

**How are children
and young people
given time and
space at home to
voice how they are
feeling?**

The University of
Huddersfield

Wednesday 17th February
2021

**6th Annual
Finding a Voice
Conference**

Mel Wainner

In collaboration with Madigan,
Patricia, Thomas, Fred and Blob

Rationale

Why focus on the home? And why feelings?

- Everywhere, and at all times (Facca et al., 2020)
- Family home: where children are often given the first opportunity to make decisions about their lives (Martin et al., 2018)
- However, children are NOT always afforded this right at home (Gilson, 2013)



Article 12 of the UNCRC Every child has the right to voice their opinions and feelings and for these to be taken seriously (UNICEF, 1989)

- Talking about feelings improves emotional literacy (Goleman, 1995; Steiner, 1997)
- Good emotional literacy contributes to improved emotional wellbeing (Bezzina and Camilleri, 2020)
- Poor emotional literacy can negatively impact development of social skills (Trigueros et al., 2020)



Research Questions

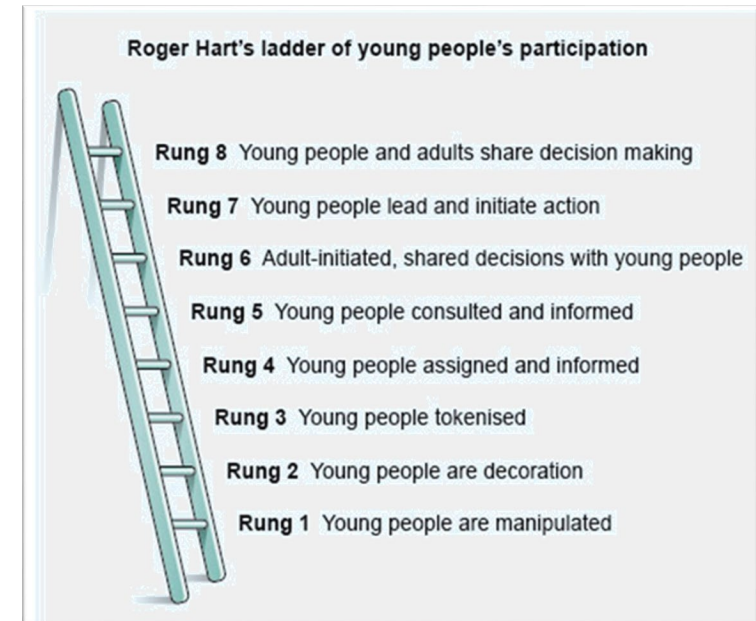
1. Do children feel that their voices are heard when expressing their emotions at home, within a family setting?
2. To what extent do children feel empowered to talk about their emotions at home?

Participation and Ethics

Early Childhood Rights-Based Research Reinforcing Cycle
(Adapted from Mayne et al., 2018)

Ethics

- Ethical guidelines (BERA, 2018)
- Participants wellbeing: the primary consideration
- Age appropriate Informed consent and assent
- Confidentiality
- Safeguarding
- Pseudonyms chosen by the participants



Hart's ladder of participation (Open Learn, n.d., Adapted from Hart, 1992)

Participation rights have no end point (Lundy, 2007)



Methodology

Aim: To empower the voice of the child by facilitating meaningful participation

Age appropriate • Fun • Fully involve CYP as fellow researchers

How did I ensure each CYP had their voice heard?

- Listen
- Celebrate individuality
- Adapt
- Empower
- Value each CYP as “experts in their own lives”
(Leonard, 2016, p. 29)

(Mayne et al., 2018)




The freedom to create a personal artefact

- Drawing
- Poem
- Photograph
- Poster
- Song

"It let me express my ideas without having to be pinned down by one or two things" (Madigan)

Themes



How can I bring
these wonderful
creations together?!



