



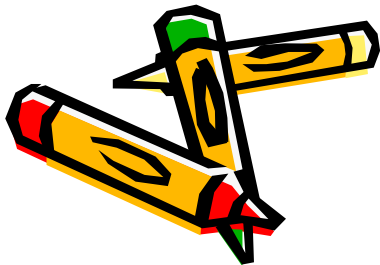
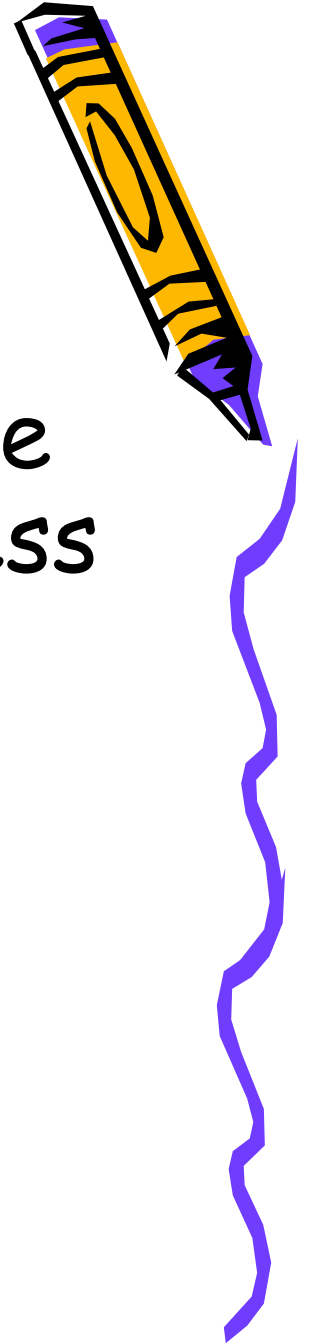
From collaborative to participant led research A Case Study

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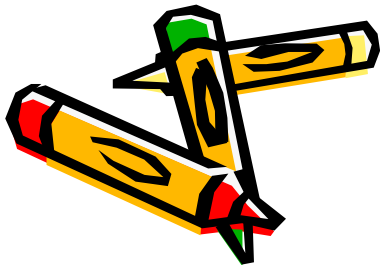
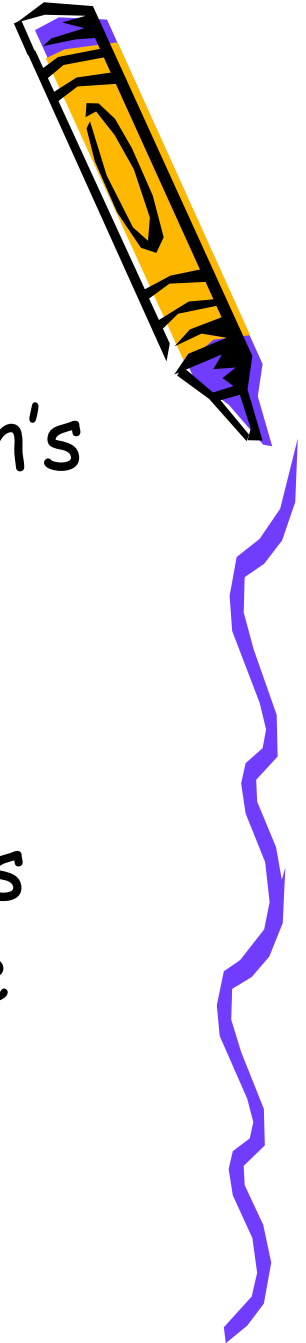
The Research

How do children and young people in Ireland experience the process of their parents separation and divorce and subsequent changed family life: Giving Recognition to Children's Experiences



