

# Co-created Training & Consultancy



**GO TOGETHER**  
CO-CREATED COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

# co-created community solutions



We believe in the power of relationships to create meaningful change. We nurture the vital connective tissue that organisations and communities need to address complex social challenges effectively.

By leveraging a relationship-centered model, Go Together fosters trust, empathy, and shared power among diverse stakeholders. Our approach breaks down silos, encouraging collaborations that unlock innovative, community-led solutions to systemic inequities and pressing social issues.

With Go Together, you'll gain the relational support and coordination necessary to achieve transformative systems change. Together, we can build a more equitable and resilient future—because real change happens when we go together.

## Vision

A world where relational and adaptive approaches drive systems change, elevating community agency, resilience, and shared decision-making.

## Mission

To bridge organisations through authentic relationships, empowering collaborative, empathetic, and innovative solutions to systemic challenges.

**Ready to join us? Let's start the journey.**



# Why Now is the Time for Community-Led Change



Following the pandemic, the UK is facing a collective mental health crisis, with alarming trends emerging across all sections of society. Traditional approaches to mental health have placed responsibility for recovery solely on individuals, through counseling, medication, mindfulness, or exercise. While these interventions are vital, they overlook a critical truth: the social conditions in which individuals live often contribute to poor health. To create lasting recovery, we must shift our focus from individual responsibility to collective action, addressing the root causes embedded in communities.

Evidence shows that stress and mental health struggles have reached unprecedented levels. In the workplace, 91% of people surveyed in Mental Health UK's Burnout Report (2024) experienced high or extreme stress last year, with stress-related work absenteeism at record highs. In schools, over 500 children are referred daily to NHS mental health services for anxiety, more than double the pre-pandemic rate, while school absence rates have risen sharply. Parents, too, report mounting anxiety, loneliness, and overwhelm (Unicef, 2023). These statistics paint a clear picture: mental health and trauma are not merely individual issues but collective challenges, deeply interwoven into the fabric of our communities.

Over the past five years, the pandemic, cost of living crisis, and global instability have left communities grappling with chronic stress and a sense of overwhelm. Child wellbeing has declined, closely linked to the wellbeing of adults. Renowned psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk highlights the power of the parent-child connection in mental health interventions, stressing the need to support adults so they can provide the stability and co-regulation essential to meet children's emotional needs. Communities are uniquely positioned to offer this support, creating environments of kindness, care, and connection to foster resilience across generations.



Research by Anda et al. (2016) reveals that many people prefer to seek support for recovery and healing through their communities and cultural traditions, turning to circles of trust and informal networks rather than formal services. These deeply valuable but often invisible forms of healing hold immense potential, especially during times of collective trauma. However, they are frequently overlooked by policymakers and professionals.

Now, more than ever, we need to invest in community-led approaches that empower people to take collective action, fostering environments of social connection and recovery. This relational approach builds on the evidence that strong social ties and community networks are often more effective than formal services in promoting resilience. By equipping the workforce with asset-based community development practices, with trauma informed knowledge we can enable communities to lead the way in addressing the profound challenges face by communities.

Whatever the question, the answer lies in the strength of community, creating spaces of compassion, trust, and shared responsibility that pave the way for recovery and hope.



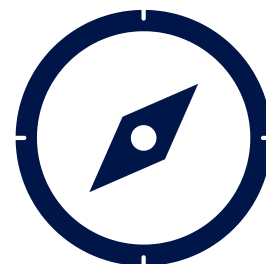
# approach



GO TOGETHER  
CO-CREATED COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

We believe in taking a co-created approach, which means learning and consultancy is co-designed with you, so it's tailored to meet your needs. While there is not a preterminded map, we do provide the compass to help navigate through the challenges concepts and paradigm shifts to support you achieve a deeper understand of community led change.

To achieve this we have developed a unique phased approach that places equal weighting on the following components:



Appreciative Enquiry ➡ Education & training ➡ Consultation to embed learning ➡ Reflective practice

## Phase 1: Appreciative Enquiry.

A method to assess the organisation's 'As it' position in relation to community development practice. Facilitates co-designed actions/ interventions that match the needs of the setting and people we are working with and informs in what order things should happen. The process emphasises the importance of building relationships, it is about putting "people before programme" and understanding that "relationships precede actions".