Audience



Space and
Place

Madigan, 17

“

Usually when I was young
I didn't know what to say I covered myself away
Realised by writing a song my family could sing along
And they valued the words they sang
This took some time
Cos when your parents ain't lying
And they're acc too busy to sit down
I realised that with melodies n rhymes
Even my saddest songs could make them smile



”

“

By the time I was 12 I kinda put my family through hell
Bullied, broken, lost who was I gonna be
Not someone that hides away
Cos that does nothing anyway
And this is what my family taught me
Sometimes we have to shout
Sometimes we have to cry
Otherwise its all or nowt
Other times you'll wanna die
But I realised through the melodies and rhymes
Even the saddest songs could make me smile

”

Madigan, 17



Usually when I was young

I didn't know what to say I covered **myself** away

Realised by writing a song **my family** could sing along

And they **valued** the words they sang

This took some time

Cos when your parents ain't lying



And they're acc too busy to sit down

I realised that with melodies n rhymes



Even my **saddest** songs could make **them** smile



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But I realised through the melodies and rhymes

Even the **saddest** songs could make **me** smile



It's like a collage of different photos that... like... represent like topics that I... like... bring up.

We share... like... similar morals. So that's what we talk about and bond over.

Even if it's not important to them they appreciate that it's important to me so they're like... "talk to me about it anyway"...



...it's a way of expressing what's important to me...

We share similar political views but also if we have a different view on some... then that's a good way to start a conversation

That's... like... really important to me





Umm, it's in my Mum and Dad's room

...ermm, it's like where I talk to them...

I usually prefer to be on my own...
like most of the time

Yeah... about school and what I'm doing
and stuff

I like it a lot

It's... like... quieter. It's not everyone
there



Well I talk to my mum and dad but
sometimes other people in my
family

H elps when it's just me and one other.

[Do you like having lots of brothers
and sisters?...] Hmmm it's annoying
but it's good

They're always shouting and there's
lots of people

E veryone can listen, but I'm not sure they understand,

A s long as no-one makes fun of it, I can tell them anything.

I always get to talk to them
and play... and have fun...

R emembering that everyone will listen is crucial,

D oing this poem was like ~~telling~~ being heard, it's quite difficult

I use my earphones... I usually
watch gaming videos. Sometimes
I listen to music





It's a repre...sen... tion... of FRED!
He really loves Yoshi!

He's the best brother in the
world!



I talk to him... well other
people as well but usually Fred



We have lots of late night chats!

I'm not lonely!

They shout at me sometimes and
get annoyed at me but it doesn't
matter

Thoughts...

“We need an environment that welcomes and encourages emotional discourse where we can share our emotions honestly with people who will honestly share theirs... even a community of two will do to start”

(Steiner, 1997, p. 41)

But all of this reaches so much further than the UNCRC

Protective factor: reducing risk of negative outcomes in adulthood

- Family cohesion
- Self-regulation of emotions
- Self efficacy
- Resilience
- Emotional wellbeing
- Relationships with others





(Bezzina and Camilleri, 2020; Horgan et al, 2016; Martin et al, 2018; Moreira and Cristina-Canavarro, 2019; Platsidou and Tsirogiannidou, 2016; Theiss, 2018; Vizard et al, 2020)



Research Questions

RE-VISITED

1. Do children feel that their voices are heard when expressing their emotions at home, within a family setting? 
2. To what extent do children feel empowered to talk about their emotions at home? 

BUT...

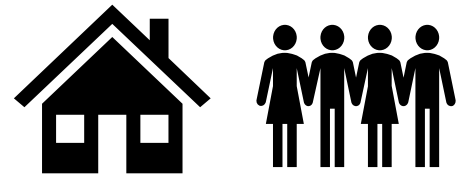
The final words belong to Patricia...

“ I just think in general I have it quite easy because of our open accepting family who's... open to talk to me about things that are important to me.

And if I've got an issue or... like... something's important to me

that I feel like I need to say...

they'll listen to me.”



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