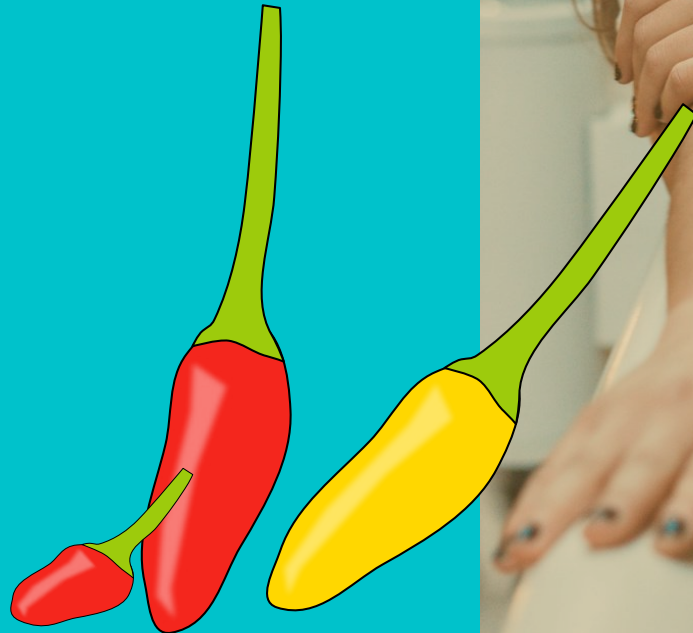


ADVANTAGED THINKING HANDBOOK



WELCOME TO THE ADVANTAGED THINKING HANDBOOK!

Advantaged Thinking is a philosophy, a mindset and a way of working. It is a deeply held belief in the skills, talents and potential of young people, and a knowledge that these abilities are the things that define them – not the challenges they've faced or the difficulties that have shaped their pasts.

We express Advantaged Thinking in the words we choose, the actions we take, the way we spend our time and the things we invest our money in. Advantaged Thinking is a choice we make over and over again, building a bigger, more positive picture with and for young people.

Foyers are founded on this belief and a desire for a best-in-class service that works with them towards independence. This handbook follows the journey of a resident through the Foyer and offers opportunities to reflect on where your service is in terms of its Advantaged Thinking practice.

Each section addresses a different part of the resident journey, from the first moment they hear about your service to the impact and outcome measurement when they leave. Every section includes suggestions for staff reflection, consultation with young people, quick actions you can take to learn more about your service, and ideas for spicing up your service offer! When you're near the start of your Advantaged Thinking path, mild spice will challenge you to go further. When you're comfortable with mild, go for medium – or even hot!

THE 7 TESTS OF ADVANTAGED THINKING

The 7 Tests of Advantaged Thinking are a positive framework for understanding how we engage with young people:

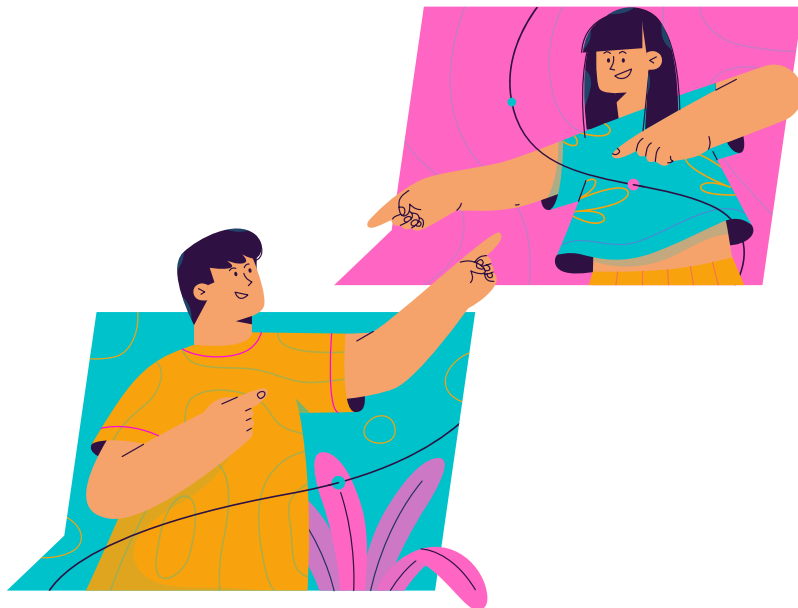
1. How do we **TALK** about young people?
2. How do we **UNDERSTAND** young people?
3. How do we **WORK** with young people?
4. How do we **INVEST** in young people?
5. How do we **BELIEVE** in young people?
6. How do we **INVOLVE** young people?
7. How do we **CHALLENGE** disadvantaged thinking and promote Advantaged Thinking in its place?

