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ENHANCING FOR IMPACT

RGU'S ANNUAL LEARNING AND TEACHING CONFERENCE

Giving children a voice:

Embedding children's rights in higher education teaching programmes.

Dr. Elaine Allan

Background

- Patient and public Involvement is a requirement in planning and designing nursing & midwifery education (Nursing and Midwifery Council 2018).
- A recent action plan & Scottish Government policy supports a shift in society to:
 - ❖ Ensure that children and young people, the general public, including HIGHER EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENTS know about, and uphold the Rights of the Child (ROC) (The Scottish Government 2018, 2021; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).

Aim:

- **Outline initiative and timeline**
- **Define what a child right's base approach is and how it relates to Higher Education**
- **Highlight the main contemporary legislation, policies and strategies supporting child rights-based standards of health and well-being**
- **Encourage the promotion and embedding of Children's Rights in pre and post graduate nurse education and through that.....**
- **Provide a sustainable model for effectively engaging with and involving children and young people in partnership in co-designing nurse pre registration & higher education that is genuinely:**
 - ❖ **inclusive**
 - ❖ **influenced by children and young people's voices from their perspective**

The “Imagineer” initiative & timeline

- 2018 Met the Imagineers (group of 40 children, aged 9-13, from across Aberdeen City schools) - discussed mental health.
- Made pledge to become RGU “Imagineer Champion” (along with key personnel from Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian, and Police Scotland - North East) by actively engaging and listening to the “Imagineers”, sharing their ideas and take direct action.
- 2019 Initiated focus groups/workshops that would ensure children’s voices were not only heard but acted upon. (Collaborative support from RGU , Aberdeen City HSCP NHSG, School Nurses, ACC - facilitated by the Children’s Parliament Scotland).
- Production of a Children’s Rights based video resource to raise awareness and understanding of C&YP’s rights through co-design of higher education materials influencing healthcare delivery (Initially Embedded in NUM077 Module aiming towards all Nursing Practice modules)

➤ **2020**



- 2021 Continued to keep pledge



What is a rights based approach for children?

- **Child rights-based approaches mean that the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) underpin the ethos of an organisation, and that all policies and practice are developed through consideration of the UNCRC. ... approaches to teaching, planning, policy & development should all reflect and uphold the rights of children.**
- **The UNCRC articulates the rights required to address political, social, economic and cultural determinants of child well-being.**
- **The principles of child rights—universality, interdependence and accountability—define the tenets of social justice and health equity required to ensure all rights accrue to all children, and the accountability of individuals and organisations (duty-bearers) to ensure these rights are fulfilled.**
- **Together, the UNCRC and child rights principles establish the structure and function of a child rights-based approach (CRBA) to child health, mental health & well-being—that provides the strategies and tools to transform child health practice into a rights, justice and equity-based paradigm. (Goldhagen J, et al. (2020) BMJ Paediatrics Open 2020;4:e000589. doi:10.1136/bmjpo-2019-000589**
- **Attainment of the highest possible standard of health as well as access and affordability of quality healthcare is an inherent right for all children. United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) - Right to health Article 51.**

How does this relate to Higher Education ?

- Governments and staff involved in all aspects of child healthcare including higher education are expected to initiate ways of working to not only promote children and young people's rights, but ensure this client group have a voice in all aspects of their life, including services that affects them. This approach supports progressing the legal status of C&YP's human rights (Scottish Government 2014).
- Article 12 of the CRC requires that children and young people's views are sought and taken seriously in all matters affecting them. One consequence of this is that, for a policy to be children's rights-based, children and young people should be involved in its development.

The role of HE –

- CO-DESIGN of Course Content–genuine involvement, listening to and hearing children and young people's voices and taking them seriously. C&YP influencing course development, content, design and delivery of material meaningful to them that is contemporary, relevant,
- Educate and influence the practice for every discipline of children's /nurses is more important than ever before, especially in relation to MH and WB and ensuring the child's voice is captured in record keeping.

Main contemporary legislation, policies and strategies

- **United Nations Convention on the Rights Of The Child (UNCRC) (1981)**
- **Getting it Right For Every Child – GIRFEC (2012)**
- **Children and Young People’s Scotland Act (2014)**
- **Progressing the Human Rights of Children in Scotland –**
 - ❖ **An Action Plan 2018-2021**
- **The Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act (2019).**
- **Independent Care Review in Scotland (2020)**

Process of Involving Children and Young People

➤ Underpinning Principle:

The rights of children must be at the heart of the new framework, so that all services, settings and professionals understand that it is their responsibility to uphold and promote children's rights.

United Nations Charter of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) aims to empower children. The charter includes the right of all children to be able to access health services to meet their needs. The charter states that children have the right to express their views in all matters affecting them, and that their views are given due accordance within the child's age and maturity.

Article 12 of the UNCRC states that "children have the right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously in all decisions which will affect them".

Gained "buy in" through -

Identifying resource across the partnership network

Obtaining informed consent for participation/videoing workshops

Actively listening to Children & YP and encouraging them to express themselves

A Partnership Approach

In collaboration with Imagineers, RGU colleagues partnered with Aberdeen City School Nurses and Aberdeen City Council to undertake workshops facilitated by The Children's Parliament in Scotland. The aim was to gain the perceptions of children and young people to decide what content to include in MSc Advancing Nursing Practice, the module I coordinate at RGU and co-produce meaningful educational resources.