## Phase 2: Education and Training

The Appreciative Enquiry will determine the starting point for specialist training input. In order to journey with the workforce, the starting point needs to be relevant to their current roles, while bridging a connection to the future ambitions. Practical training inputs will be offered on strength based practice, asset based community development, self healing communities, relational and restorative practice, trauma informed approaches, and building hopeful cultures.

## Phase 3. Reflective Practice

Practice Circles are designed to enhance a progression from transactional to relational cultures that promote staff wellbeing and reduction in toxic stress and secondary trauma, while evolving community driven practice.

## Phase 4- Consultation to embed learning

Expert consultation regarding specific issues that require facilitated support. This is an agile process that supports staff in building confidence to apply their learning, overcome barriers to engagement and provides co-regulation during periods of transformation and change.



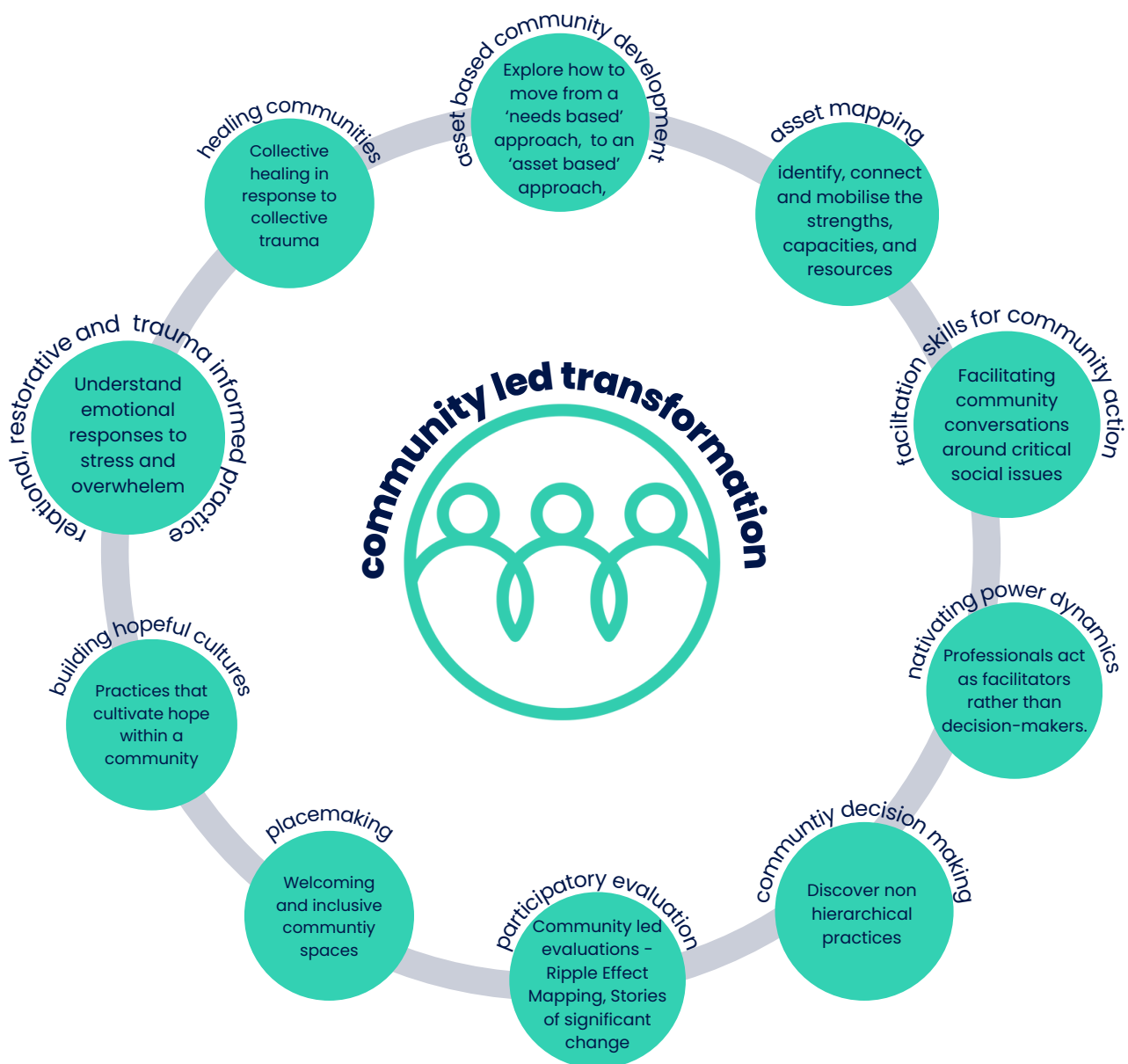
# programme content



**GO TOGETHER**  
CO-CREATED COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Programmes content is co-designed with participants and leaders to ensure we are 'doing with' rather than 'doing to'. The starting point is likely to be different for each organisation, as their experience and skill base will vary. This means the weighting and sequencing of the programme will need to vary to meet needs.

However, all these approaches require a paradigm shift to discover a new way of working and being, that moves from addressing problems through traditional service provision, to possibilities that are relationship driven, utilising community strengths and assets.

