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Hilda Campbell Convenor Nurturing & Weaving Networks SIG July 2022

What we have heard so far around learning needs and network weaving

**Co-production**

Co-production and design are around being led by need expressed by those seeking change in a particular area, understanding what isn’t working so together solutions can be found to address that need. This piece may be of interest <http://whatworksscotland.blogspot.com/2016/05/co-production-i-believe-in-unicorns.html> and the publication mentioned therein. There can be different descriptions of co-production, the key thing to remember is it’s a collaborative process, which does need leadership to ensure things move forwards. Historically it was around

*‘’Working in partnership with people who use services, carers and citizens to improve public services’’*

This has expanded to work in partnership with various groups on issues of improvement. In updating and adapting the Network Weavers Handbook (June Holley 2011) [networkweaver.com/product/network-weaver-handbook-pdf](https://networkweaver.com/product/network-weaver-handbook-pdf/) it was important to gather views on people’s understanding of, interest in, and learning needs around Network Weaving. The following share views captured from several events:

* The ALLIANCE [www.alliance-scotland.org.uk](http://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/)
* The co design group of the Network Mapping info graphic in Scotland. An invitation has went out to all the Nations in Q to share their views in order that an infographic can be created for the 4 nations, this link takes you to the jam board to add your comments <https://jamboard.google.com/d/1UoEmcCzSY-d3lR7RN9_MeMYmwwIp18TD3BABxWUzwdw/viewer?f=0>
* The QI Alumni Event in Scotland (NES/HIS) [www.nes.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk) [ihub.scot](https://ihub.scot/)
* Individual conversations with colleagues interested in Network Weaving
* The Miro Board set up on Hexitime [hexitime.com](https://hexitime.com/)

In total more than 200 people have had an opportunity to comment and share thoughts and through the Miro Board, QI alumni event and individual conversations we have been able to gather views across the nations. This conversation continues and the following reflections capture a moment in time, as we work together and learn together, we shall perhaps identify other learning needs.

**ALLIANCE EVENT**

The following are the responses captured in the chat box from the ALLIANCE event on Network Weaving which can help inform materials adaptation and development

People were asked to complete a sentence. The following shows the sentence to be completed in bold and completed sentences in bullet points for each heading

This event was attended primarily by third sector participants and experts by experience

**Observation by facilitators of the ALLIANCE event on comments made**

The importance of relationships and interconnectedness comes more to the fore also power and importance of feeling valued and that what you do makes a difference.

**I think a network is………….**

* I think a network is people connected by choice
* connections of people and organisations
* A group of people with similar interests
* a group of people with common purpose
* a resource
* is a connection of souls
* Wonderful!
* collection of people or organisations with a shared task, experience
* connection of people with a common goal
* A collection of people with a shared aim and purpose

**I think a meeting is……….**

* feeling that you have value
* where business takes place
* an organised group
* a coming together
* space to share and collaborate
* An obligation
* I think a meeting is a particular space for a connection between people
* an opportunity
* an agreed time and space to come together
* Coming together for information or share decisions
* opportunity to see and hear other people and be seen and heard
* A way of convening that is supposed to add more value than thinking or acting alone
* a space where power can be abused
* I think a meeting is a collection of people who come together to discuss a pre-planned agenda

**I think a forum is…………**

* A platform for sharing
* Bigger in its diversity
* Open space for sharing
* A forum is a space for discussion and deliberation
* A large group of people coming together to with a shared / common agenda
* A larger group of people with a shared interest.
* Larger group with a common goal they want to achieve
* A structure to support connection
* A place to share
* I think a forum is a place for common goals and collaboration

**Network weaving to me suggests……….**

* Creating something intertwined and bigger than the individuals within it
* Inter relationships and synergies
* A group of people connecting in a variety of different ways.
* A pattern of work that takes time, dedication and creativity
* Bringing connections together
* Interlacing connections
* Bringing new connections together and strengthening relationships
* A mixture of all of the above
* Bringing all of the threads of the tapestry of life together
* Network weaving suggests an intention behind networking
* Network weaving suggests a place to come together and make links and share multiple threads

**The reasons I want to connect with others are……….**

* Share, generate ideas, learn from others
* To learn from others who have different experiences
* Common humanity. learn from others and share learning
* To learn and to share
* To hear other perspectives on the same issue
* To be stimulated
* To be more effective, to feel part of something bigger, curious about other people's experience
* Learn together, achieve something
* As a volunteer I give back to society as a purposeful effect
* To find out what people think about different things
* ...because I'm a human being and I feel a need to gain and share knowledge
* To become aware of the power structures where decisions are being made
* To learn from each other about how to best go about things
* To hear about people’s experiences

