SAFE FUTURES HUB

Using practice-based knowledge to prevent and respond to childhood sexual violence

Guidance framework

Contents

This Guidance Framework was developed by the *Safe Futures Hub: Solutions to end childhood sexual violence,* with support from the Oak Foundation. It was shaped through a deeply consultative process involving over sixty key informants, the Safe Futures Hub Core and Leadership Groups, Advisory Group members, and many practitioners and individuals with lived expertise who shared insights, reviewed drafts, and offered valuable reflections throughout the process.

Using practice-based knowledge to prevent and respond to childhood sexual violence: Guidance framework

We welcome your suggestions and feedback at info@safefutureshub.org

> **Reader's note**
>
> Already read the Background Paper?
>
> Skip ahead to Practice guidance on using PbK. The first two sections summarise PbK and its value in CSV prevention and response, while the third section offers step-by-step guidance for gathering and applying it.

1. Introduction

Background

The [Safe Futures Hub: Solutions to End Childhood Sexual Violence](#) (SFH), launched in September 2023, is co-led by the [Sexual Violence Research Initiative](#) (SVRI), [Together for Girls](#), and [WeProtect Global Alliance](#). Its mission is to end childhood sexual violence (CSV) by promoting solutions informed by data, evidence, practitioner knowledge, and community-led approaches. By leading efforts to end CSV through collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and innovation, SFH provides stakeholders with the tools and resources needed for transformative change.

The work of SFH is built around three key pillars:

1

Redefining knowledge

Documenting and promoting different forms of knowledge from the field, including practice-based knowledge (PbK).

2

Mobilising knowledge

Gathering and presenting existing evidence in easy-to-understand, inclusive, and interactive formats.

3

Building knowledge

Identifying evidence gaps (for example, CSV experienced by children with disabilities or sibling-perpetrated CSV) and creating new research, while advocating for more focus on these areas.

The **redefining knowledge pillar** brings together practice, lived, and academic expertise to strengthen CSV prevention and response. This pillar promotes diverse forms of knowledge, with a particular emphasis on PbK. It aims to build a fuller picture of what works and to bridge the gap between research and real-world implementation.

Along with [The role of practice-based knowledge in preventing and responding to childhood sexual violence: Background Paper](#) (Background Paper), this Guidance Framework is one of the outputs under the redefining knowledge pillar. The Background Paper highlights the value of PbK in CSV prevention and response, while the Guidance Framework offers practical guidance on how to gather, share and apply PbK.

Background Paper
What is PbK?
Why does it matter?
Examples

Guidance Framework
How do we gather and use PbK?
Ethics
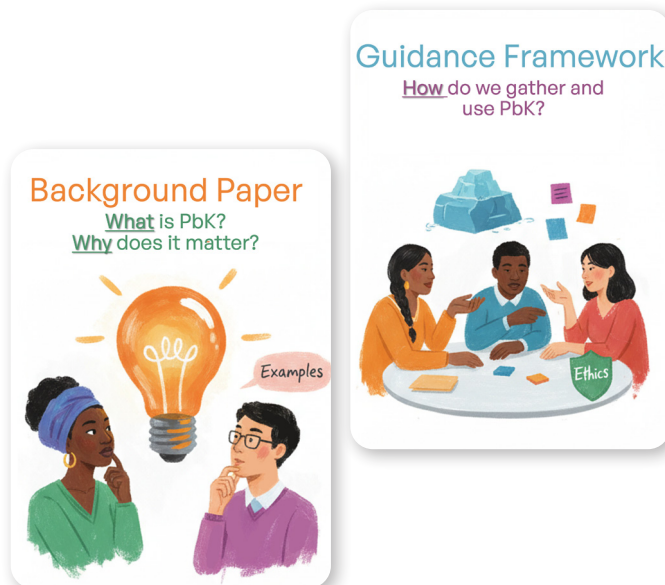
What is PbK?

In the context of CSV, PbK refers to the **valuable insights** gained through **direct engagement in** prevention and response. It includes knowledge from **practitioners**, as well as from those with **lived expertise** —when the experience of receiving support, navigating systems, or surviving harm is intentionally drawn upon to influence or improve practice.

Often **informal** and sometimes **undocumented**, PbK is **not limited to those with formal credentials**. It can also be shared in more structured or documented forms, depending on the purpose and setting in which it is shared.

PbK strengthens CSV prevention and response by **complementing and enriching other forms of knowledge.**

Understanding PbK: What it *is*

Refined through reflection and peer review

Rooted in practice and experience

Context-specific

Ethically grounded

PbK

Dynamic and evolving

Synthesised through patterns and reflections

Shared through diverse formats

Key characteristics of PbK

Rooted in practice and experience

PbK emerges from the firsthand insights of practitioners and individuals with lived expertise—when those experiences are intentionally used to inform practice. It reflects knowledge gained through practice, reflection and real-world engagement. PbK also includes tacit knowledge—insights that practitioners develop through experience and intuition, even when not fully articulated or written down. Practice-based knowledge is often led by those directly engaged in prevention and response.[1]

Context-specific

PbK is shaped by the specific social, cultural, and institutional realities of the contexts in which it develops. It should never be shared or understood detached from its environment.

Dynamic and evolving

PbK is not static. It is continually refined through reflection and real-world experience, adapting to challenges, shifting needs, and emerging patterns.

Shared through diverse and accessible formats

PbK can be shared in many ways, including oral sharing, annual reports, videos, blogs, case studies, podcasts and other structured or unstructured formats (see Using and sharing PbK). It may also be shared in the form of grey literature, particularly when these reflect insights gained through direct engagement and practice.

Synthesised through reflection and patterns

PbK moves beyond isolated anecdotes to identify broader themes and insights. In some instances, individual experiences—especially those that reveal overlooked dynamics or challenge dominant narratives—remain valuable sources of knowledge. They may shed light on gaps in response, deepen understanding of complex cases, or spark shifts in frontline practice (see the Background Paper including examples such as France's butterfly mailboxes).

Ethically grounded

As with any knowledge form, PbK can cause harm if not approached ethically. Ethical PbK involves ensuring consent, safety, confidentiality, transparency, mutual well-being and accurate ownership. This often requires PbK-specific, context-sensitive and reflective approaches, rather than rigid standards (see Ethics).

Refined through reflection and peer review

Instead of traditional academic peer review, PbK is strengthened through practice-appropriate processes such as:

- **Ethical safeguards** to prevent harm and misrepresentation
- **Peer discussions and review** within and across organisations
- Wherever possible, **triangulation** with programme data, participant feedback, evaluation findings, or lived and academic expertise

(see 'Peer reviewing' PbK).

> ## Complementary to academic knowledge
>
> While distinct in process and scope, PbK complements academic evidence. It can inform research questions, highlight gaps, and challenge or contextualise findings. When and where appropriate, practice-based insights may also be further studied through formal research or external evaluation. Together, PbK and academic research strengthen a more inclusive and grounded knowledge ecosystem (see the section on *The relationship between academic research and PbK* in the Background Paper).

Understanding PbK: What it is _not_

PbK does not replace research evidence

PbK complements—not substitutes—rigorous evidence. It offers context-specific insights from practice that help interpret research findings, highlight gaps, raise new questions, and point to areas for further study.

PbK is not just a description of practice

Learning from practice becomes PbK when experiences are intentionally reflected on, lessons about _how_ and _why_ are drawn out, and those insights are gathered so they can inform future action.

PbK is not beyond improvement

Like most knowledge, PbK is situated and evolving. Whenever appropriate and possible, it should be refined and tested.

PbK is not just about successes

PbK includes honest reflection on the failures, unintended consequences, and ethical dilemmas that emerge in practice. It is a tool for critique and reform, not simply promotion of practice.

PbK is not universally applicable

PbK is always shaped by context. What works in one setting may not work in another, so it should spark reflection—not serve as a blueprint—and always be considered alongside other knowledge and local realities.

PbK is not free from bias or power dynamics

As with all knowledge, PbK reflects the roles, positions, and institutional pressures of those who produce it. Responsible use requires being clear about whose knowledge is included, actively bringing in diverse voices, and reflecting on the conditions that shaped it.

PbK is not exempt from rigour

PbK is not exempt from rigour—it simply follows different pathways than research evidence. Rigour in PbK comes from ethical reflection, transparency, and peer validation. These processes make PbK trustworthy and credible.

PbK does not speak for all

Even ethically developed PbK reflects only the context and people from which it comes. Seeing the bigger picture requires drawing from many knowledge sources.

For a more detailed understanding of what PbK is not, see _What PbK is not: Important notes_ in the [Background Paper](#).

Methodology and approach

The Safe Futures Hub adopted a consultative process to develop the Background Paper and the Guidance Framework. Between January 2024 and July 2025, this process prioritised the meaningful involvement of people with lived and practice expertise, recognising them as essential participants in shaping the design, direction, and content of the work. This approach reflects our commitment to equity by challenging traditional assumptions about whose knowledge is considered credible and valuable. It also involved working through tensions across types of expertise, while opening space for new ways of learning.

The methodology included:

- **Key informant interviews:** Sixty-three key informants were consulted across various regions, including Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, East and Southeast Asia, Oceania, Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean. Informants held an array of roles in the prevention and response to CSV. They were primarily practitioners, alongside movement builders, policy consultants, researchers, individuals with lived expertise, activists, and a funder.

- **Knowledge mapping:** Besides academic research, we learned from reports, websites, newsletters, zines, blogs, videos, podcasts, social media posts, simulations and game prototyping. Crucially, we also drew from unpublished materials.

- **Listening sessions:** Two in-person sessions were held to refine the Guidance Framework. Over the two sessions, twenty-five practitioners

and researchers provided critical feedback on its relevance and usability.

- **External review:** The SFH Advisory Group, as well as key informants, gave detailed feedback on the two resources and shared additional reflections over a virtual feedback session. The discussion brought together a range of perspectives, affirming the value of the resources while also offering rich insights for their continued strengthening and evolution.

About this Guidance Framework

Who is this Guidance Framework for?

This Guidance Framework is **primarily designed** for **practitioners** and **organisations working directly on CSV prevention and response.** It offers tools and reflections to support them in recognising, strengthening, and sharing their knowledge.

At the same time, the Guidance Framework **may also be useful to secondary audiences,** including people with lived expertise, researchers, policymakers, activists, academics, and other key stakeholders **interested in understanding how PbK is gathered, shared, and applied.** By outlining key concepts, ethical considerations, and practical approaches, this Guidance Framework can help these audiences see what PbK entails and how it can be used responsibly and effectively.

> ### What the Guidance Framework does not do
>
> Our understanding of PbK recognises that insight and expertise can come from many sources, including practitioners, victims and/or survivors, caregivers, and others affected by CSV (see the section on *Who contributes to PbK* in the [Background Paper](#)). However, this Guidance Framework does not provide guidance on documenting lived expertise or contributions from other groups, even though these remain essential in PbK.

What is the aim of the Guidance Framework?

> "Most available resources focus on what PbK is, but do not tell us how to collect or disseminate it. We need tools that tell us how to go about it."
>
> Key informant

This Guidance Framework was developed in response to a **gap identified during consultations: the need for practical tools to recognise, gather, and apply PbK.** By providing clear, practical steps and tools to gather PbK, reflect on it, share it with consent and context, and link it with other knowledge forms, the Guidance Framework paves the way for:

1. **Improving practice in real-time** by supporting practitioners to intentionally reflect on their knowledge and strengthen their practice.

2. **Growing the shared knowledge base** by documenting and sharing PbK responsibly with clear context and ethical safeguards.

3. **Strengthening collective responses to CSV** by integrating PbK with other knowledge forms to inform more grounded, ethical, and effective strategies for CSV prevention and response.

> ### Side note: The knowledge is there — support must follow
>
> Practitioners working on CSV are already generating valuable knowledge every day, and this Guidance Framework starts by recognising and valuing that. Almost all practitioners we consulted asked for practical tools to help gather and share PbK. At the same time, some reminded us that the real barriers are often structural — limited time, funding, resources, or recognition. While these challenges are factored into every stage of this Guidance Framework, looking ahead, SFH will also engage donors, researchers, and institutions to build sector-wide recognition of PbK and strengthen the structures that support it.

What the Guidance Framework offers

Inside, you will find:

Step-by-step guidance for recognising, gathering, and documenting PbK.

Templates and prompts to make documentation easier.

Suggestions for processes to gather PbK in engaging and low-burden ways.

Ethical checklists to support safe, respectful, and responsible use.

Practical tools for using PbK to improve practice in real-time.

Suggestions for sharing PbK in ways that extend learning beyond your organisation.

Before you dive in: A note on how to use the Guidance Framework

This Guidance Framework is an evolving work that will be updated over time, incorporating new insights and lessons learned. Please keep the following in mind:

- **Emerging and evolving:** PbK in the context of CSV is a relatively new domain. There are no fixed "best" practices yet, and the approaches shared here continue to be refined.

- **Reflective and participatory:** The activities in this framework invite you to pause, reflect, and draw on your own role and experience, in conversation with others. PbK grows stronger when reflection and dialogue are part of the process.

- **Flexible and adaptable, not prescriptive:** The tools offered here are suggestive, not fixed templates. All tools and questions can be tailored to meet your specific needs. Adapt the wording, reframe the questions, or simplify the activities to make them work in your setting.