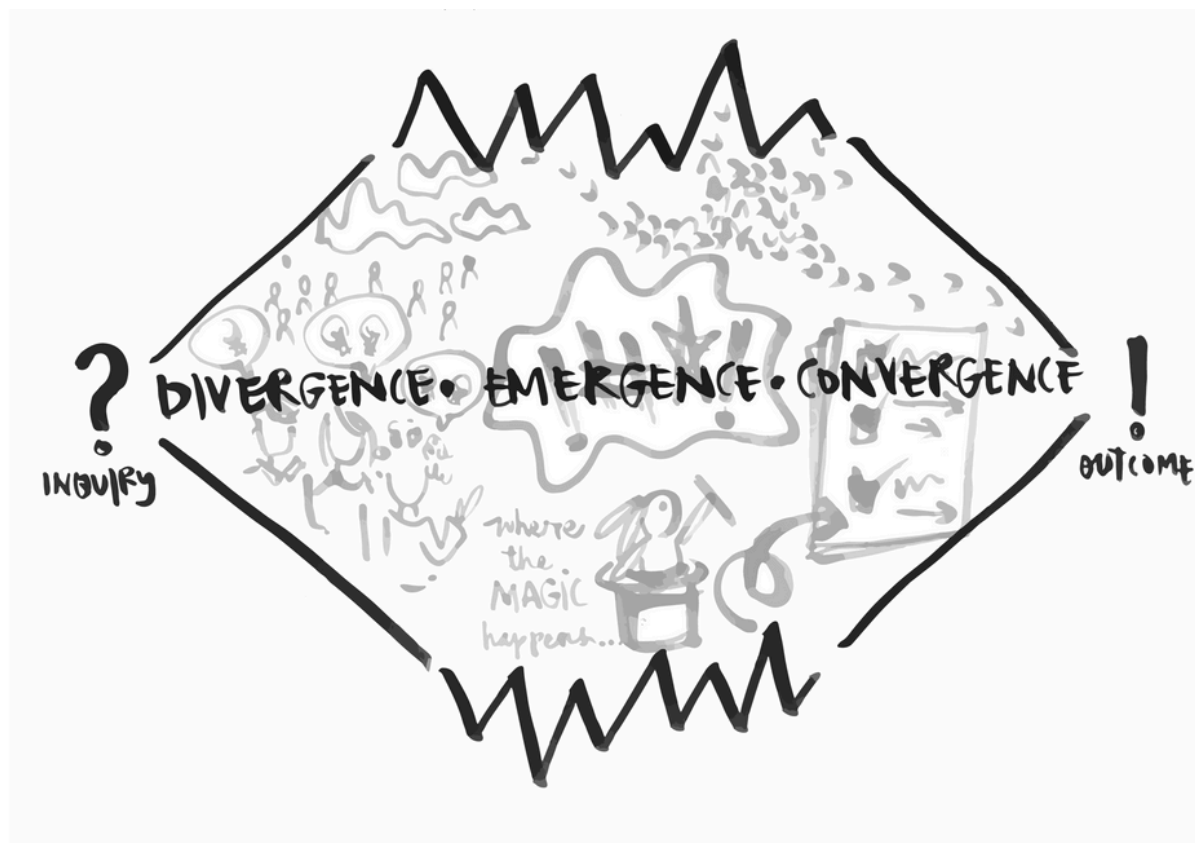


# programme content

During the course of this programme participants are invited to reflect on their role in enabling a culture where communities can connect the strengths of local people to build neighbourhoods bottom up. Participants are invited to think about their collective values and behaviours that can contribute to shaping a unique strengths-based, community led culture, which in turn they can use within to the neighbourhoods they serve.

## 1 Co-design the programme

During this first session we will introduce a method to co-design the course content with participants. Divergent, Emergent, Convergent (DEC) Theory, also known as 'The Breath Pattern' can be used as process architecture and a way to design group activity. It can be used to explain the dynamics of group and change processes. The breath pattern begins with a question or purpose and ends with some sort of outcome or clarification. In between, there are three phases: divergence, emergence, convergence. This creates an opportunity to model a participatory approach, and support participants to be producers, rather than consumers of learning.



# programme content



GO TOGETHER  
CO-CREATED COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

1

## Introduction to Relational Practice and Asset Based Community Development

In this initial workshop we will be introducing core principles of relational practice, and why it matters to groups and communities. With its roots in the community building tradition, relational practice emphasises the importance of building relationships, it is about putting “people before programme” and understanding that “relationships precede actions”. These sessions are intentionally fun and engaging in order to facilitate relationships and the create conditions for gentle challenge.

We will go on to explore paradigm shifts, supporting the group to move from a ‘needs based’ approach, which remains dominant in our culture to an ‘asset based’ approach, which is orientated around the idea of working from strengths. This shifting of perspectives from problems to possibilities requires a new way of thinking, doing and being.

During these workshops the group will be introduced to the core principles of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) and the rationale that underpins collective trauma and collective healing to improve the wellbeing of citizens.



### Needs based approach (half empty)

### Asset based approach (half full)

Outside in/ top down

Inside out/ Bottom up