**The most effective connections I have with others is by…………………**

* People with similar values
* Shared experiences
* Giving a little bit of yourself
* Work, family, friends
* Establishing trust
* Having a real connection and relationship with people
* Expectations are the same
* Laughs
* Knowing that I can make a difference and become friends also
* ...the most effective connections are by building relationships and having a shared passion and coming together to solve issues

**Challenges in connecting include……….**

* Hierarchies
* Differing agendas and expectations
* Different cultures e.g., council and NHS in the integration agenda
* Personalities
* Red tape from above
* Making time
* Online or not online
* Where do you want to start?
* Challenges include personalities, vested interests, feeling vulnerable
* Time,
* ...challenges in connecting include power inequalities, not proper boundaries

**I overcome these challenges by……….**

* Trying to understand where people are coming from
* Management expectations in time needed to create meaningful networks
* Simple and accessible language
* Finding ways to connect, persistence, safety
* Move away from looking at specific outcomes and try make connections based on an overarching common goal
* Being mindful that the challenge is there and being intentional in finding a solution
* Sometimes you don’t, you can be burnt
* Understanding what is challenging for others and working together to find solutions
* Not rushing to the doing, spending time on getting to know and building trust
* Prioritising time in calendar to meet others and maintain relationships.
* Creating safe spaces
* Showing some humility
* Overcome through specific acknowledgement in workplans
* Conversations need to be honest and no reprisals
* ...I overcome these challenges by trying to be authentic and being kind and compassionate and not respond adversely to those trying to push yours and other people’s buttons

**From what I have heard so far, I think network weaving is………**

* I think we have a compass but sometimes you need a roadmap to change
* If you fail to plan, you plan to fail
* Golden thread….
* I think the foot soldiers have the answers
* An opportunity to think differently about networks and help them become even better
* I like the focus on intention and also the reminder about encouraging diversity in the leadership within networks
* I think managers are too focused on targets
* Network weaving is a place where everyone is equal and there are many shared connections and where co-production and collaboration is encouraged and nurtured to achieve a valued space and resource which offers many opportunities to both individually and grow together within the network weaving group and also helps our community expand and grow to
* I often say that we are the sum total of all the decisions we make in life, good, bad and the indifference sucks the soul out of your life

**Partner event led to the Map for Nurturing and weaving Networks in Scotland**

This was a co designed piece of work over several sessions exploring what those attending felt would support and nurture networks. The participants were from the third sector and statutory services and there was varied input, but all voices were heard and included in the final infographic. In addition, the infographic was sent to critical friends for feedback and to consider any additions they would make, their views also informed the final version. This is the version we are working from currently, however as already shared; work is underway as an ongoing development to review the map with those who didn’t have a chance to contribute before from other parts of the Q community in the UK. The following are the main headings and subheadings from the map created in Scotland:

**Skills for Networking**

**Supporting change**

Achieve a common purpose

Feeding back to your organisation to share and inform future practice

Work towards goals

**Creating safe networks**

Liberating structures

Managing power differentials

Dealing with difficulty

Building relationships

**Values**

Fun

Generosity

More and distributed leadership

Being curious

Changes in the world

New collaborations

Positive energy

Asking questions

Peer connections

Changes in ourselves

Sharing stories

**Building connections**

**Safety**

Peer support

Inclusivity and diversity

Safe and protected spaces to connect

**Energy and motivation**

Bringing joy and fun to your networks

Encouraging curiosity

Using energy wisely and recharging enthusiasm

**Understanding and reflecting**

Reflecting on networks we are members of

What does psychological safety mean?

Understanding and respecting difference. Finding a common language

Understanding ourselves as network members

**Practicalities**

Building and sustaining relationships in a virtual world

Virtual scones (creating that informal space often happens when face to face over a cup of coffee at a break)

Repository of knowledge

Access

Transport and parking

**Individual conversations and comments on the Q NW SIG (some people shared more than one issue)**

The following reflects points people have made who have asked for a call or online chat about network weaving and adapting the materials

* Not giving of your own time frequently and getting nothing back from others
* Creating networks which support systems change and achievement of organisational objectives
* Finding ways to work across non-traditional boundaries and with others whose view and experience are different from your own
* Challenge of what you would like to do and what the system you work within allows you to do
* Motivating others and keeping your own motivation alive when you feel things are not happening, there is talk, but nothing changes, and people drop away
* Challenges with IT MS teams/Zoom some people access one better than the other
* Mapping networks
* What exactly is Network weaving as opposed to networking
* Feeling excluded and that this should be about more than formal QI
* To influence as something, I am asked more of to do
* To build relationships – I think involving building respect on both sides, and how to do that.
* To motivate, which I would see as including supporting people to identify their own values and goals, and then building importance and confidence and commitment around these.
* I have an organisational (and wider) interest in supporting QI and QI networks.
* I know minimal about NW and am curious about intentionally applying principles of NW to (perhaps) support a network of improvers in my organisation.
* Pointers on intentionally network weaving.

