POSITIVE NARRATIVES

Naming and traversing growth areas

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7 Dimensions of Well-being
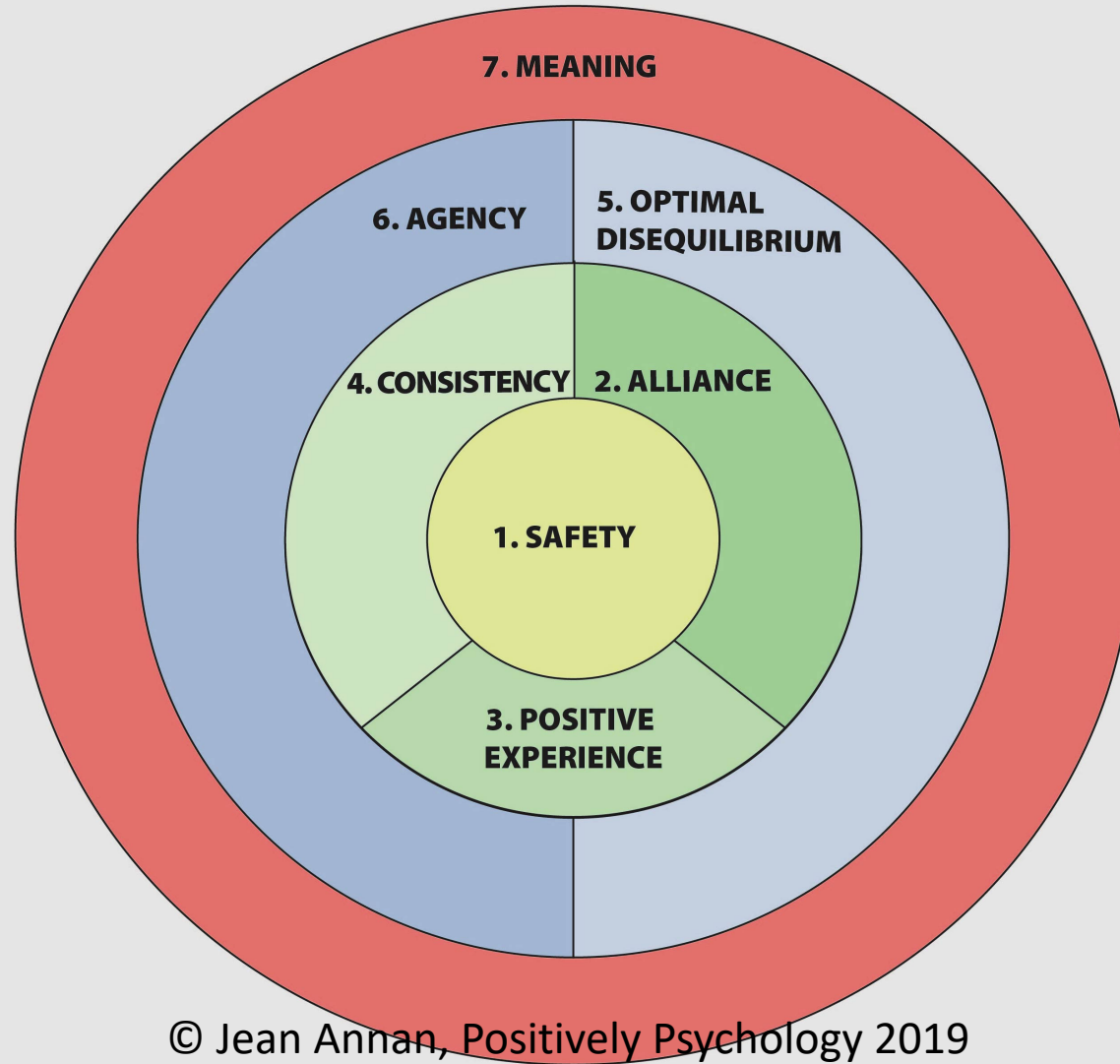
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LIVES IN STORIES

- Lives are embedded in the stories we hold
- We tend to act consistently with these stories
- Stories are dynamic, negotiable and unique — possibly multiple
- Neuroplasticity

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LANGUAGE IS A TOOL THAT POSITIONS ACTIONS

INTERNAL POSITIONING: When a behavior is viewed as inherent part of a person, their power to move forward is reduced.

EXTERNAL POSITIONING: When actions are viewed as external, as objects located in the interaction between people and the world, people have greater power to progress in intended directions.

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Relational language

- Explore the relationship between the person and the problem or solution

- Metaphor is useful

For example:

- What effect does the 'Wandering' have on you?

- What do you do to keep 'Wandering' for outside activity?

- What will happen for you when "Wandering is happy to wait for you?

Example of externalizing language

You are not bending your leg enough.