Needs/ Problems/ Disabilities

Assets, gifts, strengths, abilities

Experts/ Service Providers

Citizens

Community as a consumer/  
beneficiary

Community as a producer  
of services

Competition & dependency

Collaboration and initiative.

Agencies/ Offices & Centres

Neighbours, streets, public spaces

One to one, ‘To’ or ‘For’ the  
people.

Community led actions ‘of’ or  
‘by’ the people. Solidarity.

Professional codes, systems  
and clients

Reciprocity, relationship,  
trust and connection



GO TOGETHER  
CO-CREATED COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

# programme content

## 3 Mapping Assets: Discovery and Connection

Strong, safe, and healthy neighborhoods and communities are built on the strengths and capacities of their residents and associations that call the community home. We cannot build strong caring neighborhoods without unlocking the potential of residents. The most powerful question we can ask is “What can we do with what we already have to get what we need?”.

Asset mapping is a core process in Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) that identifies and mobilises the strengths, capacities, and resources within a community to drive positive change. Unlike needs-based approaches that focus on deficits or problems, asset mapping emphasizes what is already working well and how it can be leveraged to address challenges and foster growth.

Asset Mapping is not just another list of resources held by the Council; it is a strategy to identify strengths and assets that are available from within the community. More importantly it's a process for connecting and engaging the community and to unlock the talents of people to help solve problems and build a better community. During this session we will discover the 3 levels of asset mapping, individual, community and organisational, alongside tools that can be used to discover them. Between this session and the next, participants are invited to start their own asset mapping through initiating a community ‘treasure hunt’.

## 4 Facilitation skills for community action

Effective facilitation practices are vital in building and sustaining meaningful relationships within communities. Approaches such as the Art of Hosting and Harvesting, Community Animation, Restorative Circles, and Circle Practices rooted in Indigenous traditions create spaces for trust, collaboration, and shared understanding. These methods prioritise relational connection, active participation, and collective wisdom to strengthen community bonds.

