



**NCCA**

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta  
Curaclaim agus Measúnachta  
National Council for  
Curriculum and Assessment

# Section 4 Teaching and Learning

## 4.3 Trauma Informed Practices (Hope)

May 2023

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## Hope

As outlined in the guidelines (p. 28), children placed in care or detention schools may feel incapable of overcoming the adversity in their lives. Hope is about encouraging a positive outlook and actively cultivating expectations that things will work out.

We want Care and Detention schools to be places where young people can be supported to feel hopeful about the future. Students can be provided with opportunities to share positive stories and talk about creative solutions to overcome challenges. These schools are cultivating a nurturing environment where students can feel safe, secure and hopeful about their present and future.

One approach that can be adopted on the path towards instilling a sense of hope in young people in Care and Detention school settings is to get involved in celebrating Care Day.

## Care Day

Care Day is the world's largest celebration of children and young people with care experience. Care experience includes children and young people who are or were cared for by family members with the support of social workers; by foster carers; or children and young people from children's homes and residential units (Empowering People in Care - EPIC).

This example provides a snapshot of the manner in which young people in Care and Detention schools can be provided with opportunities to participate in and celebrate their care experience for Care Day. The approach taken to mark this occasion centred on activities/competitions which were organised by EPIC.

## EPIC

EPIC is an organisation which aims to advance the interests and welfare of children and young adults in the care system by advocating on their behalf, providing information and advice, providing opportunities for participation and influencing through regional and national councils and developing policies on and conducting research into issues affecting children and young adults in the care system. The focus of EPIC's work is to improve the lived experience of children and young adults in the care system and positively contribute to the development of care services, locally, nationally and internationally for the benefit of children and young adults, their families and the professionals who work with them (EPIC).

## Ideas for Participation

The following 3 ideas for participation are snapshots of those which were explored in a school in special care which were received well by the young people. Through CSPE lessons, these students were familiar with the work of EPIC. It is important to note that the concept of 'celebrating' care experience needs to be approached with sensitivity and not all young people may be comfortable to discuss/explore this topic. Whilst Care Day activities can be adapted/modified to meet an individual's needs, wants and/or interests, the upmost respect and consideration must be given to the fact that these young people are still on their care journey. Participation in all aspects of Care Day celebrations was optional for each young person.

### 1. It Takes a Village to Raise a Child

The theme for Care Day this year was based on the African proverb "It takes a village to raise a child". In class, the young people got opportunities to discuss and explore this proverb and how different people in communities can have a positive influence on children and young people and how significant these relationships are in shaping the lives of the care experienced community. People in each young person's lives were discussed/acknowledged who had or continue to have a significant impact on their outlook and sense of self-worth. The significant and direct impact that we have on others was talked about. Simple acts, for example listening, encouraging or understanding can have profound and lifelong impact. EPIC's campaign for Care Day was encouraging people to be, or realise their potential to be, a #CareAware champion and ally.

### 2. Care Day Creative Space

As a whole school, the Care Day Creative Space Competition was entered which involved being tasked with decorating a space to celebrate Care Day. We used the idea of this school being a village in itself, full of allies. The young people who attend these schools are at the centre of all that we do so they were placed in the middle of the display around a drawing of the school building. Each handprint, reaching towards the young people in the centre, was done by a member of school staff and represents their different roles/subjects. The words written by the young people, at the bottom of the display, are words that they chose to write which they associate with this school. The entry was selected as a winning display and each of the young people in the school received a letter from EPIC and a prize for their contribution.

A photograph of the winning entry which was displayed in the school reception area:



**A copy of the letter sent by EPIC to each young person in the school:**



EPIC Head Office: 7 Red Cow Lane  
Smithfield, Dublin 7, D07 KX52  
Telephone: 01 872 7661  
Website: [www.epiconline.ie](http://www.epiconline.ie)  
Email: [info@epiconline.ie](mailto:info@epiconline.ie)

To everyone at Ballydowd School,

First things first, a BIG THANK YOU for being a part of our Best Decorated Care Day 22 Space Competition and for celebrating the day with us. We really hope you had a positive and fun Care Day!

As a competition winner, we are really excited to share with you your prize pack for your entry into our Best Decorated Care Day 22 Space 😊

Well done for taking the time to be a part of the Care Day 22 celebrations and for your amazing contribution to the day. We hope you enjoy your prize and success.

And remember, you can contact us anytime – EPIC is always here for you.

