

Please grab a blank piece of paper – lined or unlined – and something to write with.



### Residential Staff and Administration's Role in Life History and Its Impacts

Power of Story



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8 months average.

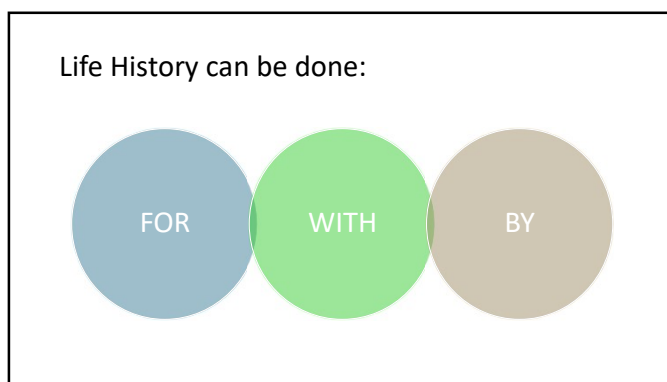
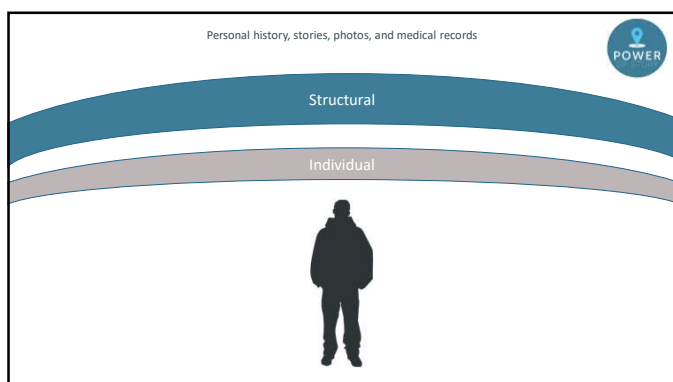
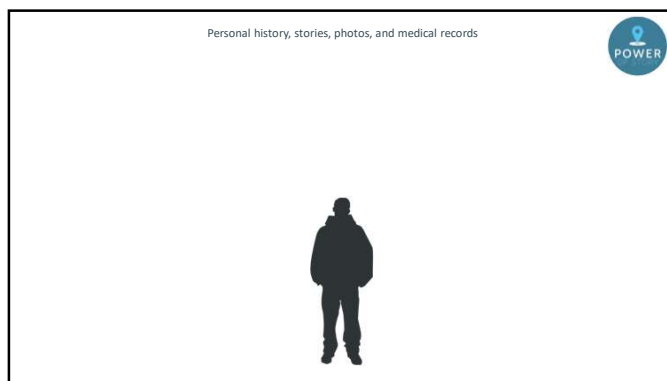
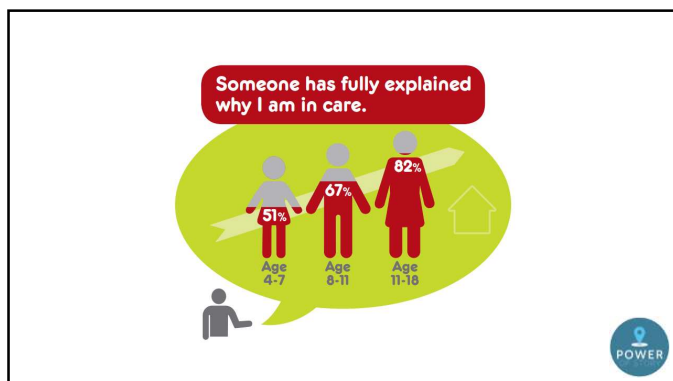


You have their now.

Others have their past.





What might they leave with, and what is possible?

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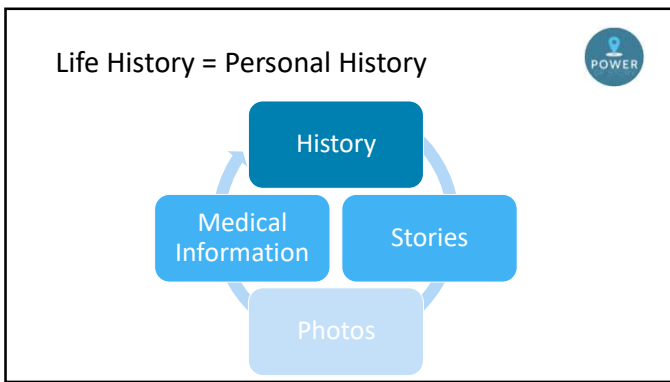
“It is the past that tells us what we are, and without it we lose our identity.”

Stephen Hawking

Everyone has a part to play.

- No degree required.
- Full information not required – start from now.

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HELLO  
I am

?