GUIDE TO USING THE HANDBOOK

TIME TO REFLECT

Before you start making changes, get the staff team together to reflect on how things are at the moment. We recommend involving as many people as you can, from as many different roles. The more perspectives you have, the better!

Reflecting as a team not only helps to build an honest, accurate picture of where the service is right now, but it also gives you a way to test the spice tolerance of the team and assess where your culture is on the Advantaged Thinking scale.



CONSULTING YOUNG PEOPLE

One of the core principles of Advantaged Thinking is putting young people at the centre of solutions. Because they're the people with first-hand experience of entering and living in a Foyer, their insights will be invaluable in understanding what it's like.

Involving your residents at this stage and factoring their thoughts into your process is a great way to start building solutions based on real, honest experiences.

SPICE-IFICATION

Read and reflect on the responses from your staff team and residents.

- What do you already have in place that's working well?
- What positives can you keep building on?
- Where can you see a need or want for a more Advantaged Thinking approach?

Decide whether your service is ready for a mild, medium or hot spice-ification, and start with our suggestions!

Let us know what you try and how it goes. If you come up with any other ways to spice things up, share your experience with us and help other Foyers on their Advantaged Thinking journey by emailing inbox@foyer.net.

REFERRAL, INTERVIEW AND INDUCTION



FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT

How you introduce your service, welcome and settle young people in your project sets the tone for their entire stay. Being bold, imaginative and positive about the opportunities young people will be able to access and treating your service offer like a college would prepare a prospectus will create the right Advantaged Thinking vibe for young people to begin their journey well.



TIME TO REFLECT

How is your service 'marketed'?

- Where do people access information about your service?
- What information is available about your service online?
- What information is available about your service in other formats, like brochures or posters?
- Does your service have its own website/webpage?
- Is the information presented in an accessible way?
- Is it tailored to young people? Their family members? Staff at connected services?
- Do these present a more Advantaged Thinking or a more Disadvantaged Thinking view of the service?



ACTION

Go to your organisation's website and count how many positive vs negative words and phrases you see used about young people. What's the result? How well does it reflect an Advantaged Thinking culture?

How is your service talked about?

- Where do people first hear about your service?
- Who first talks to potential new residents about your service?
- How Advantaged Thinking is this experience?
- Do they paint an Advantaged Thinking picture of your service?

What is a young person's first experience of the Foyer?

- How much time do you spend talking with young people about their assets, skills and life experiences compared to the time spent talking about risks and needs during the interview?
- How does your induction process provide the opportunity for young people to map their strengths and talents?
- When does a young person entering the Foyer first meet another resident?
- How long does it take to fill in the paperwork?
- How long is the interview?
- What format does the interview take?
- Who is in the room during the interview?

CONSULTING YOUNG PEOPLE



What were your impressions of the service before you arrived? What gave you that impression?
What information did you access about the service before you arrived?
What made the biggest impression on you?

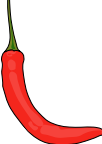

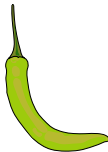
Did the interview process create a welcoming feel and positive vibe?
What kinds of things made it feel that way, or not?
Were the forms and questions intrusive? Were they respectful?
Was the amount of paperwork appropriate and relevant?
How long did the paperwork take?
How much opportunity did you have to talk about your strengths and talents when you first came to the Foyer?
Did you meet any residents before you were accepted to move in?

Who talked to you about the service before you arrived?
What stories did they tell you?
Which other services told you about the Foyer?
What did they say about it?

Were you aware of the services and opportunities offered by the Foyer in your first week?
How did you find out about them?
Were you introduced to other young people to support you in your stay?
When did this happen?
How did this happen?

