



Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. Here we share our latest news and dates for your diary.

## Farewell / Welcome back to team members...

We are sad to bid farewell to Lucy and Rob whose temporary contracts with **Me first** come to an end this month. Luckily we know we will stay in touch as both Rob and Lucy are Communication Champions so we will see them at our regular network events!

We are looking forward to welcoming back Joanna our Project Co-Lead who is returning from maternity leave in January!

*"I continue to be impressed by the **Me first** model and training and the enthusiasm and skill of the team. It has been a rewarding experience and I wish the team all the best for the future" -Rob*

*"I have really enjoyed working with **Me first** and have learnt as much as I have contributed, if not more. I wish the team well for the future and hope that our paths will cross again. Keep up the good work in championing for children and young people to have a voice in healthcare" - Lucy*



Rob



Lucy

## Upcoming Events

**Twitter Chat: 10<sup>th</sup> January**



"How and when to see a child or young person alone"

**Communication Champions Network: 5<sup>th</sup> February,**

9am-12noon, NCVO, London (plus free breakfast!)



**Me first masterclass: 13<sup>th</sup> April,**  
London

# Me first

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## Me first Updates

The 'back to school' period has been a busy one for the **Me first** team!

We've been visiting conferences & delivering presentations across the UK including:

- Royal College of General Practitioners conference in Liverpool
- SBK Paediatric Transition conference in Cambridge
- Queens Nursing Institute's Transition of Care Conference
- GOSH Inaugural Conference
- UCL Partner's 'Education as a Vehicle for Change' conference

Kate and James facilitated a session at the inaugural [NHS Youth Forum Big Meetup](#) about how to advocate for yourself in healthcare conversations.



Thanks to some prize money we received from Health Education England, we were able to buy a day's training from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) for personal impact and presentation skills. We learned about the importance of body, breath, and voice in communication... you can read more in James' [blog](#).

The pilot for our training around how to open up difficult conversations about safeguarding concerns is now complete and we have received some great feedback from delegates! Our safeguarding conversations model has been published on the [website](#). Stay tuned for the possibility of more safeguarding conversations training dates in the new year!

# Me first

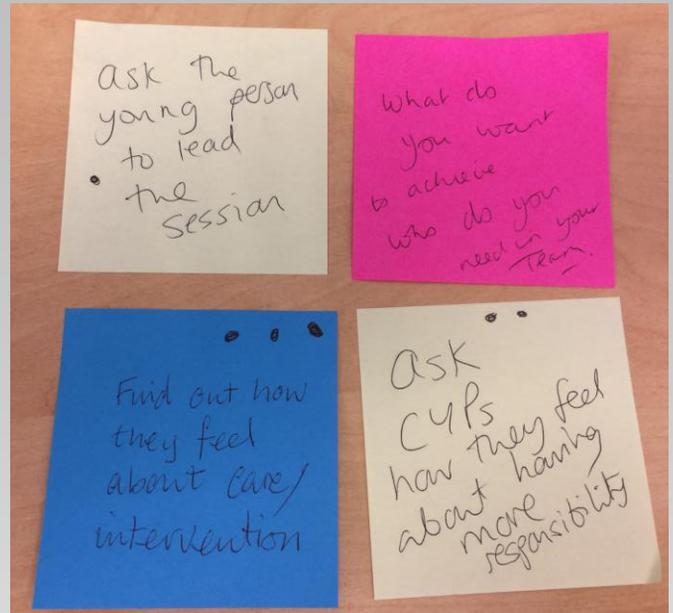
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## Introducing a new resource

### The 3x3 technique



At the last Comms Champs meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October we tested out this activity from the **Me first** resource hub to think of ideas for empowering CYPs. This led to interesting discussion about how we can help CYPs and their families feel more in control. It also linked well with one of our Twitter chats about power balance. There is a link to the transcript for this chat on page 5.

It's surprising how many ideas are sparked during this activity. Our champions commented that it would be great to use it in the workplace with CYPs and with colleagues.

Each person wrote 1-3 ideas down on separate post it notes in each round. All post-it notes were compiled and together the group chose which ideas they preferred to discuss further. Ideas suggested included:

- Let the CYP decide how, when and what care they would like
- Ask the CYP to lead the session
- Ask the CYP how they feel about having more responsibility

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We also learnt about using a resource on our website, Mapping Team Goals to help encourage joint responsibility & collaboration in health and social care. This is worth checking out [here](#).