**QI alumni event**

Information lifted from the evaluation responses to questions

**What are you going to differently as a result of being part of the QI Alumni event?**

* Use the four roles tool and network mapping
* Purposefully/intentionally reconnect with people back in the workplace.
* Increased focus on understanding of networks, developing networks and networking, as well as exploring the possibility of linking existing networks
* Explore liberating structures – including the use of Troika Consulting
* Respect for both parts of hierarchy and networks and where they overlap
* Join Q / Re-engage with Q

**5. What would you like to learn more about related to Network Weaving?**

*Key Themes:*

* Real life examples of the impact of the network weaving approach / how it works in practice.
* Publications/reading material
* Hints and tips of successful networking. The tricks of the trade
* Tips on how to use MS Teams to support networking efforts
* Roles within networks and who and how these connect to each other
* Network mapping - how to? how much? why?
* *Quotes:*
* “This is something that has really grabbed my attention and I want to understand more.”
* “How to create the conditions for networks to develop and become self-sustaining”.
* How approaches may differ in supporting local networks (with already established relationships) vs national themed networks (where relationships are new, and hierarchy/ structures may differ dependent on the organisation).”

In Network Weaving there are various roles which we can take. For interest, this is the scores around what role people scored highest in at the QI Alumni event (attended by 175 people)

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A reminder of the various role’s skills and tasks as while interesting 46% people identified as a connector, only 10% identified as a facilitator and 8% identified as a guardian. Something perhaps to reflect on in the presentation of materials.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Roles** | **Skills and Tasks** |
| **Connector** | Mapping networks  Analyzing maps  Closing triangles  Building trust |
| **Project Coordinator and Coaching Project Coordinators** | Forming action groups  Setting up coordination systems  Helping others form action groups  Sharing back learning to the larger network |
| **Network Catalyst and Facilitator** | Convening people to organize an intentional network  Helping networks determine purpose and structure  Setting up agendas and facilitating meetings for intentional networks |
| **Network Guardian** | Identifying what a network need  Setting up communications systems and platforms  Helping people use social media and the social web  Setting up Innovation Funds  Setting up evaluation and reflection  Support and provide training for Network Weavers |

**Hexitime Miro Board**

This is the learning needs captured so far from the Miro Board, we are only capturing points relevant to the NW materials though people asked for help with other things this may be on different parts of Hexitime

* Help evaluating networks
* Low-cost creative ideas for celebrating success and progress on projects
* Network mapping
* Connect with partners across the nations and create stronger connections
* Finding a pace to work at which works for everyone, managing expectations of self and others
* Finding a shared vision
* IT and working across different platforms
* Coaching/Guidance on how to intentionally build / grow / support a network!

and or action learning

* Simple approaches/tools to considering network (s) we may wish to intentionally grow/support
* Collaboration on applying (and evaluating) such approaches
* Joining up a corporate infrastructure with network weaving

**What next**

To help inform the adaptation of the existing modules of the Network Weavers Handbook cross reference the themes emerging with the existing handbook

The full contents can be read on the Handbook, but the sections are:

* Understanding networks pages
  + Starting with networks
  + Network leadership
  + How to introduce a network approach to others
* Improving your relationship network pages
  + Analysing and visualising your network
  + Connecting to increase the effectiveness of your network
  + Creating a network culture
  + Engaging your network
  + Trust in networks
* Moving to action
  + Self-organising
  + From innovation to transformation
* Intentional networks
  + Intentional networks basics
  + Forming a new network
  + Tuning up for an existing network

The plan is to take the existing handbook, break it into individual sections as opposed to one manual, explore ideas on how we make navigating through the sections easier. We are also replacing the existing case studies from 2011 and updating them with work being done across the 4 nations so are keen on hearing from those who would like to showcase their work. Please email [hilda@cope-scotland.org](mailto:hilda@cope-scotland.org) for more information. We also intend updating the handbook around sharing new IT systems which support Network Weaving and any other updated reading materials which we are made aware of to share.

We also want to explore self-care ideas for Network Weavers so please if you have any self-care ideas you would like to share, please do. This is a collaborative exchange of ideas as together, we achieve more.

Thank you for reading

Hilda