

# Positive Communications

How To Create Them and Why They Matter



A Contact online learning session presented by Wendy Davey  
*11 February 2022*



# Welcome!

Welcome to this Contact Online Learning Session.

Those of you joining by pc, laptop, tablet or smart phone should now be able to see this introduction slide.

If there is a technical hitch, please do bear with us.



# Timings and Questions

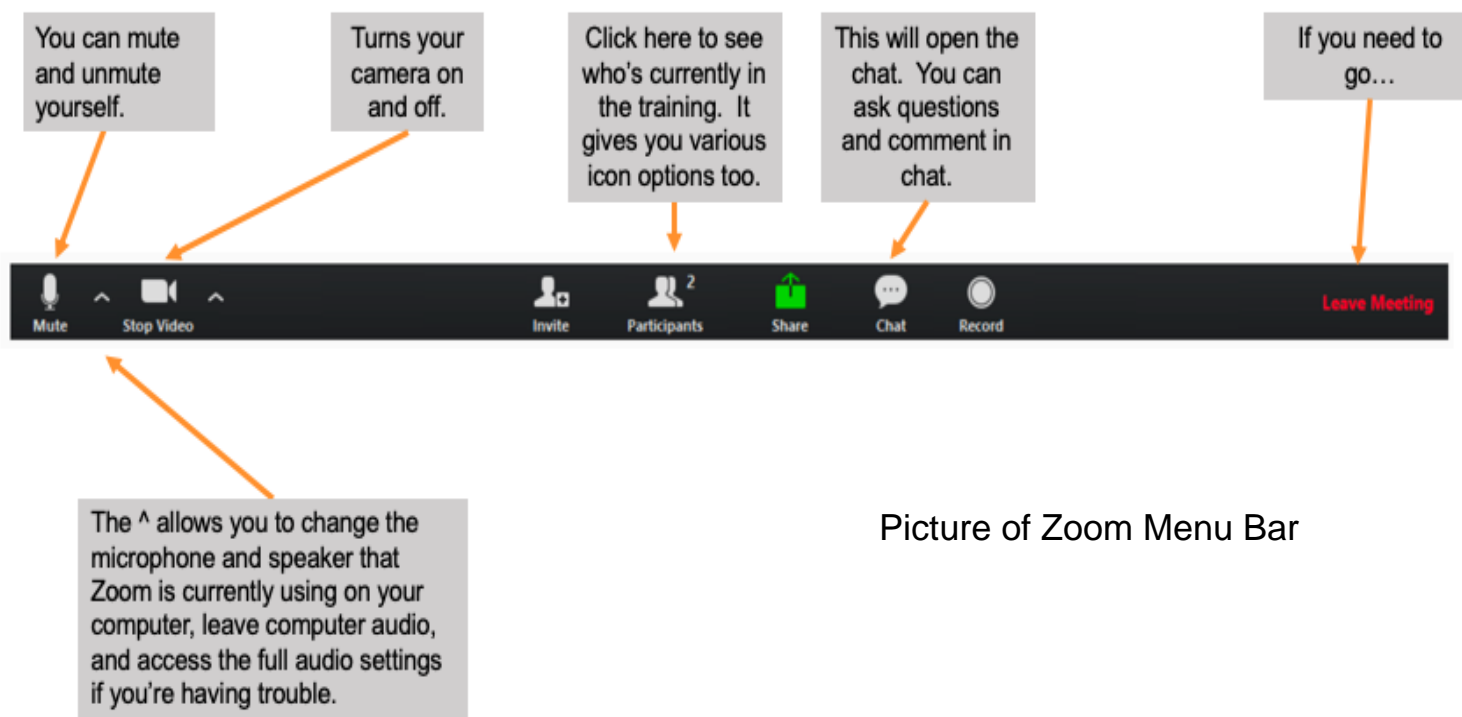
As there are so many attendees you will all remain ‘muted’ throughout the main section of this session.

There will be a short Q&A at the end.

Further relevant questions, not covered in the time allowed, will be answered and posted on Contact’s website along with the recording of the session, details of which will be circulated in the next couple of weeks.



