

Co-creating and Managing the Future Workforce: a social work perspective

This presentation has been co-produced with over 50 social workers and 10 people who use social work services

Siobhan Maclean
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Plenary 3



 **W**hy?

 **O**bstacles

 **R**elationships


 **K**indness

 **F**uture

 **O**pportunities

 **R**eflection

 **C**reativity

 **E**quality

The social work framework



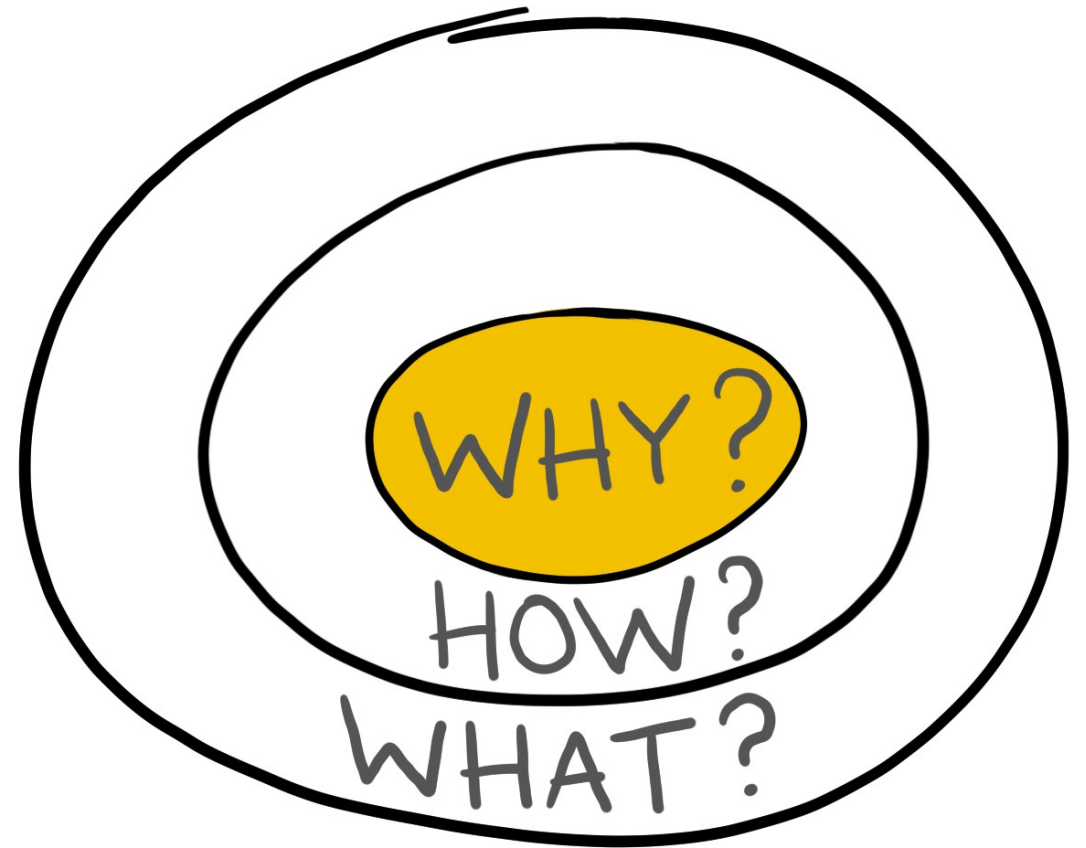
Siobhan Maclean (2024) *The Reflective Social Worker: A Little Practical Book*. (Lichfield) Kirwin Maclean Associates.

