



Families Branch

Working Together Guide

In a collaborative piece of work with branch leads and members, the Network has made the decision to use the language 'Working Together Guide' to replace terms of reference. This was done in the name of the Network's commitment to creating psychologically safer spaces, challenging power imbalances, reducing the use of jargon, empowering through transparency and innovation and listening to experts of their own experience to learn reflectively.

1. Best Hopes for the Branch

The branch is a brave space inviting professionals, community groups, local organisations and families to come together and explore the question

‘What’s it really like to raise a family in Plymouth?’

The branch will meet for 6 reflective spaces over the first year and then review its aims and objectives after that.

2. Structure

2.1. Membership

Members of the branch must also be members of the Trauma Informed Plymouth Network. All communication will be sent to branch members via Mailchimp¹

to support safer working practices.

Branch members are invited to be active with their involvement with the branch.

2.2. Facilitation of the branch will be provided by Carly Ellicott and Kirsty Mole, with Network co-ordination support offered by Nancy Hardwick.

2.3. Gathering frequency

The group will gather every 2 months alternating between in person and online meetings to give choice for members while maintaining the feeling of one branch. It is hoped that in person meetings can move around venues in the city.

The group will review its progress after 6 months and 12 months.

3. Families Branch Ways of Working Together

Way of working together	Link to the Network Values	Examples of this in practice
We are confidential about what is shared by sharing the story not the names’ themes not the detail.	<i>Safer</i> We create safer spaces and systems. We help people to feel safer	In our village city, we recognise that even in avoiding the use of names may not be enough to prevent vulnerable families being identified. We therefore draw out the themes that we might learn from their experiences.
We embrace vulnerability and	<i>Safer:</i>	We are patient with different communication styles.

¹ Mailchimp is an all-in-one marketing platform used to manage mailing lists, create custom email campaigns, and automate marketing efforts. The Network uses Mailchimp for all its emails to members as part of its Safer value to ensure that contact information is stored and shared confidentially.

notice when we step into judgement so we can avoid shaming.	We recognise how trauma shows up in people's lives. <i>Kind:</i> We notice when we are judging. We are shame sensitive.	We recognise and are informed by good intent in each of us, not how we might present if our threat response is activated. We seek to work <i>with</i>, not <i>do to</i> people.
We are open to learn with and from each other.	<i>Kind:</i> We seek connection. We foster honesty, curiosity, and empathy	We gather as Network members first, people with vulnerabilities and imperfections and we embrace being authentic with each other.
We take responsibility for self-regulation and are open to co-regulating.	<i>Kind:</i> We are emotionally aware. Empowering: We take responsibility. We validate feelings and concerns	We commit to modelling the change we want to see in the way we show up to meetings. We are alert to verbal and non-verbal cues of others. We are intentional about how we seek to connect to the Network values.
We recognise and welcome the diversity of the lived experience of family life.	<i>Person centred:</i> Lived and living experience matters Rights and needs are recognised. Strengths count	We embrace what's strong, not what's wrong, so we can do more of what works for people, recognising that at its heart, trauma informed in an optimistic message.
We take a collaborative approach so we can grow together.	<i>Empowering:</i> We support people to make decisions and take action. <i>Collaborative:</i> We learn reflectively	We are invited to enter reflective spaces which may require us to step outside of 'meeting' protocols we are more familiar and comfortable with and listen with intentionality and presence.
We give the time we can manage and respect the time of others.	<i>Safer</i> We recognise how trauma shows up in people's lives. We build mutually respectful and trusted relationships	We know we will not be judged if we can't give our time- the Network is always a warm invitation, not a burden. We recognise that if members are late or must leave early, we may have miss out on key context to empower our contribution. We can therefore expect to be greeted and informed about what we have missed so we can enter into the spirit of the space and the flow of already established conversation. Notes will be shared with all after the meeting.
We use ordinary language and avoid jargon and acronyms.	<i>Safer</i> We create safer spaces and systems.	We challenge ourselves by asking, 'would I use that language in my kitchen, with my family, at

	We help people to feel safer. <i>Empowering:</i> We recognise language and dynamics which reinforce existing power structures and challenge them with respectful honesty rather than perpetuate them.	the café or pub with my friends? If the answer is no, we commit to not using it in this space. https://www.gloriouslyordinarylanguage.co.uk/
We commit to sensitive holding potential conflict as a brave space.	Empowering: We ‘dare to try’ to enact cultural change. We recognise language and dynamics which reinforce existing power structures and challenge them with respectful honesty	We name that there is power in every space, just as there is trauma. We challenge ourselves to take responsibility for our privilege and be intentional about meeting each other as humans first.

Our working together guide is co- designed and will be adapted over time as we learn and grow together.

April 2026