Art of Hosting and Harvesting offers a participatory approach using conversational processes like World Café, Open Space Technology, and Appreciative Inquiry to foster dialogue and co-creation. It focuses on creating safe spaces where diverse voices can be heard, enabling the emergence of collective intelligence and innovative solutions. Circle Practices from indigenous cultures emphasise inclusivity, respect, and balance. Participants gather in a circle, symbolizing equality and unity, to engage in shared decision-making or storytelling. Key principles include the use of a talking piece, which ensures everyone has the opportunity to speak and listen deeply without interruption. By encouraging curiosity and deep listening, this practice builds trust and nurtures meaningful relationships.

Restorative Circles, originating in restorative justice, offers a practice that brings individuals together in a structured dialogue to address conflict, repair harm, and rebuild relationships. By focusing on healing and reconciliation, they foster deeper connections and a sense of collective responsibility.





GO TOGETHER  
CO-CREATED COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

# programme content

## 5 Navigating Power Dynamics

In Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), navigating power dynamics requires a shift from traditional, top-down approaches to a partnership model that prioritizes the community's strengths, leadership, and agency. This approach challenges professionals to critically evaluate their role, discern when to step in to support, and, equally importantly, when to step back to create space for community members to lead.

Professionals often bring resources, expertise, and authority that can unintentionally overshadow community voices. Acknowledging these dynamics is the first step in creating equitable relationships where community contributions are valued as equally important. Professionals act as facilitators rather than decision-makers. This involves creating spaces for open dialogue, listening actively to community priorities, and ensuring that decisions reflect the community's aspirations rather than external agendas. Genuine trust is foundational to navigating power dynamics. Professionals should invest time in building relationships, demonstrating respect for the community's knowledge and experiences, and fostering mutual understanding.

Professionals must continuously reflect on their motivations, behaviors, and the potential impact of their actions. Asking questions like, "Whose agenda is being served?" and "Am I enabling or undermining local capacity?" helps maintain accountability. By cultivating shared leadership and co-creation, professionals can shift power dynamics towards collaboration, ensuring the community's voice is at the center of all decisions.

Navigating power dynamics in ABCD is about balance: stepping in when necessary to address structural inequities or provide needed expertise, and stepping back to create space for community ownership and self-determination.

## 6 Community Decision-Making

Practitioners often find that they need to draw on non-hierarchical decision-making practices that emphasise shared power, inclusivity, and collective ownership of processes and outcomes. Inspired by Teal practices (as outlined in *Reinventing Organisations* by Frederic Laloux) and horizontal practices described in Samantha Slade's *Going Horizontal*, this approach shifts away from traditional top-down authority structures towards participatory and collaborative systems that empower all members.

Consent-Based Decision-Making is a process where decisions are made when no member has a strong objection, rather than requiring unanimous agreement. This ensures progress while respecting diverse perspectives. Consent-based approaches, such as Sociocracy, prioritise practicality and adaptability over seeking perfect solutions.

Self-Management (Teal) offers teams, groups and individuals a way of operate autonomously, making decisions within their areas of influence while remaining aligned with the community's shared purpose. Conflict resolution and decision-making are handled collaboratively, reducing reliance on formal leaders.



# programme content



## 7 Participatory evaluation

This workshop explores participatory evaluation, focusing on shifting from a top-down, "doing to" approach to a collaborative, "doing with" model that actively involves communities as co-researchers. Participants will learn key methodologies, including Ripple Effect Mapping (REM) and Stories of Most Significant Change (MSC), to uncover both qualitative and visual insights into the impacts of community initiatives. The workshop emphasizes fostering community ownership, equity, and shared accountability throughout the evaluation process.

Through hands-on activities and practical guidance, participants will develop the confidence and skills to implement these approaches in their contexts, enabling deeper insights, sustained engagement, and more meaningful outcomes. Ethical considerations, such as power dynamics and cultural sensitivity, will also be addressed, ensuring the process is inclusive and respectful. By empowering communities to shape and evaluate their own initiatives, this workshop equips participants to drive more relevant, impactful, and equitable change.