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“Memories in care are slippery because there’s no one to recall them with as the years pass. In a few months I would be in a **different home with a different set of people** who had no idea of this moment. *How could it matter if no one recalls it?* Given that staff don’t take photographs it was *impossible* to take something away as a memory. This is how you become invisible. It isn’t the lack of photographs that erodes the memory. It is the **underlying unkindnesses**, which make you feel as though you don’t matter enough. This is how to quietly deplete the sense of self-worth deep inside a child’s psyche. *This is how a child becomes hidden in plain sight.*”

Lemn Sissay, My Name Is Why


How Trauma Impacts Four Different Types of Memory

| EXPLICIT MEMORY   |  | IMPLICIT MEMORY  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| SEMANTIC MEMORY   | EPISODIC MEMORY  | EMOTIONAL MEMORY   | PROCEDURAL MEMORY  |
| <p><b>What is it:</b> The memory of general knowledge and facts.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> You remember what a bicycle is.</p> <p><b>How Trauma Can Affect It:</b> Trauma can prevent information (like words, images, sounds, etc.) from entering and one of the brain from connecting to make a semantic memory.</p> <p><b>Related Brain Area:</b> The temporal lobe and inferior parietal lobes collect information from different brain areas to create semantic memory.</p> | <p><b>What is it:</b> The autobiographical memory of an event or experience – including the who, what, and where.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> You remember who was there and what color you were on when you fell off your bicycle in front of a crowd.</p> <p><b>How Trauma Can Affect It:</b> Trauma can weaken episodic memory and fragment the sequence of events.</p> <p><b>Related Brain Area:</b> The hippocampus is responsible for coding and recalling episodic memory.</p> | <p><b>What is it:</b> The memory of the feelings you felt during an experience.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> When a wave of shame or anxiety grips you, the next time you see your bicycle after the big fall.</p> <p><b>How Trauma Can Affect It:</b> After trauma, a person may get triggered and experience a painful sensation, often without context.</p> <p><b>Related Brain Area:</b> The amygdala plays a key role in supporting memory for emotionally charged experiences.</p> | <p><b>What is it:</b> The memory of how to perform a common task without actively thinking.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> You can ride a bicycle automatically, with out having to stop and think how it's done.</p> <p><b>How Trauma Can Affect It:</b> Trauma can change patterns of procedural memory. For example, a person might tense up and unconsciously alter their posture, which could lead to pain or even numbness.</p> <p><b>Related Brain Area:</b> The cerebellum is associated with producing procedural memory and learning new habits.</p> |


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### Different Types of Brains

**Ocean Brain**



**Filing Cabinet Brain**





**Access to life history is a basic human right.**

**Known life history helps us heal and thrive.**  
Research bears it out.


**Those who know their family stories do better.**

**Higher:**


- Self-esteem
- Social and Academic competence
- Sense of meaning and purpose in life

**Lower:**

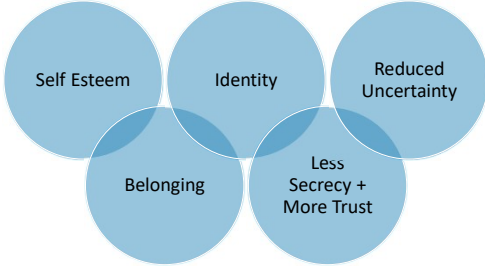

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Aggressive behaviors








*Robyn Fivush, "Do You Know." The power of family history in adolescent identity and well-being.*




### Personal Impacts


### Barriers for Therapeutic Staff

-  Too much Paperwork
-  Crisis Management
-  Privacy
-  Boundaries
-  Fear of Pandora's Box / Trauma / Untrained

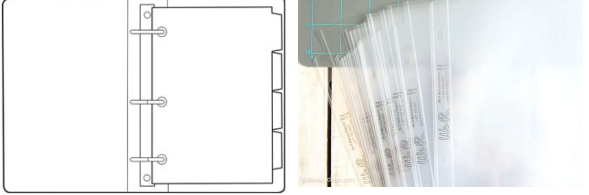



When your life has been \_\_\_\_\_, life history work is \_\_\_\_\_.

- Young people have barriers to looking at the past
- So, it's important to start with NOW




Many things CAN be shared!

### Share about your facility + staff

Pre-create


- ~~Group photos and last names~~, but how about...
- Photos inside and outside of the facility
- Staff photos + First names
- Routines/special quirks about the facility
- Menus
- Get creative!



### Share About Their Time With You


Add for each young person

- Copies of their art
- Photos of them
- Letter from staff and peers
- Photos of the goodbye celebration, cake, rituals
- Share the HIGHS (lows will be in exit paperwork)



*Nothing About Us Without Us*


James Charlton



*"I would like someone to talk to about my feelings and tell me about my past. I would like to see a picture of my dad, so I know what he looks like. I would like to see a picture of me as a baby. I have never seen a picture of me. I have a lot of questions that no-one answers."*


Care Leaver, 11-18yrs

Bright Spots Survey out of the UK



## Ways to Involve Youth - Prep

- What
- Why
- Share Examples
- Share Limits



## Do together

- REGULAR Photos Taken By Youth
- REGULAR Youth-led + Staff supported update
- With photos and questions
- "All About Me" Pages
- Other Fill in the Blank Type Pages

### ABOUT MY TIME HERE

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**I want to remember**  
Friendships made, ideas touched, memories made

**Highs**  
Experiences that are happening, settings, funny moments

**Lows**  
A place to talk about the things that haven't been great


**I wonder about**  
A place to gather questions about my family, or my life, that may or may not have answers yet

**Recent Photos**




Why this photo is important and when it was taken.






<https://powerofstory.us/2022/08/11/lifebook-lifestory-book-overview/>




## Moving Forward

- Create procedures
  - How will info will be gathered?
  - How will it stay available?
  - Who will get a copy?
  - When?
- TALK about the importance with staff and clients



Now that you know about the importance of life history for ALL, what will you do?



## Please complete an evaluation!



Training Evaluation  
 Thank you for sharing your thoughts!  
 11 Questions  
 START →

<https://form.jotform.com/212295638456161>

