

Working



Together

HOW TO DO GOOD CO-PRODUCTION:

What's the recipe? - Grab Sheet

Co-production is not a set approach or model that can be learned on a training course, then you go away and repeat what you have learned.

There are lots of approaches and models which are similar to co-production and which are used in specific settings, for example ABCD (asset-based community development), SBA (strengths-based approach), Community Catalysts, etc.

These are some examples of models that work well. They look a lot like co-production, because **they share the same values and need the same skills** as co-production.

In Oxfordshire, we say the important thing to focus on is not individual outcomes, but on creating the right conditions for being able to work together positively and as equals and shifting the culture from 'doing to' to 'doing with'.

“Make working together the outcome!”

Jo Barnicoat, Co-chair – Team-Up

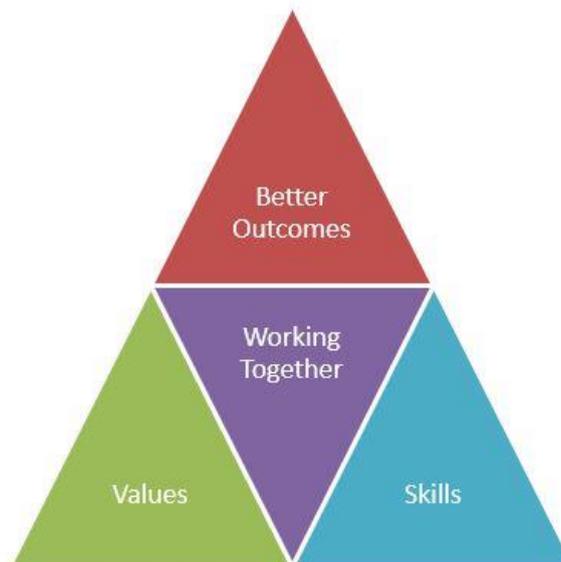
If you focus on working together well and the values that underpin this, and if you do it well, your outcomes will be better as a result.

So, if you can't learn co-production as a model, how can you know 'how' to do it?

How to do co-production is like a technical problem; it is a problem-solving team exercise. We like to think of each problem as a box of Lego, and everyone involved has a role in planning, building, and checking it together. Each piece of work will look different. It will start differently, go on a different journey and will have a different outcome.

See **What does co-production look like in practice?: Comparing two local examples**

Good co-production can be thought of like a **recipe**.



The core values are like **ingredients** and the core skills are the **method**. You put the values and skills together to make the right conditions and behaviours for 'working together', and as a result you get better outcomes.

What **ingredients (values)** do we need to make co-production work?

- **Beliefs** – holding or developing the belief that everyone is equal.
- **Courage** to be ourselves, and see each other as whole people.
- **Valuing** each other and focusing on strengths and skills.
- **Respect**- valuing each other's contributions and truly listening.
- Being **committed** to the values and principles of sharing power.
- **Trusting** the process of collaboration and teamwork.
- **Compassionately** leading – everyone can lead.
- **Reciprocity**- recognising that if people are putting something in, they should be getting something out (e.g. paying people for their time, providing essential training, etc).

What **method (skills)** do we need to make co-production work?

- **Facilitation** skills and coaching skills.
- **Honest** and transparent communication and listening skills.
- Handling challenges and different opinions and needs **constructively**.
- **Patience** and **openness** to change.
- **Supporting** each other; it's okay to make mistakes.
- **Accessibility**- making sure everyone's needs are met.
- **Accessibility**- making sure everyone can participate fully.
- Being a **reflective** person; growth mindset*
- **Communicating** openly, building trust & a safe space.
- **Resilience** and determination.
- **Awareness** – knowing your unconscious biases and being sensitive to other people's needs and differences.
- **Who**- involving people that matter.
- **Time**- involving people fully.
- **Learning**, reflecting and improving together.

*(Growth Mindset - this is the belief that one's abilities and intelligence can be developed. See <https://www.mindsetworks.com/science/> for more information.)

See 'Co-production litmus test' on the following pages for some prompt questions to support you to get things right and challenge yourself on your values and skills

Co-production litmus test

Here are some prompt questions to support you to get things right and to help you (regularly) challenge yourself on your values and skills.

Values

- Am I really treating everyone as an equal and seeing the whole person in each person?
- Am I being honest and respectful?
- What language am I using, could it cause problems if misinterpreted?
- Are my clothes so formal that they might make people feel a power imbalance, because of the symbolism in power dressing?
- Am I hiding parts of my whole self, because I am afraid to be 'seen'?
- Am I hiding behind my professional status?
- When I introduce myself, do I create a power imbalance by stating my job title (this applies to all professionals in a group setting)? Should we just say what area we work in?
- Am I fully aware of my unconscious biases that might be coming in and affecting how I interact with people? Do I know where these come from, and how to adjust my behaviour or challenge myself to not allow my bias to come out in my actions and words?



Skills

- Am I good at facilitating workshops/meetings or do I need to update my training?
- Am I truly reflective in my practice and honest with myself and others about how I can improve?
- How do I react when I am challenged or faced with conflict? Am I defensive? Why? How do I address this to make sure I am skilled enough to be proactive, confident, calm and positive, even in difficult situations?
- Do I have basic coaching, mentoring or mediation skills?
- Are my communication and compassionate leadership skills strong?
- Am I empathic, supportive and caring, and do I know how to make people feel valued and respected?
- Do I know how to be inclusive?
- How do I know that everyone in the room feels valued, respected and involved?
- How do I really know that everyone in the room understands the task? Is it because I told them the task, or did I check back with them using an activity?
- How do I know that everyone in the room feels safe to make mistakes, and safe to challenge



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