Warm wishes,

From everyone at EPIC, Empowering People in Care



Regional Offices – Cork, Dublin, Limerick

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Registered Offices: 7 Red Cow Lane, Smithfield, Dublin 7, D07 KX52.

Company Registration No. 381973. Registered Charity No. 20055080. CHY No. 15742.

Directors: C. Brophy, M. Doyle, J. Feehan, V. Kerr, D. Mullen, M. O'Connell, A. Stacey, F. Ó'Suilleabháin, B. O'Sullivan.

### 3. Creative Writing Competition

Students were encouraged to enter EPIC's creative writing competition whereby young people could submit a poem or piece of writing which reflected the theme 'It Takes a Village to Raise a Child'. One student wrote a poem to capture the fact that some of the best people in her village, who have helped her on her care journey, were those who simply listened. Sometimes they may even have been unaware of how important a role they played as she may have only encountered them briefly. The poem echoes the significance of listening without judgement. It was selected as a winning entry the young person received an individual letter from EPIC and a prize to acknowledge her fantastic achievement. Following this, the poem got some incredible exposure:

It was shared across EPICs social media platforms – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. EPIC had partnered with Family for Every Child (a global alliance that works to improve the lives of children around the world) who shared the poem on their Lived Experience Platform. In addition to this, her poem featured on 'The Care Experience Podcast' – a podcast which explores the experiences of people who grew up in the care system from all over the world. The young person was so proud to have her work feature on a podcast that aims to raise awareness and fight stigma by providing a platform to the people who know the most about the care system: the people with first-hand experience of it.

**Link to podcast episode featuring the student's winning poem:**

<https://thecareexperience.libsyn.com/the-care-experience-bonus-careday22-podcast>

The excitement that the success of the poem had generated for the young writer and for all involved in the school reached a new height when we were asked if the poem could be displayed in a Care Day exhibition in Mayo. One of her teachers travelled to Mayo to view the young person's work on display. The young person also got the opportunity to travel to Mayo with care staff to view her work alongside the work of other young people with care experience.

**A proud teacher visiting her student's poem being exhibited in the gallery in Mayo!**



**Sometimes Let It Out**

Many a times,  
we keep everything inside us,  
From a little pain  
to biggest sorrows,  
From small worries  
to illnesses that kills,  
Everything is kept inside,  
caged.

There are times  
when the caged emotions,  
caged secrets,  
caged mystery and pain  
wants to get free,  
wants to be narrated  
to someone who listens, understands,  
But the fear of being not understood,  
the fear that it is not normal,  
the fear of being considered different, the fear of hurting, being  
makes us force it to suffocate.

And slowly it turns red,  
bringing in more pain, more hate, more rage.

Sometimes all we need is an ear,  
that will listen and forget,  
We don't want them to remember it,  
but we do want them to listen,  
for a short time and heal us,  
by helping us let out the heavy hurt.

I found an ear that the moon loved  
and a voice that the sun granted  
I found people I didn't know  
and wouldn't matter if they remembered  
what I went through.

Sometimes let it out,  
it won't only heal you, help you,  
not burden you with any pain.



**It Takes a Village  
Sometimes Let It Out**

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Many a times,  
we keep everything inside us.  
From a little pain  
to biggest traumas.  
From small worries  
to illnesses that kills.  
Everything is kept inside,  
caged.  
There are times  
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wants to get free,  
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But the fear of being not understood,  
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bringing in more pain, more hate, more rage.  
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## Collaborative Opportunities

Throughout their engagement with the work that was done to celebrate Care Day, it was evident that the young people were particularly interested in what their peers in other schools based in secure care and detention settings were doing to mark this day. While every young person has his/her own unique care journey experience, there is an invisible thread that weaves together the cohort of young people who experience these particular settings. Going forward, there is scope for schools within these settings to use Care Day as an opportunity to collaborate to celebrate the rights of care experienced young people and to demonstrate our commitment to giving our students opportunities to thrive, opportunities to recognise that they are part of a community and opportunities to be proud of themselves and their individual journeys.


### Care Day Reflective Quotes from a Young Person




I think it is important to mark this day because being in care is an important time in your life and shouldn't go unmarked. Your experience of care impacts your life a lot and it's a huge difference to not being in care.



I'm really glad I contributed and got involved in Care Day.



I really think people should celebrate Care Day regardless of whether they have personal experience in care.



Care Day is a day to collectively get care relationships bonded together and for self-expression and sharing different views and stories.



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