Simon Sinek's 'golden circle'

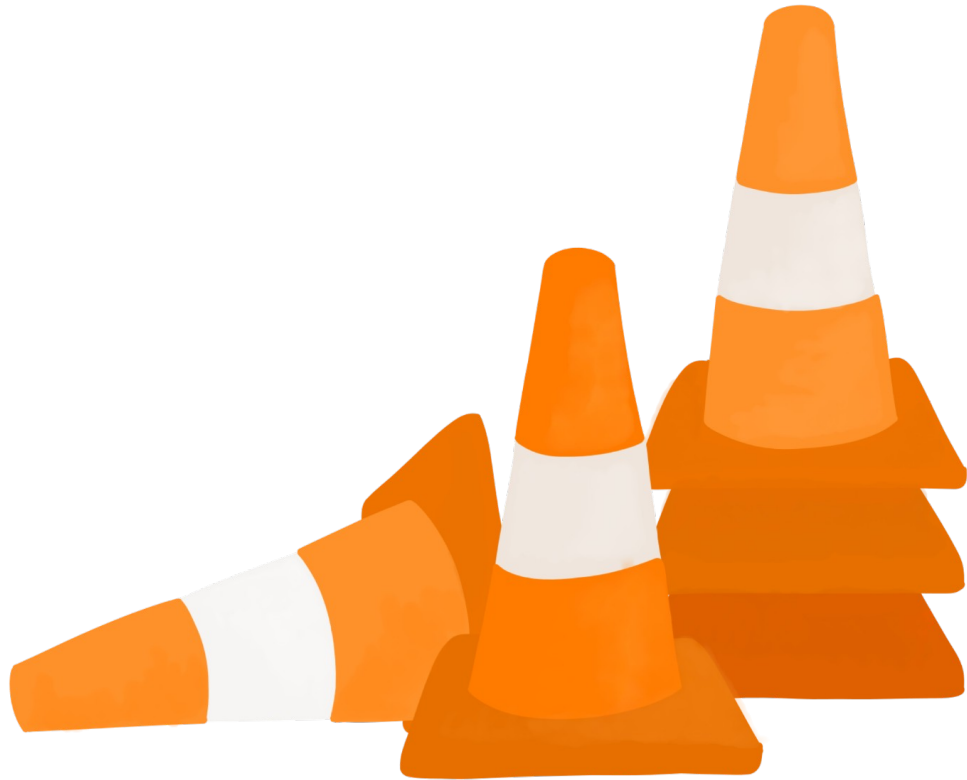
WHAT: Sinek claims that every organisation on the planet knows *what* they do. The products they sell or the services they provide. **Do we even know what co-creation means?**

HOW: Sinek states that some organisations know *how* they do it. The things that set them apart from their competition – their 'USP.'
How do we co-create?

WHY: Sinek's main claim is that very few organisations know *why* they do what they do. **There is a definite lack of clarity around why we are co-creating and how it will impact!**



