

## Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board Manager's Blog

February 2021

### ***Snowflakes, making 'it felt' and resilience in safeguarding***

There are a number of bamboo plants outside my back door. They are thin but now quite tall. The other weekend Norwich got its first touch of snow for 2021. Not like other parts of the country ([winter scenes from around the UK](#)) but a reasonable covering. I was sitting in the kitchen in my favourite spot next to the radiator listening to [Radcliffe and Maconie](#) then The Huey Show on 6 Music.

Over an hour or so I was struck by the snow falling on the bamboo, and how the bamboo bent further and further under the weight of the settling snow.

One snowflake doesn't weigh very much – but after a while all those feathery flakes add up. Ten inches of snow covering an acre of land weighs about 226,000 pounds. According to the [Archimedes Notebook website](#) (hands-on science exploration for children and their families), an individual snowflake weighs 0.02\* grams. At that weight it would take 50 flakes to make a gram. For comparison, a Cadbury Dairy Milk chocolate bar weighs 45 grams.

\*this would be the heaviest end of the spectrum. Most are much lighter, weighing from 0.001 to 0.003 grams.

Two thoughts occurred. One was for the street homeless on a day like this, and I hope they were able to get out of the cold (see [Office of National Statistics Deaths of homeless people in England and Wales – 14/12/2021](#)). The second was how very small things when added together can make a big difference: one snowflake does not bend the bamboo, but lots together do.

This is not a new idea, but for us in adult safeguarding in the middle of a pandemic it may feel like we are not making headway against the threat of abuse and harm. To paraphrase the words of Renee Danielle Montgomery, an American basketball player, let's '*make it felt*'. Inspired by the rising movement against racism in the US, Renee Montgomery made an unexpected decision: she opted out of her dream job.

As she says in this inspiring TED talk – [How to turn moments into momentum](#) – she wanted to "*make it felt*," and that meant turning her attention from the

basketball court to the community. After watching the protests in her neighbourhood, Renee was speaking with her mum, who said – ‘when people feel that their voices are not heard they have to make it felt’.

As Renee put it:

*‘A lot of time we underestimate what we can do, the effect we can have. Imagine if we all started to think about how could I make it felt’*

And you don't have to be a basketball star to make it felt; anyone can turn **important moments into meaningful momentum.**

What I take from this is that small actions against adult abuse *do* matter, like snow bending bamboo. But on our own it can be difficult to sustain. We need to be part of a network that supports resilience.

As we move into February and the pandemic threat continues to stretch ahead of us, it is tough to keep a safeguarding focus against such big issues. I saw a [tweet by Sonya Wallbank shared by Helen Bevan about resilience](#) which I found helpful. Adapting it slightly it speaks to why we do safeguarding as a network:

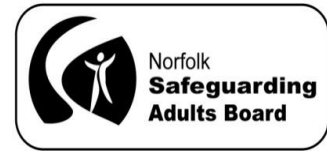
*"Resilience" is less about individual characteristics & more about the work environment & supporting each other in the team [and across teams]. How we talk with each other can protect us from burnout. So important that we make the time & space for intentional [safeguarding] conversations.*  
[@SonyaWallbank](#)

An important source of resilience for our adult safeguarding network is the Locality Safeguarding Adult Partnerships (LSAP). A few days ago, at short notice I stepped into chair our western LSAP online meeting. There was good spread of agencies attending and I was stuck by the support colleagues were giving each other. If your organisation is not yet plugged into your local partnership do check how you can join, there is [list of LSAP on the NSAB website](#).

Thank you.

Walter Lloyd-Smith  
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PS: Funny how the past can echo back. I was out one morning for daily exercise using [Norwich City Council's brilliant 'Nooks & Crannies' walk](#), which takes in



Rigbys Court. This was the home of Edward Rigby settled in Norwich in 1769 – he was a brilliant surgeon who helped found the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital & introduced **vaccination** to the city.

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