That leg doesn't want to bend.

The person is not the problem,
the problem is the problem.

White & Epston, 1988/89; Denborough, 2014.

Reconfiguration of phrases – from external to internal
A collaborative, negotiated process

1. Sam is angry.

   Anger is upsetting Sam and his friends.

2. Tahlia is causing problems again.

   Trouble is finding Tahlia again.

3. Oliver is so callous.

   Oliver is rethinking his relationship with empathy.

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Positive reframing: From problems to improvement areas

- Hear and acknowledge the story

- Then look together for the sparkling moments

- These are pivotal points for change

- Positive focus from this point

- Where do we want to go? Describing the growth area and naming it.

- This helps to put the focus on growth and progress.

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Positive steps – moving forward

1. Describe the improvement area (e.g. I want to recognize when I am becoming unsettled)

2. Name the improvement (e.g. ''The Cues')

3. Explore how everyone could work to help (e.g. supporting the student in ways that allow 'The Cues' to become clear).

Examples
- Teacher, parent or peer to a child: What can I do to make the The Cues clearer?
- What can we do to keep Wandering outside? (Active students, teachers, family/whanau)

In general

- When interacting about the maps incidentally, use the 'name'

- Positive, externalising language strengthens the person in relation to the learning area as the mapping unfolds.

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Practice Activity

Look at a student's map. The growth area may have been described. If not, make one up for now.

1. Based on the description, what name might the child have given the growth area?

    - Create a **one or two-word name** that can be discussed as an object, perhaps a person or a thing.
    - Just a guess at this stage – in practice you would listen for children's language and support them to suggest the name.
    - Children can help one another to find a name that is 'right' for them.

2. Devise two or three questions or comments that you could use to help students explore ways of progressing.

    Examples
    - How can I help you make friends with kindness?
    - I can see that communication is strong in this area of your map. Tell me a bit more about that.
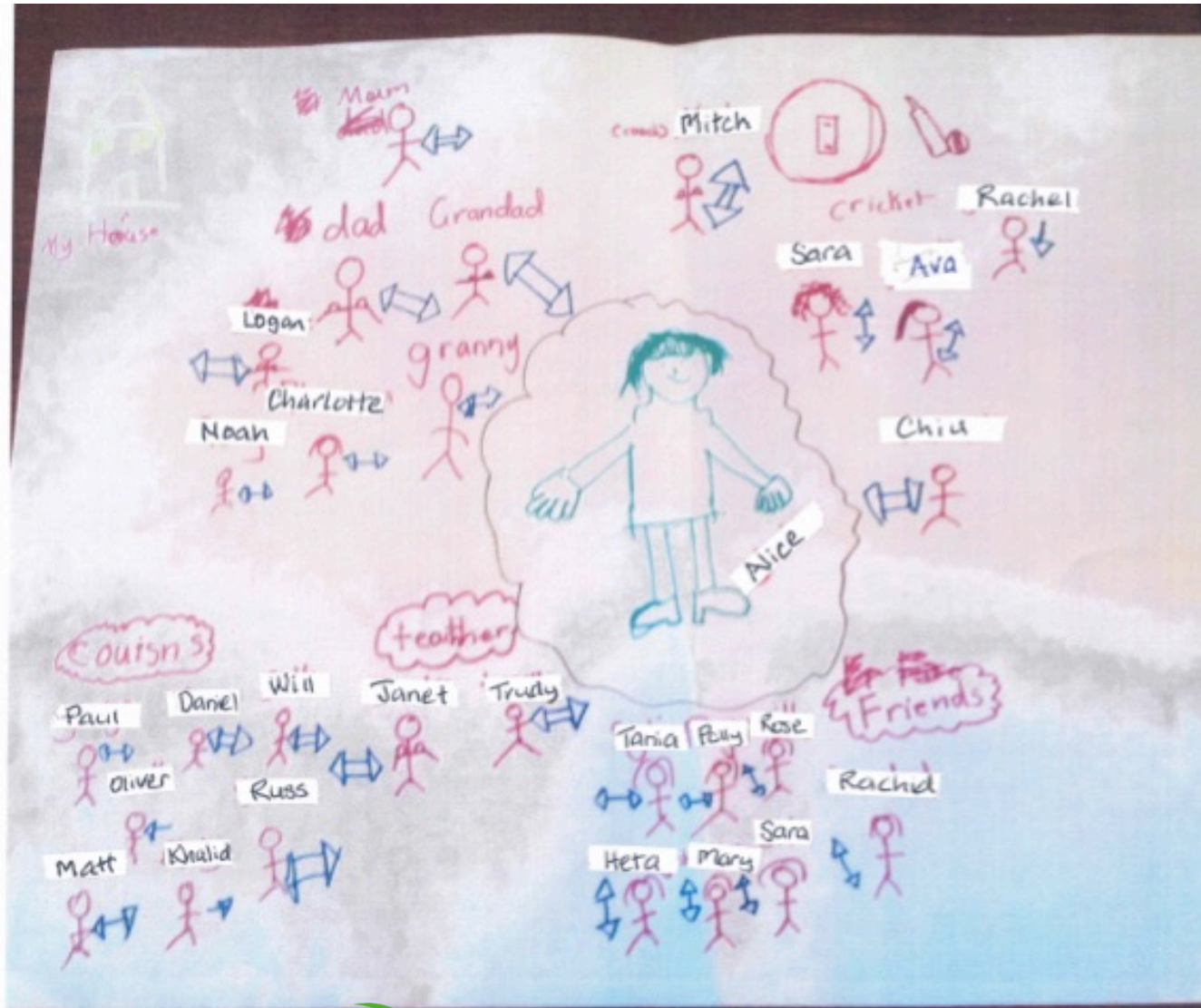   - It seemed that focus was right there with you today. Did you do anything special today?