# Tips on how to use Zoom



Picture of Zoom Menu Bar



# Introduction



- About Positive Communications
- Getting the Basics Right
- Generating and Sharing Positive Content
- Who Does the Work?
- Considering Risks
- Summary





# Times are Tough

- Times are tough. People want to hear positive messages and personal stories they can relate to.
- Connecting through telling personal stories is a powerful way to raise awareness, engage parent carers and recruit new members.
- Case studies are a great way to evidence achievements to local parent carers, partners and practitioners from statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and other parent groups and networks



# About Personal Stories

People use emotions, rather than information, to evaluate organisations.

Research shows that people have a real physical and psychological response when they see an inspiring video.

If just looking at cute pictures of baby animals can have powerful cognitive effects, imagine the impact an emotionally inspiring story might have. And how those feelings are more likely to carry over into **action**.

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/your-stories>

<https://www.raredisease.org.uk/rduk-news/tell-your-rare-disease-story/>



# About Case Studies

- Sharing your most effective work helps reinforce your forum as the lead partner for parent carer participation in your local area.
- It grabs the attention of parent carers.
- It enhances the forum's credibility and helps build respect and partnerships with other stakeholders.
- Providing clear analysis and results can also help fend off challenge from alienated individuals and groups.

<https://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/our-work/services-projects/workfit/>





# An Intentional Approach

- Taking a positive approach is about so much more than simply telling one upbeat story or listing successes in an Annual Report.
- It's about committing to plan, resource and weave positive messages through your communications activities in an ongoing way.
- Getting the basics right is the best way to ensure that your positive ideas reach people in the way that you intend them to.

<https://www.hubspot.com/>



# Positive Communications

## Getting the Basics Right

- Why** are we doing it? Act SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timed)
- Who** are we talking to? Who are our audience?
- How** will we speak? Using a formal or informal tone of voice?
- Where** will put our message out? On our website? Social media? E-news?
- When** will we say it? Do we have planned schedule?
- What** will our content be? How are we going to generate it?





# Track What You Do

## Build a Positive Communications Toolkit

- Track your activities throughout the year to prove the value of your work by evidencing successful outcomes.
- Include parent carer statistics such as the increase in subscriber numbers month on month, how many active members you have working as parent carer representatives.
- Log organisational achievements.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3d7fseYJvM&list=PLhKkwuMU6uqfB2a9urD6QI66iFRYvYWPH&index=9>

<https://bit.ly/3GTNdII>



# Create Digital Resources

## Build a Positive Communications Toolkit

- Track what you do in pictures! Take photos of everything you do – remembering to gain consents from anyone who features.
- Build a digital library of free to download and royalty-free inspiring images.
- Build a digital library of motivational moving image resources.
- Design information into bite-size chunks via infographics, blogs, case studies and forum statements that you can use again and again.

<https://canva.com>

<https://pixabay.com>

<https://creativecommons.org>



# Focus on Personal Stories

Our brains are hardwired to think, learn and **act** most effectively through stories. We even dream in stories. Personal stories create human connection through which the audience can learn more, with deeper understanding.

We can tell a single story many times from different angles, depending on what we want to highlight.

Think about the type of stories you want to focus on.



# Take an Honest Look!

We're all hard on ourselves. It's how most of us were hard-wired! That mentality has a way of seeping into the way we communicate because most of us take what we do very personally. We tend to look at what didn't work or get done, not what did.

Start by putting a focus on the positive things the forum has achieved. Encourage everybody to spend 10 minutes thinking about one positive thing that belonging to the forum has helped them achieve in their own life or that of their family.