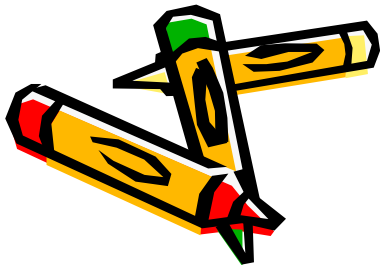
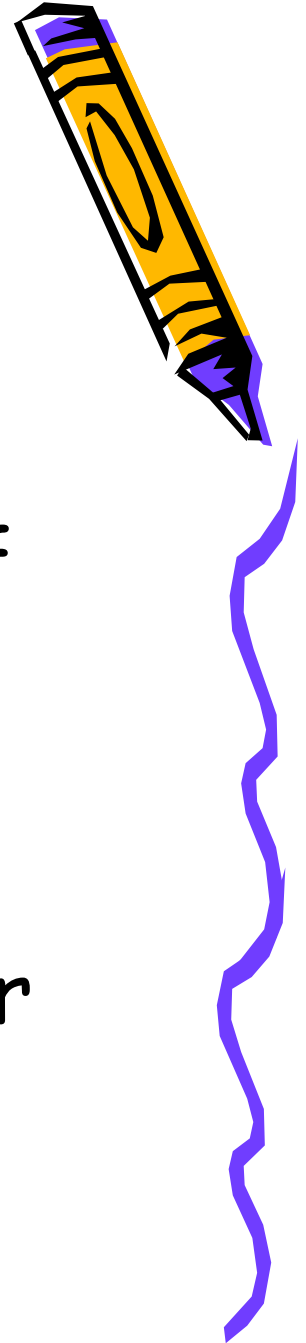
Background

- A PhD research study into children's and young people's experiences of parental separation, divorce and resulting family re-ordering.
- Significant in Ireland, as divorce is relatively new in our country, since 1997



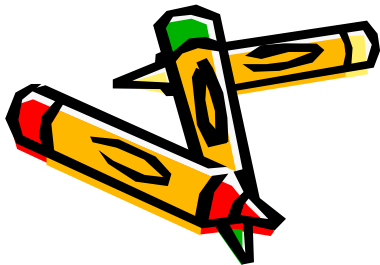
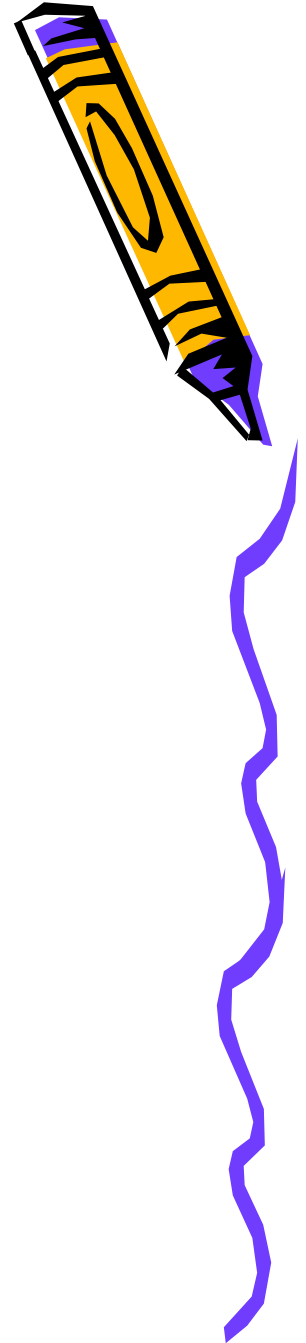
Methodology

- Qualitative study
- Embedded in the New Sociology of Childhood using participatory methods
- Narrative Inquiry used for data gathering and data analysis (Fraser 2004)



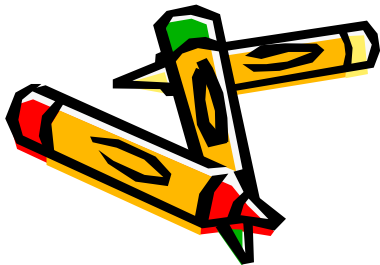
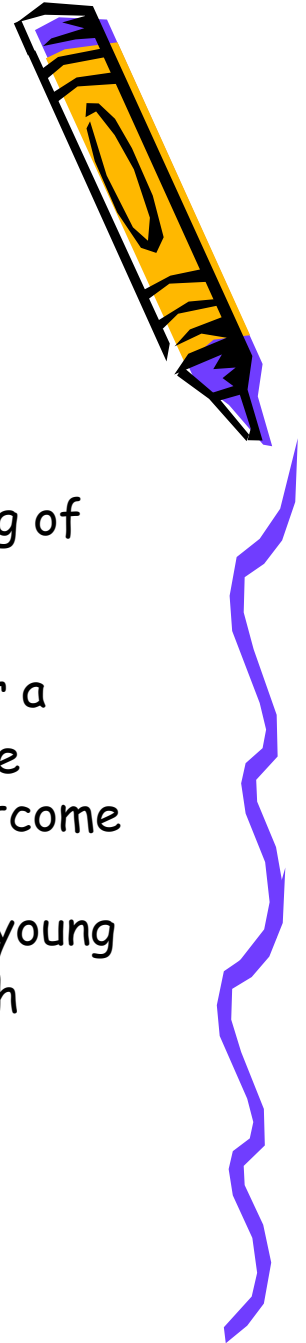
Participatory Approach

- Principle of Participation of the UNCRC (1989)
- Use of Lansdown's (2010; 2013) 'degrees of participation'
- Incorporated Lundy's (2007) conceptualisation of Article 12.



