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WEBINAR 4: FROM POLICY TO EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION IN PRACTICE

Unpacking 'Planning': What and Who Matters to Young People Leaving Care



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Purpose of seminar today

- To share and discuss some of the ideas about informal everyday planning which have arisen during our Essex University qualitative research studies with care-experienced young adults
- A book outlining these ideas is due out late March 2024, and this will be free and Open Access (thanks to Essex University)
- Many thanks to Emily Munro and Dorothy Adams for the seminar opportunity today

Six sections

- **Background:** Essex University studies with care-experienced young adults, and more background
- **Our qualitative research methodologies**
- **Introducing a three-aspects model of planning**
- **Voice: Some qualitative data from *What Matters:***
Chapters 3-6: three aspects of planning
- **Takeaways** on three aspects of planning
- **Some possible next steps / implications**

Background

Background to the *What Matters* book

- Two Essex University qualitative studies of internal conversations /self-talk, including (informal, everyday) 'planning', with care-experienced young adults:
- One in **London**, UK, urban, diverse ethnicity, diverse 'outcomes' (n=9)(Hung & Appleton, 2016; Appleton, Hung & Barratt, 2021)
- A second, in **Suffolk**, UK, mixed rural/urban, White British (n=6) (Barratt, Appleton & Pearson, 2020)
- Further theoretical work on planning in adversity (Appleton, 2020)
- Meri Kulmala and Anna Fomina's research on care-leaver planning and future orientation (Kulmala & Fomina, 2022; Kulmala et al, 2023)

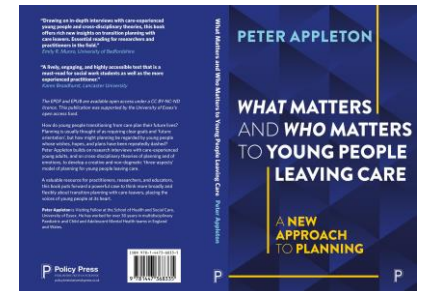
Background: future time and planning

A starting point (a few years ago): From our two published qualitative studies in England there is a suggestion that ‘thoughtful and expressive scepticism’ about planning for the future is an important aspect of the experience of *some* young adults transitioning from out- of-home care (Appleton, 2024, p. 4)

Several starting points (now)

What Matters and Who Matters to Young People Leaving Care: A New Approach to Planning

is organised around the idea of beginning to think about planning differently, more broadly, and more flexibly, with a clear focus on young adults experiencing compounded adversity (Appleton, 2024, p. 8).



More background: keeping in mind

- Young adult lives (emerging adulthood)
- Compounded adversity (biographical and current)
- Structural disadvantage and minoritisation
- Young people's own voices and perspectives

Qualitative research methodologies

We might say that aspects come out of our framing of procedures (of proof or calculation)

Juliet Floyd, 2016, p. 54

Qualitative research methodology

- In each of our two primary studies (London and Suffolk), and in each of our secondary studies (e.g. in the *What Matters* book), we used innovative **qualitative** methods: **a particular interview framework, and a particular analysis method**
- Transparency (Tuval-Mashiach, 2017) about these methods has been an important part of our work

Internal Conversations Interview (Archer, 2003)

- The **Internal Conversations Interview** (from sociologist Margaret Archer's 2003 book: *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
- The interview is qualitative, semi-structured, open-ended
- In our first study (Hung & Appleton, 2016) the internal conversations interview was conducted over **two interview sessions**, separated by several weeks:
- The first interview was focused on a range of internal conversations such as **imagining, deciding, rehearsing, re-thinking, mulling over, clarifying, planning**, etc; (compare Deborah Munro * and colleagues', 2024, paper in *Reflective Practice*)
- The second interview included the main ***What Matters***, and ***Planning*** sections – our **main focus** in this seminar
- Queensland University of Technology, School of Teacher Education and Leadership, Brisbane, Australia

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

(Coxon & Smith, 2021; Smith, 2019)