- **Attention to well-being and collective care:** Identifying and sharing PbK can involve emotional labour, especially for victims and/ or survivors, frontline workers, or affected communities. This Guidance Framework encourages voluntary, supported, and trauma-informed engagement, grounded in consent and care. For additional support, you may find it helpful to consult the following resources:
  - Brave Movement's Practising self-care
  - SVRI's Dare to care: Wellness, self and collective care for those working in the VAW and VAC fields

- **Rights-based approach:** Use this framework in ways that recognise that all individuals, including children, have rights — not just needs or vulnerabilities. PbK processes should centre consent, inclusion, and preventing further harm. Children, in particular, should have safe and age-appropriate opportunities to be heard and take part meaningfully.

- **Starting points:** PbK takes time, support, and organisational buy-in, especially in crisis or fast-paced settings. This Guidance Framework serves as a starting point, with additional examples and low-resource options to be added as the field evolves.

2. Why is PbK important for preventing and responding to CSV?

Why is PbK important for preventing and responding to CSV?

Through the consultation process, we identified **four broad ways in which PbK contributes to CSV prevention and response.** The benefits are interrelated and often reinforce one another.

These **contributions are not unique to PbK**, but **PbK plays an important role in strengthening and expanding them.**

1. Expanding learning from underrepresented regions and populations

PbK brings forward insights from communities and contexts that have been historically excluded from CSV research. This helps ensure that their experiences are recognised and reflected in prevention and response efforts. By documenting how interventions are implemented in these contexts—what enables or hinders them, and how practitioners and communities respond—PbK **helps build a fuller, more inclusive picture** of what it takes to prevent and respond to CSV in diverse settings. PbK can also guide the direction of future research in these contexts.

2. Strengthening frontline practice

PbK **helps practitioners and organisations refine their own work in real-time**. It can support the early stages of trying a new intervention, adapting evidence-based approaches to fit local context, and addressing practical challenges that arise during implementation. PbK can also inform how successful evidence-based interventions are sustained or scaled, complementing research by offering grounded insights from the frontlines.

3. Learning from the expertise of practitioners

Practitioners are not just applying external ideas; they continually generate valuable knowledge from their direct experiences. PbK makes space for the kinds of learning that often go undocumented and provides a way to gather and share this expertise with other stakeholders. For instance, practitioners often **provide early warnings about emerging risks, highlight ethical concerns in implementation**, and

share children's perspectives that might never surface through formal research. PbK **highlights what seems to work**, what is causing harm, and what needs to change in places **where little research exists**. This kind of knowledge helps others **avoid repeating mistakes** or "reinventing the wheel." It informs smarter decisions and can even push institutions to reform. PbK does not just improve delivery—it honours practitioners as creators of knowledge and brings their wisdom into the knowledge base.

4. Learning from CSV lived expertise

People with lived experience of CSV—victims and/ or survivors, caregivers, and affected community members —hold crucial knowledge that can strengthen prevention, advocacy, and support systems. When applied intentionally to inform practice, this expertise forms an important part of PbK and helps expand our understanding of **how practice is received and experienced**, not just how it is designed or delivered. **PbK can help ensure that CSV responses are grounded in the lived realities** of those most affected and reflect their needs and priorities.

These four benefits of PbK in addressing CSV are discussed in more detail along with several illustrative examples in the Background Paper.

3. Practice guidance on using PbK

Practice guidance on using PbK

This section offers practical guidance for those wanting to gather and use PbK in the context of CSV. It is organised into five key parts:

3.1 Preparing for the PbK journey
Things to consider before starting.

3.2 Getting down to it: Gathering PbK
Practical steps for gathering and working with PbK.
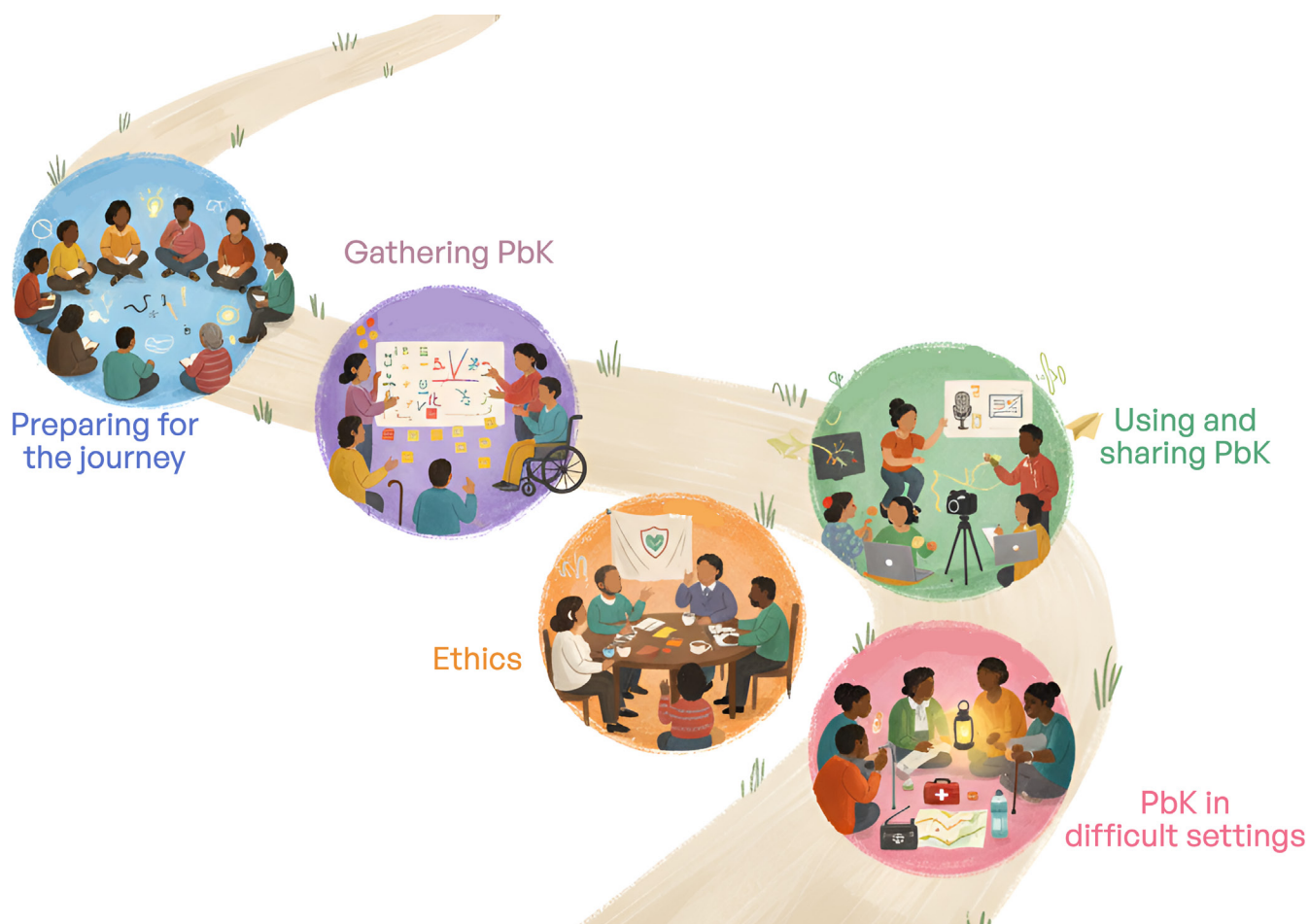
3.3 Keep in mind: Ethics
Ethical considerations.

3.4 Using and sharing PbK
Ways to use PbK to improve practice and tools to share it with others

3.5 PbK in difficult settings: Crisis, shutdowns and emergency response
Gathering PbK in crises, shutdowns and emergencies.

Preparing for the journey

Gathering PbK

Ethics

Using and sharing PbK

PbK in difficult settings

3.1 Preparing for the PbK journey

Working with PbK is rarely a linear process. It can involve navigating ambiguity, tensions, and discomfort. But with intentional preparation, you can engage more confidently and ethically in the process. This section is a starting point for building that readiness.

3.1.a Starting your PbK journey: Reflecting

Engaging with PbK is as much a reflective process as it is a technical one.

PbK is not about neat answers. It reflects learning in motion, particularly how situations evolve and how frontline workers respond in real-time. That complexity is not a flaw. It is a feature. Engaging with it can be deeply valuable, even if it is, at times, uncomfortable.

The following sections offer a starting point for this reflective journey.

What counts as knowledge?

Many of us carry implicit assumptions about what counts as valid knowledge and whose voices are credible. Conventional definitions of knowledge, often shaped by dominant Euro-American and colonial traditions, tend to position academic output as the only reliable knowledge. This excludes many other forms of valid knowledge.[2]

Different forms of knowledge

In addition to research and evidence, knowledge relevant to CSV prevention comes in many forms, including:

- **Experiential knowledge:** Insights gained through direct practice and personal experience.

- **Tacit knowledge:** Unspoken, intuitive understanding built through experience.

- **Lived expertise:** Knowledge from those directly affected by CSV.

- **Cultural knowledge:** Community-held beliefs, traditions, and practices.

- **Community knowledge:** Collective insights developed through shared experiences and dialogue.

Together, these forms of knowledge become part of PbK when they are actively applied, reflected on, and used to shape practice. See also What is PbK?

Expanding what is seen as knowledge

Integrating diverse forms of knowledge allows for a more nuanced and responsive approach to CSV prevention.

Practitioners working on the frontlines bring deep insight grounded in daily practice and contextual understanding. Yet, within prevailing knowledge systems, this form of expertise is too often undervalued and overlooked.

Insights from our consultations highlight that **dominant assumptions and systems that value only academic knowledge can discourage practitioners and organisations from recognising their own learning as meaningful.** This leads them to undervalue their expertise and feel hesitant about sharing their insights.[3]

In the words of one key informant:

> "Before we even talk about PbK, we must actively undo these internalised messages."

Working with PbK invites us to:

- **Reflect** on our own biases about knowledge and expertise.
- **Recognise** the legitimacy of diverse knowledge forms, including those rooted in practice, community, and lived expertise.
- **Get comfortable** with the complexity and 'messiness' of real-world knowledge that may not fit neatly into structured research frameworks.

See Gathering PbK for ways to implement the reflection activities listed in this section.

Reflective exercise: Baking bread

Purpose:
Illustrate how different kinds of knowledge contribute to effective CSV prevention—just like different ingredients are needed to bake bread.

Introduction:
Think of prevention work using the metaphor of baking bread (or a culturally relevant food). Each ingredient represents a different source of knowledge needed for effective prevention:

Steps:

Step 1 **Gather ingredients**

What knowledge sources shape your work (e.g., lived expertise, academic studies, practitioner insights, community perspectives)? Just as diverse ingredients enhance bread, a range of knowledge sources enriches CSV prevention and response.

Step 2 **Mix and knead**

How do these sources combine? Reflect on how these sources work together to strengthen

prevention and response efforts. Consider the limitations of relying on a single knowledge source.

Step 3 **Bake**

What are the benefits of integrating different ingredients or diverse perspectives? What happens if an element is missing? Also consider the impact of missing an essential knowledge type —like yeast in bread—and how its absence affects effectiveness. Much like a well-baked loaf, a holistic approach to CSV prevention ensures richer and more effective strategies.

The bread may not rise without yeast, just like prevention strategies may fall flat without practitioner PbK!

Recognising yourself as a knowledge creator

Many practitioners do not see themselves as knowledge creators. This is not a personal shortcoming; it is a result of structural norms that devalue practice-based expertise.

> "Practitioners are not mere contributors—they are integral to the knowledge-building process.
>
> We just need to remind ourselves of this."
>
> Key informant

This section aims to **support practitioners in recognising, claiming, and valuing their own knowledge**. Your insights, shaped by frontline work, relationships with communities, and practical problem-solving, are vital to improving CSV prevention and response.

Reflection prompts for practitioners

Whose knowledge is visible?

- *Who do I see as the thought leaders or creators of knowledge in the field of CSV prevention and response? Whose ideas or work do I learn from?*
- *Where do I see practitioners in this landscape? Are we recognised as knowledge creators?*
- *Can I think of examples of knowledge which have not been taken up or recognised? Why?*

Recognising myself as a knowledge creator

Note: These questions can feel heavy. For the first time, just pick one or two concrete moments from your work and jot down what you learned—enough to remind yourself of your expertise.

- *Do I see myself as a knowledge creator? Why or why not?*
- *What are some lessons I have learned from the work I do—big or small—that others could also learn from?*
- *What insights or skills have I developed through my work?*
- *How have I adapted to changing circumstances or challenges in my work?*
- *Are there patterns or lessons from my work that have helped improve outcomes?*
- *Have I applied insights from past experiences to address current challenges?*
- *Can I think of examples where my direct experience with communities shaped a better approach?*

- *Can I think of a time when a colleague's or community's experience or insight positively influenced my work?*

Others' perception of my knowledge

- *Have I had opportunities to share my insights with others (e.g., peers, networks)?*
- *What has made this easy or hard for me? What challenges have I faced in sharing my knowledge with others?*
- *Do I feel my knowledge is valued by others? Why or why not?*
- *What would help me feel more recognised as a knowledge creator?*

Note: Come back to these questions over time. Re-reading and adding to your notes is a simple way to keep recognising that you are, in fact, a knowledge creator.

For ways of implementing reflective activities, see [Processes for gathering PbK](#).

Asset mapping as a tool for knowledge recognition

Asset mapping is a simple activity that can help surface the expertise and strengths already present among practitioners and teams.[4]

This activity helps surface PbK by making visible the insights, skills, and relationships already shaping your work — and if time is short, you can adapt it by sharing just two highlights at a time.

