

The Value of Improving SEN Provision

Welcome to Module 3 of your SEN toolkit!

In this module we look at the practical benefits of improving SEN provision for all stakeholders.

Aims

By the end of this module, I will be able to:

- recognise the practical benefits of improving SEN provision for all stakeholders
- apply the core principles of the SEN Manifesto to my own context
- understand the values of improving SEN provision as outlined in the SEN Manifesto



Understanding the value of inclusion

When understanding the importance of improving SEN provision in our education contexts, it's key that we understand the core values that underpin our actions.

Engaging with, and revisiting these core values can help us focus on those things that can help us make change focused, child-centred, and consistent.

1. Without looking at our SEN Toolkit Manifesto, try playing this matching exercise! Match the headline with the statements to see if you can align the core values of the Manifesto with the principles they represent.

1) We *Value* Everybody

2) We Accept Ourselves

3) We Find Ways to Communicate

4) We Get it Right From the Start

(5) We All Share Responsibility

We know that:

a) we must express our different needs and identities openly to live and work well together.

b) the task of inclusion is not up to just a few people. We all gain a lot when we all contribute a little.

c) every individual has strengths and skills to contribute to a group. Nobody is better or "super"

d) early intervention can make a huge difference to one's sense of belonging and self-worth.

e) nobody is perfect, and this is okay. We know our own strengths and or own weaknesses.

Now check your answers with The SEN Manifesto!
(<https://sentoolkit.com/manifesto/five-core-values/>)

Answers

1c, 2e, 3a, 4d, 5b.

Being the change-makers

It can be easy to feel that “doing this alone” is a daunting task, but every movement begins with an individual.

You’re about to read some very short accounts of those who have affected great change for the better.

2. Read the stories, and then match the statements you sorted in the previous exercise to them.

Story 1

We know that: nobody is perfect, and this is okay. We know our own strengths and our own weaknesses.

There is the family life and there is the life you live when you are out in the street.

Yes, there are the people out there and none of them is the same. Unto themselves and unto your life as well, they are all different. What a wealth to explore and tuck yourself in.

“To be born in the street means to wander all your life, to be free. It means accident and incident, drama, movement. It means above all dream. A harmony of irrelevant facts which gives to your wandering a metaphysical certitude. In the street you learn what human beings really are; otherwise, or afterwards, you invent them.

What is not in the open street is false, derived, that is to say, literature. Nothing of

what is called “adventure” ever approaches the flavor of the street.

The boys you worshiped when you first came down into the street remain with you all your life. They are the only real heroes. Napoleon, Lenin, Capone—all fiction. Napoleon is nothing to me in comparison with Eddie Carney, who gave me my first black eye. No man I have ever met seems as princely, as regal, as noble, as Lester Reardon who, by the mere act of walking down the street, inspired fear and admiration. Jules Verne never led me to the places that Stanley Borowski had up his sleeve when it came dark. Robinson Crusoe lacked imagination in comparison with Johnny Paul.

All these boys of the Fourteenth Ward have a flavor about them still. They were not invented or imagined: they were real. Their names ring out like gold coins: Tom Fowler, Jim Buckley, Matt Owen, Rob Ramsay, Harry Martin, Johnny Dunne, to say nothing of Eddie Carney or the great Lester Reardon. Why, even now when I say Johnny Paul the names of the saints leave a bad taste in my mouth. Johnny Paul was the living Odyssey of the Fourteenth Ward; that he later became a truck driver is an irrelevant fact.”

Henry Miller, *‘The Black Spring’*

Looking back and going out to meet a new day, I cherish encounters, shared moments and this simple and magnificent life lived in the company of others. I look at children and I admire the ease with which they enjoy each other’s company.

Yes, nobody is perfect but that is the perfection of the miracle of life we live together. Out there in the street, nothing is ever the same, no one is ever the same. What a beauty to wake up to.

Story 2

There's an interesting story that coyotes and badgers often travel together. These two unlikely companions share very little in common, but it turns out that they have a mutually-beneficial relationship that helps them both. While the coyote is fast, and can run after sources of food, the badger is skilled at digging, and can dig out these sources of food from under the ground. Alone, neither would be very successful; but together, they form a formidable partnership and can provide enough food for both of them. It's not about their individual strengths, it's in the act of sharing the workload that they become most effective.

Story 3

Healthy communication habits are the basis of any lasting and honest relationship. It's important that, as teachers, we learn to communicate not only with those who are, behave or think similar to us. We also have to communicate with those who have different views and come from different perspectives. Powerful communication habits will strengthen our relationship with our students, their families, our peers and the whole education community.