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## Agenda for Communication Champions Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> February 2018

- Me first update & new resources
- Planning ahead:  
Supporting & celebrating  
Me first champions in 2018
- Workshop: Working with  
CYPs with Mental Health  
issues with Cher Johnson
- Challenging our  
communication skills

## Topics for future Communications Champions meetings:

- Psychological aspects of  
chronic illnesses
- How to tackle barriers to  
CYP centred communication  
in the workplace: professional  
conversations

**If you have any other requests,  
please get in touch:**

[info@mefirst.org.uk](mailto:info@mefirst.org.uk)

Represent us! Come to the  
next Communication's  
Champions events to pick  
up one of our shiny badges!



## Upcoming Communications Champions Meetings:

**5<sup>th</sup> February 2018**  
**20th June 2018**  
**October 2018 date TBC**

Our next meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> Feb is at  
NCVO in Kings Cross, London.  
9-12. Free Breakfast is included.  
Please contact us to let us know  
if you plan to attend.

Join us for the next  
**Twitter Chat:**

**How & when to see a  
children or young person  
alone**

**Wednesday 10th January  
8-9pm**



**Me first Twitter chats  
continue every 2 months.**

## Twitter chat 12/09/2017

How to move beyond power imbalances in conversations between children and young people and health and social care

[Read full transcript here](#)

*"In appt say "I'm your (HCP role) but you (parent) are expert in your child & you (CYP) are expert in you."*

*"By using methods which consider the individual and the life course and qualitative research which deconstruct the CYP grouping"*

## Twitter chat 06/12/2017

What to do when a parent wants to withhold information from a CYP about their health/care?

[Read full transcript here](#)



*"I think it's sometimes more helpful to think of the risks of not sharing information e.g. CYP may feel scared as they don't know what's happening to them"*

*"Remind the parent that we are there to support the child and that we cannot do that effectively without being honest with them about what we are doing and why"*

## In Conversation with...

### Rob Brown - Me first Project Lead



#### **Q) Can you tell us a little about yourself, your job title and background?**

Hello All. I am currently the **Me** first Project Co lead (along with Kate Martin). I am a Social Worker by trade and have worked in numerous settings throughout my career. I have worked in Safeguarding in both Australia and the UK. I have also worked in two tertiary paediatric hospitals (Princess Margaret Hospital for Children in Western Australia managing a Social Work team for 15 years. I have also worked in the Social Work team at GOSH for 3 years). In addition to this I am the father of 3 sons, grandfather of 3, soon to be 4. I came to the UK for 1 year in 2008 and still enjoy living here (despite the winters being a bit colder than in Australia).

#### **Q) You've been involved with Me first for 8 months, how did you become involved with the project?**

A) I worked on the **Me** first project for 1 month in 2016 prior to an extended holiday to Australia. I was impressed by the model, the training and the website and the project's goal of improving the health outcomes for children and young people. When Joanna Reid went on maternity leave in May this year, I applied to cover for her and was pleased to get the role. Joanna returns from maternity leave in January 2018 and my fixed term contract will finish.

#### **Q) The Me first team consists of many professionals, from different backgrounds, all with unique and varied skill-sets, what do you believe to be the most important attribute to have when working on a project like this? What makes a great team member?**

A) I believe that **Me** first team members need to be (and are) committed to child and young person centred communication and shared decision making with CYP. An enthusiasm for training and good communication are key utilising worker's backgrounds and experience.

**Q) The Me first project has been going for 3 years now, what do you see as Me first biggest achievement to date?**

A) There is more than one!

The model - which has 6 powerful questions that health and social care professionals should be answering for CYP.

The training – which builds on professional’s existing communication skills and promotes shared decision making with CYP.

That the training continues to be very well received by participants

The project has won national recognition winning several awards

Where do you see **Me** first heading in the future?

In addition to continuing to deliver the Masterclass training to an increasing number of sites and professions, the project is expanding the number of modules available in response to feedback. The Safeguarding training has been well received and we look forward to meeting the demand for more of this training.

**Q) Me first runs a masterclass training day, what is this and why should professionals book onto a Me first masterclass?**

A) As mentioned earlier, we acknowledge that professionals will have existing communication skills and the masterclass will build on and complement these for those who want to increase their child centred communication. Communicating with children and young people sounds easy but to being truly inclusive of CYP takes increased skills and practice. The advantage of the training is that participants have the chance to practice before putting it into practice in their work setting.

**Q) Finally, is there anything else you’d like to add?**

A) It has been challenging yet rewarding working on the project with such a committed and skilled team. I wish the team and the project all the best for a successful future.

**Thank you, Rob!**

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*Our next newsletter will be due in Spring 2018*

*Wishing you all a Merry Christmas & a happy new year!*