- “A key facet of **IPA** is our commitment to looking at experience – the sense-making that participants are doing around important things that are happening to them” (Coxon & Smith, 2021)
- “--- a person as a self-reflexive , sense-making agent who is interpreting his or her engagement with the world” (Smith, 2019)
- “articulation of meaning as being of a particular thing, for a particular person, within a particular context - - - **IPA’s** idiographic commitment” (Smith, 2019)
- A deep emphasis on the **agency** of the participant
- Not only **lived experience**, but also **interpreted lived experience**

Internal Conversations Interview (Archer, 2003) and IPA (Coxon & Smith, 2021; Smith, 2019)

- **An epistemic match?**
- **IPA** – an analysis method with a focus on understanding the **active meaning-making and interpretations** of individual participants, seemed to us to ‘work well’ with the ‘meaning-making’ and self-reflective, thoughtful, data from participants during the **Internal Conversations Interview**.

A three-aspects model of planning

“The fecundity of planning agency”

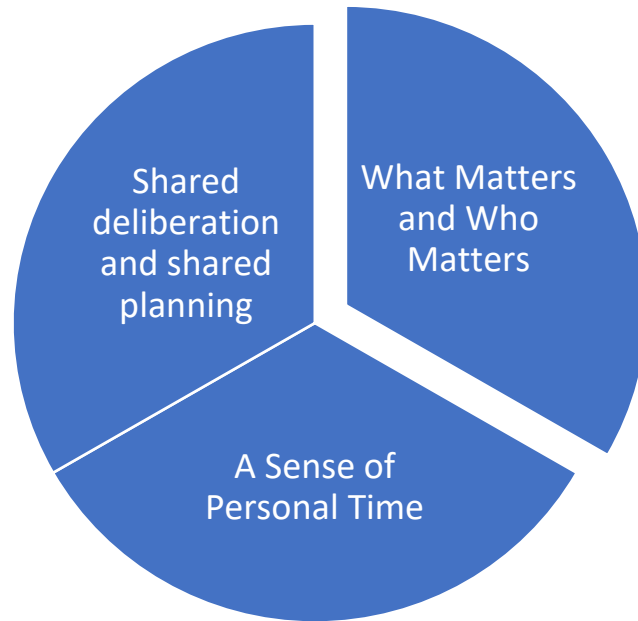
Title of **Michael Bratman’s** 2013 paper which acts as a rich and detailed starting point
for Chapter 8 of *What Matters*

Origins of three aspects model

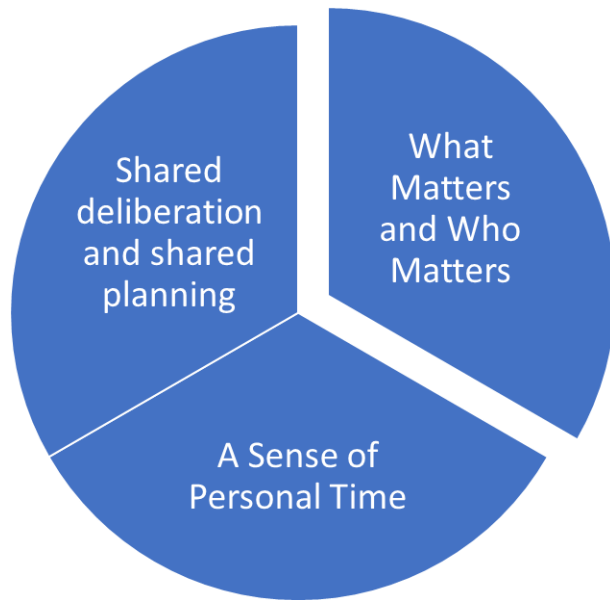
(Appleton, 2024)

- The **interplay** between:
- Care-experienced young people's narratives / voices in the Internal Conversations Interview
- Margaret Archer's (2003) theory of internal conversations, including **what matters** / concerns as a **central idea**
- Michael Bratman's (see e.g. 2013) theory of a "remarkable trio of [planning] capacities"
- Let's look today at the **three aspects** / 'remarkable trio' model, and **young people's narratives**

INTRODUCING a three-aspect model of planning (Appleton, 2024; see Archer, 2003; Bratman, 2013)



INTRODUCING a three-aspect model of planning (Appleton, 2024)