Story 4

Ioana (name chosen random to exemplify the walk of life) experienced repeated traumatic events such as childhood neglect. This led to a lack of

self-esteem, low motivation and persistence. Growing with this trauma in her psyche, she experienced failure after failure. She did not enjoy the support or understanding of those around her. She experienced continuous feelings of helplessness. BUT the support came exactly where she never hoped. The leader of a team of volunteers noticed the situation in which Ioana was then and knew that she will reach depression and isolation if she does not overcome this trauma. So there was a first sign of an early intervention: Ioana received one of the most special tasks. She was going to organize an event for children with disabilities in the park. But helplessness made her feel like she can't get anything done. Continuous encouragement has been another sign of early intervention. So at one point she stopped, took a deep breath, reset her body and calmed her nervous system. Then things started to "come to life". She made a step-by-step plan for organizing the event. It was one of the most important moments in her "early career in belonging to a group".

Story 5

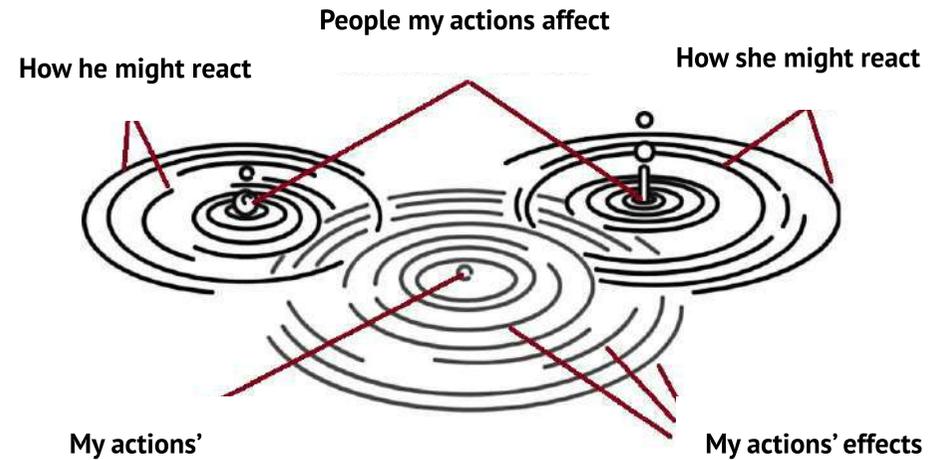
As a teacher and mentor I have worked making sure that I value all students as individuals, as not a just mere number. This has helped me a lot to look at students as persons and deal with their parents in an individualised way, making a real difference in real life situations and coming up with solutions to issues and problems in a meaningful way and not as one glove fits all!

Answers

Story 1: We Accept Ourselves; Story 2: We All Share Responsibility; Story 3: We Find Ways to Communicate; Story 4: We Get it Right from the Start; Story 5: We Value Everybody

3. Then note down the crucial action that instantiated the core value of each of the short stories. And note down one positive outcome you believe came from that action.

4. Now look at the image: “The Ripple Effect of Values”. Where it says “My Actions”, think of one action you can take in your context which manifests one of the five core values of the SEN Toolkit. Then fill in the rest of the diagram (with one effect that action might have, an effect that effect might have, and an effect that that effect might have; and with two other people you believe your actions might effect; and with two actions you think those people might take as a consequence of your actions).



Engagement deepening

In this section, you will read the stories again, and engage with them in a far deeper way, considering how they can be made more relevant in your own context.

Look at the five short stories again.