## 8 Placemaking

Placemaking focuses on enhancing the physical, social, and cultural spaces where communities live, work, and gather by leveraging their existing assets. Placemaking transforms neighborhoods by turning physical spaces into hubs of connection, creativity, and collaboration.

Placemaking emphasises the leadership of community members in shaping their environment. Local knowledge, culture, and creativity drive the process, ensuring spaces reflect the community's unique character and needs. Placemaking creates spaces where people feel welcome, connected, and engaged. Vibrant, inclusive public spaces strengthen social ties and create opportunities for interaction, collaboration, and celebration.

Well-designed, community-led places can stimulate local economies, support small businesses, and reduce social inequalities by creating accessible and inclusive spaces for all. By improving the quality of public spaces, placemaking enhances physical and mental well-being, encouraging physical activity, social interaction, and a stronger connection to the environment.



# programme content



GO TOGETHER  
CO-CREATED COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

## 9 Building hopeful cultures

Building a culture of hope within organisations and communities is essential for fostering resilience, well-being, and collective efficacy. A hopeful culture emphasizes clear goals, belief in the ability to achieve them, actionable plans, and a sense of well-being throughout the process. It recognises hope as both an individual and collective resource that enhances relationships, creativity, and perseverance in the face of adversity.

Hope is not the sole responsibility of leaders; it must be cultivated collectively, with everyone contributing to a supportive and resilient environment. Resilience is central to hope, defined as maintaining positive feelings despite adversity. Practices that support emotional, physical, and mental well-being strengthen resilience at both individual and group levels. Hope spreads through social networks, so intentional practices such as storytelling, celebrating milestones, and honoring both accomplishments and losses.

Activities that strengthen interpersonal relationships, such as team building exercises, personal story-sharing, and communal rituals, enhance cohesion and mutual support.

## 10 Relational, Restorative and Trauma informed practice

Trauma informed practice in the context of community building integrates an understanding of how trauma, particularly intergenerational trauma shapes individuals and communities. Trauma is not what happens to you, but what happens inside of you, as a result of what happens to you. This approach emphasizes creating safe, inclusive, and empowering environments where people can engage meaningfully in community life, even amidst the challenges posed by poverty and adverse family experiences.

Trauma is not just an individual experience; it can be intergenerational, with unresolved trauma cascading across families and communities, affecting relationships, health, and social cohesion. Poverty exacerbates trauma, creating chronic stress that undermines individuals' capacity to fully engage in their community. Adverse family experiences further compound these challenges, often leading to isolation and disconnection.



GO TOGETHER  
CO-CREATED COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

# programme content

## 11 Healing Communities.

Healing communities leverage place-based approaches to mental health, emphasizing the power of relationships and local connections in fostering resilience and recovery. Drawing on the principles of social capital, trust, and inclusion, these communities prioritise co-regulation, emotional support, and collaborative action.

Frameworks like the Self-Healing Communities Model underscore the role of "anchor institutions" in mobilising networks and fostering environments that reduce trauma and enhance resilience. By addressing both individual and systemic factors, healing communities rebuild trust, acknowledge past traumas, and empower local networks to co-create solutions tailored to their unique challenges.

This approach not only supports individual recovery but strengthens community well-being, fostering cohesion and sustainability. Social ties, as highlighted in the model, are "the cheapest medicine we have," making these initiatives central to addressing collective trauma and promoting mental health equity.



