

TARA PROJECT

CONTINUE

- Strong teamwork, trust, and empathy
- Supportive leadership and good practice
- Working with families, not just for them

STOP

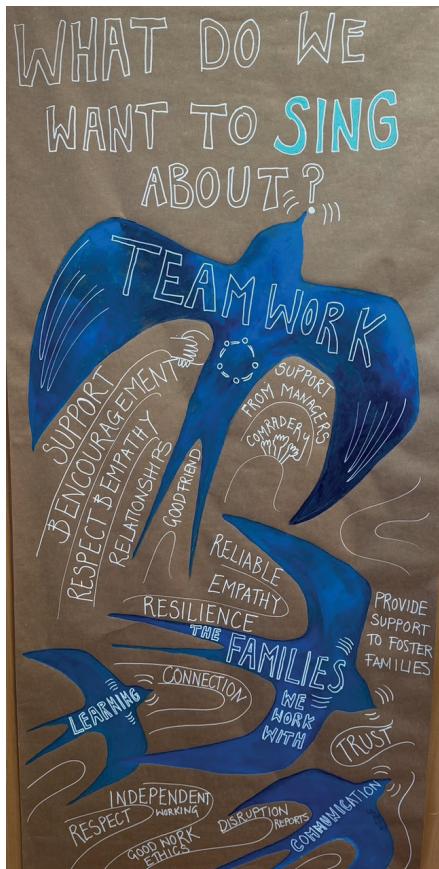
- Burnout, overload, and unnecessary bureaucracy
- Being hard on ourselves and crossing boundaries
- Losing balance, focus, and wellbeing

START

- Caring for people, spaces, and systems
- Prioritising children, families, and staff needs
- Building sustainable practices that last

SUMMARY of reflective exercises and participant feedback.

As part of the Practice Initiatives Showcase Event were three reflective, participatory exercises with attendees that invited practitioners to collectively explore what is sustaining their work, what may be holding them back, and what new practices are needed to move forward. Using accessible visual metaphors and creative reflection, participants were asked to consider: what they want to continue (“what is working and what do we want to sing about?”), what they need to stop (“what is no longer serving us”), and what they want to start (“what seeds should we plant next?”). These reflections captured key themes across teamwork, leadership, systems, and wellbeing, highlighting the strong relational foundations already present, the pressures created by workload and bureaucracy, and the shared desire to invest in environments, practices, and supports that enable trauma-informed work to flourish. The exercise created a reflective bridge between individual experience and system-level change, reinforcing the TARA Project’s commitment to co-creation, practitioner voice, and embedding trauma-informed principles in everyday practice.



WHAT DO WE NEED TO STOP?

("Like leaves in autumn, what can we shed?")

