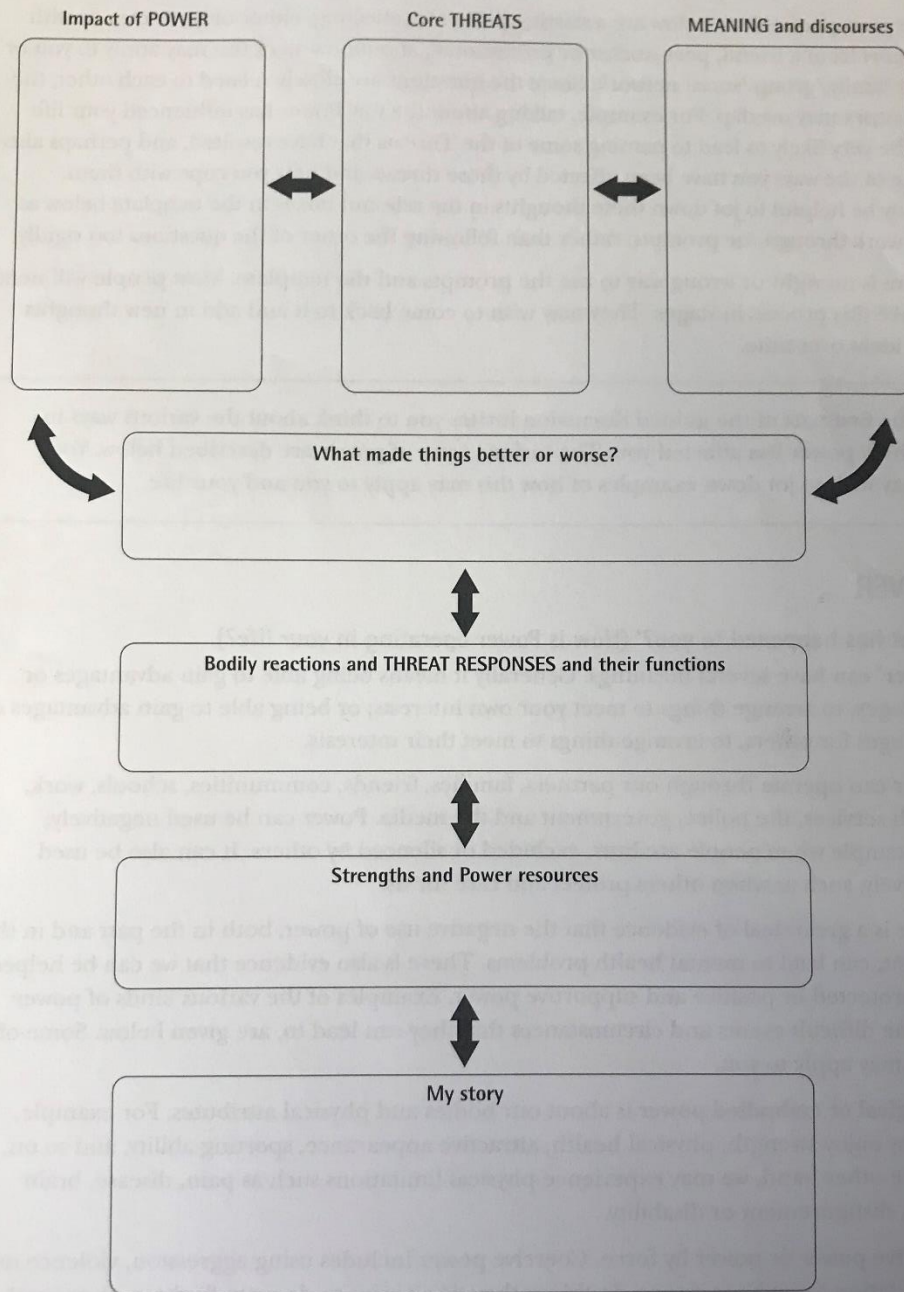
Value base

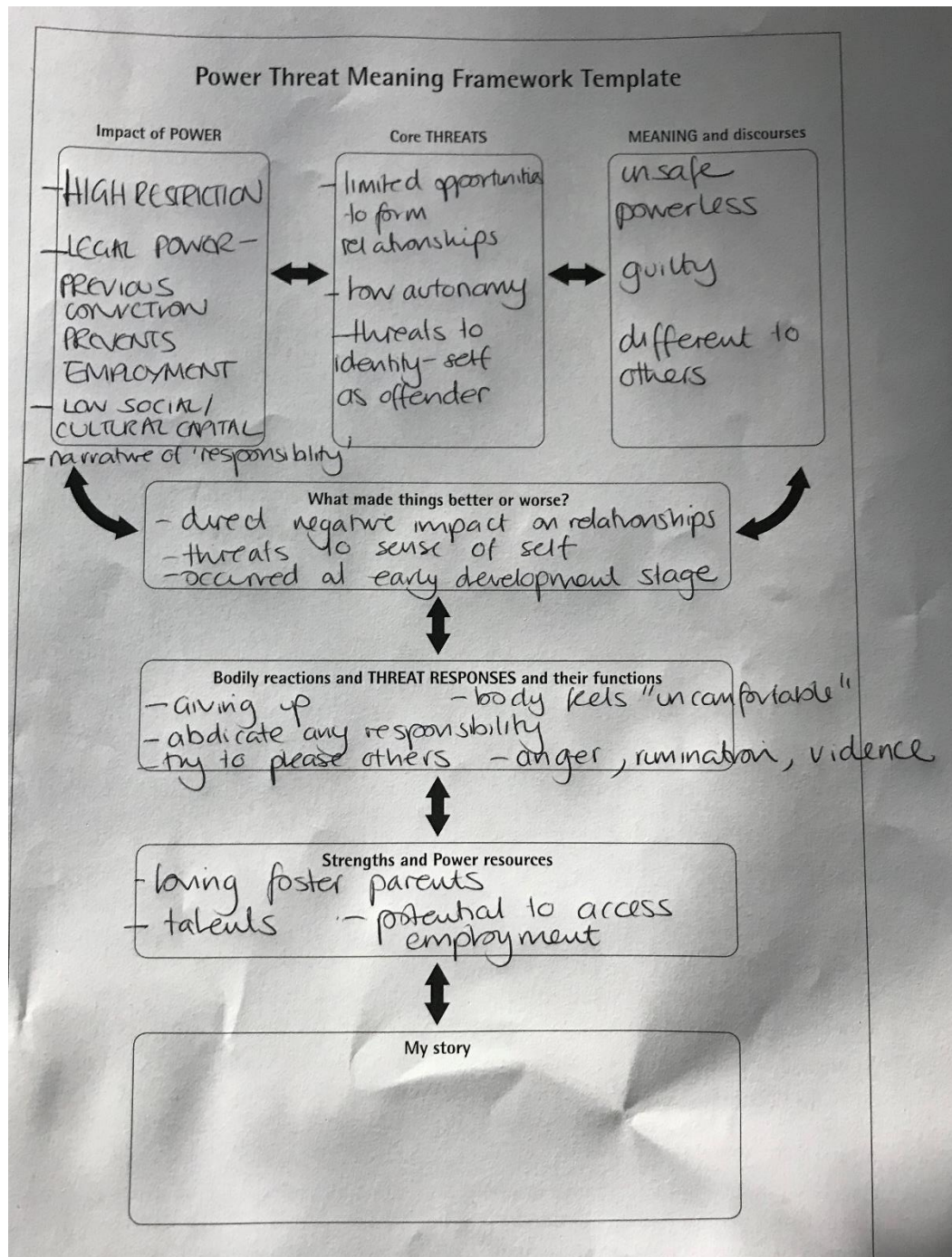
Meaning making

Power Threat Meaning Framework General Patterns Template



Power Threat Meaning Framework Template





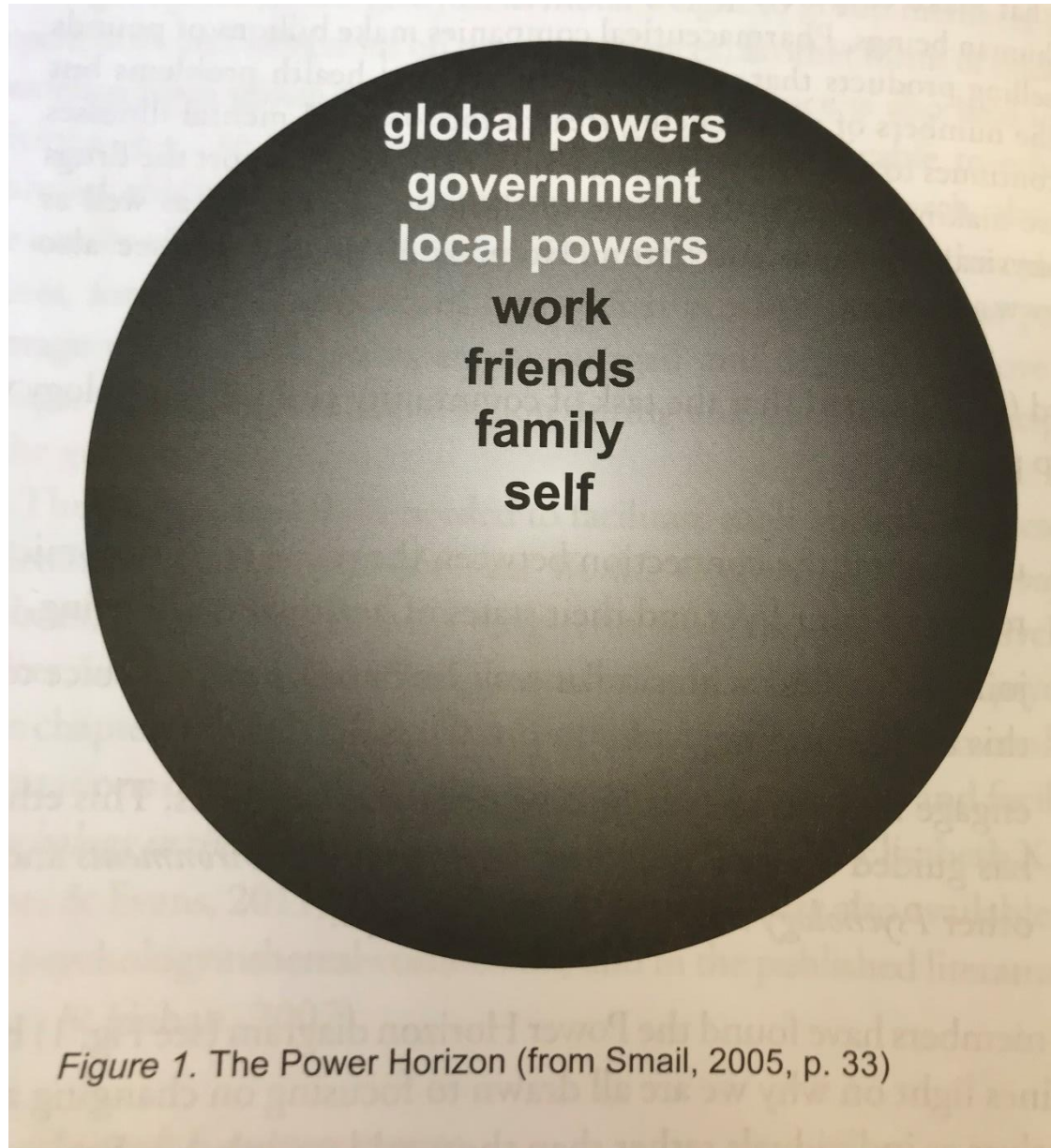


Figure 1. The Power Horizon (from Smail, 2005, p. 33)

Main Focus

		CHANGE	UNDERSTANDING
INDIVIDUAL		<p>Aim: Alleviation of individual peoples distress</p> <p>1. 'Patient'</p> <p>Method: problem-solving</p>	<p>Aim: Exploration of experiences that underlie individual peoples difficulties</p> <p>2. 'Person'</p> <p>Method: Individual insight</p>
ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS	MAIN FOCUS	<p>Aim: changing environments/aspects of society that affect us all.</p> <p>4. 'Activist'</p> <p>Method: socio-political action, solidarity, building mutual aid systems</p>	<p>Aim: Exploration of social factors that affect all people</p> <p>3. 'Citizen'</p> <p>Method: social analysis</p>

What then must we do?

THINK SMALL

Box 1. On Smallness: An overhead used in *Psychology in the Real World* groups

On Smallness

1. Small is beautiful
2. Small is effective
3. Small is tolerable
4. Small is manageable
5. Small is knowable
