



Charter Champions' Forum takeaways

The final activity at the Charter Champions Forum on November 14 invited groups of Charter Champions to propose how they would plan to build a sense of identity and belonging with a particular young person. Although the scenarios varied widely from group to group, the action plans they produced proved very similar in the opportunities and issues they addressed and the kinds of actions they proposed.

This is a summary of what the Charter Champions said, grouped under six themes:

Culture

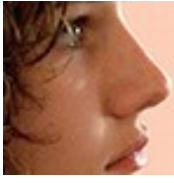
- The cultural competency of workers is important– there should be a commitment to ongoing education and knowledge of where to go for help if they identify cultural issues and are not confident.
- Find out what the young person knows about their culture? Do they want to know more?
- Seek information to confirm their cultural identity, including a genogram. Pursue connections that can be incorporated into the child's everyday life.
- Engage a cultural consultant / advisor to inform research, planning and decision making.
- Take opportunities to engage with others to celebrate culture.

Timely and effective support for trauma and loss

- Identify key people with whom the young person is connected and promote those connections as appropriate and safe.
- Educate carers / workers to enable them to understand trauma history, the impact on young person's behaviours and development and how they should respond.
- Create and maintain consistency and safety within the placement.
- Identify the young person's behavioural / developmental stages and ensure therapeutic support is available and relevant.
- Advocate to ensure access of the young person to the necessary services.
- Nurture collaborative working relationships with others in the young person's life – ensure continuity of care outside of 'therapy'.

“Pursue connections that can be incorporated into the child's everyday life

“ensure continuity of care outside of 'therapy'



Recognising the important role of family

- Seek and continue to seek the child's view about who is important to them. Find out what is their understanding of 'family'? Acknowledge that the young person may integrate birth and carer families into 'one family'.
- Map out important connections identified by the young person.
- Explore activities and forms of contact to meet the young person's needs.
- Seek the opportunity for co-placement with siblings.
- Ensure the young person has a Life Story Book and add to it.
- Organise respite visits with extended family members, safety and the young person's wishes permitting.

Building and maintaining connections

- Promote continuing contact to meet the young person's needs for connection. Various activities and forms of contact should be explored such as visits, play-dates, phone, Skype, postcards and letters.
- Social workers need to prioritise building a relationship with the young person.
- Promote 'normal' peer connections and nurture those identified by the young person as important such as friend at kindergarten or school.
- Promote 'normal' community connections for the young person, their birth and carer family such as playgroups.
- A number of respondents proposed the idea of a 'mentor' but without information about what the mentor would do. Some group respondents believed a mentor can have a critical role in teaching and supporting a child to build and maintain connections

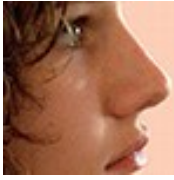
Participating in and contributing to the community

- Take the young person's lead and support their specific interests, previous engagement and desire to continue.
- Facilitate 'outside' community relationships beyond the care situation, for example look for opportunities promoted via school.
- Give the young person opportunity to experience new interests and activities.
- Organise visits to the young person's community of origin such as Aboriginal country or a regional town.
- Encourage activities that promote future volunteering such as helping people and animals, for example Labs 4 Life and Riding for the Disabled.

6 seek the child's view about who is important to them

6 a mentor can have a critical role in teaching and supporting a child to build and maintain connections

6 look for opportunities promoted via school



Providing holistic support

- Promote regular and effective communication within the care team with inclusive meetings, planning and decision making.
- Assess learning, development and other needs (as well as reviews).
- Adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to ensure all needs are being met.
- Take opportunities to explore with the young person such topics as 'what makes you happy?' and 'where do you see yourself in the world?'.
- Have a consistent case manager.

Promoting and facilitating hope for the future

- Place great emphasis on consistency of placement.
- Promote and nurture relationships important to the young person.
- Celebrate milestones such as 'I go to school' and other achievements.
- Vision with the young person exploring 'who do you want to be?' and 'what do you want to do?'.
- Keep talk about the future optimistic but realistic.
- Encourage the young person to seek opportunities and support them to access them.

“ Ask: 'what makes you happy?' and 'where do you see yourself in the world?'

“ Ask: 'who do you want to be?' and 'what do you want to do?'