WORKLOAD & SYSTEMS

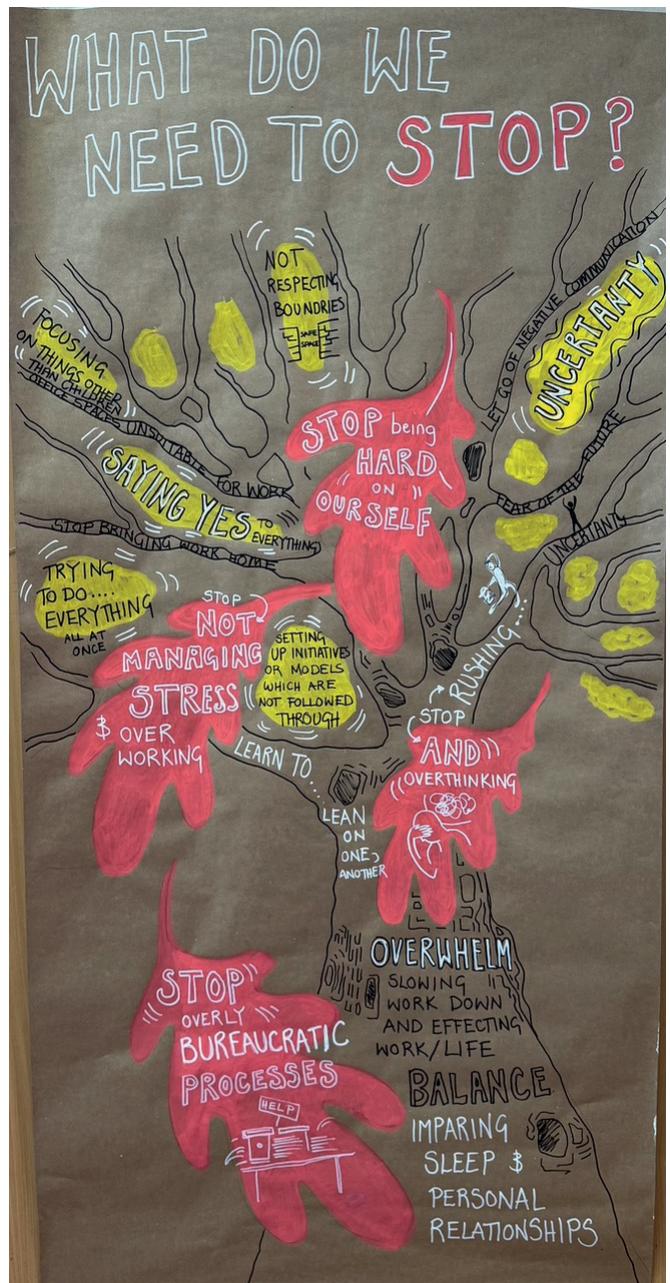
- Overly bureaucratic processes
- Setting up initiatives or models that are not followed through
- Trying to do everything at once
- Saying yes to everything
- Bringing work home
- Overworking and unmanaged stress

CULTURE & BEHAVIOUR

- Being hard on ourselves
- Not respecting boundaries
- Rushing and overthinking
- Focusing on things other than children
- Poor or negative communication

IMPACT ON WELLBEING

- Overwhelm
- Unsafe use of time and space
- Unstable work practices
- Uncertainty and fear of the future
- Work impacting work-life balance
- Impaired sleep and personal relationships



WHAT DO WE NEED TO START?

(“In the acorn lies the oak, what seeds can we plant?”)

WHAT DO WE NEED TO START?

ENVIRONMENT & RESOURCES

- Improving office spaces
- Fresh air and food
- Nice lighting
- Joyful pictures
- A chair, a desk, a phone, a printer – works!!
- Private space
- Outdoor space / windows that open
- Snacks around the office
- Microwaves
- Coffee docks

MORE FOCUS ON THE CHILD (AND THEIR NEEDS)

- Increasing capacity
- More staff
- Less form filling
- Allocating reasonable caseloads

CARE / CULTURE

- Time for self-care
- More team building
- Communicating the good stuff
- Supporting each other
- Reflective practice
- Wider service decision making
- More autonomy
- Professional development
- Training
- Better wages and staff retention
- Sharing practice
- Tending to our basic needs



WHAT DO WE NEED TO CONTINUE?

("What do we want to sing about?")

TEAMWORK

- Support
- Encouragement
- Respect & empathy
- Relationships
- Being a good friend

