



In a nutshell: are we making a difference?

East Ayrshire learning event (June 2023)

What Matters to You (WM2U) and the Nest Wellbeing Group welcomed about 40 people who live or work in the area to a learning event, held at Netherthird Community Centre. We were pleased that lots of community members were there.

"A power shift is happening – we are making the right people uncomfortable - the community is realising they have power of their own."

The event was designed to help us have conversations based on sharing stories about whether our efforts are achieving change in Cumnock and Muirkirk. Five community members played an active part in planning and running the day - they were – Courtney Lennox, Gordon McGuire, Heather Sykes, Jacqueline Cross, and Natalie Carmichael



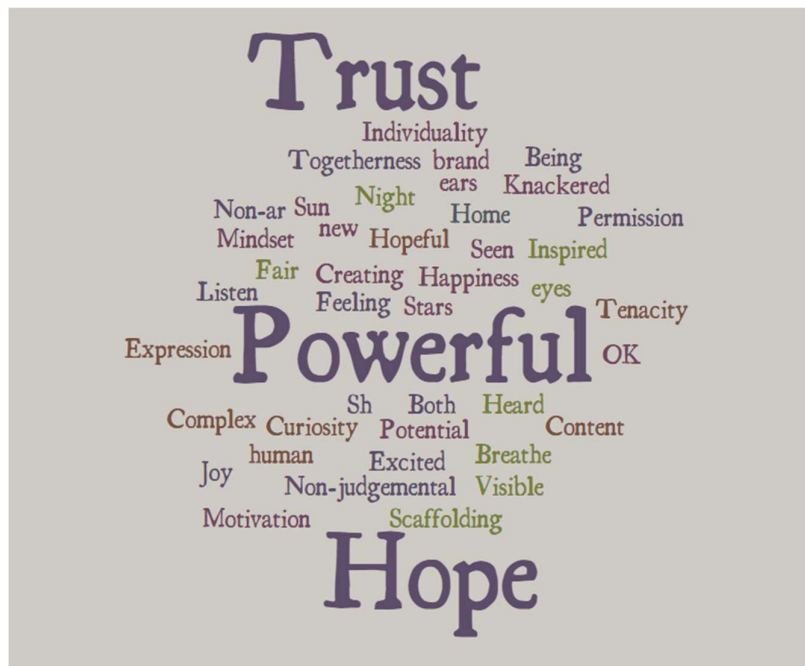
Our guiding spirit was very much that people should show up 'as a human being', not wearing official badges or lanyards and sharing experiences with each other on an equal and safe basis. Not everyone finds this an easy thing to do, and we are grateful to all those that took part in some way.

Highlights: what we learned

- The day was positive and challenging. It showed that there is a collective passion and commitment to make a difference, especially to create better mental health for children and families.
- We acknowledged again that what matters are trusting, non-judgemental relationships and responses from services and professionals. People value being listened to and really heard, most simply, being asked about and supported to access the kinds of help that work for them.

- Parents and community members are clear that the existing system is not working for them and at the same time, that 'mutual respect between services and the community needs to continue to improve'.
- There are still issues of stigma, a lack of understanding about trauma and recovery, deaths from suicide and drugs and a need to tackle the impact of poverty.
- There was real frustration at the slow pace of change, difficulties engaging with schools and with decision-makers that might block the progress that has been made.
- It wasn't all gloomy or disheartening. We heard examples that show that change is possible. These stories also showed that community is a unique resource, where timely and real supportive support can be offered by community members, as well as services. And we heard example where professionals had changed their approach with good results.

Our words of the moment



"The NEST wellbeing group are an unstoppable force – the ambition is there, wanting to do more".

- Looking ahead, we feel confident that the best prospects will be based on collaboration of services and communities, where the community is a clear and valued partner.
- There's still lots to learn about how best to do this, so that community and services can work alongside each other to create practical ways to build on the existing progress and goodwill created.

More information: <https://wm2u.co.uk/> and <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089997421795>