Activity: Asset mapping

Step 1 **Identify your strengths**

Draw three columns titled **knowledge, skills**, and **relationships**:

- **Knowledge:** *What are some insights we have learnt from our work? (maybe 2-3)*
- **Skills:** *What practical skills have helped us address challenges or bring about change? (e.g., communication, problem-solving, crisis response)*
- **Relationships:** *Who have we learnt from and collaborated with, and how has this supported our work? (e.g., who do we learn from, and how?)*

Identify your strengths

Knowledge	Skills	Relationships
We understand the challenges children face in disclosing violence...	We have learnt how to support disclosures safely while supporting the family	Relationships with religious leaders helped us get community buy-in
We know about the local attitudes toward disclosing CSV	All team members know how to support a child through first disclosure	Our rapport with the police ensures they allow us to sit with the child when reporting

Map connections

Step 2 Map connections

Draw lines between related insights, skills, and relationships.

- *Which skills help us apply our knowledge?*
- *Which relationships make our work stronger?*
- *Have certain insights led to creative solutions?*

Step 3 Reflect

Ask:

- *What patterns emerge?*
- *Are there areas of expertise we had not recognised before?*
- *How have our insights shaped our work and influenced others?*

Reflect

3.1.b Preparing as an organisation

"Many organisations are unaware of the knowledge they possess.

Are you ready to acknowledge and leverage this knowledge?"

Key informant

Organisational readiness is just as important as individual reflection. Practitioners operate within systems, and those systems shape whether their knowledge is surfaced, valued, or lost.

Even if a practitioner recognises their insights as PbK, they may not be taken seriously unless the organisation also views them as valid and valuable.

Clarifying how knowledge is defined within an organisation is crucial for uncovering any biases that may limit the utilisation of diverse perspectives.

Creating organisational conditions for PbK to emerge

PbK does not emerge on its own—it requires space, safety, and intention. PbK flourishes in an organisational culture that **supports reflection, encourages asking difficult questions and treats mistakes as a learning opportunity.**[5] This also means cultivating an environment where teams feel supported in trying new approaches, reflecting honestly on what did not work as intended, and

exploring the underlying reasons with openness rather than defensiveness.

A meaningful approach to PbK depends on this kind of **curiosity—a willingness to look closely at the nuances of the work, including the parts that are uncertain, incomplete, or uncomfortable.** Without that culture, the most powerful insights from practice may never surface at all. It is therefore critical for organisations to foster a culture where learning from experience is valued, diverse perspectives are welcomed, and insights from practice are integrated into how teams think, plan, and adapt.[6]

Side note: Practice-based learning

Raising Voices describes this orientation as practice-based learning (PBL) to emphasise that the value of PbK lies not only in what is documented, but in the reflective journey itself.[7] While this Guidance Framework uses the term PbK, it aligns with the view that meaningful knowledge emerges from a culture of curiosity, interrogation, and collective reflection, not just from producing outputs.

Building organisational conditions

The following approaches can support this shift to better gather, value, and apply knowledge from practice.

1. Recognise your team's knowledge

Recognising internal expertise means moving beyond seeing practitioners only as implementers. **Position them as active knowledge creators** (see Recognising yourself as a knowledge creator for reflection tools on redefining knowledge creators).

Try this: In your next team meeting:

- Ask: *What is something we have figured out through experience that others might learn from?*
- Ask: *What do we know now that we did not at the start of this project/case?*
- Create a rotating role: *"Knowledge sharer of the month",* where someone shares a key insight or story from their work.

2. Gather knowledge intentionally but simply

You do not need elaborate systems; what matters is building habits that help you catch lessons before they are forgotten.

Establish clear and simple yet **structured processes** for collecting lessons learned and knowledge gained. This can involve the tools mentioned in Processes for gathering PbK.

Try this: Add one reflection question to every team meeting, such as:

- *What is one thing that surprised us this week?*
- *Did anything not go as expected, and why?*

3. Link to practice

Ensure that learning loops are closed by revisiting past learnings and using them to inform future planning.

Try this: At the start of planning for a new activity, take 5 minutes to ask:

- *Have we done something similar before?*
- *What did we learn that could help us now?*

4. Create safe and brave spaces

Real learning happens when people feel safe to share not just successes, but also failures, doubts, and challenging experiences. **Engage diverse perspectives** by creating intentional spaces for input across roles and levels of seniority.

Try this:

- Leaders go first. Set the tone by sharing something you struggled with and what you learned from it.
- Make it clear that no one is punished for trying and failing. Say it often. Show it with your actions.
- Promote an environment where questioning and critique are welcomed.
- Create a culture where team members feel safe to express differing opinions. This openness is essential for authentic learning.

5. Use inclusive methods

Tools like **anonymous feedback or storytelling circles** can surface insights that might not emerge in formal settings.

Try this:

- Use anonymous short surveys to hear from those who do not usually speak up.
- Host a *"story circle"* where everyone shares a short example of a challenge they navigated.

Reflection tools for teams

In addition to practical steps, teams may also benefit from dedicated space to reflect together on how knowledge is understood and valued in the organisation. The following questions can be used in meetings or workshops to spark dialogue and identify areas for change (also see How to do it: Processes for gathering PbK for ways to implement the reflection tools).

What counts as knowledge in our organisation?

What do we usually treat as 'knowledge' in our work?

- Examples: research papers, lived expertise, team discussions, monitoring data, case notes, training manuals.

Whose knowledge do we tend to trust the most?

- *Do we rely more on external experts, senior staff, people with degrees, frontline experiences, children's voices, or community insights? Can we write these in order of how much we rely on them?*

What types of knowledge guide our decisions?

- *Is it mostly formal research? Or what we have seen work on the ground? Or what communities tell us? Do we blend them?*

Do we value all types of knowledge?

- *Are there patterns in whose knowledge we cite, document, or amplify?*

- *Are there any types of knowledge we overlook?*
- *Do we consider certain voices, such as children, youth, or less experienced staff, as "less valid"?*
- *What are the assumptions or biases that impact our perception of valid knowledge?*
- *How could we do better at including different ways of knowing?*

Where do we see knowledge intersecting?

- *Can we think of moments where research, lived expertise, and frontline practice have complemented or contradicted one another?*
- *How did we navigate that tension—or did we ignore one perspective?*

What would it look like to shift this?

- *How can we more intentionally integrate diverse knowledge types into planning, analysis, and reflection?*
- *What space (practical or symbolic) can we create to legitimise and centre multiple forms of knowledge?*

Remember, these tools aim to **highlight the value of PbK while also recognising the importance of other knowledge forms.** For PbK to be meaningful and effective, organisations must reflect on how different forms of knowledge—academic, experiential, and practice-based—are integrated into their work. Valuing a broad spectrum of knowledge fosters a more inclusive environment, encouraging contributions from all team members, and improving how the organisation identifies, shares, and learns from PbK. (see Reflective exercise: Baking bread)

Note: While these tools may not gather PbK directly, they help prepare the ground for it to emerge. PbK is not always "out there" waiting to be collected — it often develops through reflective, relational, and practice-based processes. More focused methods for gathering and documenting PbK are shared later in this Guidance Framework.

3.1.c Make peace with the messiness of PbK

> "We must acknowledge the complexity of PbK and emphasise the importance of honesty about this complexity."
>
> Key informant

Engaging honestly with complexity

Working with PbK means embracing contradictions, layers, unknowns, and evolving understandings. Not every insight will be conclusive. Sometimes the work will raise more questions than answers. Engaging with complexity requires a mindset shift: from seeking fixed outcomes to valuing the process of learning itself. Instead of simplifying or flattening these tensions, PbK invites us to reflect honestly:

- *What went well?*
- *What was difficult or unresolved?*
- *What are we still learning?*

This shift—from seeking perfect outcomes to valuing the learning process—helps build a culture where reflection, curiosity, and iteration are normalised.

Making space for multiple perspectives

One aspect of this complexity is that different groups—victims and/or survivors, communities, practitioners, and researchers—may see the same issue differently. PbK grows stronger when these diverse perspectives are brought into discussion.

Try this: When gathering insights, ask:

- *Who else sees this differently?*
- *Whose voice is missing here?*

Respecting differences — not rushing to resolve them

When multiple perspectives are shared, disagreements are natural—even between practitioners. PbK values these differences rather than forcing agreement. Contradictions can deepen understanding and point to more balanced strategies that are often overlooked in simplified narratives.

Rather than rushing to solve or harmonise everything and finding "a single truth", PbK can hold space for multiple perspectives. The aim is to acknowledge and respect each perspective, without letting one "win".

- Instead of: *"This is true"* or *"This is wrong"*
- Try: *"This is one way of understanding it"* or *"This adds a different layer to what we know"*

Reflective activity: "Hold the tension" discussion

Purpose: Helps teams make sense of complex or conflicting insights, without rushing to find one "correct" answer.

Materials needed:

- Large sheet of paper, whiteboard, or virtual board
- Sticky notes or digital text boxes in three colours

  ✅ **Agreements**

  Tensions

  ❓ **Gaps**

Step 1 **Gather input**

Choose a specific practice area and ask the team to reflect on the insights gathered from their work and write down:

✅ **Agreements:** *Where do different perspectives align?*

🟧 **Tensions:** *Where do different perspectives differ or conflict?*

❓ **Gaps:** *What perspectives are missing or need further exploration?*

Step 2 **Create three zones**

Draw three areas on the board and have participants place their notes in the relevant area.

Step 3 **Facilitate the discussion**

Start with *Agreements*. Ask:

- *Where is there consensus?*
- *What strengths emerge from alignment?*

Move to *Tensions.* Ask:

- *Why might different perspectives exist? Why might people see things differently?*
- *How do our different beliefs and lived experiences shape these differences?*

- *How do our roles or the power we hold affect what we notice?*
- *What can be learned from the disagreement?*

Discuss *Gaps.* Ask:

- *What additional perspectives are needed to create a fuller picture?*
- *What is missing—and how might we bring it in?*

Step 4 **Reframe**

- Emphasise that tensions are a feature of PbK: *"Tensions aren't a problem—they are a sign of depth. Holding them with care can lead to stronger practice."*
- Encourage participants to see value in the contradictions, rather than feeling pressure to *"fix"* them.
- Discuss how embracing these differences can strengthen future decision-making.

Step 5 **Capture and revisit**

Keep the notes visible and encourage the team to revisit them regularly. Document how tensions shift or evolve over time.

If you are wondering how this might play out in practice, the example below shows one way a team could use the "Hold the tension" discussion in their CSV prevention work:

Example: Using "Hold the tension" in practice

A team working on CSV prevention and response in rural schools gathers insights from teachers, community members, and frontline staff. During the "Hold the tension" activity, they map out different perspectives on how to handle reporting of suspected cases:

✅ **Agreements**

- Building trust with children is critical for disclosure.
- Reporting pathways must be safe and accessible.

🟧 **Tensions**

- Some teachers worry mandatory reporting may betray children's trust.
- Practitioners note that in some communities, reporting could expose children and families

to stigma, education disruption or physical harm.
- Leaders emphasise the legal obligation to report in all cases.

❓ **Gaps**

- Children's own perspectives on reporting pathways are missing.

Instead of forcing consensus, the team recognises that each view has value. They decide to pilot more nuanced approaches, such as:

- Strengthening informed consent processes with children.
- Partnering with local child protection actors to improve trauma-informed responses.
- Continuing to explore how to balance trust-building with legal requirements.

3.1.d Acknowledge that there will be challenges

Even when the value of PbK is recognised, many barriers can get in the way. These challenges stem from shifting power dynamics, documentation barriers, biases in knowledge-building, donor expectations, and complex partnerships.

> "Working with PbK can feel hard… especially when you're juggling tight deadlines, limited staff, and urgent work. Even when you see the value of PbK, there are very real reasons it might fall to the bottom of the list."
>
> Key informant

These challenges do not mean PbK is not possible. They simply require you to plan for the obstacles, think creatively, and be kind to yourself and your teams.

Naming your challenges

From tight timelines to unclear expectations, from the fear of being wrong to a lack of recognition, these challenges are real and valid. An interactive way to start an honest conversation in your team is by playing *Barrier Bingo* (see illustration on the right).

- Use it in a team meeting or reflective session.
- Mark the barriers you have faced.
- Talk about which ones you can shift—and which ones might need collective action or leadership support.

Common barriers and what might help

Barrier bingo

No time	No one takes it seriously	Have another fire to put out!	It's not knowledge!	No 'research person' on the team
What if I get it wrong?	Too messy to document	Don't know where to begin	Others may copy our ideas	
No one asked for it	Leaders want results, not reflections	Team turnover – lost all context	Don't have the language to write up reports	No one will read long documents
No space to share this	They only want to hear from academics		We'll waste time we could use working	Scared to admit mistakes
Don't know what to share	It's just intuition	They're only looking for evidence	Too stressed to reflect	Funders want to see numbers

Remember: naming the challenges is the first step in overcoming them.

1. Structural constraints

> - *"We don't have time for this."*
> - *"We're short-staffed — who's going to write things down?"*
> - *"If we're always writing and reflecting, when do we actually get things done?"*

- **Limited resources:** Funding and staffing shortages restrict the ability to consistently gather and share PbK. Limited organisational support further compounds this challenge.[8]

- **Time and workload pressures:** Time and resources need to be allocated to PbK activities, which could otherwise be used for immediate programme implementation.[9]

- **Rigid programme structures:** In settings such as schools or multi-year projects, programme plans and indicators are often fixed upfront—leaving little room to adapt or integrate new learning mid-cycle.

- **Measurement bias:** Quantitative indicators tend to dominate reporting requirements, sidelining qualitative insights, including PbK. Because stories are harder to measure, they are often undervalued—even when they add essential depth.