GO TOGETHER  
CO-CREATED COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

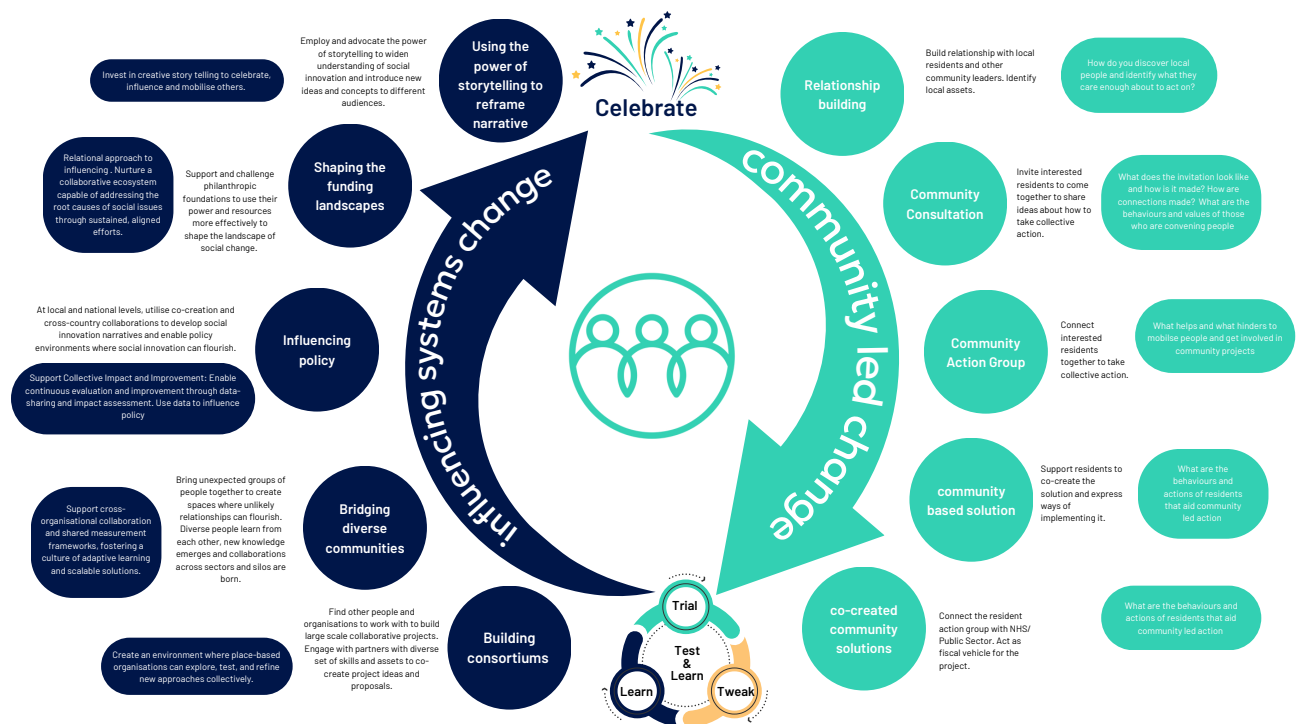




## 12 Systems Change & Community Led Development

This interactive workshop explores the intersection of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) and systems change, emphasizing the often-overlooked "connective tissue" that fosters collaboration, innovation, and sustainable impact. Rather than focusing on individual components of the system, participants will examine the invisible structures—such as relationships, shared values, trust, and processes, that enable systems to work cohesively and adaptively.

Through practical exercises, case studies, and group discussions, attendees will learn how to strengthen these vital connections, align diverse stakeholders, and create the conditions for collective healing and resilience. The session will also highlight how invisible "plumbing" supports long-term transformation by weaving together local assets, community-led approaches, and system-wide practices for sustained change.



# about



**GO TOGETHER**  
CO-CREATED COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Rich Holmes MEd is an experienced thought-leader, strategist and practitioner in Asset Based Community Development, trauma informed practice and systems change. He was previously Managing Director at Knowledge Change Action ([www.kca.training](http://www.kca.training)), one of the UK's leading providers of Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware Practice. Prior to this he founded the Gloucester Community Building Collective (<https://gloscommunitybuilding.co.uk/>), who nurture community led change, through the adoption of strengths-based approaches.



He is currently undertaking a PhD on Self Healing Communities at the University of Worcester and is a Board Director of the Asset Based Community Development Institute at De Paul University, Chicago (<https://abcdinstitute.clubexpress.com/>). Rich is respected globally, having hosted and facilitated events at the ABCD Festival in Goa and online workshops for the Nebraska Community Foundation and Jeder Institute in Australia. He brings humour, thoughtfulness and gentle challenge to encourage transformational change.

# thank you

**We look forward to potential collaboration.**

Phone

**07748845514**

Website

**[www.gotogether.org.uk](http://www.gotogether.org.uk)**

E-mail

**[rich.holmes@gotogether.org.uk](mailto:rich.holmes@gotogether.org.uk)**

