



University of Dundee

Connection for wellbeing

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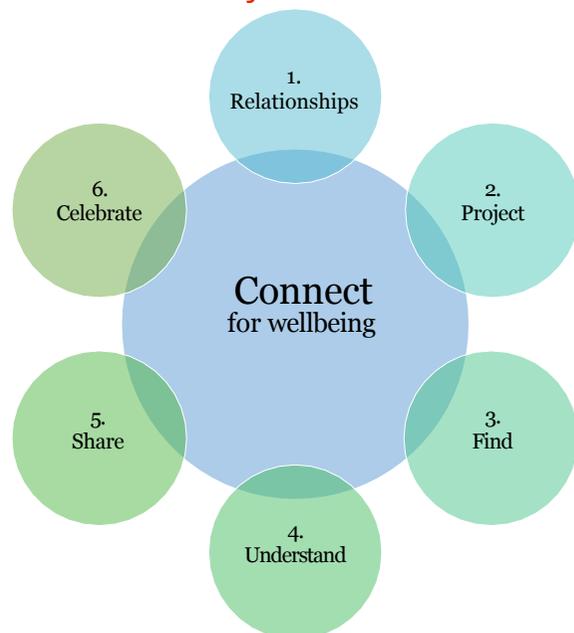
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Connection for Wellbeing

The [Ideas Fund](#) programme run by the British Science Association and funded by Wellcome Trust, supported a community engagement project that involved an academic-community organisation partnership between:

[Kyleakin Connections](#), which is a day resource for people with learning disabilities on the Isle of Skye and includes a cafe and two academics from [UHI](#) (Megan Dickson) and [University of Dundee](#) (Gill Hubbard), who spent a couple of days each month for 14 months to co-create research projects with service users.

Research cycle



1. Relationships

We spent the first few months getting to know each other. The academics “mucked in” by working in the cafe alongside staff and service users. The two academics were taught Level 1 Makaton to improve their ability to communicate by a member of staff.

2. Project

Kyleakin Connections chose two interlinked projects that aimed to improve *connection for wellbeing*:

- Creating a community wellbeing garden
- Creating a Makaton friendly community

3. Find

We decided what we needed to find out. Tasks for finding things out aligned with each of the service users’ skills, interests and abilities. Tasks included taking photographs, asking questions, visiting cafes and gardens, taking notes, open days. The service users role-played seeking consent to take someone’s photograph.

4. Understand

We worked together to understand all newly gathered information. For example, the service users produced graphs (bar charts) to display the results to the question: “What would you like in a community wellbeing garden?”

5. Share

The service users shared their understanding and interpretations of the results. They did this through group discussion, creating drawings and paintings, writing stories, making display boards, and creating videos.

6. Celebrate

We celebrated our achievements.

A community engagement project

Connection is “feeling a part of something larger than yourself, feeling close to another person or group, feeling welcomed, and understood.”¹ Connection helps people feel that they “belong.” We believe that doing community-based research can help people with learning disabilities connect, belong and improve health and wellbeing.



Kyleakin Connections cafe



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