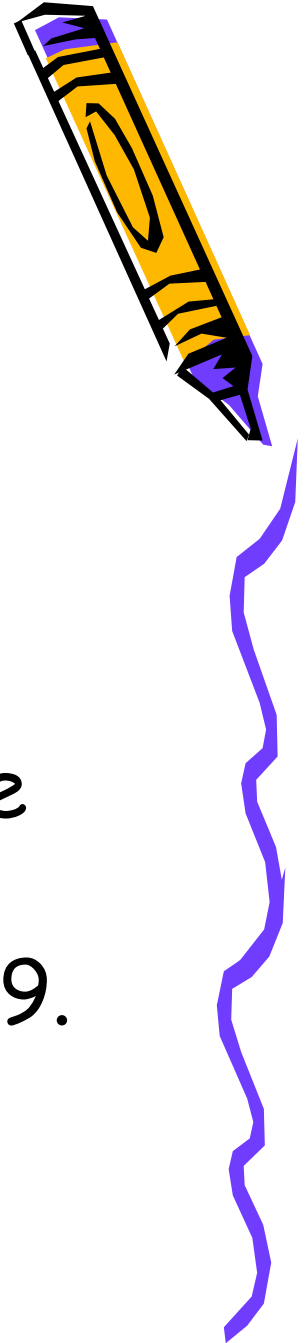
Lansdown's 'degrees of participation'

- **Consultative participation:** adults seek children's views in order to build knowledge and understanding of their lives - recognises the value of children's perspectives
- **Collaborative participation:** provides for a greater degree of partnership with the opportunity for active engagement - children influence both the process and the outcome
- **Child led participation:** allows children and young people to identify issues of concern and to initiate action with adults as facilitators, not as leaders



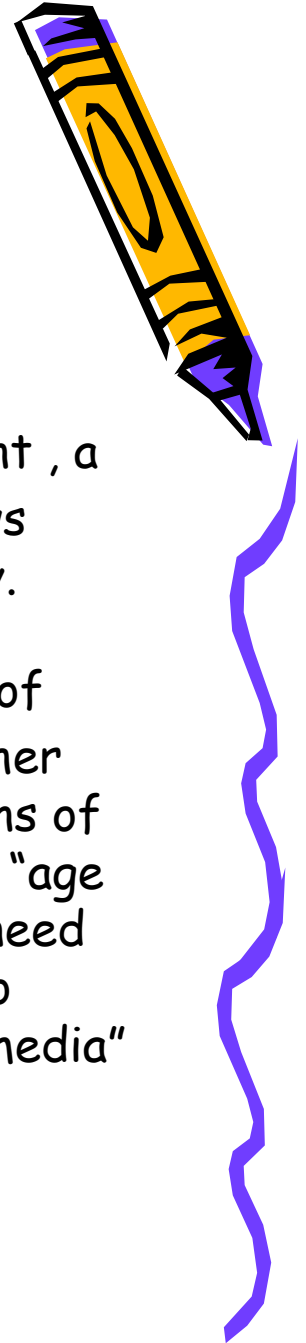
Lundy's Conceptualisation of Article 12 for Children's Participation

- Four Elements: Space; Voice; Audience; and Influence
- Incorporates other Articles of the Convention: Article 2; Article 3; Article 5; Article 13; and Article 19.



