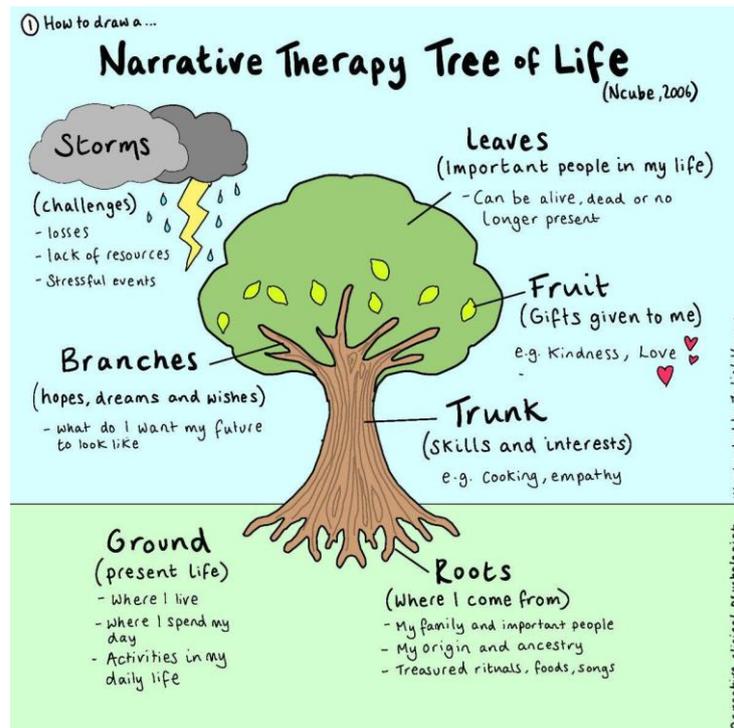


Top tips for working with younger people in social care settings (by Omar Mohamed)



Tree of Life approach

Using the Tree of Life in PPI with young people in social care offers a powerful way to centre their voices, strengths, and aspirations rather than only focusing on problems or deficits. With Tree of Life, participants draw their “roots” (background, culture, early life), “trunk” (skills, values, internal resources), “branches” (hopes and dreams), “leaves” (important people in their lives), and even “storms” (challenges they have faced), allowing a holistic, multidimensional mapping of identity and life experience. This kind of narrative, creative and participatory work can help young people in care feel recognised for their resilience, understand their own strengths, and imagine constructive futures, which aligns well with PPI’s aim of involving service users as equal partners in decision-making and service design. Because the method is non-threatening, visually oriented, and flexible, it can make it easier for young people, including those who find traditional clinical or discussion-based formats difficult, to contribute meaningfully. In a group setting, using a collective “forest of life” can help build connection, peer support, mutual understanding, and shared hope.

Key learnings from Omar’s session:

Look past the surface; social justice is a result of exploring intersectionality.

[Working with minoritised youth] is complex. Needs to be looked at from all viewpoints - patient, clinician, researcher, etc.

[We need to explore] the totality of people’s experience and build that in in multiple ways.