- **Key points:**
- Each aspect is deeply interwoven with each other
- Individual young people will bring a unique and distinctive combination / interweaving of aspects of planning
- IPA is useful *to explore a participant's active interweaving and construction of aspects of planning*
- **NEXT** four research participants discuss what matters, shared deliberations, and a sense of personal time

Some qualitative data from *What Matters:* three aspects of planning

Corrina (Chapter 3)
Tyreece (Chapter 5)
Zavie (Chapter 6)
Nailah (Chapter 5)

Corrina

Corrina (pseudonym) aged 20, is a woman in transition from care in London UK. She was in foster care for seven years after severe maltreatment and neglect. She left care age 16. While in transition, she gained some experience of an apprenticeship, and is currently looking for work. She experiences frequent mental health issues and has received treatment for an addiction.

(Appleton, 2024; Hung & Appleton, 2016)

Corrina

- As part of the Internal Conversations Interview, (second interview) **Corrina** was asked the question
- ‘Which areas of your life matter most to you at the moment?’
- **Corrina:** Um . . . my family, er . . . my friends.
- **Interviewer:** Anything else?
- **Corrina:** I want to go to college. I want to go in September.

What / who matters

Corrina

- Corrina had been estranged from her birth mother and father for some years.
- **Recently her birth father had been in touch and wanted to meet up.**
- She described the complex decision. It involved consideration of **what matters and who matters**, but also involved **shared deliberations / discussions with trusted friends and family**
- In particular (i.e. 'uniquely') she was helped in her complex decision by **imagining** what her **recently deceased paternal grandfather** might have advised. Later in the second interview – after the discussion of 'what matters' – the researcher asked:
- **Interviewer:** [Is there] anything that's made family so important to you?
- **Corrina:** Well, like – before it was always my Grandad; he was always my – he was – he was the one that always knew everything and always spoke to me and stuff and when he passed away [12 months ago] I felt like I didn't have anyone to talk to but like when I spoke to Dad, I kind of felt a lot better . . . my Grandad always wanted me and my Dad to talk one day so now we've done it.

What / who matters and shared deliberation

Corrina:

- In both interviews **Corrina** explained that she did not plan:
- “No, not really 'cos it never goes to plan anyway. I can't plan, I have to do it the day before. I can't 'cos I don't know if I'm going to feel [describes anxiety issues] so I have to plan on the day.”

A sense of personal time

Tyreece

Tyreece (pseudonym) aged 20, is a man in transition from care in London UK. He was in foster care for three years after emotional maltreatment. He left school age 16. He is currently volunteering. He experiences mental health issues.

(Appleton, 2024; Hung & Appleton, 2016)

Tyreece

- As part of the Internal Conversations Interview, (second interview) **Tyreece** was asked the question
- ‘Which areas of your life matter most to you at the moment?’

‘There is a lot of things that’s important to me right now. There’s a lot. There’s me wanting to finish my course . . . getting my qualification . . . ; also, you know, having my people around me, my brother and my friends around me. It’s important to me to have my two key friends like around, I always want them around. I know it isn’t as important, but . . . having a woman now, as well as those letters [the further education qualification] . . . it’s not the biggest concern . . . but I need a female’s attention in my life . . . there is also the fact that I need to pay off my fine . . . I need to pay off my mobile [cell- phone] provider . . . but these are small stupid mistakes.’

What / who matters

Tyreece

The “two key friends” he mentions have been, from the time he was in care, through to now, like “family”:

‘We’ve just been through it together . . .if I had money . . . I look after him . . . you know, he eating, I’m eating . . . that’s who I saw as my family . . . our little family . . . I just saw them as my family as in [name], [name] and me, in and out, and I know them in and out, yeah.’

What / who matters and shared deliberation

Tyreece

In the interview he [outlines] the structure of his very busy week – what he does each day, and how he plans – during the evening – for the following day.

But, on longer- term planning: “I don’t plan too far ahead, that’s one thing I’ve learned . . . plan is good but I don’t plan too far ahead because right now I’m young . . . right now I’m just getting my qualifications.” And “right now I see it as I am still trying, I’m still finding my way”.

A personal sense of time

Nailah

Nailah (pseudonym) aged 21, is a woman in transition from care in London UK. She was in foster care for seven years after severe maltreatment and neglect. She experienced racist bullying at school and was formally excluded from school. She left care age 15.