SUPPORTIVE LEADERSHIP

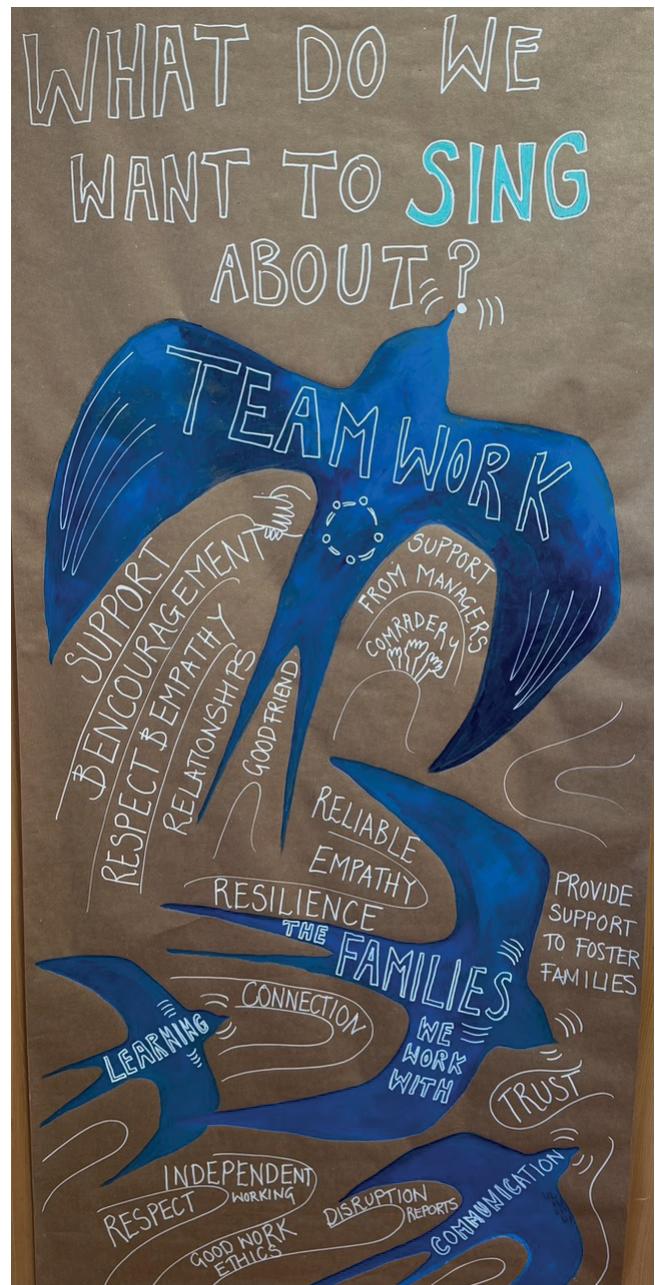
- Support from managers
- Camaraderie

WAYS OF WORKING

- Reliable
- Empathic
- Resilient
- Connection
- Continued learning and development
- Independent working
- Good work ethics

WORKING WITH FAMILIES

- Trust
- Communication
- Providing support to foster families
- Working with families, not just for them



Suggestions for 'Next Steps'

(These are just offerings, take only what you need)

1. Make the Commitments Visible

- Revisit, refine and display the Continue / Stop / Start statements in team spaces and meeting rooms.
- Use them as a shared language in team meetings, supervision, and planning
- Revisit them regularly to keep practice values visible and alive

2. Embed Into Everyday Practice

- Use Continue–Stop–Start as a standing reflection in:
- Team meetings
- Supervision
- Project reviews
- Ask one simple question regularly: “Is this helping us continue, stop, or start?”

3. Support Staff Wellbeing and Capacity

- Review caseloads and workload distribution for sustainability
- Protect time for reflection, learning, and peer support
- Agree and model clear boundaries around working hours and availability

4. Reduce What No Longer Serves

- Identify one bureaucratic process to simplify or stop
- Pause initiatives that are not followed through or aligned with priorities
- Focus energy on fewer actions done well
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5. Strengthen Leadership Alignment

- Ensure managers actively model trauma-informed values
- Create space for honest feedback and shared decision-making
- Support leaders to prioritise care, clarity, and consistency
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6. Keep Families at the Centre

- Check regularly: “Does this strengthen trust with children and families?”
- Involve families where possible in shaping and reviewing practice
- Value relational work as core work, not extra work

7. Review and Renew

- Set a Continue–Stop–Start light-touch review point (e.g. every 6 months)
- Celebrate what is working
- Adjust what needs changing without blame
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A Guiding Question Going Forward

“What small, achievable change can we make now that moves us closer to the practice we want to continue, and further from what we need to stop?”