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/>

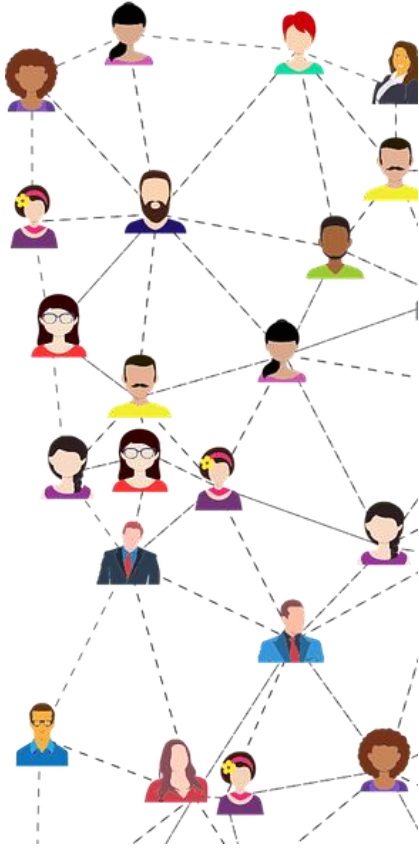
<https://bitly.com>



<https://bit.ly/3AgKcQc>



# Who Tells The Story?



**Tell your own story** about your forum and what motivates you. Be genuine. Sharing your passion with someone is in and of itself a positive message.

**Encourage parent carers to tell** their positive stories of what they do for the forum or how a forum success has impacted them.

**Ask a friendly professional to tell** how working with the forum has changed their perspective and helped them improve services.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/amy\\_cuddy\\_your\\_body\\_language\\_may\\_shape\\_who\\_you\\_are?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_may_shape_who_you_are?language=en)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1m-ELWr8dRo>



# Transparency & Support

- Sharing personal stories can stir up surprising amounts of emotion, even when the messages they contain are positive. Think about how you are going to ensure that people giving their stories feel comfortable and well supported as they do so.
- Identify and train a project leader able to facilitate the storytelling processes and signpost contributors to further support if needed.
- Be transparent about how stories will be used.
- Invite potential storytellers to sessions where they can participate in establishing forum ground rules around telling their stories. Offer training to develop communication skills or hold open sessions to practice telling personal stories.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/crisis-services/helplines-listening-services/>

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well-online.co.uk

Online and Live Chat  
Username: [contact](#)  
Password: [Wellbeing](#)





# Focus on Case Studies

CASE STUDIES: A descriptive case study is **an in-depth study of one person, group, or event** designed to understand a situation better. It might also help others make a decision about how to do things in a similar case.

- Choose a situation on which to write.
- Gather as much information as possible about the project, say how it was implemented and analyse what worked well.
- Say why the forum's input was essential to the success of the project.

<https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/parent-carer-participation/success-stories/>



# Sharing Positive Messages | Website

- Create a webpage to invite, gather and house your contributor's stories and another to hold your case studies.
- How can you make your stories and case studies stand out? Remember that weaving photos and short videos into your positive messages adds emotional resonance.
- Infographics are another great way to combine the written word with visual elements. They condense lots of information into small accessible bite size chunks. They encourage visitors to spend time looking at and, hopefully, sharing your content.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/your-stories/>



# Sharing Positive Messages | Social Media

- The pandemic has shifted people's online behaviours. Users have found more ways to work or spend time in the home, and this has increased the time they spend using social media. 2022 is a good time to begin to explore posting personal stories as short form video content on Instagram Stories, YouTube, TikTok and Facebook live streams.
- Keep it professional. Be intentional. Don't confuse planned personal story output with personal posts!
- Use analytics to check out the best times to post. Don't post too often.
- Make sure you are talking about the work of the Forum in every 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> post.

Check out the social media and websites of other forums. How are they doing it?



# Sharing Positive Messages | E-news

- Apply everything we have already covered to considering how to integrate e-news into your positive communications plan.
- Who are your audience? Is this an internal team update? A monthly e-newsletter for existing subscribers/members? Or are you hoping to raise awareness and recruit parent carers by sending the information out more widely?
- Check out Canva for access to free e-news templates like this one.

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH 2022 OUR FORUM TOGETHER

Making a Difference

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

including a talk on the impact of Covid-19



We agreed three strategic priorities for Jan/Feb/Mar 2022:

Pathways to Adulthood Conference (Spring 22)  
Outreach to CAMHS  
Education, Health and Care Plans

### WHAT WE DO

We are an independent group run by local parent carers. We work with the local authority and health as equal partners to help improve services for children and young people with additional needs and their families.

### WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES?



"I attended a meeting about the impact of Covid on care provision. We agreed to allocate emergency funding and I was able to share how to access it via the Forum newsletter." Aashi Mittal



"Working with the Forum I started a group for parent carers. It's made a huge difference to the way we engage with the needs of their children at the school." Sally Jones, HeadTeacher



### JOIN US

Are you the parent carer of a child or young person?  
Do they have additional needs?  
WE NEED YOU!

### Our Town Forum

Tel: 01234 567 891 [ourtown@forum.org](mailto:ourtown@forum.org) [www.ourtownforum.uk](http://www.ourtownforum.uk)



# Sharing Positive Messages | Other Channels

- **Blogs** | Lead with a Day Dream. Get creative! Paint a picture of the world as you want to see it! Tell a story of the way the world should be; the way it *will* be once your mission is fulfilled. Follow it up with your plans for getting there and why your audience should care and/or get involved.
- **News Media** | Make it local, personal and timely. Follow up!
- **Face-to-Face** | Use the personal touch. Motivate team members to present an upbeat case study or positive story in person at a conference or workstream meeting. This can be one of the most personal ways of getting a message across. Provide training around confidence and resilience and positive personal communication techniques.

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/blog-strategy-guide>



# Burnout

# Who Does the Work?

- Set up a working group of team members with clear, designated responsibilities.
- Always encourage everyone you work with to send you their positive quotes, stories, photos and short video clips via your website.
- Encourage subscribers to raise awareness of the forum by sharing any content you post to their friends and other sites using appropriate hashtags and joining links.

[https://www.wix.com/blog/2018/02/what-are-hashtags-and-how-to-use-them-in-social-media/?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=cpc&utm\\_campaign=13774768257^126077909722&experiment\\_id=^531699814067^\\_DSA&gclid=Cj0KCQiAraSPBhDuARIsAM3Js4psqLCIkfS\\_LghHLmy5dj4vA\\_Oh1HS6lZq23EmqMzWrdBWg7x6cHacaAl-PEALw\\_wcB](https://www.wix.com/blog/2018/02/what-are-hashtags-and-how-to-use-them-in-social-media/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=13774768257^126077909722&experiment_id=^531699814067^_DSA&gclid=Cj0KCQiAraSPBhDuARIsAM3Js4psqLCIkfS_LghHLmy5dj4vA_Oh1HS6lZq23EmqMzWrdBWg7x6cHacaAl-PEALw_wcB)

<https://bit.ly/3rzicDr>



# Considering Risks

Be authentic or risk losing people's good will.

Make sure you support people who generously share their stories and images or risk alienating disaffected contributors.

Ensure you have GDPR protections in place.

☒ YES  
☐ NO

<https://www.gov.uk/data-protection>

<https://communitymatters.org.uk/>

[admin@community-matters.org.uk](mailto:admin@community-matters.org.uk)



At this online learning session we have explored how positive communications are a powerful way to raise awareness, engage parent carers, enhance credibility and build confident relationships with other stakeholders. We've considered:



- The psychology underpinning the power of
- telling positive communications.
- How getting communications basics right reinforces the impact of everything you publish.
- How to generate and share content, and how to support contributors.
- What the risks are and who does the work.

Now it's your turn! Get out there and say something positive!

“I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

— **Maya Angelou**





# Questions and Resources

If you have any other questions relating to your forum please contact your [Regional Parent Participation Adviser](#) or [parent.participation@contact.org.uk](mailto:parent.participation@contact.org.uk)

For advice on SEND issues get in touch via **Contact's free helpline** 0808 3555 (9.30 – 5pm Mon-Fri) or [helpline@contact.org.uk](mailto:helpline@contact.org.uk) or visit our advice pages on our website [www.contact.org.uk](http://www.contact.org.uk)

Webinars and other resources can be found on our **participation pages** [https://www.contact.org.uk/get-involved/parent-carer-participation/resources-\(general\)/](https://www.contact.org.uk/get-involved/parent-carer-participation/resources-(general)/)



# Thank you!

Thank you for attending with us today.

The recording of this webinar and presentation will be available on Contact's website in the next two weeks.

Look out for news about this on our homepage and social media networks.

**[www.contact.org.uk/get-involved/parent-carer-participation/resources](http://www.contact.org.uk/get-involved/parent-carer-participation/resources)**