♡ What might help:

- Find ways to **capture small learnings** during or right after work, like jotting a note on your phone, sending a quick voice message, or reflecting out loud with a colleague.

- **Use team moments that already exist** (e.g., debriefs, check-ins, or WhatsApp groups) to surface reflections.

- **Keep a running log for future change:** Even if changes cannot be made in this cycle (e.g., academic year constraints), a simple log of what worked or what should change can support revisions later.

- **Document even within fixed structures:** Note what adaptations are being made in practice, even if the official programme cannot yet change. This can support future versions or help advocate for flexibility.

- **Build PbK into required reporting:** Where possible, include short practice-based insights alongside quantitative indicators to add context, nuance, or explanation.

- **Advocate for qualitative space:** If funders or leaders only ask for numbers, share why stories and practitioner reflections matter. Even a brief quote or example can shift the narrative.

> **Reflection prompts:** 💡
>
> - *What small changes could help us gather insights without adding more work? Similarly, what is one low-effort way we can start capturing insights right now?*
>
> - *What routines already exist where reflection could fit naturally? Could we build PbK into existing routines, such as end-of-week reflections or supervision? (see* Building organisational conditions: Tips *and* Embedding PbK gathering into routine work activities*)*

2. Feeling unprepared or under-resourced: Knowledge and skill gaps

> 💬
> - *"No clear tools or formats to guide how to document insights."*
> - *"We are unsure about what is 'worth' documenting."*
> - *"Language and tech barriers make formal writing feel out of reach."*

- **Lack of training or tools:** Without the necessary tools or training, it can be difficult to share practice experiences. Uncertainty about what to document and how to structure it further complicates the process.[10]

- **Access barriers:** Accessing platforms or networks to share knowledge can be challenging. Language barriers and expectations to document in specific formats can further limit the reach and impact of PbK.

♡ What might help:

- Ask a peer or partner how they document learning; you do not have to start from scratch.

- Use formats that feel natural: talking, drawing, short voice notes, or storytelling.

- Together with a colleague, try some of the PbK tools in this Guidance Framework — this could build confidence.

> **Reflection prompts:** 💡
>
> - *Who can we learn from or practice with?*
> - *What type of format (writing, audio, diagrams, etc.) feels most natural to us? (see* Sharing PbK*)*
> - *What is one insight we can share this month, and in what form?*
> - *What kind of tool or training would help us feel more ready?*

3. When no one asks for it, or pays for it: Lack of recognition and incentives

> 💬
> - *"It may not count unless it fits formal monitoring and evaluation formats or shows success."*
> - *"Donors don't ask for this."*
> - *"We get rewarded for success, not for learning."*

- **Lack of incentives:** There is often no clear recognition or incentive for practitioners to document PbK. Without sufficient motivation or acknowledgement, practitioners may be pushed to deprioritise this work.[11]
- **Stakeholder buy-in:** Explaining the value and purpose of PbK to stakeholders consumes additional time and resources. A lack of understanding about the importance of PbK can make it harder to secure funding and institutional support.[12]

♡ **What might help:**

- Start thinking about real stories that show how PbK contributed to important insight, even in small ways.
- Share these examples with stakeholders to build buy-in over time.
- Start small: even informal recognition within your team can help.

If you are struggling to think of an example, the Background Paper contains multiple examples of how PbK strengthens CSV prevention and response.

> **Reflection prompts:**
>
> - *What is one story that shows how learning from experience made a difference?*
> - *How can we share this in a way that others (e.g., funders or colleagues) can understand or appreciate?*

4. Why sharing feels risky: Fear and competition

> - *"It feels risky to admit what did not work."*
> - *"If we share what we have learned, others might copy or criticise us."*

- **Fear:** Sharing mistakes can be challenging, particularly when most frontline organisations primarily rely on success stories to secure funding.[13]
- **Competition:** Concerns about losing competitive advantages can restrict knowledge-sharing efforts.[14]

♡ **What might help:**

- Create or join trusted spaces where honesty feels safe, such as peer networks, alliances, or communities of practice (see Communities of practice).
- Frame mistakes as learning: *"Here is what did not work, and what we tried next."*
- Share learning selectively: distinguish what can be shared (to strengthen the field) from what should remain internal (to protect funding or innovation).
- Build collaborative partnerships that emphasise collective progress over competition—for example, sharing learning on common challenges while maintaining organisational uniqueness.

> **Reflection prompts:**
>
> - *Where do we feel safe being honest about what is hard?*
> - *How can we share challenges in a way that feels honest but still constructive?*
> - *Who can we partner with to share learning without risking our team's security or funding?*

Preparing for the challenges

Anticipating these barriers makes it easier to plan for them and keep PbK alive, even in difficult contexts. Reflect on these questions and keep them in mind as you go through the Guidance Framework. You may come up with additional solutions along the way, for instance, how to save time in the PbK process by embedding it into your existing work.

> You do not need to have all the answers to begin.
>
> Start where you are. Reflect on what you have.
>
> Use the small windows that already exist.
>
> And remember—PbK is not about perfection.

3.2. Getting down to it: Gathering PbK

Gathering PbK is less about filling out questionnaires and forms and more about noticing, pausing, and learning from insights that emerge from practice. This section offers practical, flexible ways to reflect on, document, and share insights from real-world work.

Whether you are deep in implementation or just beginning a new intervention, you will find prompts, templates, and activities to help you capture what matters—and maybe even have fun doing it.

This section covers the following topics:

3.2.a. When can PbK be gathered

Explore how PbK can emerge at different stages of a project—from planning to evaluation. It is not just for the end of the process; insights can be gathered at any moment.

3.2.b. What constitutes PbK

This is a closer look at what makes up PbK. Prompts to think about PbK include a flexible set of reflection questions that can be tailored to your context and stage of work. You can pick and choose the ones most relevant to you.

3.2.c. How to gather PbK

These are practical approaches for gathering PbK, individually, within teams, or in partnership with others. These processes can be integrated into your ongoing work. The section is split into:

- **Processes for gathering PbK**
  - **Embedding PbK gathering into routine work activities:** Making PbK gathering a natural part of everyday work activities such as team meetings, supervision, and peer discussions.
  - **Using games and activities to gather PbK:** Incorporating creative methods such as games and activities to make the reflection and gathering process engaging and enjoyable.

- **Tools for gathering PbK**
  - **Templates for gathering PbK:** Using pre-designed templates to help guide and structure

PbK documentation, ensuring consistent capturing of insights.

- **Using monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data to gather PbK:** Utilising M&E data to deepen PbK by transforming structured data into reflective insights.
- **Using technology to gather PbK:** Leveraging digital tools like apps, collaborative documents, and voice memos to streamline and gather insights.

> **Tip:** You can skip to the sections that are most relevant to you. For example, if you already have well-established processes but are seeking reflection questions, jump straight to the What constitutes PbK? Prompts to bring PbK to life.

1. When can PbK be gathered?
At all stages

2. What constitutes PbK?
The who
The what
The how
The why

3. How to gather PbK?
Through games
During everyday work
With tools and templates

Side note: Finding the right language

The language used to describe the process of gathering PbK matters because it reflects values such as respect and shared ownership. Commonly used terms come with different connotations:

Documenting is widely understood but often implies *written records,* which may not fully encompass oral traditions, art, or other non-written forms of knowledge.

Collecting can suggest an *extractive* process, where knowledge is taken rather than shared or co-created.

Capturing has been critiqued as *oppressive or violent,* evoking control rather than collaboration.

Harvesting conveys a process of *gathering what has grown naturally over time,* with care and acknowledgement of its origins.

Gathering emphasises *bringing together knowledge* that already exists.

The choice of terminology should align with the principles of PbK and your context. These include recognising knowledge as emerging from lived realities, ensuring that it remains connected to those who generate it, and avoiding practices that feel extractive or imposed.

How to use this section:

- **Flexible, not fixed:** These prompts, templates, and processes are meant to kickstart your reflection and inspire you — not to be rigid steps.
- **Choose what works for your programme in your context:** Not all questions or activities will be relevant to your context. Start with the ones that speak to your experience or situation.
- **Reflect in stages:** All reflection does not have to take place in one go. The process of gathering and analysing PbK can happen at different stages, through multiple activities (see the section on Processes) and evolve over time. PbK can be gathered gradually—before, during, or after an intervention. Do not feel pressure to "finish" it in one go.
- **Focus on insight, not perfection:** The goal is to gather meaningful insights, not to produce a perfect report.
- **Use it your way:** These prompts can guide team discussions, journaling, reflection circles, interviews, or quick voice notes (see the section on Tools).

Also see Before you dive in: A note on how to use the Guidance Framework.

Why flexibility benefits both the practitioner and the knowledge-sharing process

By allowing for adjustments based on available resources, team size, or local context, you ensure that the process of gathering PbK is sustainable and does not become a burden. It helps you maintain a practical focus, keeping reflection and documentation manageable, despite varying workloads or conditions. Ultimately, this flexibility empowers you to engage with PbK in a way that feels natural and relevant to your work, while still facilitating the crucial sharing of insights across teams and organisations.

Adapting prompts, templates and processes to different environments

These templates are designed to be flexible and adaptable to various work environments. Whether you're working in a highly resourced urban setting or a remote, resource-limited field, the core structure remains the same. How you implement it may differ based on your context.

- **In resource-limited settings:** In more constrained environments, where access to technology or time is limited, adapt the templates to ensure they still fit into your workflow without adding extra burdens. For example, instead of detailed written logs, you can capture insights through voice notes, flipcharts, or informal group debriefs. The templates can be **simplified** into key reflective questions, which can be shared during regular team check-ins or recorded on paper or on tools like WhatsApp.

- **Culture and language:** Ensure that the templates respect local customs and languages. You might choose to involve community leaders in interpreting the questions or use visual methods (such as drawing or mapping). Please **adapt activities** to your context— for instance, the reflective exercise 'Baking bread' can be modified to suit the ingredients and methods most familiar to your community. This ensures that the process is culturally appropriate, inclusive, and relevant to everyone involved.

- **In resource-rich settings:** You may have access to more formal structures and tools, such as digital platforms for documentation (Google Docs, Trello), advanced data analysis tools, or dedicated reflection sessions. In these settings, you can **further build** on the prompts and templates.

Activity idea: "Adapting the Questions Together" Teams can come together to review and modify the reflection questions to better align with local values, language, and their PbK.

3.2.a When can PbK be gathered?

⚡ **Hint: It is not just at the end.**

PbK often includes the insights gained from implementing a project, programme, or approach, particularly by those working on the frontlines of CSV prevention and response. PbK can emerge at any point in the work. PbK is not just about reflecting on past work. It is also about capturing insights as the practice unfolds—from planning and implementation to monitoring and reflection. The key is to pause and gather insight about *why* things were done, *how* they unfolded, and *what* was learned.

PbK often begins with the practitioner's own sense-making through doing, noticing, and questioning. This initial insight is then deepened through reflection, dialogue, and structured tools (such as the prompts shared in this Guidance Framework).

When can PbK be gathered?

Planning

Mid-Project

End-Project

There are several stages where PbK often surfaces:

Design and planning

Reflective conversations during the design or planning stages to help shape the intervention

Example: A team comes together to brainstorm how to incorporate community input into project design. Questions might include: *Why was this approach chosen? Who was involved in shaping it?* This helps to clarify the why, what, how, and who behind the planning phase (see Why, what, how and who).

Implementation

Ongoing reflections and informal learning from implementation and adaptations that take place throughout the day-to-day work of the intervention

Example: During the first week of rolling out a programme, a team reflects on the challenges and lessons learned, such as realising that key community leaders were not involved enough in the initial discussions, as a result of which there is not adequate community buy-in. This leads to a quick adaptation in engagement strategies. Questions might include: *What is happening in practice? What real-time decisions are being made, and why?*

Monitoring and ongoing feedback

Insights that are gathered from monitoring data, informal feedback loops, or structured evaluations

Example: Feedback from community members reveals that an aspect of the intervention is not resonating as expected. Routine check-ins, informal conversations, or tracking data might uncover shifts or emerging patterns. Questions might include: *What is shifting? What are people noticing in their experiences?*

Evaluation

Reflection and insights that emerge at key moments or endline to assess the intervention's impact and learnings

Example: After the intervention phase concludes, a team reflects on unanticipated outcomes, such as how a previously overlooked community group became central to the success of the programme. The team also assesses how their interventions were discussed in informal settings (e.g., WhatsApp chats, debriefs). Questions might include: *What changed, for whom, and how? What were the surprises, gaps, or unintended outcomes?* See also Using M&E data to gather PbK.

You can choose which questions from the next section best apply to your stage of the process. The activities and methods introduced later (see Processes for gathering PbK) will help make gathering PbK dynamic, low-burden, and ongoing across all stages (see also Choosing games for different stages).

3.2.b What constitutes PbK? Prompts to bring PbK to life

PbK can be created in many ways; it is what you learn from patterns across working with victims and/or survivors, what you learn while delivering an intervention, and insights that appear when you test and tweak new ideas. You can gather your PbK in ways that most accurately reflect your knowledge. This section offers prompts to get you started.

What constitutes PbK

How did we do it?

What did we do?

Challenges

What's our context?

Why, what, how and who

The Why **Why did you do this — reasoning behind the approach**

Understanding the motivations and decisions behind an intervention can uncover important learning. This may help others understand why certain choices were made and how they shaped the outcome.