She is seeking post-school education.

She experiences mental health issues and has experienced addiction.

(Appleton, 2024; Hung & Appleton, 2016)

Nailah

- As part of the Internal Conversations Interview, (second interview) **Nailah** was asked the question
- ‘Which areas of your life matter most to you at the moment?’

‘OK. First things first. Getting my education out of the way and done with ‘cos I hate studying but I need to. Being financially stable . . . having a part- time job . . . and go really and release my stress and socialise as that’s the thing I like doing the most [laughs].’

Nailah talks much about her socialising, her love of being with people, and how, although she feels “not academically smart”, she *does* feel “smart . . . when it comes to society, people, life and all that stuff”.

What / who matters and shared deliberation

Nailah

She also recalls that a recent application for an educational course foundered because of a series of service-based administrative errors. The errors delayed her acceptance by the course for another whole year (with potential loss of funding).

She recalled the sense she had of each of the services' failure to appreciate *the meaning to her* of this administrative blunder, and resultant delay, in the context, for her, of an already compounded history of educational disruption, exclusion, bullying, victimisation, and self- doubt.

She described the mental health issues that arose from this particular episode:

'What kept me going through all them bad things in my childhood was that my adulthood would be a lot better. That's what I thought [laughs]. OK my childhood is hell, but adulthood will be heaven as long as I put the hard work and the effort in. I can turn it around and make my adulthood great. But I guess now I'm thinking fifty- fifty – I'm kind of a bit on the lost side.'

What / who matters, shared deliberation, and a personal sense of time
(see [What Matters: Chapter 5, for more detail of Nailah's story](#))

Zavie

Zavie (pseudonym) aged 24, is a man in transition from care in London UK. He was in foster care for ten years after maltreatment. He is not in touch with his birth parents but sees his ex-foster mother regularly. He attended university. He is in a full-time graduate occupation.

(Appleton, 2024; Hung & Appleton, 2016)

Zavie

Which areas of your life matter most to you at the moment?

“Especially as a young person that grew up in care . . . I want to continue my education and continue working with young people. I want to continue being active with people who are in care. Just to kind of remove the stereotypical view.”

He expounds in detail where this sense of ‘what matters’ had originated as he discusses his own previous experience of frequent foster placement moves, frequent changes of social workers, and the importance of the “safety network” of friends: “It’s a circle of building up trust and it being broken down and building up trust and being broken down again.” This, he found, was something he/ we constantly talked about with our friends”

What / who matters and shared deliberation

Zavie

Zavie makes a clear distinction between **planning and having responsibilities**: “I don’t really *plan* my future . . . I want to make money but I don’t actually plan, as I’m someone who believes that you don’t know what’s going to happen . . . every day could be your last, so I’m someone who just lives for each day,”

And he adds: “For me, I would say it’s too hard to think about the future.”

A sense of personal time

Zavie on ‘responsibilities’ for friends: “I feel very responsible in making sure that they are OK every day if that means ringing them or emailing them.”

What / who matters and shared deliberation

Eight participants in four qualitative chapters in *What Matters* (Hung & Appleton, 2016; Appleton, 2024)

- **Much much** more (in *What Matters*) on the rich detail of Corrina, Tyreece, Nailah, and Zavier's thoughts about time, what and who matters, and shared deliberations
- And narratives of **four other** participants with equally rich and complex thoughts and feelings about planning

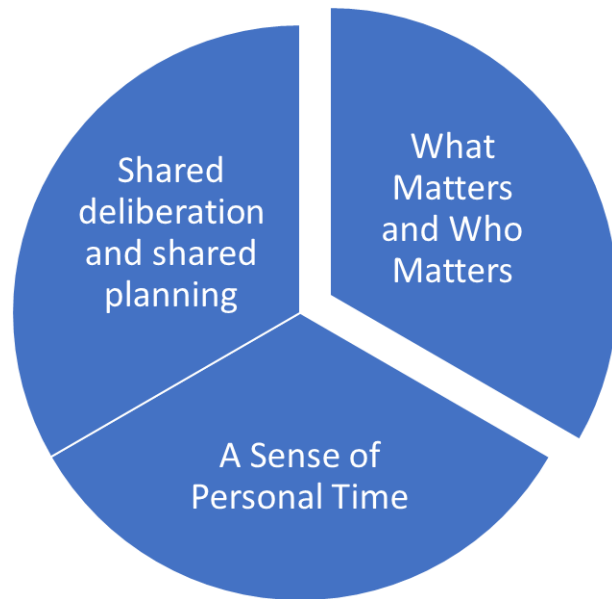
Eight participants in four qualitative chapters in *What Matters* (Hung & Appleton, 2016; Appleton, 2024)