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Alice's first map

I want to be friends with deaf and hearing people.

I like my friends but I want to communicate with more people.

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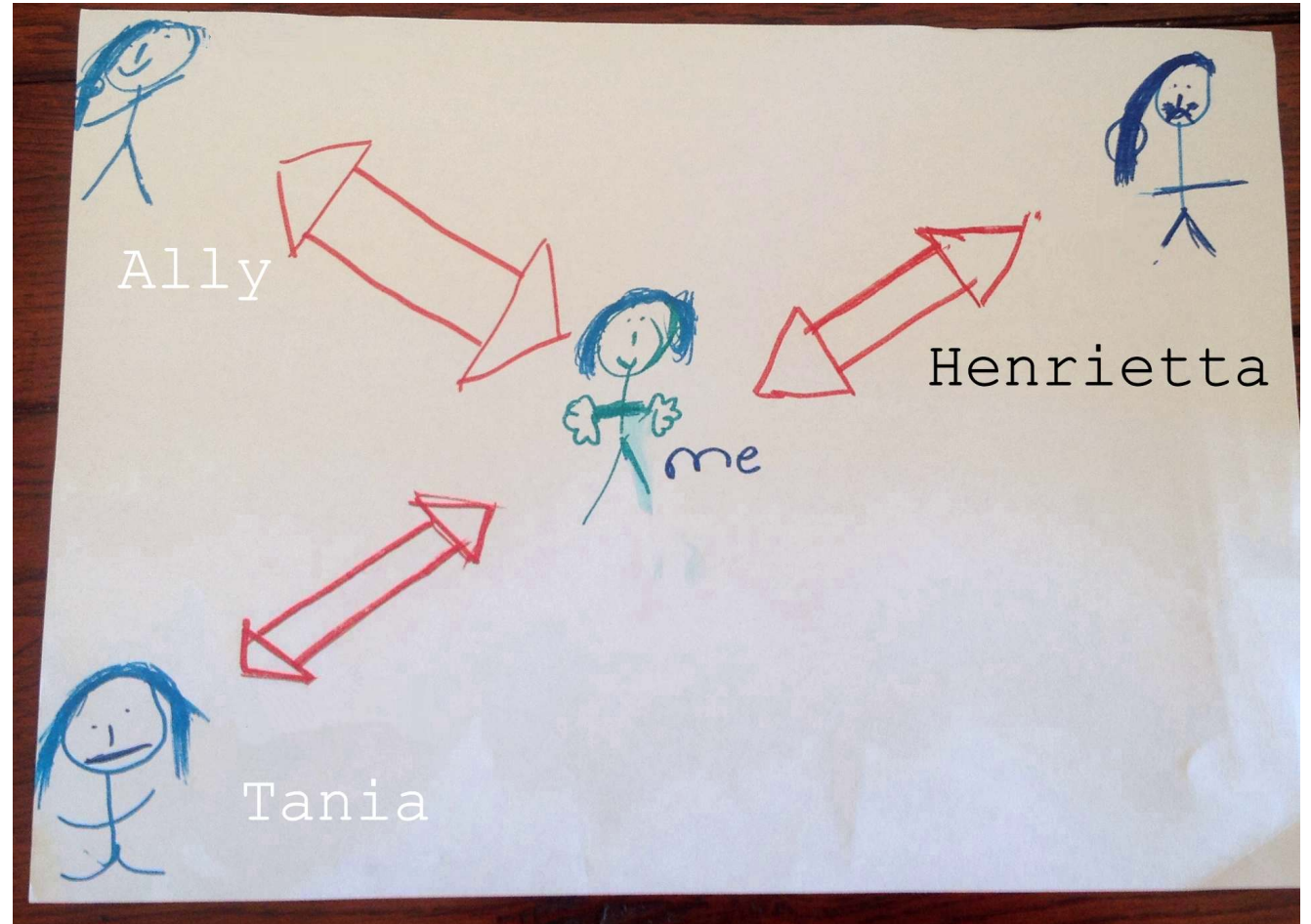
Alice's second map