Obstacles

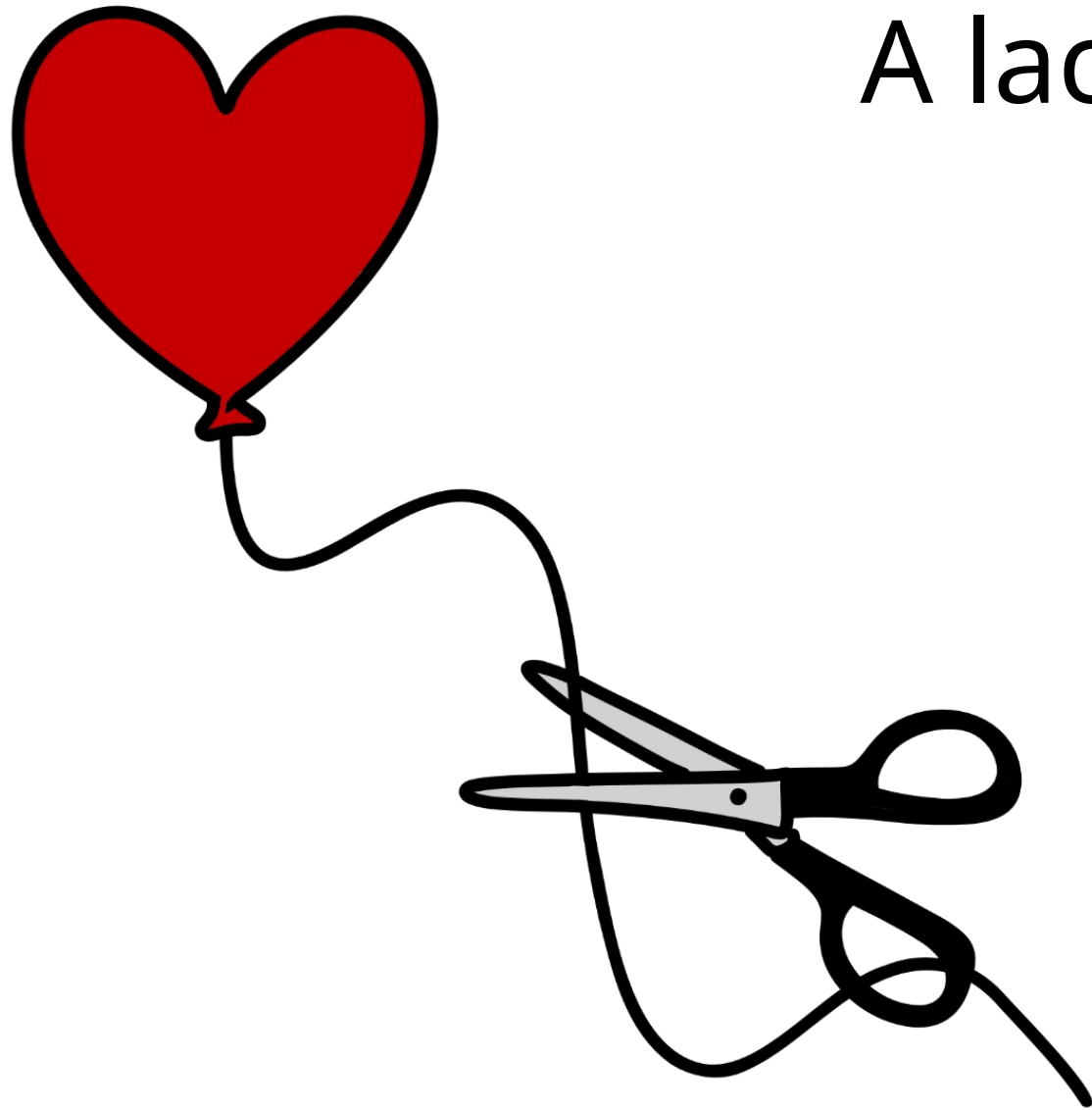


- Physical
- Emotional
- Cognitive
- Economic / financial / monetary
- Cultural
- Political
- Technological
- Structural
- Societal
- Moral / ethical
- Geographical
- Corruption (specific view)
- Temporal obstacles?

“Bureaucracy
might need a
category to
itself!”

Main obstacle?