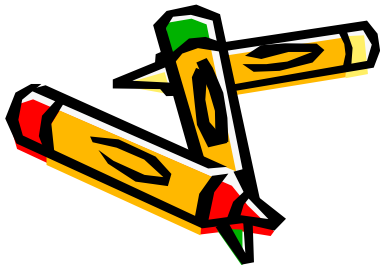
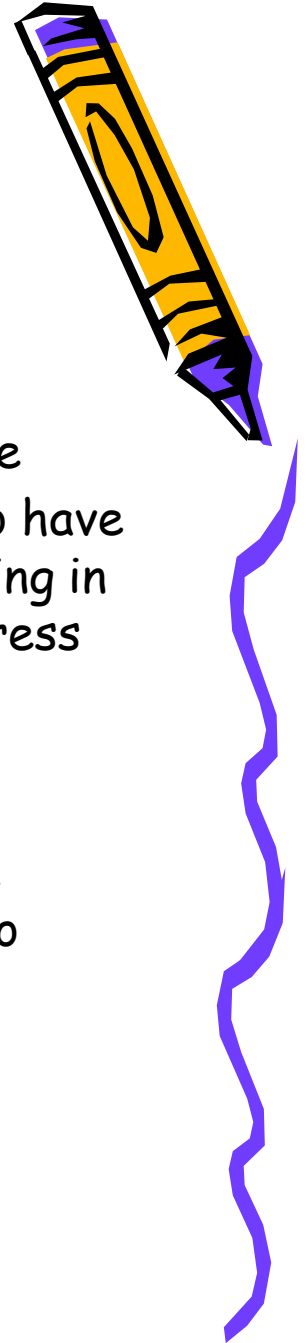
Space and Voice

- **Provision of Space:** opportunity for involvement , a safe space (Article 19) where children can express their views (Article 12) or be free not to, Article 12 is a right, not a duty.
- **Voice:** a right afforded to all people, present in a range of human rights instruments; specifies "capable of forming his/her own views" ; this has been replaced, at times with "assumptions of capacity"; has led to misconception about being dependent on "age and maturity" applies to 2nd part of Article 12; children may need support to form a view (Article 5) and be given opportunity to express views "either orally, in writing, in art form or other media" (Article 13)



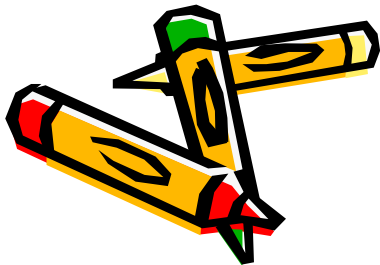
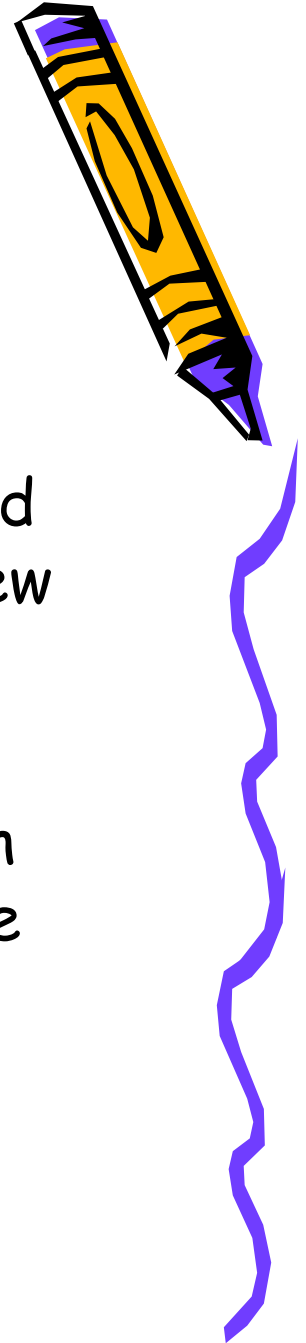
Audience and Influence

- **Audience:** Article 12 requires that views be given “due weight”. Children and young people, therefore, have a right to have their views listened to by decision-makers. Adults need training in active listening; children need to be given opportunity to express views in a variety of ways (Article 13)
- **Influence:** “due weight in accordance with age and maturity”. Listening may be easy and unchallenging; giving due weight requires real change. This provision adds complexity to Article 12 as adults conception of capacity and maturity may differ. Article 5: important to provide support for evolving capacity.



