"It started at home":
A critical examination of family mediation as an intervention to prevent youth homelessness.

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Starting at home: conflict and housing insecurity

How do young people become ‘at risk of homelessness’?

How are we responding to this issue?

Does mediation work? What do we know about mediation?

Aim and objectives

The project aims to critically examine mediation as an approach to youth homelessness prevention.

1.Empower young people to voice their experiences of mediation and conciliation services as a mechanism to prevent homelessness.

2.Explore the role of networks and familial ties in mediation and conciliation responses to youth homelessness.

3.Investigate conceptualisations of home and feelings of ontological security in young people's journeys through mediation and conciliation services.

4.Consider the implications of young people's experiences of mediation and conciliation services for the prevailing conceptualisations of homelessness prevention.

5.Identify implications for mediation and conciliation services and homelessness prevention policy more widely.

Research Design and Methodology

Young People

•Experience of mediation and 'at risk of homelessness'
•16-25 year olds
•Biographical participatory interviews
•Network mapping activity
•Accessed through range of statutory and non-statutory organisations

Mediation Workers

• Semi-structured interviews
•Across the sector through Local Authority Housing teams, Social Services, Third Sector support delivery organisations, Youth homeless organisations
•Mediation in a range of formats including workshops, one to one sessions and longer-term drop-in sessions