- *What influenced our choice of intervention or practice? This may include past PbK, evidence, values, available resources, community input, or personal experience.*
- *How might sharing the reasoning behind our decisions help others learn from our experiences?*
- *What assumptions shaped our approach?*

The What **What did you actually do — understanding the intervention**

Clarifying the details of the approach/intervention helps others understand its purpose and plans.

- *How would we describe the intervention?*
- *What specific goals did we aim to achieve?*
- *What activities were involved?*

The How **What was the process — emphasis on process**

The process of implementing an approach or intervention is often as important as the outcome. Exploring how an approach was carried out can reveal valuable insights about effective strategies and adaptations.

- *What key steps or methods did we follow?*
- *What resources (people, funds, time, knowledge) were necessary for implementing the intervention?*
- *Were there any adaptations/changes made? Why?*
- *How did we ensure that the process was inclusive, ethical, and safe?*

The Who Who was involved — involvement of key actors

Recognising who was involved in the intervention and how their contributions shaped the outcome is essential for understanding its impact.

- *Who was directly involved in delivering the intervention (e.g., frontline staff, volunteers, peer workers)?*
- *Who participated in or were reached by the intervention (children, survivors, families, community members)?*
- *How did different participants (e.g., children vs. adults, community leaders vs. practitioners) experience or shape the process?*
- *What roles did families, communities, practitioners, institutions, or other stakeholders play?*
- *Were any key groups left out or harder to engage? What was the impact of their absence?*
- *What strategies were used to involve people meaningfully, and what lessons can be drawn from that for others?*

Contextualisation

PbK is shaped by the specific context in which it emerges—whether it is a rural school in Malaysia, an urban shelter in Brazil, or a post-conflict community in South Sudan. Without this context, PbK can be misunderstood or misapplied.

Think about:

- *What specific details about the context are crucial for understanding the story/learning?*
- *How does the context influence this learning?*

Examples of contextual factors:

- **Location:** *What geographical location are we referring to?*

- **Context:** *What specific situation or conditions exist in this area?*
- **Social norms:**
  - *How does the historical context, such as colonisation, influence those involved?*
  - *What social/structural issues (e.g., racism, ableism, or casteism) are present in this context?*
  - *How does the role of family and community shape the dynamics? For instance, does the society lean more towards individualism or collectivism?*
- **Gatekeepers:** *Who are the individuals or groups that control access to information or resources?*
- **Legal framework:** *What important laws or regulations should we mention?*
- **Population characteristics and marginalisation:**
  - *Which groups are most directly involved or affected (e.g., children with disabilities, Indigenous populations, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ youth, migrant or refugee children)?*
  - *What barriers or exclusions do these groups face in accessing services or protection?*

Reflect on how different contexts can lead to different outcomes. **Context anchors knowledge and protects against overgeneralisation.** Naming the conditions that enabled (or constrained) a practice allows others to assess its relevance with clarity and caution.

Timeframe: How long did it take

Being explicit about timeframes helps show how practice and its outcomes change across different stages—early observations may differ from long-term impacts. It also helps others judge whether an approach is realistic in their own context (e.g., if results emerged only after 3 years).

Guiding questions on timeframe considerations

- *Over what period have we implemented this practice, and what key changes have we noticed at different stages?*
- *What time constraints did we face, and how did we adjust? What deadlines, funding cycles, or seasonal pressures affected our work? How did we adapt in practice?*
- *How did we balance urgency with the need for thoughtful implementation?*

What does success look like? (to you)

In the context of PbK, **success does not always need to be measured by the same standards as academic evidence or funding requirements.** Instead, success might be about the less concrete but meaningful changes observed in communities or individuals, reflecting the unique realities of the context. At times, it can, however, resonate with findings of internal or even more formal evaluations. Reflect on your understanding of success and focus on what truly matters in your practice.

What does success or effectiveness mean in your context?

- *How do we perceive the success of the intervention? What tells us that our approach/ intervention is or is not working? What tangible or intangible signs of success have we observed?*
- *What does success mean to the communities or individuals involved? How do their views on success differ from ours, if at all?*
- *How do these align with/differ from formal evaluation markers?*
- *In what ways have we measured the impact of our work? Did we consider 'programme evaluations' (internal or external, participatory)? Why or why not?*
- *Have specific tools or methods been particularly useful in understanding impact?*

Below is a sample activity for you to explore what success means:

Activity: Mapping success

1. Create your map

On a sheet of paper, draw three sections:

- **Impact:** *What meaningful changes have we seen?*
- **Response:** *How have the people—for whom the intervention was intended—reacted? Were they engaged, resistant, or asking for more?*
- **Growth:** *How has the team's thinking or approach improved?*

2. Jot down signs of success

- In each section, list 2-3 signs that reflect success. These do not need to be perfect indicators—just the things you notice.
- Use lines or arrows to show how different signs are connected. *Did one shift lead to another?* (e.g., child participation > parent openness > more disclosures)

3. Circle what matters most

Circle the signs that feel most important to the team and community.

- *Do these align with what funders or partners usually count as success?*
- *Are they the kinds of changes participants themselves say are meaningful?*

4. Share and adapt

Invite a colleague, peer or partner organisation to look at your map. Ask:

- *What patterns do they see that we missed?*
- *Do they agree with what we circled as "most important"?*
- *What might be missing?*
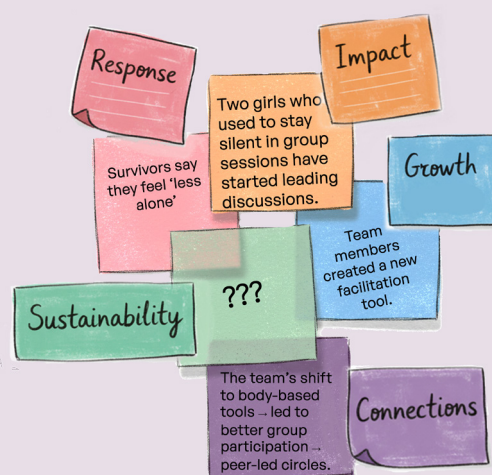
Challenges and adaptations

Challenges are often where important lessons are found. PbK is also very useful for reflecting on how they *were* addressed and how they *could* have been addressed.

Navigating challenges: Consider the challenges you encountered throughout the intervention.

- *Were there hurdles or unexpected complications? What obstacles, be they logistical, political, or interpersonal, did we face?*
- *What unexpected challenges arose?*

Solutions and adaptations: Explore your response to these challenges.

- *How did we respond?*
- *What parts of our response worked and why?*
- *How can others use our approach when they face similar challenges?*
- *What might we do differently next time?*

Leveraging limited resources: Reflect on how you used existing resources, even in resource-limited settings. Consider what you did when ideal systems or support were not available. For example, if psychologists were not readily accessible and you equipped college students to respond to distress, offer psychological first aid, and facilitate referrals.

- *What resources were already in place that we could build upon?*
- *How did we, despite limitations, leverage what we had to make the intervention work?*
- *How were local skills and knowledge used to overcome challenges and address resource gaps?*
- *What innovative solutions have been developed to work around these limitations?*
- *How did collaboration lead to better outcomes and fill the gaps in resources?*

Learning from mistakes: Reflect on what you learned from things that did not go as planned. This can help others avoid similar mistakes. Failure is not always negative—it is an opportunity for learning and growth.

- *What mistake(s) did we make?*

- *What early signs did we miss that might have helped us avoid the mistake?*
- *What factors contributed most to the mistake (e.g., time pressure, assumptions, resource gaps)?*
- *How did we respond in the moment, and what does that reveal about our team's resilience or decision-making?*
- *What strengths did we draw on to recover or adapt after the mistake?*
- *How did the mistake affect victims and/or survivors, communities, or colleagues, and what did we learn from their feedback?*
- *What would we do differently next time to reduce the risk of repeating it? How can others avoid these pitfalls by considering the lessons we have learned?*

Supporting knowledge

PbK's **credibility does not always rely on formal verification or the use of multiple sources.** However, where possible, **bringing in additional perspectives gives others a fuller picture.**

You do not need to "prove" everything, but reflecting on how you know what you know can make your PbK more helpful to others.

Supporting your PbK with additional knowledge sources

Other knowledge sources can strengthen your PbK by providing context, validation, or contrast that makes your reflections clearer for others. Ask yourself questions about how your PbK complements/contradicts existing evidence or learning from other settings.

> **What do other knowledge sources say?**
>
> Reflect on whether additional knowledge can help and/or support your PbK. You can consider:
>
> - *Are there any additional knowledge sources, such as data, feedback, news articles, reports, or testimonies, that we could integrate into our reflections?*
> - *How does our PbK compare with the work of other practitioners or research? Does this similarity or difference make our insight stronger, more specific, or more context-bound?*
> - *Does our PbK align or contrast with similar practices in other contexts or regions?*

Supporting your PbK with feedback

Feedback from participants in an intervention is itself a form of supporting knowledge — it anchors your reflections in lived realities. When you show how you gathered, weighed, and acted upon feedback, you help others see whether your practice reflects real needs and whether it evolved in response to those most affected.

> **What does feedback say?**
>
> - *How did we gather feedback (quick chat, informal conversation, formal survey)?*
> - *What did this feedback say?*
> - *Whose feedback was missing or harder to capture, and how did that affect our insights?*
> - *How did we weigh different or even conflicting perspectives?*
> - *Did feedback confirm what we were already doing, challenge us to rethink, or reveal something new we had not considered?*

Consider what others can learn from you

As you reflect on and document PbK, consider how your insights can guide others in their own practice. While **PbK does not provide replicable models**, it offers unique lessons that can **help others ask better questions, approach their work with fresh perspectives, and discover areas that may be underexplored.** Your experiences can illuminate what is not always captured in formal research and can inspire new ways of thinking about practice.

Think about **what others can do with your insights**. How can they build on your experiences to improve their own practice? The key lies in supporting them in **asking the right questions** and in **seeing their work through new lenses:**

> - *How can our reflections inspire a shift in how others approach similar challenges?*
> - *What questions should others ask to dig deeper into their own practice?*
> - *What areas have we explored that others might have overlooked, and why is that important to highlight?*

See also, the PbK case studies on the SFH website for examples of questions that can help other practitioners reflect on their own practice.

3.2.c How to gather PbK: Processes and tools

The previous sections outlined reflective questions that can support the collection of PbK. While asking the right questions is important, questions alone are not enough to gather meaningful insights. This section offers you processes and tools that can help you explore the reflective questions discussed earlier.

> How, where, and when those questions are asked, and who feels safe to answer them, can deeply affect the quality of the insights shared.

Processes for gathering PbK

The process of gathering PbK is central to the value of the knowledge: it shapes the depth, credibility, and ethical soundness of the insights. The processes outlined below offer flexible and accessible ways to gather PbK.

> **Tip:** You can choose one or two processes that feel doable and adapt as needed.

Embedding PbK gathering into routine work activities

> "People are often more willing to express their true feelings in informal settings, such as over tea, rather than in a formal meeting."[15]

PbK often begins to emerge in the natural flow of work. Practitioners already reflect on what worked, what did not, and why—during moments such as tea breaks, WhatsApp chats, or car rides. The key is to gather these insights within what you are already doing.

What does embedding mean?

Embedding means weaving PbK gathering into:

- **Workplace routines:** team meetings, supervision, debriefs, peer discussions.
- **Programme cycles:** design, implementation, review, and adaptation.

When PbK reflection is built into existing rhythms, it:

- Fits naturally into routines and avoids extra burden
- Adapts to different settings, times, and cultures.
- Values relationships and context
- Relies on everyday tools, not complex systems
- Supports continuous learning across the project cycle

Instead of treating PbK gathering as an extra task, it can become a natural part of conversations, decisions, and everyday problem-solving. This helps make learning continuous, low-burden, and collective.

The methods below offer practical ways to embed PbK gathering into real-world rhythms. These approaches **do not always produce insights in one sitting — they create the conditions for PbK to gradually emerge over time.**

Team meetings — Quick, collaborative learning

How it fits into your routine:
Team update meetings are most likely already part of your regular schedule. By incorporating brief, reflective moments during these meetings, you can encourage collective learning without requiring additional time.

What to do:
During team meetings, spend **5 minutes** inviting each team member to share a **key lesson learned** or a **challenge faced**. Use simple reflection questions (e.g., *What worked well this week? What challenge did we face?*).

How it can help:
This ensures that reflection becomes a natural part of your **existing team meetings**, while also offering a **safe space** for emotional processing and support. It allows valuable learning to emerge organically, strengthening team relationships while capturing critical insights.

Practice debriefs Reflecting together after key activities

How it fits into your routine:
After important activities, most teams already have some form of a **debrief session**.

What to do:
Reflect on **what went well** and **what could be improved**, along with a peer or supervisor. This can be done informally, with one person taking notes.

How it can help:
This is a low-burden method to process emotionally and professionally challenging moments. It allows teams to immediately learn from their work and share insights without needing a formal, lengthy documentation process.

Peer reflection Peer support and processing together

How it fits into your routine:
Peer reflection can be done during case reviews or progress update meetings. These sessions can involve two or three colleagues and allow more focused emotional processing.

What to do:
Spend **10-15 minutes** discussing a **challenging aspect or learning** from your work. One person can jot down key insights while the others discuss challenges and ideas.

How it can help:
Peer reflection encourages **shared learning** and **emotional processing**, enabling practitioners to support one another. This method reduces the burden of documentation by having one person take notes, ensuring that valuable insights are captured without the need for formal reporting.

Sticky notes Simple and efficient sharing

How it fits into your routine:
Sticky note reflections can be integrated into **your everyday tasks**, such as **writing case notes, preparing for sessions**, or **after implementation**. This is an easy way to gather insights or challenges without disrupting your work and can be done at any time throughout your day.

