MORPHUMANE, A CONVERSATION
A CHANGE IN ATMOSPHERE

CAMDEN CONVERSATIONS
OUR FAMILY-LED CHILD PROTECTION ENQUIRY
Contents of full report

**Themes**
- Relationships
- The Role of the Social Worker
- The Role of the Parent
- The Role of Advocacy
- Focus on the Child Protection Conference
- Acknowledging the system does harm

**Summary of Recommendations**

**Method**

**Introduction**

**Participants, Project Team, Project Support, Acknowledgements**
Building relationships by acknowledging what is happening and acting on what is needed

Building relationships by valuing and empowering families

Building relationships by lessening the fear and powerlessness felt by families

Maintaining a relationship with good communication and good people skills - ‘Worked with’ rather than ‘done to’.

Being caring, curious, holding people’s life journey in mind

Recognising the importance of ‘action’

Bring transparent and avoiding jargon when having difficult conversations

Inviting feedback on practice

Conflict resolution, and inviting both parent’s contribution through being better at engaging dads and young parents.

Image: Camden Conversations
There are many shared goals between family members and professionals to promote hopeful and helpful conversations that values the expertise of families with experiences of child protection services. Their recommendations are as follows:

1. Develop “Independent Peer Advocacy” as a preventative tool offered across Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection stages, including at Child Protection Conferences.

2. A review of language used, which connects to the community and reaches out to minority groups.

3. Where timescales allow, Family Group Conferences to be offered and FGC Plan considered at Child Protection Conferences.

4. Explore community venues, more flexible timing and role of peer advocacy in Child Protection Conference

5. Child Protection Chair/ IRO to meet family beforehand/ in between conference to encourage family input. Including, allowing families and the Chair to be in the conference room first.

6. Multi-agency professional to join the meeting, limited to one professional per agency.

7. Enable families to understand the Child Protection process and timescales and allow Child Protection conferences to make time to make a plan.

8. Identify creative and digital ways to allow feedback/debrief with support from advocates.

9. Multi-disciplinary Camden Conversations Training on “Empowering Families” and consider ways to acknowledge the power dynamics between parent and frontline professional.

10. Look at opportunities for multi-agency professionals to critically reflect on the Child Protection system, how can we do better, what does a more participative process look like?

11. Review support offer to birth parents, before, during and post child protection stages.
A relationship works well when...

- You feel comfortable enough to open up and get the help that you need.
- When people feel valued and respected.

- You feel comfortable with the other person.
- There is trust and respect.
I had success the other day when...

- Someone showed genuine care and interest
- Someone listened to me and explained to me
- I had a cup of tea with a parent and let them say what they wanted to
- With my help someone understood what was happening
Most people think I am...

- Warm
- Approachable

- Kind hearted
- Approachable
I think I am...

- A good person
- Patient
- Doing my best

- A good person
- Kind
- Trying my best
Children need...

Love

family

professional
In an ideal world a Child Protection conference would be...

- Like a safe kitchen
- An opportunity for the family to lead the plan
- Including advocacy

- More comfortable, make me feel less vulnerable
- Like a Family Group Conference
- Giving more independent advocates for families
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What we hoped to achieve:
- Camden child protection can change by being human
- In an ideal world, child protection conferences would be a conversation instead of a meeting
- How Camden conversations happened: 2016 - creation of the Cambridge Filament, 2018 - first conversations project
- The team: Camden's Family Advisory Board, supported by senior partner Tim Fisher, Professor Anne Cope

The team:
- Participants from Surviving Safeguarding
- Participatory research project is born

CAMS EDEN CONVERSATIONS are free morning workshops
- Sowing a journey to a place of respect, learning, and humane practice
- Important to acknowledge that the system does harm
- We are travelling in hope based on good intentions of individuals within the system
- "An appreciative enquiry"

Who's involved?
- 50 people
- 25 families
- 25 professionals
- People from all points in the child protection system
- One-to-one interviews and listening circles
- All led by parents

These all took place between September 2017 and September 2018 at our spaces

I never thought I would be back in this office sitting down, leading this conversation

Feedback:
- Families are finding the Camden model really exciting
- Some excited to hear the evidence and recommendations of the enquiry for this process
- We developed a sense of belonging which helped "ground" professionals

Changing culture
- Peer support
- Learning exchanges
- Training advocacy
- Family voices lead workshops

HEADLINE AREAS FOR ACTION
- Advocacy
- Peer support
- Learning exchange
- Demonstrating family voices can lead to change
- Support, information, and opportunity for parents to feed back

Where could this journey take us?
- More humane, a conversation, a change in atmosphere

In an ideal world...