Key Themes

Home

Care

Conflict

Networks

*Pseudonym

Sadie*, 16 years old

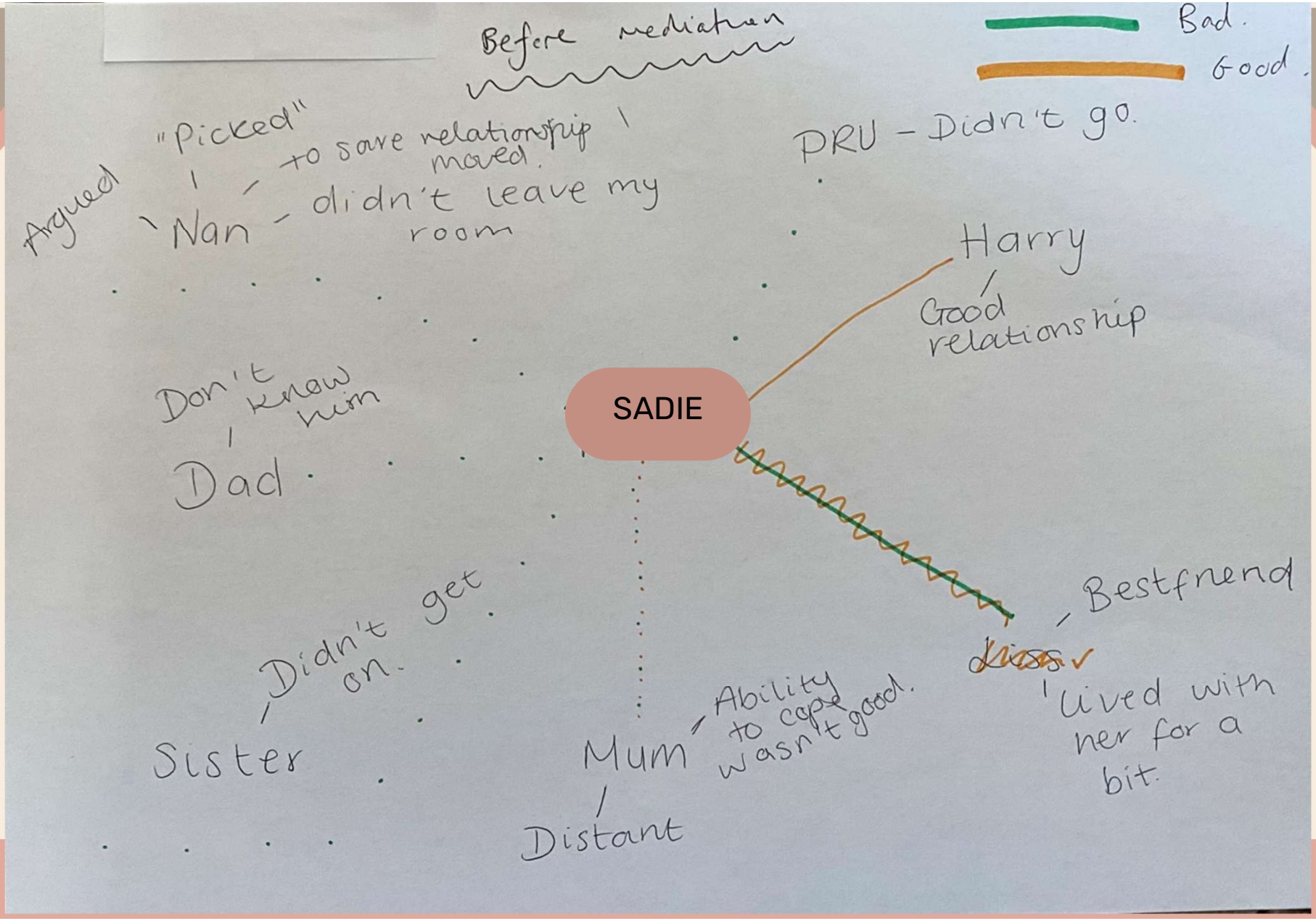
Experience of trauma and family deaths

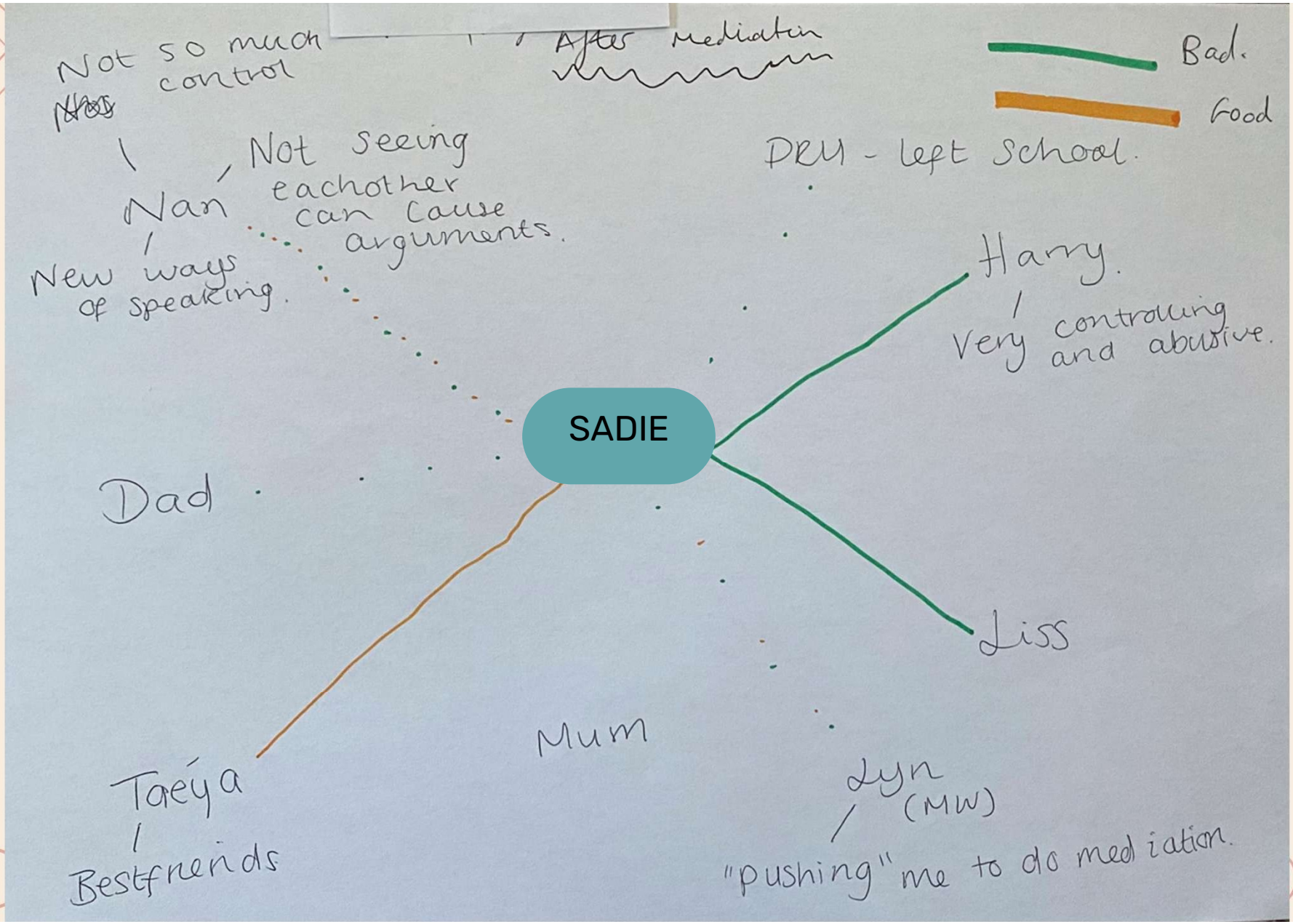
Mediation aim to repair relationship with Grandmother