Alice's second map after talking with her resource teacher

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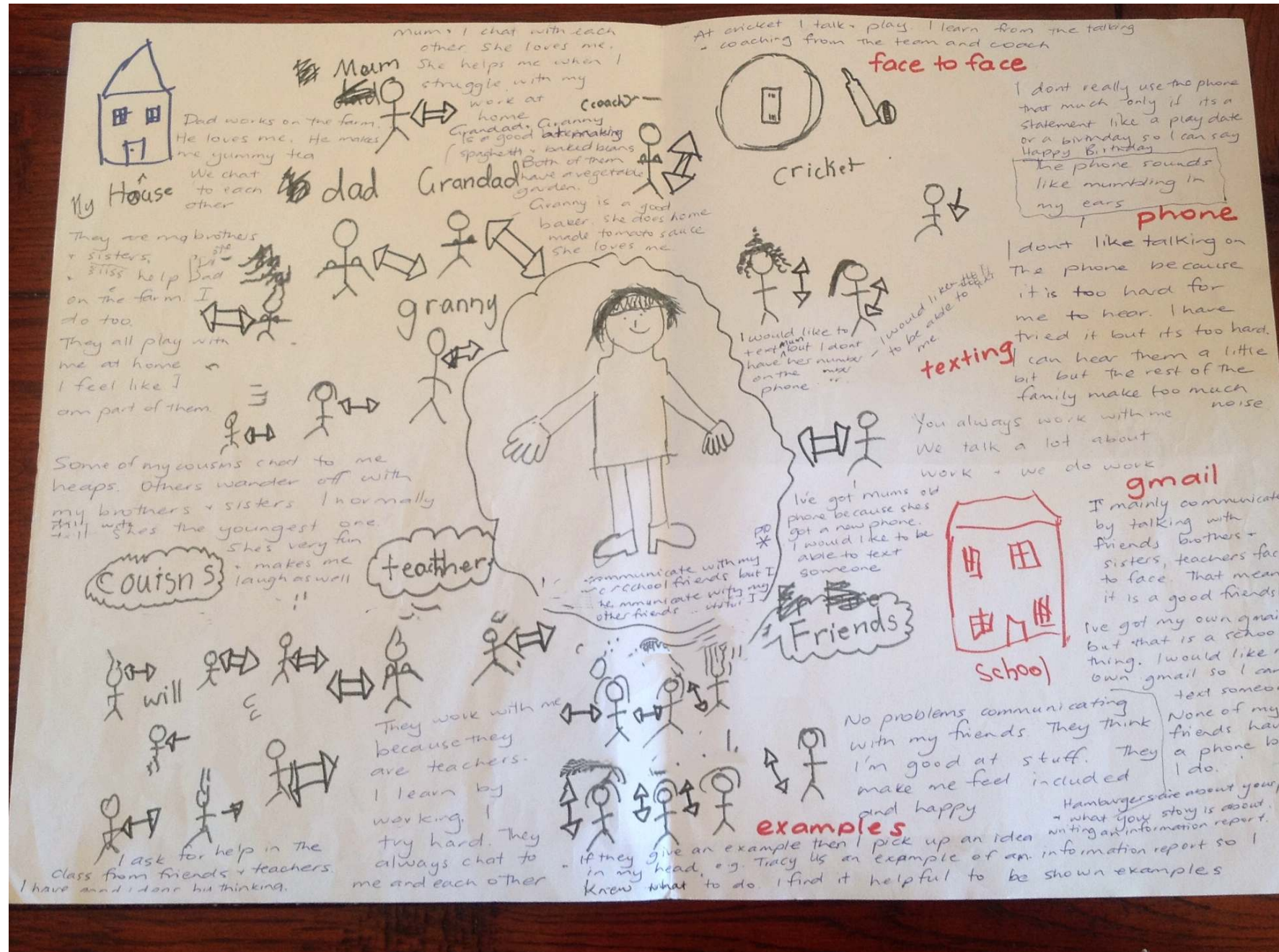
Externalising or Internalising?

1. You're so lazy.

2. What is anger doing to your friendships?

3. Its because he's got attention deficit disorder.

4. She is a trouble-maker and causing massive problems in this class.

5. She is gifted, a bit of a nerd really.

6. Distraction is keeping you from showing us your best work.

7. Who is looking after the special needs children?

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