

Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board Manager's Blog

November 2018

Help to pump up the volume

A few weeks ago, in order to progress an important piece of work, I met with two lead safeguarding adults colleagues (one from housing, the other from health) after work. A 6pm meeting was made 'do-able' by having a bite to eat and a pint (just one, as we were driving) in the pub. And yes, we got some good work done as well.

The soundtrack playing in the pub was a cracker: *Gangsters* by the Specials, *Transmission* and *Love Will Tear Us Apart* by Joy Division, followed by New Order's *Blue Monday*. Next up was The Smiths, *Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now*, segwaying into *Once in a Lifetime* by Talking Heads. It was such a good soundtrack that we would be in full conversation when one of us would just start singing the lyrics in mid-sentence. This could be a little distracting but great fun.

One song we didn't hear that evening was the 'classic' 1986 hit *Walk This Way* by Run DMC (featuring Aerosmith) You may remember the video which shows the two bands turning up the volume of their version of the track in order to drown out the other. A week later I attend the Safeguarding Adults and Legal Literacy (SALLY) seminar, at which Kenny Gibson (@kennygibsonnhs) was giving a presentation about 'turning up our safeguarding adults volume' How can we do this, and amplify our safeguarding message?

If you like, it is finding the safeguarding equivalent of yodelling. Yodelling is a very old tradition that spans several different cultures. We have all done a version of this when we cup our hands around our mouth to make a voice carry. The aim is to direct the sound toward a specific location. The hands act like a 'blow horn' – they don't make you shout louder, but rather focus the acoustic energy of the voice. The point is to get the energy to the listener's ears instead of letting it dissipate elsewhere. So, how can we use the safeguarding equivalent of the blow horn to give direction to our safeguarding message? Here are three very easy things you can do:

- **Speak to one person a day about safeguarding.** Just by starting a conversation will help get the subject of abuse and harm more readily into the current discourse

- **Use social media.** As board manager I am responsible for NSAB social media (just Twitter at the moment). I was somewhat reluctant when I started actively using Twitter at the end of January. But it has proven invaluable in helping me get the message out and make new connections. So, if you use Twitter, why not follow @NorfolkSAB?

Of course, we can work hard to spread an idea, but ultimately success will be determined by how others respond and whether they decide to adopt it. To help make this happen more readily, we need to:

- **Enlist key ‘change champions’ for our safeguarding message.** These are key influencers in your network. A ‘change champion’ is not always the most obvious person, but the one whose opinion carries weight and reach. Think who this person / people might be in your organisation or network and see if you can start a conversation with them about their important role in spreading the safeguarding adults message. Change champions drive the spread of our message by demonstrating commitment to the idea.

If each of us used the above 3 actions we could really turn up the volume for our safeguarding message and in doing so help protect those who are at risk of abuse and harm. Just think, if all the readers of this blog did the equivalent of cupping their hands to amplify their voice – our message would reach much further.

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