What to do:
When you have a moment—perhaps during a case note writing session, while preparing for a meeting, or reflecting after a session—write down a **key insight or challenge** you have encountered. Jot it on a sticky note (or digital equivalent) and either keep it for personal reflection or add it to a shared space for future review.

How it can help:
This approach makes reflection **ongoing**, allowing you to gather insights at moments when they naturally arise. **It is a low-effort method** that does not interfere with your primary tasks but still ensures that insights and reflections are consistently gathered.

Visual mapping Creative, collaborative reflection

How it fits into your routine:
Visual mapping can be used during **team reviews** or as part of a **group reflection activity**, making it easy to incorporate without requiring extra time outside of the workday.

What to do:
Use a **whiteboard** or **shared digital space** to draw simple visual maps of your cases along with key insights. Team members can add visuals, keywords, or symbols to express what is working well or where challenges lie.

How it can help:
Visual mapping is a **creative and engaging way** to reflect on complex issues. It allows for **shared understanding** through visual expression, helping everyone to process difficult cases and work together on solutions.

Key takeaways

- **Reflection does not need to take up extra time.** Integrate it into your **regular routines**—such as team meetings, case reviews, and peer support activities—without spending your personal time or adding more work to your schedule.

- **Adapt these methods to your context.** Some methods, such as peer reflection sessions, may take longer but can still be incorporated into your regular team meetings. Others, such as sticky note reflections, are quick and low-effort, fitting into even the busiest workdays.

- **Choose what works best** based on your schedule and team dynamics. Each activity

can be designed to be **flexible** and **easy to implement** while ensuring that you gather PbK and process challenging work.

Using games and activities to gather PbK: Can PbK processes be engaging and fun?

Reflecting on PbK does not have to feel formal or be done alone. The guiding questions on what constitutes PbK, such as how knowledge is created, who holds it, and how it informs practice, can seem complex (see What constitutes PbK? Prompts to bring PbK to life). However, there are easy, interactive and creative ways to explore them. The outputs from these activities — whether drawings, recordings, or short notes — can then be more formally recorded by someone on the team.

Tip: Mix and match formats and facilitation styles

These activities can be done with whatever tools are available—online whiteboards, simple paper, or a flipchart. Facilitation can also rotate among team members, allowing everyone to lead in a style that feels natural to them.

Activity: "Invisible influences iceberg"

Use an **iceberg drawing** to identify hidden or less apparent factors that influenced the intervention's/project's successes or challenges.

Steps:

- Draw an iceberg where the **visible part above the water** represents formal knowledge and obvious factors (e.g., project design, goals, funding).
- The **hidden part below the water** represents informal or less visible influences (e.g., community norms, relationships, power dynamics).
- Write or draw key influences in both parts of the iceberg.

Prompts:

- *What informal knowledge played a role?*
- *Who contributed behind the scenes?*
- *How did cultural or community norms shape the process?*

How it can help:

This encourages reflection on unseen but valuable sources of knowledge while highlighting the depth and complexity of influences.

Formal knowledge and obvious factors

Informal or less visible influences

What intuitive learning did we rely on?

Who contributed behind the scenes?

What did the community tell us?

Activity: "If this project were a movie…"

Describe your intervention as if it were a movie.

Prompts:

- *What would the title be?*
- *Who are the main characters (practitioners, community members, partners)?*
- *What was the plot twist – a surprising challenge or insight?*
- *How did the story end? Or is it still unfolding?*

How it can help:

This helps reflect on processes and outcomes through creative storytelling.

If this project were a movie…

What would the title be?

Who are the main characters?

What was the plot twist?

How did the story end? Or is it still unfolding?

SCENE   TAKE

Activity: "Highs and lows" comic strip

Create a simple comic strip (stick figures work!) showing both the highs and lows of the intervention/ practice.

📖 **Panels:**
- **High point:** When something worked
- **Low point:** When something did not go as planned
- **Learning:** What was learned and how it shaped future action

♥ **How it can help:**

This encourages reflection on both challenges and successes in a low-pressure format.

HIGH POINT — When something worked as planned...

LOW POINT — When something didn't go as planned...

LEARNING — What we learned and how it shaped our actions ...
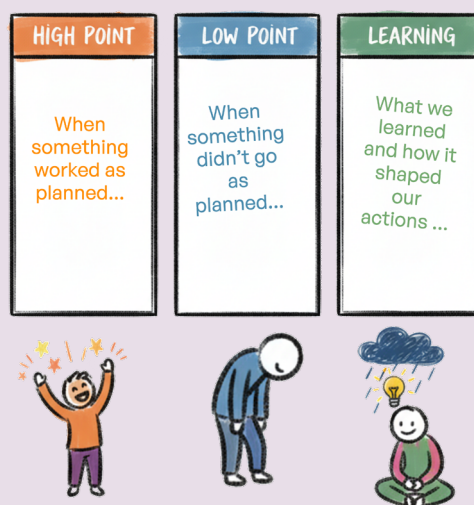
Activity: "Two truths and a surprise"

🖌 **Steps:**

Ask the team to share:
- **Two truths:** Two things that went as expected based on existing knowledge
- **One surprise:** Something unexpected that changed the approach or outcome

♥ **How it can help:**

Comparing expected truths with an unexpected surprise helps surface the gap between assumptions and practice.

Activity: Peer interviews

Team members interview each other rather than write formal reports.

? **Sample questions:**
- *What is the biggest lesson we learned?*
- *What surprised us about the process?*
- *How did the community respond?*

♥ **How it can help:**

Conversations are often more natural and insightful than structured reporting.

Activity: Fill-in-the-gaps reflection

Create a simple fill-in-the-blank worksheet to reflect on challenges and learning.

✏ **Examples:**
- *"The most valuable insight came from _____."*
- *"A moment that surprised us was _____."*
- *"Next time, we would try _____."*

♥ **How it can help:**

It provides a structure for reflection while maintaining a low-pressure environment.

Activity: "What is in the backpack?"

Create a list or drawing of items you would pack in a metaphorical "backpack" for someone doing a similar project.

💬 **Prompts:**

- *What lessons or insights would we pack?*
- *What tools or resources would we want them to have?*
- *What emotional support or mindsets might they need?*

💜 **How it can help:**

It encourages reflection on both tangible and intangible learnings.

Activity: "Dear future practitioner" letter

Write a letter to a future colleague or someone trying to implement a similar intervention.

💬 **Prompts:**

- *Here is what I wish I had known at the start.*
- *If you hit this challenge, try this...*
- *Do not forget to pay attention to...*

💜 **How it can help:**

Framing it as advice not only shifts from self-evaluation to supporting others, but also makes tacit knowledge explicit—helping PbK emerge in concrete, sharable lessons.

Activity: "Change timeline"

Create a **visual timeline** showing how the understanding or approach evolved over time.

🖌️ **Steps:**

- Use coloured markers or sticky notes to represent different phases or events.
- Add symbols (like arrows, stars, or question marks) to show breakthroughs, setbacks, or turning points.
- Encourage participants to reflect on emotional shifts alongside process changes (e.g., "feeling uncertain" → "feeling confident").

💬 **Prompts:**

- *What triggered changes in approach?*
- *What knowledge helped shift the process?*
- *What felt like a turning point?*

❤️ **How it can help:**

It helps to surface process-based insights while creating a colourful, engaging visual record.

Turning setbacks into insight: reflecting on what did not go as planned

Reflecting on what *did not* work can be just as powerful as celebrating success. The following activities help practitioners safely explore surprises, missteps, or challenges.

This is not to assign blame, but to surface hidden learning. When framed creatively and supportively, these reflections can strengthen adaptive practice and build collective wisdom.

📌 **Remember:** Use these games flexibly. Adapt, merge, skip, or add parts as needed.

Reflection: "What we wished had worked" gallery

Create space where teams can share tools, ideas, or assumptions that did not work out as expected—and what was learned from them.

🖌️ **Steps:**

- Ask participants to contribute a "gallery item" representing something that sounded promising but flopped in practice.
- These can be drawings, objects, or short written cards.
- Display them like an exhibition and invite discussion.

💬 **Prompts:**

- *What did we hope would happen?*
- *What actually happened—and why?*
- *What did we learn that could help others?*

❤️ **How it can help:**

It encourages collective learning. It also surfaces valuable knowledge that may not emerge in formal evaluation processes.

Reflection: "Lessons in disguise" wall

Invite the team to reflect on moments that initially felt like setbacks—but ultimately offered surprising insights.

🖌 **Steps:**

- Each person writes or draws a moment that initially felt like a failure.
- Underneath, they note the hidden lesson or shift that came from it.
- Display these on a wall under the heading *"Lessons in disguise."*

💬 **Prompts:**

- *What did not go according to plan?*
- *What did we learn because of it?*
- *How did it shift our practice or understanding?*

💜 **How it can help:**

It reframes challenges as opportunities. It also encourages openness while reinforcing the value of reflection across all stages.

Reflection:"The plot twist awards"

A playful group activity to share learning from surprises or unintended outcomes.

🖌 **Steps:**

- Groups prepare a short "nomination" story for a fun category like:
  - *Best unexpected outcome*
  - *Most creative detour*
  - *Greatest learning from a messy moment*
- Presentations can be spoken, drawn, or performed.
- Participants vote for their favourites using stickers or tokens.
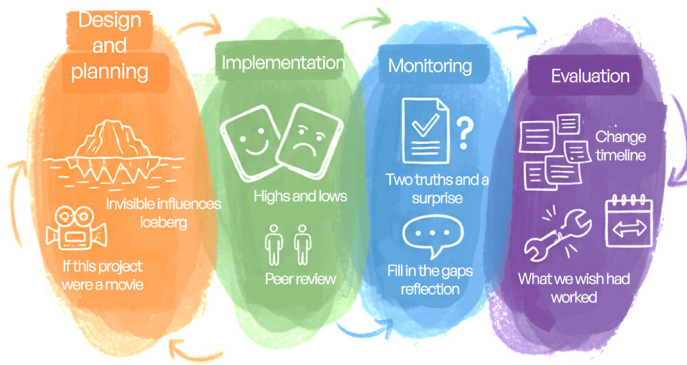
💬 **Prompts:**

- *What did we expect to happen?*
- *What was the twist?*
- *What insight or change followed?*

💜 **How it can help:**

It uses humour and storytelling to make reflection engaging. It helps normalise adaptation and learning from real-world complexity.

Choosing games for different stages

Whether during **design and planning, implementation, monitoring,** or **evaluation**, these activities can provide a flexible way to ensure that PbK is gathered continuously.

For example:

- In the **design and planning phase**, activities like the "Invisible influences iceberg" and "If this project were a movie…" allow you to surface underlying assumptions and map early influences that could shape the project's success.

- During **implementation**, methods like the "Highs and lows" comic strip and Peer interviews can gather real-time insights from day-to-day work, while also providing space to reflect on challenges and successes.

- In the **monitoring phase**, activities like "Two truths and a surprise" and "Fill-in-the-gaps reflection" allow you to regularly reflect on the unfolding work, capture shifts, and adapt in real-time.

- At the **evaluation stage**, creative activities such as the "What we wish had worked" gallery and "Change timeline" enable you to look back on the entire process, surface lessons learned, and refine future practice.

Tools for gathering PbK

Templates for gathering PbK

"Avoiding academic writing traps: When consolidating practitioner knowledge, steer clear of the pressure to replicate academic writing styles. Use your voice, your language, and your unique ways of expressing your experiences."

Key informant

During our consultation process, we repeatedly heard the need for simple and relatable ways to gather and share PbK. Apart from a few existing tools,[16] practitioners said they find most formats too rigid or academic, making it challenging to reflect the realities of their work. We offer two templates designed to make the process easier:

- **Tree template:** Maps out an intervention's foundation, growth, and outcomes.
- **Developmental stages of PbK template:** Reflects how a practice is born, developed, and matured over time.

The metaphors of a tree and a child are meant to make the process more intuitive and reflective of how practice and PbK naturally grow and evolve over time. The templates offer a structured but flexible way to capture not just the outcomes of practice but also the thinking, relationships, and adjustments that shaped it. These templates may inspire you to create your own.

You can use the guiding questions (What constitutes PbK? Prompts to bring PbK to life) to explore each part of the templates in more detail.

Tip: You do not have to use these exactly as-is. Adapt them. Talk them through with colleagues. Add visuals or skip parts. They are here to support—not control—the process.

Template: Tree metaphor

This template builds on the earlier 'Why, What, How, and Who' prompts, offering a visual and participatory approach to working with them. Using the metaphor of a tree helps see connections and growth more intuitively, making the process accessible for those who prefer drawing, mapping, or group workshops.


