

Towards a More Diverse Scotland: Elevating Young Voices

Multi-Cultural Family Base

By Rania Qussasi & Hannah Kearns



Introductions

Multi-Cultural Family Base is a third sector agency which supports families from ethnically diverse backgrounds. MCFB consists of a lot of projects supporting from pre-birth to adulthood. We will focus on some of the work with young people aged 8-16. MCFB is also a social work student 'learning hub'.

Hannah Kearns

- ▶ Project lead 8plus
- ▶ Social work background

Rania Qussasi

- ▶ Practice Educator manager & coordinator
- ▶ social work background



Aims of the workshop

- ▶ Overview of our work
- ▶ Exploring the main themes that impact young people from diverse backgrounds.
 - Inclusion
 - Language
 - Identity
- ▶ How do we support?



Summer 2023 Meadows Picnic

8plus Service



8plus

- Supports children and young people aged 8-16 from culturally diverse backgrounds and their families.
- Offers a range of individual, family and groupwork supports

8plus is an amalgamation of three projects

1. Junior Groups
2. 4Corners
3. The Mosaic Project



Junior Groups

- ▶ Predominantly groupwork
- ▶ Children in primary 4-7
- ▶ Focus on:
 1. Developing social skills
 2. Reducing isolation
 3. Promoting emotional wellbeing



4Corners

- ▶ Both group & individual/ Family work
- ▶ CYP 8-16
- ▶ 2x Community-based groups, and one school group
- ▶ Similar focus, but additional attention given to resilience/ skills for young people to be successful learners.



Mosaic Project

- ▶ For high school aged young people from a diverse background
- ▶ Partnership with the Junction
- ▶ Weekly group, with outside support available
- ▶ Seeks to offer mental health and wellbeing support to diverse young people
- ▶ YP may struggle to access supports from mainstream services