The Research

- Two-person advisory group initially recruited: involved from ethical approval stage - reviewed materials: posters; information packs; interview schedule
- Involved fourteen children and young people
- Recruited from across Ireland, mainly through press release - a number of young people made direct contact
- Age range from 7-19 years; 9 female; 5 male



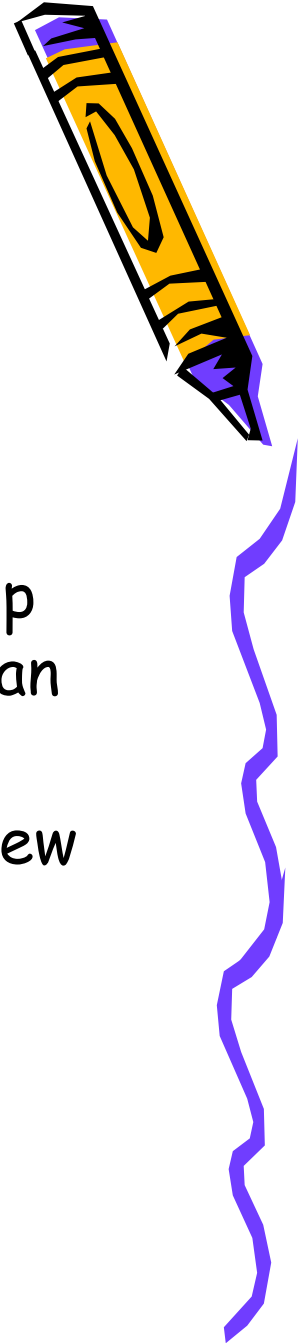
Process

- Initial interviews with each participant; discussed their experiences of parental separation and changed family life
- Narrative, interactive, dialogical approach taken, shared information, talking cards exercise (Moore, 2007); bear cards exercise to identify emotions; and family sculpture 'closeness' to exercise conducted with each participant.
- All participants invited to continue involvement
Continuous on-going consent for each stage



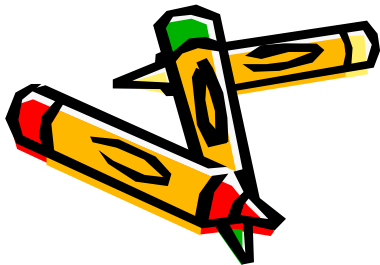
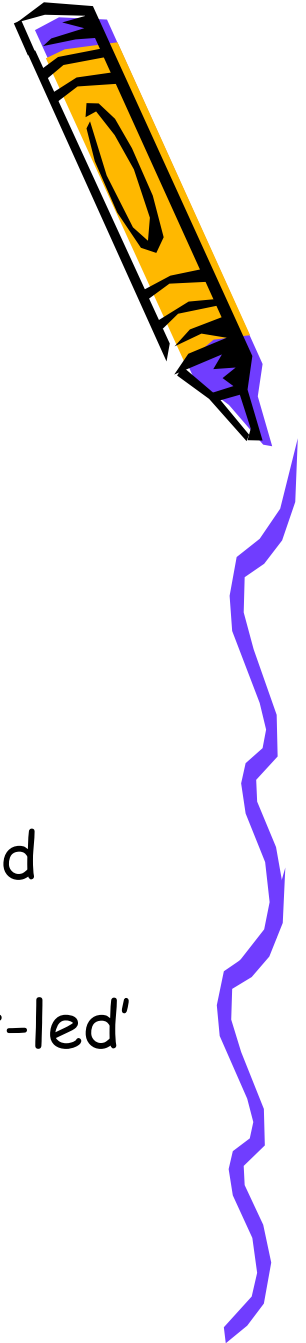
Process

- Regular contact with each participant by post: letter with update on the research
- Continuous involvement with the advisory group throughout - met to discuss initial findings; plan research review days
- All participants invited to initial research review day: six attended; Update from day sent to everyone
- Second review day 12 attended and remained involved



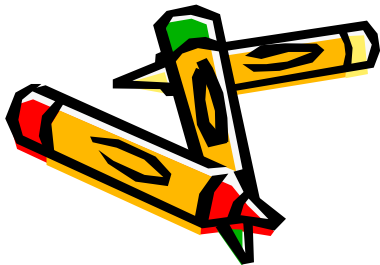
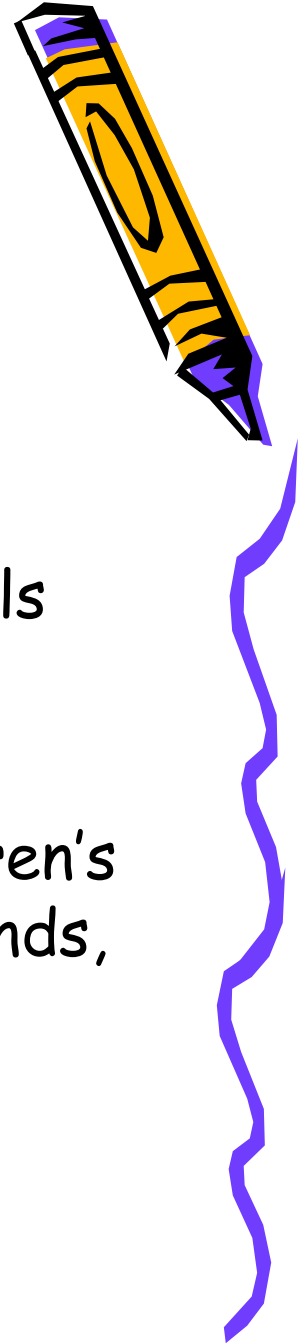
Process