5. What was most inspiring about them? Write down one thing about each story that inspired you.

6. Can you apply these stories to your own context?

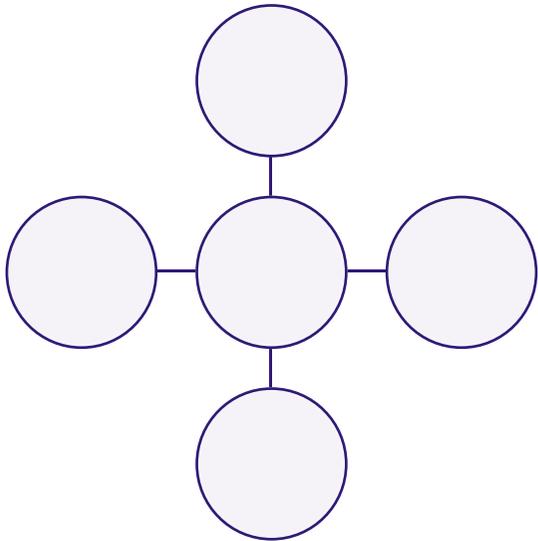
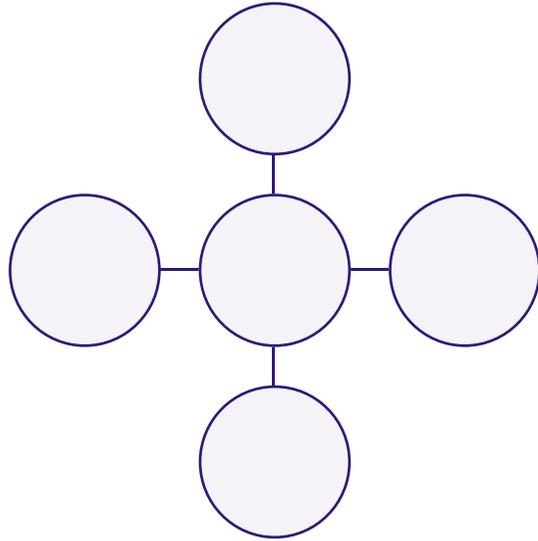
6.1 Take the two most inspiring stories, and re-write them so that the people, environments, and actions fit your own context. You are, effectively, telling a new story about your own future.

7. Short “comprehension” exercise. In your own SEN-specific context:

- What does “we value everybody” mean?
- What does “we accept ourselves” mean?
- What does “we find ways to communicate” mean?
- What does “we get it right from the start” mean?
- What does “we all share responsibility” mean?

7.1 Now take these values, and complete two of the spider diagrams provided.

Core value of the manifesto:



Core value of the manifesto:

7.2 Now you have worked out what these values mean in your context, do you think your context currently manifests those values as well as it might?

7.3 What changes do you think you need before your context can fully manifest those values?

8. Look at the values again. Which ones do you instantiate most frequently? Which ones could you instantiate more?

8.1 When you have instantiated the values, how did it make you feel?

9. Manifesting each of the values individually is a positive start. But combining two or more of them in our behaviour will produce even better results.

9.1 Take the “Core Value Statements” again from page 3. Now spend a couple of minutes mixing and matching, and note down some ways that combining the values can yield stronger results than acting them out individually. How can, for instance, Accepting Ourselves and Finding Ways to Communicate give better results combined in your context?

10. What do the six steps of the “Six Step Vision” in the Manifesto mean to you?

If you're on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, or any other social media platform, post your answer with the hashtag #SENToolkit! (and please, remember to post updates as you go through the SEN Toolkit modules – this will help others connect with you and share your experiences)



Planning for Change

Change can be hard, for all of us - especially if we are hoping to make positive changes in the lives of others - and even more so if we are in contexts where others might not be as willing to make change happen as we are!

You are about to create a plan for the kind of change that will be possible to make, and which will make a real difference to the lives of the SEN children you come across.

12. Now think of any change you have made in your life. Try to think of a small change (such as quitting taking sugar in your coffee, getting out of bed an hour earlier than you used to, or taking a different route to work every morning).

12.1 Now draw your own “ripple effect” diagram, and work out what effects this one small change has had on your (or others’) life.

13. Now try to plan out a detailed forecast for how you can effect change in your context. Use the image: “Ripple Effect Plan” as a guide.