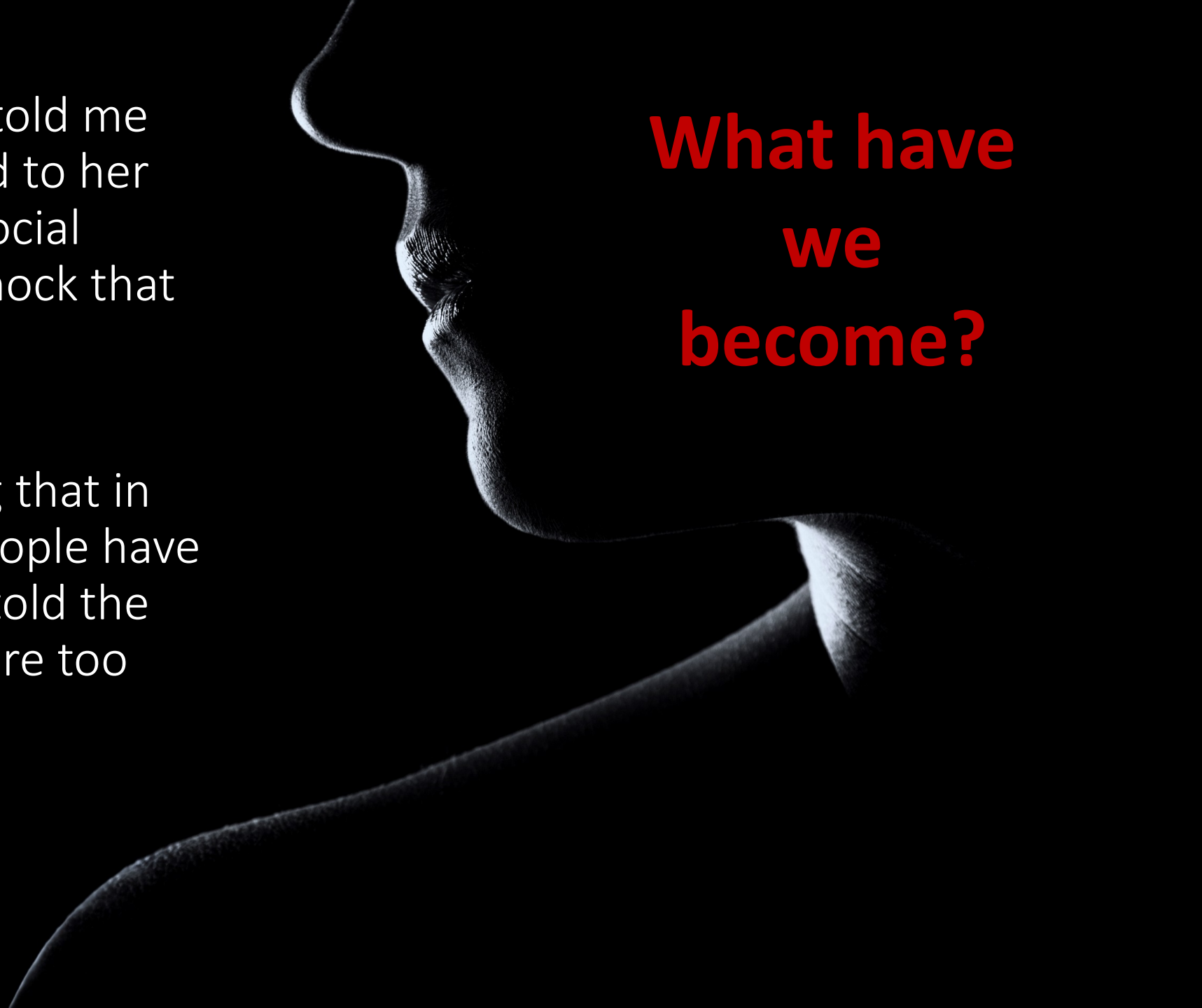




A lack of kindness!

A newly qualified worker told me that her manager had said to her “You’re too kind to be a social worker. We will have to knock that out of you...”

When I have been sharing that in training so many other people have said that they have been told the same kind of thing... “you're too kind to be a manager...”



**What have
we
become?**

- The people that social services support have experienced trauma of many kinds – hopefully we are working towards a more widespread recognition of this
- Your workforce is experiencing:
 - High levels of work-related stress
 - High levels of work-related anxiety
 - Vicarious trauma
 - Compassion fatigue
 - Burnout
 - Ethical stress
 - Moral injury



How can we expect people to become meaningfully involved in co-creation in these circumstances? It is vital to be trauma informed in our approach – building on professional kindness throughout the journey



“Radical kindness demands institutional change. It requires a difference in the ways in which things are run and managed. It challenges long established norms and has the potential to be highly disruptive.”

Julia Unwin (2018) Kindness, Emotions and Human Relationships: The blind spot in public policy. Carnegie UK Trust.

THE KEY IS KINDNESS



Certainly co-creation is about...