- Funding for reviews from UNESCO CFRC for transport and lunches
- Advisory group involved throughout
- Three meetings held: views on findings; participation and dissemination
- Discussions recorded with permission, provided additional data
- Views on dissemination resulted in 'participant-led' project



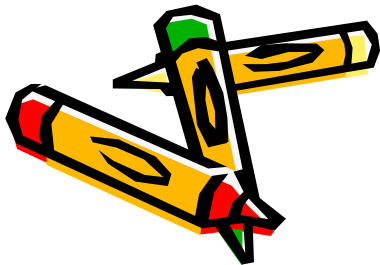
Dissemination project

- Asked to discuss how findings should be disseminated
- No mention of academic peer-reviewed journals
- School magazines, meetings with peers, information sessions for parents
- Social Media won out... concentration on children's and young people's social worlds: Parents, friends, primary schools



Dissemination project

- Meeting with parents; re-assurance regarding social media
- On-going consent
- Funded by the Child & Family Research Centre's Youth as Researchers project
- Carried out in conjunction with Foróige, national youth education and TechSpace
- Worked with three creative youth workers
- Provided Space, Voice, Audience and Influence



Challenges

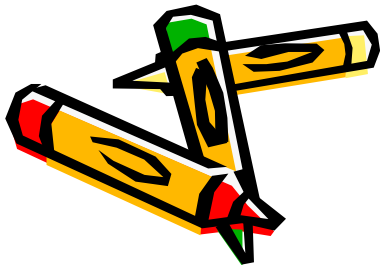
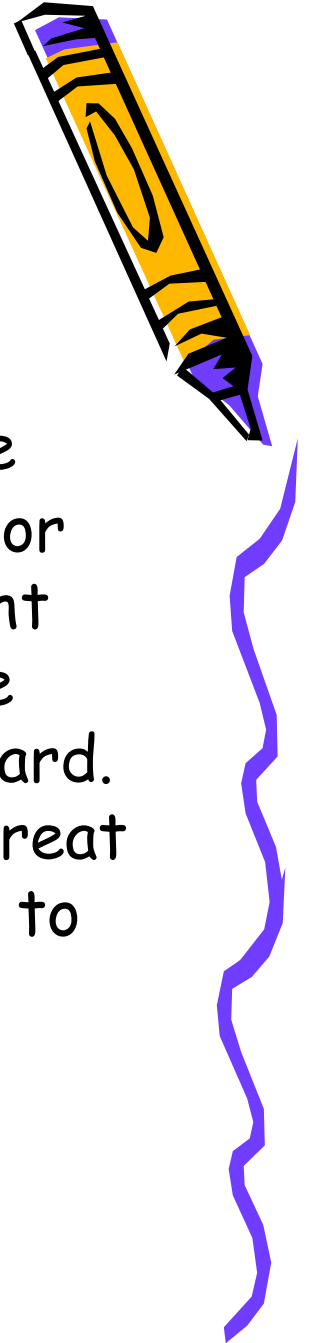
- Moving from the role of researcher to role of facilitator - professional background in family mediation helped
- Highlighted 'adult-centric' thinking
- Led to discussions regarding age of consent for participation
- Should children's and young people's views form part of Ethics Committee's deliberations/be involved in ethics committees?



Final Word

- " After my parents split up I didn't feel there was anyone else going through the same thing or understood what I was feeling...I never thought when I was ten years old my situation could be used to benefit other people. My voice was heard. I am so grateful for that. I have made some great friends through this project and have learned to appreciate the power of young people's minds"

E-mail from Marianne, age 15 years.



References

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