Process of self-acceptance after being a 'looked after child'

Moved to supported accommodation

Multi Agency support network involved


Before mediation
Bad.
Good.
Argued
"Picked"
to save relationship
moved.
Nan - didn't leave my room
PRU - Didn't go.
Harry
Good relationship
Don't know him
Dad
SADIE
Didn't get on.
Sister
Mum
Ability to cope wasn't good.
Distant
Bestfriend
lived with her for a bit.


Not so much control
After Mediation
Bad.
Good
Not seeing eachother can cause arguments.
Nan
New ways of speaking.
DRU - left School.
Harry.
Very controlling and abusive.
SADIE
Dad
Liss
Mum
Taéya
Bestfriends
Lyn (MW)
"pushing" me to do mediation.

Caring role of the mediation workers

- They go above and beyond their role
- Support the whole family and not just the young person
- Demonstrate how to care, often to young people who may not have experienced this care
- Trusted adult
- Important to recognise the constraints: structural hierarchies, bureaucracy of the system, vicarious trauma impact

Care

Home is at breaking point...

‘Unmaking’ to re-making home…

- Baxter and Brickell’s (2014) home unmaking conceptualisation
- Type of home being unmade using Gurney’s (1990) influential work on harmful home and tole of ACE
- Home unmaking is continuous, it is not a singular event
- Home unmaking and making are not mutually exclusive. Necessary to unmake home to remake
- Role of grief poses a barrier to home making
- Reconcile these feelings of loss, grief and hurt to move forward through the home making journey

Key Learnings

- Mediation is a JOURNEY rather than a one point intervention
- Role of familial ties and institutional support are interlinked
- Mediation is CARE WORK, they are demonstrating and leading by example
- ‘Home-making’ and ‘un-making’ are not mutually exclusive, it is embedded throughout the mediation journey
- Have an understanding of how mediation works, for who and when it works
- Mediation is necessary in PREVENTING youth homelessness, but this is required at the right time of intervention
- Challenges are embedded at different levels
- Innovative methods developed WITH young people uncover their voices

What's next?

- Interest for this research across sector and academia (local government, non-governmental organisations, and international research bodies)
- Utilising the findings to inform new prevention legislation in Wales, UK
- Publications in progress
- Working with partners to develop a framework as a tool for practitioners
- Methodological interest in support

Diolch am wrando...

Thank you for listening...

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