Leading by example by showing compassion and empathy towards others to manage emotions in a patient and progressive manner;

Open and transparent communication at all times (it's OK not to know all the answers);

Encouragement and having faith in the person, refocusing the pressure from someone's inabilities to their abilities;

Withholding judgement to allow the possibility of new ideas, concepts and options to be freely discovered;

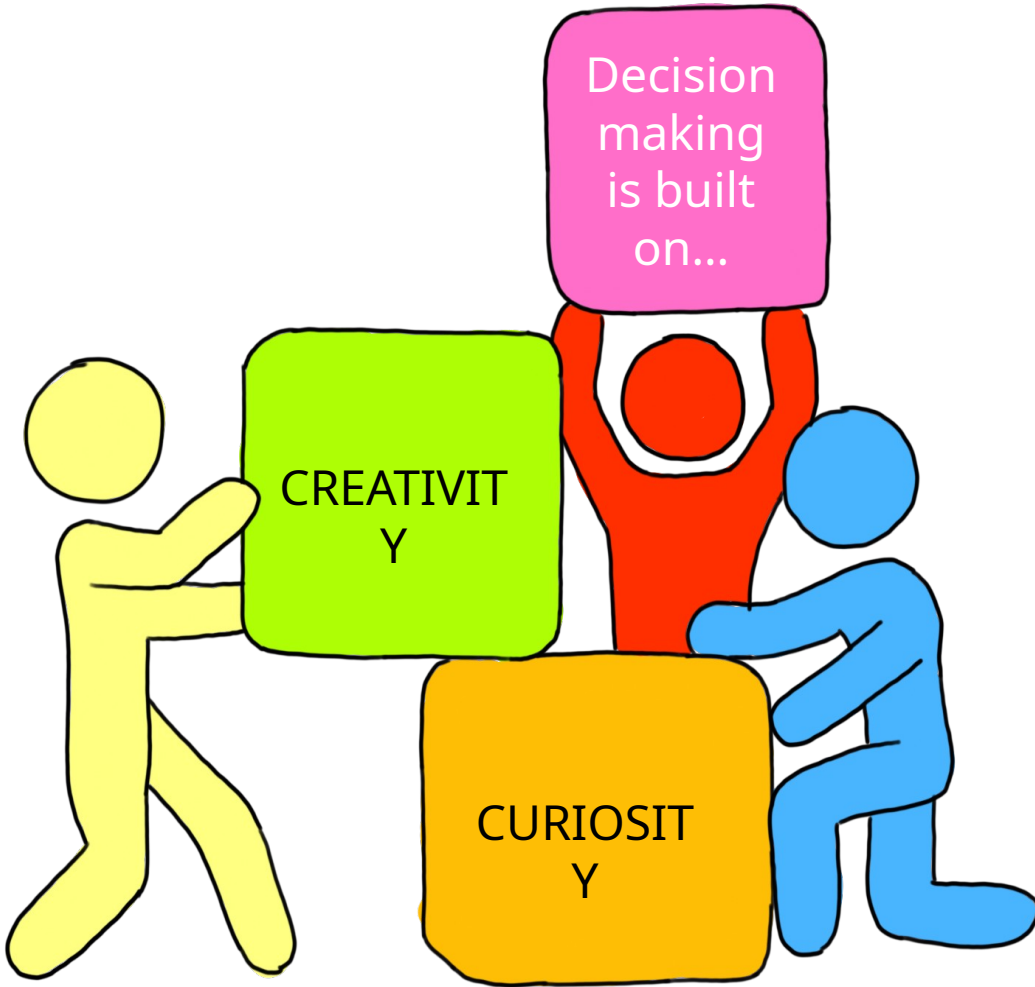
The ability to perceive the situation, being adaptable and flexible to the environment, and tailoring the solution for suitable delivery.