What C & Y P felt should be included in Specialist School Nurse Higher Education Module

Children are important. Higher Education

Children can trust them.

Children should be respected.

Children's rights.

Children and young people's health and wellbeing - especially mental health and wellbeing, allergies and asthma.

Children's emotions and about how to help children deal with them.

Keeping children safe and how to do this, and understand children's rights around this.

It is OK for children to feel the way they do and will help if they are worried, as well as help build their confidence and keep them calm.

Results

Results demonstrated that, in a supported environment, children and young people ably negotiated relationships with higher education & NHS professionals on an equal basis, building connections & trust.

Acting upon the workshop's findings, we produced and incorporated a child-led teaching video into the delivery of RGU online teaching and published an article outlining the process so the model could be applied to future practice contributing to progressing the Rights Of the Child.

Children and young people have clear opinions and views when included & consulted in an age-appropriate way. They have rights and responsibilities that lecturers across all schools can support by ensuring that they are actively listened to regarding aspects of life that affect them.

Becoming a Children's Rights Defender

- If this information has enthused you to become a children's rights defender and contribute to the Scottish Government action plan, here are some questions to ask yourself when developing and embedding a rights-based approach into your own module, regardless of the subject:
 - ❖ Have children and young people been involved in the development, design, and delivery of the teaching materials?
 - ❖ Will this raise awareness of the UNCRC and Rights of the Child for students?
 - ❖ Am I linking the dynamic syllabus and MAG (Module Assessment Guidelines) explicitly to the UNCRC?
 - ❖ Can students access information on the UNCRC and a CRB approach to practice?
 - ❖ What examples of best practice can I develop, share/include to encourage students to contribute meaningfully to a CRBA when they are qualified in their profession?

Resources created from innovation

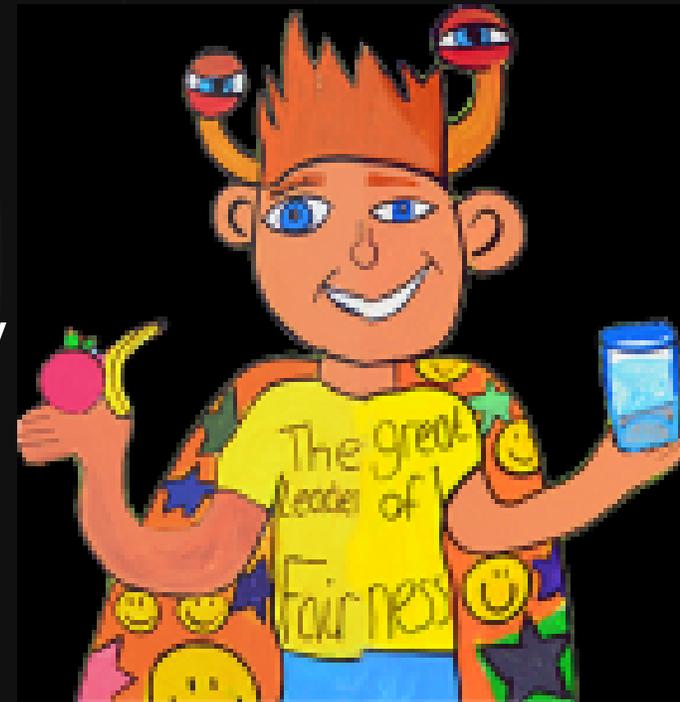
- [Click here to watch the Imagineer video](#)
- Queens Nursing Institute Blog <https://www.qnis.org.uk/blog/imagining-the-school-nursing-service/>
- The published article “Giving children a voice through partnership: a child rights-based approach to the co-design of postgraduate nurse education” Dr. Elaine Allan; Dr. Sadullah Luders can be found at the following
- link: <https://www.magonlinelibrary.com/doi/full/10.12968/chhe.2021.2.4.171>
- Year of Childhood activities [What's On - Children's Parliament \(childrensparliament.org.uk\)](https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/what-s-on/)
- The Promise <https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Promise.pdf>
- Each and Every Child <https://eachandeverychild.co.uk/>
- <https://eachandeverychild.co.uk/the-toolkit/>
- UNICEF child friendly cities <https://childfriendlycities.org/>

Invitation become an UNFEARTIE

➤ *Unfearties* are individuals who are courageous in discussing children's issues, are making a difference in children's lives, and who are willing to speak up for, and stand alongside, children.

➤ **An Unfeartie**

- ❖ Listens to children
- ❖ Views children as capable and an asset to their communities
- ❖ Strives to ensure children's voices are heard
- ❖ Challenges infringements of children's human dignity
- ❖ Helps children learn the values of honesty, empathy, respect and social justice
- ❖ Promotes greater awareness and understanding of children's rights
- ❖ Speaks up about their Unfeartie role and spreads the message about signing up



• [Click here to join the brave band of Unfearties](#)

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Any Questions?

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- Thirtieth anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: advancing a child rights-based approach to child health and well-being. Goldhagen J, et al. (2020) BMJ Paediatrics Open 2020;4:e000589. doi:10.1136/bmjpo-2019-000589
- <https://bmjpaedsopen.bmj.com/content/bmjpo/4/1/e000589.full.pdf> [downloaded 25/08/21]