Problem/need:

- **Soil (Why):** *What problem, challenge, or need was this work responding to? Why was it needed?*

Detailing the practice:

- **Roots (What):** *What did we do? What were the main actions we took?*
- **Leaves (Who):** *Who was involved? Who helped make it happen?*

Emphasis on process:

- **Trunk (Process):** *How was the work carried out? What steps were followed?*
- **Growth rings (Progress):** *What changes or improvements happened over time? What signs of progress did we see?*
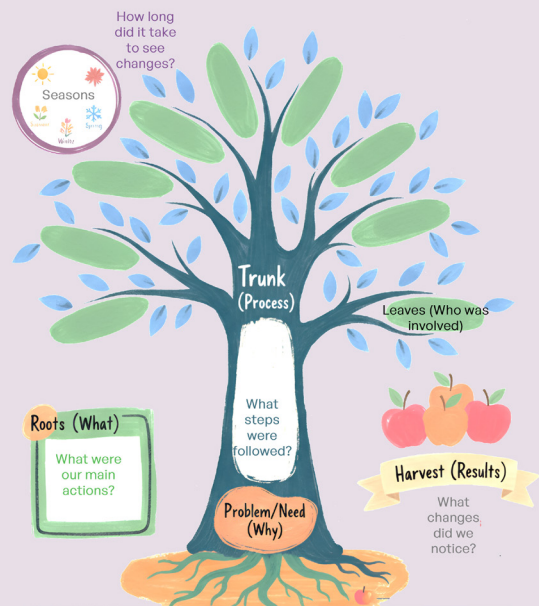
Timeframe consideration:

- **Seasons (Timing):** *Was this a short-term effort or something that took longer? How long did it take to see changes?*

Results:

- **Harvest (Results):** *What were the results? What changes did we notice?*

Template: Developmental stages of PbK – Understanding how PbK emerges, evolves and informs action over time

Birth (Starting point):

- **Where was the practice "born"?** *Where did the idea come from? What need or situation led to its creation?*
- **Why was it developed?** *What issue was it trying to address?*
- **Who contributed to its development?** *Whose ideas, experiences, or actions helped get it started?*

Nurturing (Growth):

- **Who supported it?** *Who or what helped it grow? (team members, funding, partnerships, or other resources)*
- **How was it cared for and adapted?** *What actions helped it take shape or improve over time?*

Challenges (Growing pains):

- **What problems came up?** *What difficulties or setbacks emerged along the way?*
- **How were they handled?** *What changes or strategies were used to solve these problems?*

Milestones (Key stages):

- **What were the key moments?** *What were the most important achievements or turning points?*
- **How did it change over time?** *What improvements or adjustments happened as it developed?*

Current state (Maturity):

- **Where is it now?** *How well is it working today? Is it sustainable?*
- **What is next?** *Can it grow further? Are there plans to improve or expand it? Are there plans to partner with researchers to build evidence of effectiveness further?*

Using M&E data to gather PbK

While PbK can be gathered informally through reflections and daily practice, M&E data provides a structured point from which PbK insights can be formally gathered and expanded upon. M&E data can serve as a springboard for PbK, transforming raw numbers into actionable insights. While M&E tells us *what* is happening, PbK helps explore *why, how,* and *what needs to shift*. M&E data can function both as a process (to collect data) and a tool (to convert that existing data into PbK insights).

When to use M&E data for PbK insights:

- During midline or endline review meetings
- After routine data collection (e.g., monthly/ quarterly)
- As part of after-action reviews or learning sessions
- When facing unexpected trends or data gaps

Sample activity: Building PbK through M&E data

Choose the data set

Pick a small, focused set of M&E findings, ideally 2–4 indicators or trends that invite further exploration. For example:

- Unexpected drop or increase in attendance
- Low uptake of referral services
- Feedback that is contradictory or surprising
- Outcomes that are disappointing, despite active programming

Use a "see–sense–shift" reflection framework

Step	Prompt
See	*What do the numbers say? What is standing out or surprising?* Example: "Participation in caregiver sessions dropped in the last quarter."
Sense	*What might explain this? What are we noticing in practice that the numbers do not show?* Example: "Sessions were shifted to mornings, but many caregivers now work during those hours."
Shift	*What could we do differently? What small changes might we try?* Example: "Pilot evening sessions in one location to see if attendance improves."

Facilitate this discussion in small groups, ideally mixing programme and M&E staff.

Facilitator tips

- Use visual aids (e.g., printouts, flipcharts, graphs) to make data visible.
- Create a safe space to name contradictions: e.g., when the data says one thing but practice experience suggests another.
- Capture not just conclusions but uncertainties, tensions, and emerging hypotheses.

What to document

Document insights in a "PbK log" using these sample fields:

- *What did we observe in the data?*
- *What did we sense from practice?*
- *What minor adaptations are we considering?*
- *What tensions or unknowns remain?*

This creates a bridge between M&E documentation and practice-based insight, generating learnings that are dynamic, contextual, and ready to be acted upon.

Why this matters

- Surfaces context-specific understanding often missed in numeric data.
- Validates practitioner knowledge as a key interpretive lens for data.
- Turns reflection into action, not just reporting.
- Builds a feedback loop between M&E, programming, and PbK.
- Strengthens programme agility and relevance.

Using technology to gather PbK

Where appropriate and relevant, technology can be an invaluable tool for gathering PbK and can address various challenges, including language barriers, resource constraints, and time limitations.

Example: OOLOI Labs' Storytelling Assistant Bot

OOLOI Labs, an organisation in India that supports frontline civil society organisations working on various themes, **recognised the challenge of collecting and sharing valuable fieldwork insights from frontline workers.** Many field staff possessed rich, practical knowledge gained from daily interactions with communities, but this knowledge often remained undocumented and underutilised.

To address this, OOLOI Labs developed the Storytelling Assistant Bot, an artificial intelligence based chatbot. The bot operates on widely used messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp and Telegram, making it accessible to frontline practitioners even in low-connectivity areas.

How the Storytelling Assistant Bot works:

- The bot interacts with practitioners through a text-based conversation, asking a series of carefully designed questions. These questions are tailored to draw out the nuances of the workers' experiences, ensuring that key details, emotions, and lessons are accurately captured.
- After answering the questions, the bot synthesises the responses into a well-structured story.
- Practitioners can review and edit the story before publishing it directly on OOLOI Labs' platform.
- A preview link of the published story is generated, allowing easy sharing with colleagues and stakeholders.

Benefits for practitioners:

- **Ease of storytelling:** The chatbot reduces the time and effort needed to transform practical insights into a clear, engaging narrative.
- **Accessibility:** By eliminating the need for formal writing skills, the tool makes it easier for frontline staff to document their knowledge.

- **Instant sharing:** The generated preview link allows workers to quickly share their stories with others, facilitating faster learning and dissemination.

While the Storytelling Assistant Bot is an innovative tool, not all organisations may have the resources to develop or purchase similar technology. However, practitioners can use readily available tools:

- **Voice notes:** Encourage frontline workers to record their insights and experiences using widely available apps such as WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram or even phone recorders. These recordings can later be transcribed and synthesised into structured narratives.
- **Survey and form tools:** Free or low-cost tools such as Google Forms, Microsoft Forms, or Typeform can be used to create structured prompts. Practitioners can respond at their convenience, and the responses can be compiled into a coherent format.
- **Collaborative platforms:** Tools such as Google Docs allow frontline workers to document their experiences collaboratively and make real-time edits. Create simple templates with key guiding questions to help practitioners structure their narratives. These templates can serve as a reference for consistent documentation. Free translation apps, such as Google Translate, can help address language barriers when documenting insights in different languages.

Safeguarding and data protection

When using digital platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, Google Forms, Typeform, artificial intelligence-powered tools), always prioritise confidentiality and safeguarding. Some tools are encrypted and widely accessible, but they are not risk-free. Case details can still be exposed if devices are lost, shared, or backed up to the cloud. Where digital access is limited—or when privacy cannot be guaranteed—low-tech options such as paper logs, offline dictaphones, or flipcharts provide equally valid ways of gathering PbK.

This section complements the earlier discussions on [When can PbK be gathered?](#) and [What constitutes PbK? Prompts to bring PbK to life](#). Both digital tools and low-tech solutions can be used to facilitate continuous, real-time reflection and knowledge gathering throughout the project cycle.

Templates

Easy formats

Online forms

Shared drive

Art

Sticky notes

Weekly reflection

Translation tools

Audio recording

Debriefs

Build your own PbK kit

3.3. Keep in mind: Ethics

PbK is not just the documentation of practice — it requires rigour. The insights it offers need to be grounded in thoughtful and ethical reflection. This section supports you in exploring the many nuances of practice so that PbK becomes not just useful, but credible, respectful and enduring.

3.3.a Ethical considerations in PbK

Why ethics matter in PbK

All forms of knowledge, including academic research, have the potential to cause unintended harm if applied or shared without care. PbK is no different. Without intentional reflection, even well-meaning practices may reinforce inequities, misrepresent experiences, or cause harm.

While PbK offers valuable insights from lived and practice expertise, it also **poses unique ethical challenges**. This is especially true since it typically **falls outside formal ethical review structures,** such as Institutional Review Boards, and established mechanisms for evaluation. As PbK involves working closely with victims and/or survivors, other practitioners, and communities to document insights from lived and practice experiences, it is **not simply a technical process; it is deeply relational.**

While existing ethics guidance on conducting research is important,[17] **PbK often follows different pathways, rhythms, and timelines**. Ethical questions may arise at any point in the journey, such as during a conversation, when taking notes, when deciding whether to share a story from years ago, or when writing up an insight based on decades of practice. Practitioners may face dilemmas about what to share, how to honour contributors, and who should be involved.

Ethics and rigour: A symbiotic relationship

Ethics do more than protect — they also strengthen the rigour of PbK. When you take the time to reflect on power dynamics, representation, and context, you also sharpen the clarity, credibility, and integrity of the knowledge being shared.

Rigour in PbK

In PbK, rigour is not defined by academic protocols or standardised evaluation tools. Instead, rigour in PbK means producing knowledge that is:

- Drawn directly from practice, with insights verified by those involved.
- Clearly anchored in its setting, showing how local culture, politics, and institutions shaped what was learned.
- Honest about process, explaining how the knowledge was developed, what shaped it, and where its limits lie.

Why ethics and rigour are interdependent

Ethics prevent harm and also improve quality. Ethical practices help ensure that what is documented is not only truthful but also accurate, that contributors' words are **not taken out of context,** that **nuance is preserved,** and that **insights are not overstated or stripped of meaning.** Trustworthy PbK emerges when practitioners are deliberate, open, and accountable in how they surface, interpret, and share practice-based insights. By embedding ethical reflection into how knowledge is gathered and used, teams also embed rigour through better sense-making, deeper questioning, and a **stronger understanding of what an insight truly means in its full context. The more relational, careful, and accountable the process, the more credible the resulting knowledge will be.**

Why this matters for external audiences

By making the process of ethics explicit in your PbK, others can better understand how PbK ensures credibility, even when it follows different pathways from formal research.

Creating your own organisational structures to support ethical PbK

While ethical considerations are critical at the individual level, organisations play a vital role in supporting ethical PbK practice. Organisations **can use the reflections in this section to create their own ethical guidance or peer review processes**. These may be informal, but they are essential—especially in the absence of formal oversight mechanisms.

Drawing from the themes outlined here—such as dynamic consent, privacy, equity, power, and care—organisations can:

- Develop a values-based ethics checklist
- Set up a peer reflection or ethics advisory group
- Integrate ethics prompts into existing documentation or review tools

Tip: You do not need to start from scratch.

The shorter ethical reflection guide offered in this Guidance Framework may be helpful to begin with.

Any internal guidelines or tools developed can draw from a mix of sources: the PbK-specific ethical reflections offered in this section, existing global ethics guidance, and your organisation's own safeguarding or values-based guidelines. The peer review mechanisms described later in this guidance can serve as a practical way to embed ethical reflection into your PbK review processes.

Principles to guide ethical and rigorous PbK

Ethics in PbK

- ☑ Ensure consent
- ☑ Protect privacy
- ☑ Build safety into every step
- ☑ Make the learning process visible
- ☑ Don't overgeneralise
- ☑ Clarify whose experience is represented
- ☑ Bring missing voices to the centre
- ☑ Be honest about what's known - and what isn't
- ☑ Name your lens and how it shapes the story
- ☑ Credit those who built the insight
- ☑ Give back, don't just take
- ☑ Pause when unsure

Ethical guidelines can help mitigate risks by ensuring that PbK is gathered and shared in a **respectful, accurate, and safe manner for those involved**. These guidelines can also ensure that **PbK is shared in responsible ways without overstating its influence**.

PbK must be guided by core ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, safety, and respect for contributors' agency. It should also be supported by processes that prioritise the responsible use of knowledge, transparency, mutual well-being and accurate ownership.

Ethical PbK practices should go beyond simply avoiding harm and **embrace an ethics of care**. This involves **actively valuing, supporting and caring for the people who share their knowledge.** It involves recognising the emotional, mental, and social labour involved in the process, and also supporting their well-being.

Practitioners already practice ethics

Practitioners already make decisions on the basis of ethical principles. Ideally, they hold dignity, care, and the best interests of children and communities at the heart of their work. This guidance builds on that foundation, offering questions and principles to support thoughtful reflection.

Ethics in PbK

Care and rights

Rigour and credibility

1. Intentionality

Before gathering data or insights, ask yourself why this information is being gathered.

In PbK, the "why" may not be known in advance. Often, **stories or patterns emerge after years of practice, not through structured data collection.** You may reflect and identify knowledge retrospectively. However, if you are specifically seeking additional data, reflect before gathering data or insights.

Reflection questions:

- *Why is this information being gathered? Is it necessary, and will it contribute meaningfully to learning or action?*

- *How will it be collected? Are the methods respectful, inclusive, and appropriate to the context?*

- *Are we collecting more than we need? Is this insight necessary, or just interesting?*

2. Informed and dynamic consent

Unlike structured research, PbK often emerges from everyday practice and informal settings (e.g., conversations, peer discussions, and frontline work). This raises **unique ethical challenges related to consent.** PbK may not involve signed forms or one-time agreements, but often emerges from ongoing relationships and trust built over time.

When thinking about consent in PbK, it is helpful to distinguish between different situations (see also Step 2 of the shorter ethical reflection guide).