(Fox 2016; Ballat, Campling and Maloney 2020, Maclean and Aldridge 2024)

CREATIVITY and CURIOSITY

“When our curiosity is triggered, we think more deeply and rationally about decisions and come up with more creative solutions”

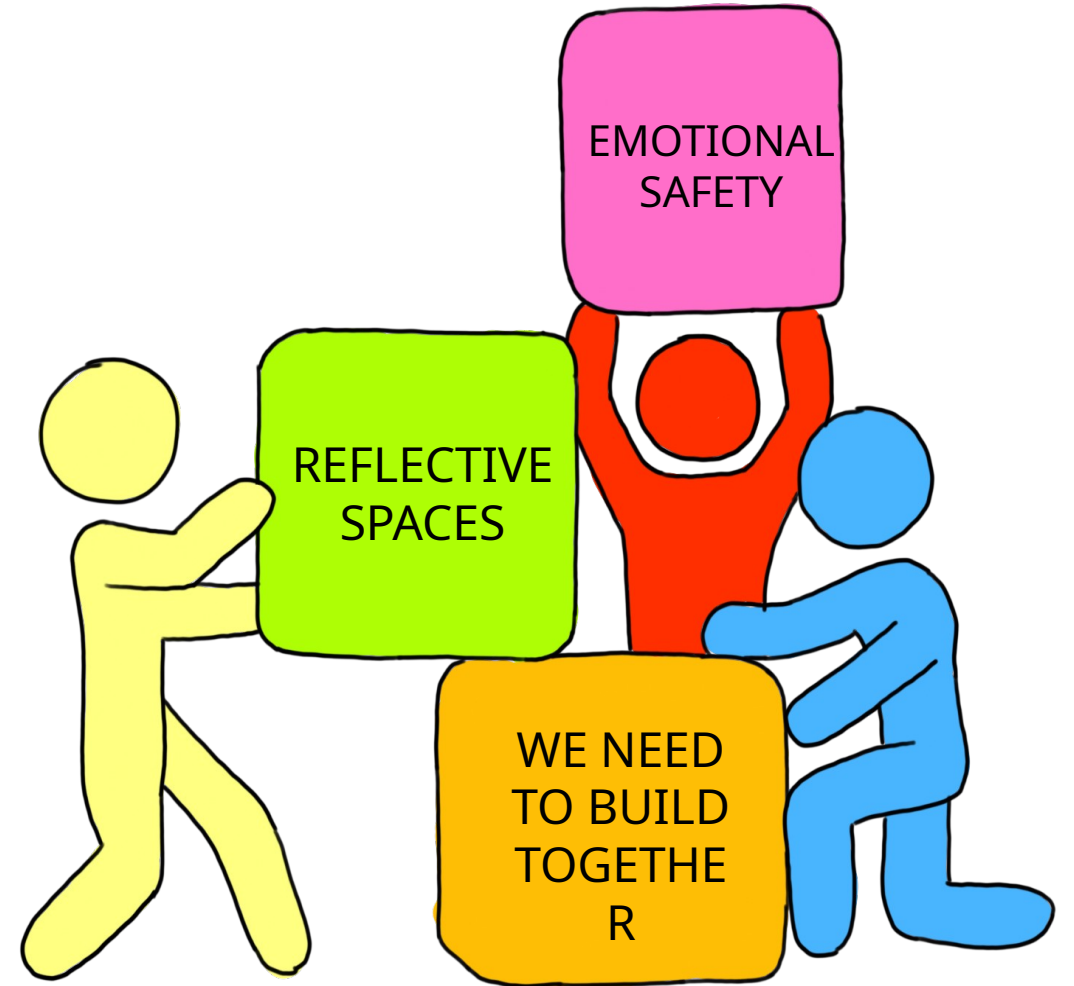
How are you inspiring creativity and curiosity in your workplaces? Staff will only be able to be curious and creative within co-production when they are in curious creative workplaces!



Francesca Gino (2021) The Business Case for Curiosity. Harvard Business Review On Creativity.