SPICE-IFICATION



	First impressions	Information gathering	Involving young people
 <p>Hot</p>	<p>Train the people in the local authority who send you referrals on Advantaged Thinking and what a Foyer is all about.</p> <p>Create a video tour of your service with young people leading the production and content.</p>	<p>Create or source a digital product that gathers information prior to an interview and reduces the amount of time spent on admin and makes the service more accessible.</p>	<p>Set up a buddy system for new residents.</p>
 <p>Medium</p>	<p>Invite young people to attend Foyer sessions before moving in to get them used to the service.</p>	<p>Include questions about young people's strengths, preferences and personalities and record their responses in the same way you track needs.</p>	<p>Invite young people to share their story of their Foyer journey, including the good and bad, during the interview stage.</p>
 <p>Mild</p>	<p>Create an Advantaged Thinking brochure advertising your service through a lens of positivity.</p> <p>Make sure your website is modern, up to date and positive about young people.</p>	<p>Turn your interview into an informal-feeling conversation rather than ticking boxes on a piece of paper.</p>	<p>Ask your resident reps or similar to give a new resident a tour before their interview.</p>

NEEDS, RISK AND BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT



TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

When you meet someone new – whether it's a friend of a friend at a BBQ or a new colleague at work – you normally wouldn't start by asking them about previous drug use or their mental health. Unfortunately, it's often one of the first things we do when we meet young people coming into our services. Finding an Advantaged Thinking way to approach this important conversation can set the relationship off in the right direction and help new residents feel understood for their positives too.



TIME TO REFLECT

How do you talk about needs and risks?

- What do you call your risk assessment and needs assessment?
- What format does your initial risk and needs assessment take?
- Do young people understand the risk and need descriptors and language you use?
- How often do you review this while a young person is living in the Foyer?
- What format does the ongoing risk and needs assessment take?
- Are the risk and needs assessment linked together? Do they inform each other?
- Do the risk and needs assessments inform a young person's goal-setting process?
- Do you find out more about a young person from their risk and needs assessment, or from other conversations?
- Do you set aside time to discuss a young person's strengths and talents in the same way you talk about risks and needs?
- Do you record young people's assets to same extent you record their risks and needs?
- What percentage of the data you collect and record focuses on risks and needs, and what percentage focuses on positive attributes, strengths and assets?

How do you approach behaviour management?

- What is your process for behaviour management?
- When do you explain this process to young people?
- Is your approach more punitive or restorative?
- How confident are you that the current process is the right one?
- How do you assess whether it is a successful process?
- Do you involve young people in the behaviour management process?
- What percentage of staff time is spent on reactive behaviour management?
- Does this leave enough time for proactive work?



ACTION

*How could you rebrand risks and needs in your service?
Take two minutes to write down as many alternative names as you can think of, focusing on using positive language. Where else could you do this in your service?*

CONSULTING YOUNG PEOPLE



How comfortable are you with the terms 'risk assessment' and 'needs assessment'?

How often do you have a conversation with staff about risks and needs?

What does this conversation look like? Does it feel invasive? Respectful? Helpful? Supportive?

How do you know when you're making progress? How is that tracked and shared with you?

Do you spend more time talking with staff about things like risks and needs, or about your strengths, talents and ambitions?

Do you know what the Foyer's behaviour management process is?

When was this explained to you?

What experience do you have of the Foyer's behaviour management process?

What was that experience like? Positive? Negative?

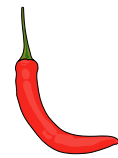
Have you experienced or heard of a restorative approach to negative behaviour in your Foyer?

What was that experience like? Positive? Negative?

If you have not experienced or heard of this, what do you think about it as an idea?

Does your Foyer feel like a place where it is safe for you to make mistakes?

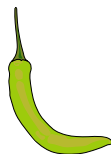
SPICE-IFICATION



Hot



Medium



Mild

Risk and needs assessment

Have a conversation with your commissioners about shifting the focus of reporting towards strengths and assets as a measure of the service's progress and success

Create a robust strengths and talents assessment and tracking process to report on alongside your risk and needs process

Review your assessment process to ensure it doesn't feel clinical. Consider a conversational approach, or smaller conversations over time, and filling in the report at a later time

Review and streamline your risks and needs documentation to ensure it's gathering just the necessary information without being overly prying or invasive

Give your needs and risk assessment a new name that focuses on positives

Behaviour management processes

Create or join a local alliance with other housing providers to make moving between services easier and strengths-focuses

Introduce an independent anonymous review process for possible evictions with a panel of young people from another connected service

Introduce a restorative policy and process that focuses on behaviour change rather than punishment