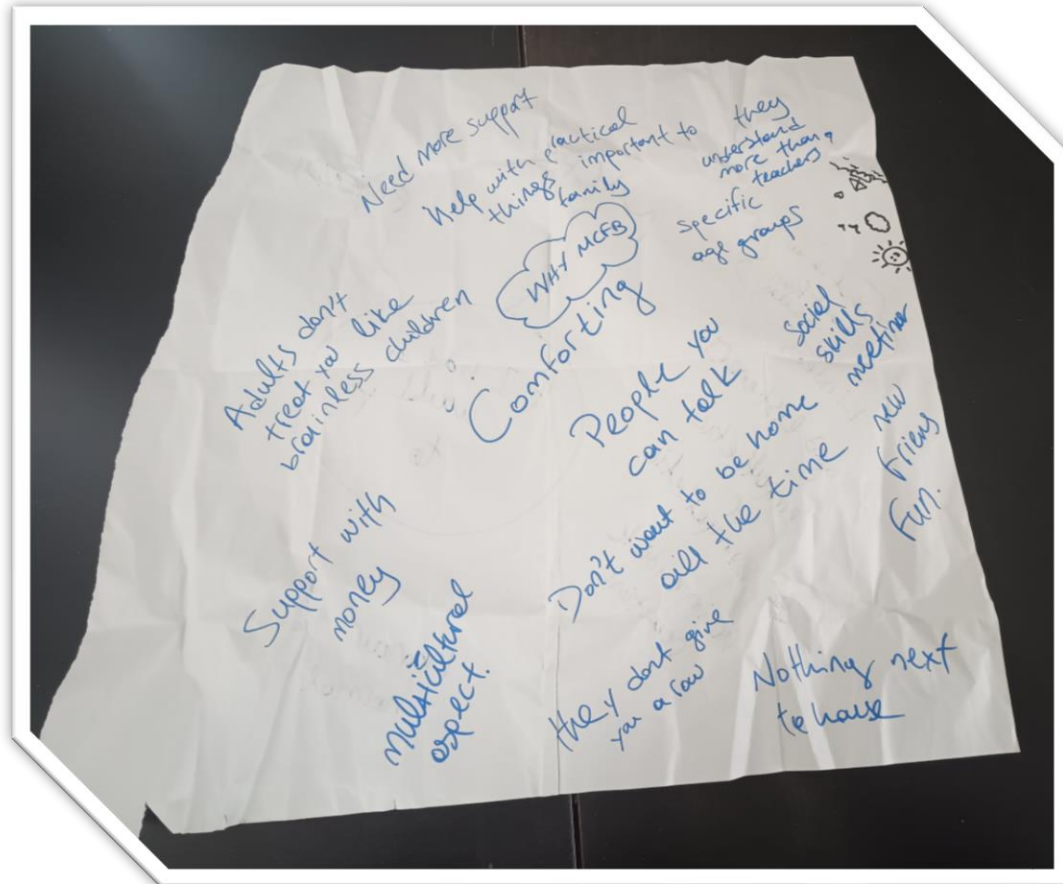


Young Ambassadors

- ▶ The Multi-Cultural Community Youth Ambassadors Program (MCCYAP) is a visionary initiative for the Multi-Cultural Family Base.
- ▶ It is designed to align with the Edinburgh Children's Service Plan 2023-26 to enable young people's voices to be heard and to foster cross-cultural understanding, leadership skills, and community engagement among the youth of our diverse community.
- ▶ This program aims to empower young individuals from various cultural backgrounds to become active, informed, and compassionate leaders who represent and celebrate our community's rich tapestry of cultures.



Key themes



How it feels to be 'different' in Edinburgh today

- ▶ Young people's feedback
- ▶ Inclusion & belonging
- ▶ Identity



How it feels to be 'different' in Edinburgh today

"kind of the same as everyone else but you have to deal with all the questions"

"I have tried to bring up the racism but they don't take it seriously"

"People always want to know where I'm from but then they don't believe me so sometimes I just say I was born here"

"I always get in trouble but the white girls get away with the same things all the time"

"I don't think we get treated the same [...] they see us like more of a problem"

"I get called an emo Pablo Escobar but I find it annoying"



Belonging

- ▶ Of the 33 group members, only 3 young people said they consider themselves Scottish
- ▶ Most young people described feeling 'outside' of their peers at school
- ▶ Many felt their experiences of racism were not recognised by important adults
- ▶ Several described instances of their identities being questioned because they "don't look like that country".
- ▶ Most stated they felt uncomfortable discussing their backgrounds at school or in the community