- **Chapter 3:** My family matters, **Corrina** and Brittany
- **Chapter 4:** A roof over my head: self-reliance matters; Danny and Charelle
- **Chapter 5:** Time future: time complex: **Nailah** and **Tyreece**
- **Chapter 6:** What matters is social: friendships and social responsibility: **Zavie** and Joe.

Takeaways

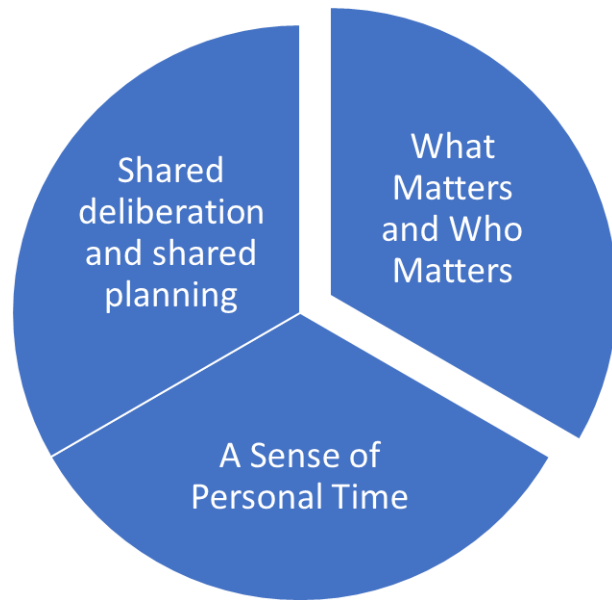
See Chapter 7 (and Chapters 8-10 !) of *What Matters*

Takeaways from qualitative data on three-aspects planning in *What Matters* include:



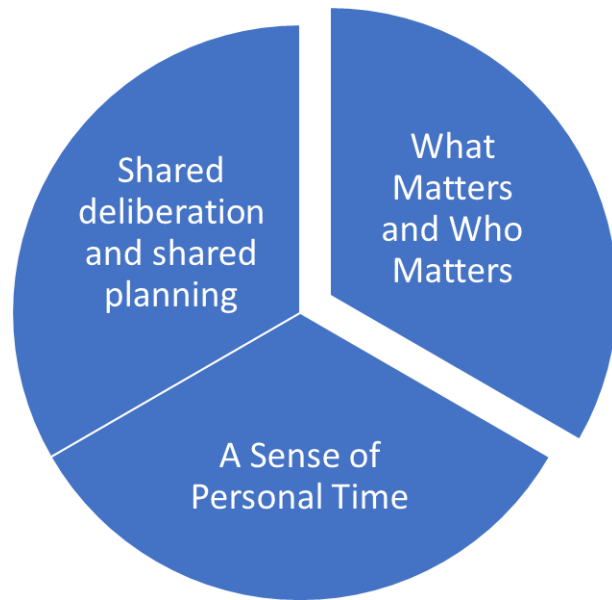
- **'Practical examples'** are actively given by participants of - often profound - deliberations and decisions, which contain poignant lived experience of **interweaving** of some or all aspects of **planning** e.g. Corrina's decision about her father, Nailah's education application
- **'Level of detail'**: Considerable participant self-reflective detail of rich personal experience of, and perspectives on, all three aspects of everyday planning
- **'With feeling'**: voice and emotion are part and parcel of the expressive discussion of what matters, how and what is shared, and a sense of time (see Chapter 9 of *What Matters*)

Takeaways from qualitative data on three-aspects planning in *What Matters* include:



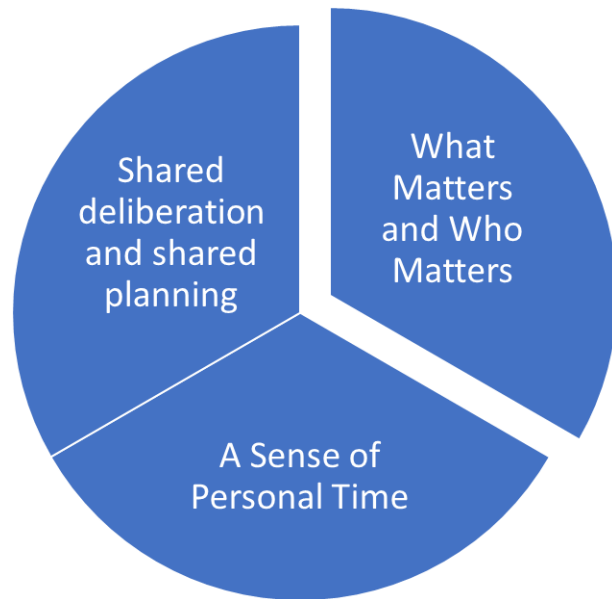
- **Very wide range of voices (across Chapters 3-6) on all aspects of planning**
- **Importance of shared deliberation and shared agency, despite / in face of interpersonal trauma histories / finding common ground with friends, family members, professionals – planning is not a lone, self-governing, task (Corrina, Tyreece, Zavier) PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT FINDING? (But see Chapter 4 on self-reliance, and bear in mind Nailah’s education application experience)**
- **Mental health issues seem deeply ‘part and parcel’ of all three aspects of planning**

Takeaways from qualitative data on three-aspects planning in *What Matters* include:

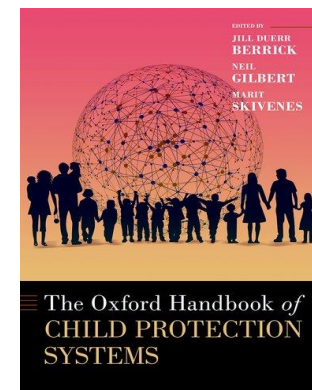


- **Aspects of aspects:** each young person defines their own complex sense of time, their own patterns of shared deliberations and shared agency; their own highly distinctive what matters and who matters
- Not a 'fixed model'

Takeaways from qualitative data on three-aspects planning in *What Matters* include:



- **Personal logics and counterlogics of future time - a sense of personal time** – a key aspect, with significant practical implications
- In Kulmala and Fomina’s (2022) study in North West Russia in 2018, **20 out of 43 care-leavers ‘showed no or little future orientation or even refused to plan’**; see Kulmala et al, 2023, for important geographic, historic, and jurisdictional context for their study.



Some possible next steps
/ implications

Next steps?

- Co-designed mixed methods studies of **everyday** (and formal) **planning** by care-experienced young people in different places and times and services

Next steps (2)

- Co-design qualitative research developing our appreciation and recognition of **aspects of planning**
 - will there be many more aspects of planning in different places and times?

Next steps (3a)

- Possible application to planning: Cross-pollination of co-design ideas from leaving care literature (see Jo Dixon* et al, 2019, for key review) with those from sustainability science Alison Greenaway's (and colleagues) work in Aotearoa New Zealand** with Indigenous partners: 'methodological sensitivities for co-producing knowledge through enduring trustful partnerships' (Greenaway et al, 2022).

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Next steps (3b)

- “Co-produced knowledge must include a focus on unsettling the research and management ethics and practices which fragment knowledge of nature and society and disconnect people from environments.” (Greenaway et al, 2022, p. 434)

Next steps (4)

Can young people's *own starting points* for planning also be the starting points of services, or potential services, starting points for research and service codesign and co-production, and starting points for individual help and support? Each of these areas is by definition *planful* in some sense: but whose sense?

See Chapter 10 of *What Matters*

Contacts:

- papple@essex.ac.uk
 - Zoom Book launch with author, and with Discussant Dr Meri Kulmala, University of Helsinki
 - UK lunchtime: Thursday 11th April, 2024
 - University of Essex
-
- Book is free and Open Access (mega thanks to University of Essex), due out March 28th, 2024

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