Communicate positive outcomes with residents using an anonymous method, eg noticeboard updated quarterly with the number of young people worked with and those progressing

Make Advantaged Thinking tweaks to the language around the process, eg 'warning' becomes 'improvement notice'

Ensure your behaviour management process is clear to staff, and being clearly communicated to and understood by young people

COACHING AND ACTION PLANNING



PERMISSION TO SPEAK FREELY

You're out for a jog one day. Suddenly, a stranger runs up beside you and starts sharing unsolicited advice. "Keep your chest up!" "Your gait is all wrong!" "You can go faster than that!" You'd probably feel annoyed and intruded upon – who gave them permission?! The coaching relationship is built on trust and, importantly, an agreement between the coach and coachee – especially when the subject is as personal as a young person's life. An Advantaged Thinking approach makes sure the young person is always in the driving seat.



TIME TO REFLECT

How is the coach's role understood in your service?

- What terminology do you use for coaches? Support workers? Project officers?
- How well does the title reflect the role?
- What impression might the title have on young people?
- How many members of the team can describe the difference between support and coaching?
- What are the characteristics of a coach?
- What is the goal of coaching?
- When is the right time to use a support approach, and to use a coaching approach?
- How many members of the team have been trained in coaching?

How do coaches gain permission?

- Is there a method by which staff gain permission to speak into a young person's life? A formal agreement? An informal relationship-building approach?
- Is the permission reviewed later in the relationship?
- What are the formal ways coaches speak into young people's lives? What are the informal ways?

How do you empower young people in the coaching relationship?

- To what extent do young people understand what a coaching relationship looks like? How could this be shared with them?
- If young people receive information about this, how much focus is on the expectations of them vs the offer to them?
- Do staff understand and use open questioning? How often do they offer solutions?
- Does your service have a feedback mechanism from young people to staff?
- Can young people choose their coach? How might you be able to give young people more choice?



ACTION

How often do you make time for reflective practice? After each interaction with a young person today, take two minutes to reflect on your practice. Did you support them, or coach them? What was the impact short-term? Long-term? Was it the right approach in the situation?

CONSULTING YOUNG PEOPLE



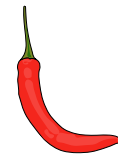
What impression do the job titles of the staff in your Foyer have on you?
What does it mean to you when someone coaches you? Is there a difference between coaching and supporting?
What characteristics does a good coach have?
What are some characteristics you don't like when working with a coach?

Did you give your coach permission to speak into your life? When did you give them permission? Was it explicitly given? Was it written down or spoken? How often do you renew this permission? Are you happy with this arrangement?

Can you describe the structure of a normal coaching session?
Are your coaching sessions usually formal or informal? A conversation? Following a set structure?
What paperwork do you see during a coaching session?
Are your action plans and targets usually based on your own goals and ambitions? Are they based on your needs and risk assessment?
How do you set and track the outcomes you want to achieve?
How are your achievements and successes celebrated?

Do you have a good understanding of what is expected of you by the Foyer?
Do you have a good understanding of what you can expect from the Foyer in return? How do you access this information?
Do you feel confident to give feedback to your coach? Do you know how you can do this?
Were you able to choose your coach? How might this look if you could?

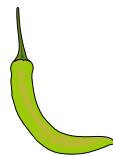
SPICE-IFICATION



Hot



Medium



Mild

The role of a coach

Ask young people to share the characteristics they do like and don't like in a coach. Use this as the basis for future role recruitment.

Review your role titles with young people and, if needed, develop new ones.

Share a copy of the Foyer 'something for something deal' with young people, making sure the expectations of the Foyer and young people are equally weighted.

Share a description of what a coaching relationship is like with young people so they know what to expect.

Coaching practice

Make regular time for coaches to reflect, practice techniques and share experiences or questions about their coaching practice to support ongoing development.

Make sure everyone on your staff team is trained in the coaching approach.

Ensure paperwork or record keeping is unobtrusive and ideally done after you've met with a young person – prioritising informal relationship building in a variety of settings

Empowering young people

Give young people entering the Foyer a survey about their personality/ communication preferences and match them with a coach based on this.

Develop formal and informal methods for young people to give coaches feedback, eg asking young people how they would like to be worked with, regular anonymous surveys, asking for 'stop, start, change' feedback at the end of 12Is.

As a team, explore ways to gain permission from a young person and implement these at the start of each new coaching relationship.