

Negative reputations

Young people are often preceded by their negative reputation, and it can become the thing that defines them. Reviews and meetings are sometimes a venue for parents and professionals to discuss those things which they find difficult about the young person, which can alienate the young person even further and sometimes actually increase the problems.

A person centred approach does not try to deny that young people can do things which make life difficult for themselves and others. Instead, we try to understand what the young person may be communicating with their behaviour, and try to discover what might make a difference to them in terms of support; or changes in the behaviour of others or the environment.

If you are in a meeting or review and negative aspects of a young person's behaviour are being discussed, you may want to consider these questions;

- Is it ever a positive?
- What does it tell us about what is important to the person?
- Is it ever a problem? If yes what works best in supporting the person?

You could test this out with one of your own MILD negatives.

Q1 So, if you think are untidy; is this ever a positive thing? For instance, it could mean that you are very laid back. As you answer this question, you can add the positive to the 'Like and Admire' list.

Q2 Being untidy might tell you that it is more 'Important to' you to spend time doing things other than tidying (you can explore what these things are); so you can add this to the 'Important To' section of a review or plan.

Q3 If it is ever a problem, what support plan could you put in place? For instance, you could set aside an hour a week to tidy up; or get a cleaner!

It important to say that not all negatives are positives and that negatives reputations are NEVER put into plans.