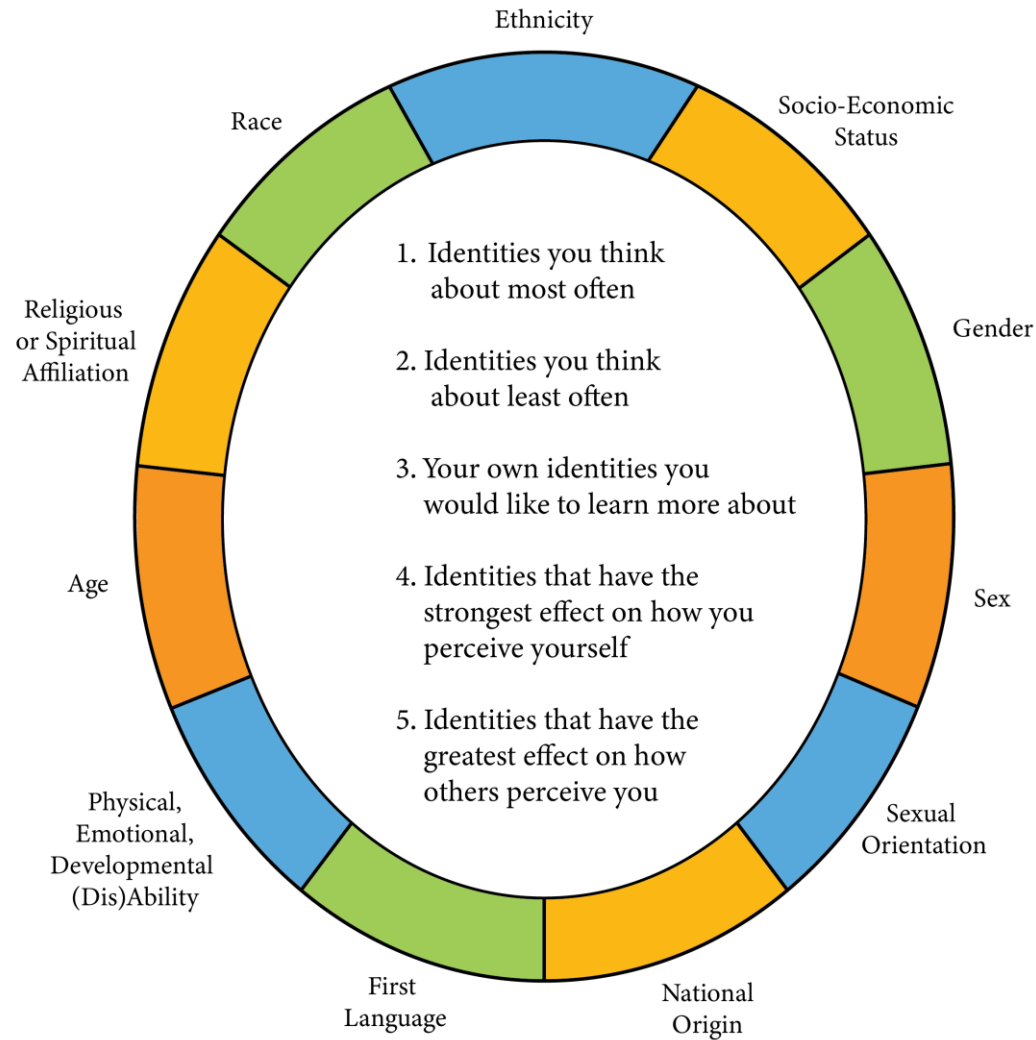


Identity

- ▶ Formation of identity is one of the key functions of adolescence
- ▶ Positive resolution is associated with improved psychosocial outcomes & forms the basis of self esteem
- ▶ Challenges can be seen through a range of risky or harmful behaviours
- ▶ Adults can support in a range of ways, including
 - modelling
 - providing opportunities to explore and celebrate different aspects of Young people's identities
 - Supporting resilience



Identity Wheel - Reflection



Story!

- ▶ Listen to the story & fill in the comprehension questions

Story! Reflection

- ▶ How did that feel?
- ▶ How would it feel for a 9-year old?

- ▶ Attitudes around English language acquisition can be harmful
- ▶ For many of our young people; English is their third or fourth language but they can be made to feel incapable if not supported appropriately.

When the child is the cultural broker

- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Racism
- ▶ Isolation
- ▶ Interpreting for the family



What young people want from adults

- ▶ Kindness
- ▶ Good listening
- ▶ Empathetic / sympathetic
- ▶ To be "normal"
- ▶ To have some humour
- ▶ No immediate reactions
- ▶ Understanding
- ▶ Respect



Cultural Competence

- ▶ Refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures.

Cultural competence comprises four components:

- (a) Awareness of one's own cultural worldview,
- (b) Positive Attitude towards cultural differences,
- (c) Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews,
and
- (d) cross-cultural Skills.

Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures.

Anti-racism is everyone's business

- ▶ "Racism is not the shark in the water, it is the actual water we swim in".
- ▶ Not enough to say that we are not racist- we address and challenge racist attitudes and inequalities where these arise for the individuals that we support.
- ▶ No One Size Fits All viewpoint- Our Rights Based approach and support avoids at homogenising individuals and focuses on the uniqueness of each person.
- ▶ We grow and gain power when we are around people with similar experiences. This goes beyond colour and ethnicities.

Summary

- ▶ Responding to changing needs and priorities of ethnically diverse children, young people and their families.
- ▶ Our identities are shaped by multitude of factors.
- ▶ Part of job as professionals is to support our young people as they navigate this process.
- ▶ Practicing in a culturally competent manner is achievable and necessary for everyone.

References

- ▶ Martin, M., & Vaughn, B. (2007). Cultural competence: The nuts and bolts of diversity and inclusion. *Strategic Diversity & Inclusion Management*, 1(1), 31-38.
- ▶ Williams, B. (2001). [Accomplishing cross cultural competence in youth development programs.](#) *Journal of Extension*, 39(6), 1-6.

Thank You!