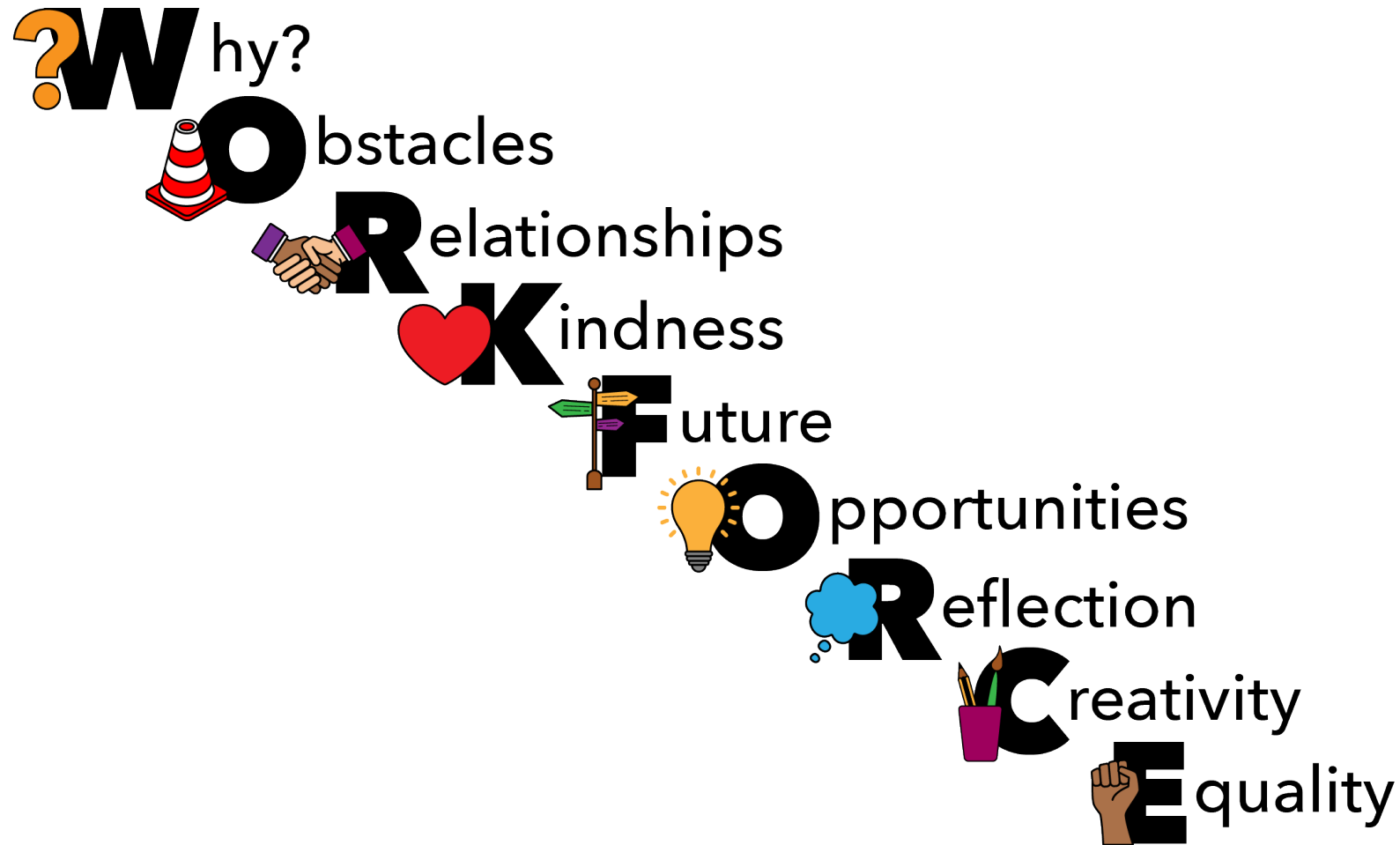
REFLECTION

- Encouraging and enabling reflective practice is one of the most transformational things we can do in the workforce
- Reflective practice is often seen as being about looking back rather than looking forward. There needs to be more focus on reflection *for* action-
looking forwards is a key component of co-creation
- Using new more creative models and methods of reflection is important



**How are you creating emotionally safe reflective spaces for your workforce?
Are your co-production spaces truly emotionally safe and reflective?**

If you want to co-create and implement a workforce strategy, then **THINK:**



MODEL the MODEL!

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