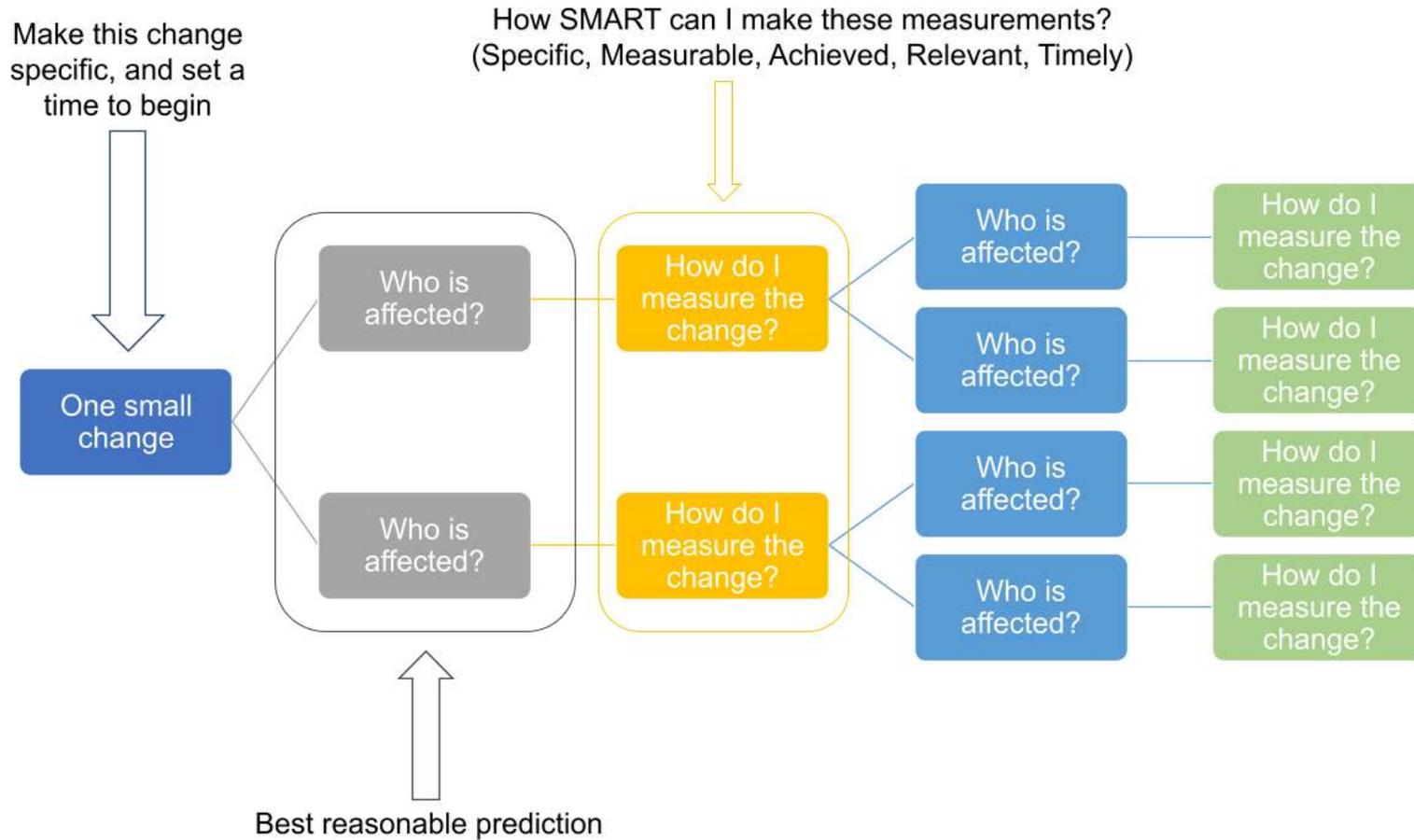
Ripple Effect Plan





Then fill in the template: "Planning for Change".

Begin with one small action you would like to take regarding SEN. Then predict whom this action might affect. Then work out how you can measure the change. Then predict whom these changes might affect. Finally, work out how you can measure those changes. Then decide when you want to implement this change.





Five ways I can bring five core values to life

In this section, think about what you have learnt in this module, and how it could impact on your own teaching practice. Read through the five-point checklist, reflecting on how the values are manifested in practice.

1. I value everybody by:

- a)
- b)
- c)

2. I encourage myself and those around me to accept ourselves by:

- a)
- b)
- c)

3. I find effective ways to communicate by:

- a)
- b)
- c)

4. I try to get it right from the start by:

- a)
- b)
- c)

5. I encourage everybody to share responsibility for this by...

- a)
- b)
- c)



Check your understanding

Take a short quiz to check you've understood the main points of the module.

Now you have completed the first three modules of the SEN Toolkit, it's a great time to reflect on any changes you have already undergone.

14. Think back to Module 1. At the start of Module 1, you wrote some "associations" on a bunch of post-it notes. Find those post-it notes again.

14.1 Now, look through those post-it notes. Do you still agree with everything you wrote? What would you change, if you had to?

14.2 Has your attitude changed towards anything you write? For example, if you felt that SEN might be problematic, has your attitude about this changed in the light of what you have looked at up until now?

14.3 Re-write some new post-it notes, to reflect any changes that you have undergone between then and now. If there are any positive changes, make a note of them.

Reflect on the module

In this final section, think about what you've learned this module and how you can use this in your day-to-day working life.

1. What practical benefits does improving SEN provision have for you, your colleagues, your SEN students, and their families?

2. In what ways can you immediately adapt your practices to reflect the core values of the SEN Manifesto?

3. How well do you understand and buy into the values of improving SEN provision, as outlined in the manifesto?

If you believe that you do understand and buy into the values of the SEN Manifesto, why not [Sign The Pledge](#) now?

And good luck as you now go about examining in more concrete detail, how to help dyslexic, ADHD, and ASD students! You've already come a long way!