6. Small is usual

The bottom line ... Small is normalising.

(adapted from Mosher & Burti, 1994, p. 105)

“When it's all gone
Something carries on
And it's not morbid at all
Just when nature's had enough of you
When my blood stops
Someone else's will thaw
When my head rolls off
Someone else's will turn
And while I'm alive, I'll make tiny changes to earth.”

Grant Hutchison / Scott Hutchison / David Kennedy

“Young people should get more say in decisions. We should be able to choose our own staff – these people are going to become your family at the end of the day. Staff get paid to be there; we have to be there.

Its hard to trust social work as they are saying stuff you don't want to hear and making decisions. So we should get more say, like young people getting to interview staff. Also, it shouldn't just be high tariff cases who get to talk to their social worker every week”.

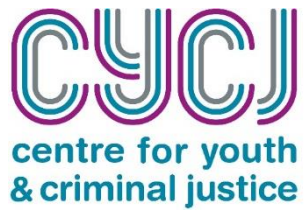
Jane (Age 18)

What then must we do?

Key Questions:

With respect to the professional services that we provide:

1. What are the biggest power imbalances present and how can we redress these?
2. How can we increase service users' access to forms of power?
3. How can we bring about some positive changes in the environments that we and others inhabit?
4. How do we work collaboratively with others towards changing embedded unhelpful influences/narratives in our communities and wider society?



Responses

- Start small
- High honesty
- Use of language
- Form a group to influence policy/politics
- Clarify what an individual cannot change
- Focus on environments and managing power in environments

“ There is a big difference between illusion and ideals. The loss of illusion is a necessary process on the painful road of enlightenment; the loss of ideals is spiritual death.... Ideals are not just unlikely to be realised – by their very nature they can never be realised. Nevertheless, their existence is what makes life worth living”.

David Smail, Power Interest and Psychology,
p94

“Solidary action may once again rise, as it has in the past, from our having nothing to lose but our misery”.

David Smail, Power Interest and Psychology,
p101

References

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- Cromby, J, Harper, Reavy, P (2013) *Psychology, Mental Health and Distress*, Palgrave, Macmillan Publishers Ltd, London
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