1. **Aggregate or collective insights**

   PbK sometimes reflects patterns across many cases or long-term community-wide practices. In these instances, the knowledge does not belong to a single person and may not require individual consent. Even so, their confidentiality, privacy and safety must be ensured.

2. **Individual or recognisable experiences**

   When PbK draws on the specific experiences of one or more people — whether victims and/ or survivors, children, colleagues, or community members — consent becomes essential. Even if names are removed, details can make stories recognisable. In such cases, **consent must be understood as dynamic**. It is not a static checkbox but a living agreement that may shift, based on evolving relationships, circumstances, and power dynamics. It is as much about how you honour someone's continued agency over time as it is about whether you obtained a clear "yes" at one moment. Even if someone initially shared their experience, they may feel differently later or under different circumstances.

Reflection questions:

- *Have we considered the person's age, ability to consent, and right to withdraw at any point?*

- *Have we received explicit consent?*

- If yes:
  - *Are we offering pathways for people to modify, update, or withdraw consent over time?*
  - *Have we made space for participants to withdraw or modify consent, even after the insight has been shared?*
  - *If a person revokes consent, have we adjusted or removed their insights?*

- If explicit consent was not obtained:
  - *Was the information shared in the context of trust? Did they understand how it might be used?*
  - *Was the original sharing context-specific (e.g., shared in a peer support group, not for documentation)?*
  - *Have we considered how the person might feel now about their insights being shared?*

- If any of these raise concern, seek explicit consent or reconsider using the insight.

When direct consent is not possible

- If you are reflecting on working with specific children or communities from years ago, **direct consent may no longer be possible.** Perhaps, too much time has passed and the person is no longer contactable. Here, the responsibility is higher: the insight should only be shared if it can be anonymised fully and without risk of harm.
- If direct consent is not possible, question if the insight can still be shared in a way that ensures their anonymity, privacy and safety (see Confidentiality and privacy).
- If privacy and dignity cannot be guaranteed, reconsider your approach. **The ethical priority should be to protect the contributor's well-being and uphold their right to privacy and agency.** In this case, the insight should not be shared as is.

3. Agency and voice: Involve and reflect with those affected

When the PbK is specific to certain individuals or groups, ethical PbK practice means centring their agency and voice. Children, victims and/or survivors, and communities are not simply contributors — they should shape how their insights are represented and used. Involving them in reflection and review helps ensure accuracy, prevents misrepresentation, and honours their right to control their own narratives. It requires recognising contributors' **ongoing agency over how their knowledge is represented, interpreted, and circulated.**

Reflection questions:

- *Have children, victims and/or survivors, or communities been meaningfully involved in reviewing and shaping how their knowledge is presented?*
- *Does the way we represent their insights reflect their voice, priorities, and language — or mainly ours?*
- *Are we creating space for people to challenge or correct how their contributions are framed?*

- *Do contributors retain genuine choice about how their story is used, adapted, or shared?*
- *Who has the final say in dissemination, and how are power imbalances being addressed?*
- Sense-check with contributors and peers. Ask: *Does this reflect your experience? Are any details missing or misrepresented?*

Upholding agency involves listening closely to how people want their stories held and ensuring that the dignity of contributors remains intact even when identities are anonymised.

Side note: How children, victims and/or survivors, and communities can engage in the PbK process

Children, victims and/or survivors, and communities connected to the work can engage in different ways throughout the PbK process. Engagement does not need to happen only at the point of consent. It can also be part of shaping what knowledge is documented, how it is shared, and what meaning is drawn from it.

Contributing insights · Ongoing consent · Shaping how knowledge is shared · Framing lessons and meaning · Reflecting together

Some possible ways this engagement can take place include:

- **Contributing insights:** sharing experiences and reflections that inform PbK.
- **Co-reflection:** participating in conversations about what is valuable to gather and why.

- **Deciding how knowledge is shared:** exploring together how contributions are represented, where they are shared, and whether they remain anonymous or are attributed.

- **Ongoing consent and feedback:** having space to revisit consent over time and to offer input on how their knowledge is used.

- **Framing lessons and meaning:** contributing to how the lessons from their experiences are understood by others.

Inviting this kind of engagement can help make PbK more collaborative and surface knowledge that reflects the experiences and perspectives of those most closely connected to the work.

4. Transparency

Transparency is an essential ethical consideration, particularly when sharing PbK externally. It emphasises making the processes of knowledge generation visible to others. Transparency involves clearly outlining how insights were developed, the context in which they emerged, and the limitations of the knowledge being shared. This strengthens the credibility of PbK and promotes ethical, responsible sharing. This also helps ensure that insights are not misapplied.

Make the learning process visible

Sharing how insights were developed—not just the conclusions—strengthens the credibility of PbK and helps others assess its relevance and limitations.

- Be transparent about how you arrived at a particular insight: *Was it through observation, reflective journaling, peer dialogue, or community workshops?*

- Clarify what patterns or experiences led to the learning: *What were people noticing? What was surprising? What shifted your approach?*

- Highlight the role of iteration and sense-making: *Did the insight emerge over time, or from a specific turning point?*

- Share caveats and uncertainties: *What do you still not know, or what tensions remain?*

This promotes honesty about the rigour of the process—even when it is messy—and gives others the tools to build on your insights responsibly.

Be clear about context and scope

What works in one setting may not apply in another. Ethical sharing requires clarity on where insights came from — and where they may not apply.

- **Avoid over-generalisation:** Before applying insights, ask: *Does this reflect the realities of the community we work with?*

- **Be upfront about evaluation status:** If the intervention has not been formally evaluated, clearly state this when sharing insights. For example: *"This approach has been implemented for six months but has not yet been formally evaluated."*

- **Clarify whose experience is being represented:** If insights come from certain groups (e.g., men or adults), avoid presenting them as reflective of all experiences.

- **Acknowledge gaps:** If insights are based on limited experience or reflect only certain groups, be upfront about this when sharing or applying them.

5. Confidentiality and privacy

While representation is essential, it is equally important to recognise that **visibility is not always empowering.** This is especially true when stories are shared from individuals or communities that face stigma, systemic marginalisation or political and social backlash. For LGBTQ+ individuals, victims and/or survivors of violence, or others, visibility may carry real risks, including loss of privacy, retaliation and surveillance.

Ethical PbK practice involves carefully assessing these risks with contributors and centring their autonomy in deciding how much of their story to share, and with whom.

Step 1 **Consider whether anonymity is needed**

Always start by assessing with contributors what level of visibility feels safe and meaningful for them. Some may choose to remain visible; others may prefer to remain anonymous or invisible — and this choice is equally valid.

Reflection questions:

- *Have contributors had the chance to decide what level of visibility feels safe and meaningful to them? Do they want to be identified or prefer to be anonymous?*

- *Are we aware of any risks that could emerge if this knowledge is shared more widely? Have we considered and discussed the political and social risks of visibility for this person or group?*

- *Think about cultural and contextual sensitivities — how will the story be received, interpreted, or possibly misused?*

- *Are we reinforcing a narrative that visibility is always empowering, or are we also making space for invisibility as a form of protection and care?*

- *Can we share learnings by anonymising the stories or through a collective voice while still honouring the learning?*

Step 2 **Recognise that anonymisation may not eliminate risks**

Even after removing names or details, PbK insights are often tied to specific contexts that may make them identifiable. Contextual clues such as the name of the school or unique cultural practices can still put individuals or groups at risk.

Reflection questions:

- *Can we anonymise the insight so it is unidentifiable to those who initially shared it?*

- *Have we taken out names or identifying details (such as the name of their community or school, or specific case details), while still keeping the main point clear and helpful for others to learn from?*

- *Have we considered whether sharing this insight could cause harm, even if the insight is anonymised?*

- *Could this insight be traced back to an individual or community in a way that places them at risk? Could the context or patterns we are sharing reveal the identity of those involved?*

- *Have we balanced the importance of learning with the responsibility to protect?*

6. Safety

The line between practice and knowledge production can be blurred. The PbK may be related to experiences that, if revisited or shared without care, can cause distress or harm. It is essential to prioritise the well-being of victims and/or survivors, children, and community members contributing to the PbK in any form.

Safety includes emotional, psychological, and relational safety, not just physical protection. Taking proactive measures to reduce risks during and after engagement is essential. This includes ensuring that support services are available if needed.

Safety, when grounded in care, is not only about preventing harm — it is about cultivating conditions where people feel seen, affirmed, and supported.

Reflection questions:

- *Have we created a process where participants' safety is prioritised?*

- *What emotional, psychological, or practical support is available if distress arises?*

- *Are we checking in regularly — not only at the start, but throughout the process — to make sure people still feel safe?*

- *Have we communicated that participants could withdraw or modify their involvement at any time?*

7. Mutual well-being and enrichment

Ethics require considering not only what participants give to the PbK process but also what they receive in return. This means ensuring that those who share knowledge feel appreciated, affirmed, and, where possible, **strengthened by their involvement.**

Reflection questions:

- *Have contributors gained something from the process, such as increased confidence, new insights, or stronger community connections? What skills can they strengthen while engaging in PbK processes?*

- *Have we offered access to relevant support services, such as counselling, legal aid, or medical assistance — not only if distress arises from our engagement, but also for any needs in their lives Have we provided clear*

information about where and how to access these services?

- *Have we provided feedback to contributors on how their insights have been used?*

8. Equity and representation of diverse voices

Power shapes what counts as knowledge and whose voices are heard, remembered, or erased. Power also shapes what is recognised, legitimised, and taken forward.

PbK insights may reflect dominant voices unless deliberate efforts are made to centre marginalised perspectives. Even within practitioner spaces, **hierarchies can influence what is surfaced**. In many settings, PbK from large international NGOs or academic-adjacent organisations is more likely to be documented, cited, and seen as "insightful". This is the case even when similar practices have long existed in less formal, community-led spaces. Frontline practitioners, peer supporters, and victims and/or survivors may be the first to trial an approach, yet the recognition often comes only when those with institutional access or influence repackage it.

For example:

- Senior professionals may be amplified, while frontline workers, peer supporters, and volunteers — often those closest to the issue — are treated as informal or secondary.
- Practitioner insights may be privileged over community insights due to professional hierarchies.
- Perspectives from well-resourced organisations may overshadow those from smaller, less formal, or underfunded spaces.
- Insights from regions with more power might be privileged over those from LMICs.

There is a need to be intentional about whose perspectives are captured and whose are sidelined. This is not just about inclusion. It is about actively interrupting patterns where only certain people or institutions are considered legitimate knowledge holders.

- Ask: *Who holds the pen? Who gets cited? Who decides what is "insightful"?*

To shift this dynamic:

- Actively seek to include **diverse voices** (e.g., disability, sexuality, race, caste, gender, and class).

- Create deliberate processes that invite **voices without advanced degrees or documentation skills** to share knowledge. Ensure that the knowledge shared reflects the diversity of experiences and perspectives within the community.
- Use oral storytelling, group reflection, or drawings to surface PbK in **ways that are culturally relevant and accessible**.

Reflection questions:

- *Whose voices are represented in this PbK?*
- *Whose voices are missing from this process, and why? What would it take for them to contribute meaningfully?*
- *Are victim and/or survivor perspectives balanced with practitioner insights without being overshadowed?*
- *Have we ensured that professional knowledge is not valued more (or less) than lived expertise?*
- *Have we spoken up against extractive or hierarchical practices, even if they seem "normal"?*
- *Have we created opportunities for those affected to add to or update the insight?*
- *Have we ensured that underrepresented or marginalised voices are included?*
- *Have we reflected on whether the insight reinforces or challenges dominant narratives?*

An ethics of care is also about actively shifting power. A care-centred approach to PbK challenges extractive forms of knowledge collection. It says, **"Your voice matters, and how your voice is held matters too."** A care-based approach also acknowledges that marginalised voices are not just "additional" perspectives, they are central to building knowledge that is just, accurate, and transformative.

9. Reflecting on bias and position: Are we seeing the whole picture?

PbK is never neutral. The perspectives, identities, and experiences of the person or team documenting it shape what is noticed, how it is interpreted, and whose voices are amplified.

Practitioners invest deeply in their work, often shaped by years of care, commitment, and relationships.

This investment can create biases—both positive and negative—that influence how work is documented, interpreted, and shared. **Bias is natural. It is a human trait that can shape how knowledge is shared.** Organisational biases also shape what is shared and how it is described.

PbK requires intentional reflection on bias. The important part is **recognising bias, not judging it.** Transparency about biases and limitations strengthens PbK's credibility.

> **Reflection questions:**
>
> When sharing PbK, it can help to pause and ask:
>
> - *What assumptions are shaping how this practice is being shared?*
> - *How might power, privilege, or bias be influencing this story?*

Be mindful of selective narratives. Avoid highlighting successes while ignoring challenges or negative outcomes. Balance the story to reflect the full picture.

Reflecting on your position

By acknowledging your own identity and background, you can better understand how your perspective shapes the knowledge you document and share. This self-awareness helps to mitigate the risk of unintentional bias or misrepresentation. *How have your own background and experiences shaped the knowledge you are sharing and/or the knowledge of others that you are analysing and sharing?* Some outputs may require explicitly explaining your positionality. With others, it may be enough for you to be aware of this.

> **Reflection questions:**
>
> - *How have my own experiences and perspectives shaped the knowledge I am sharing?*
> - *What specific experiences inform my understanding of the topic?*
> - *How do my background and beliefs influence my approach?[18]*

10. Recognition of information sources

The stories and insights that comprise PbK— especially those rooted in practice and lived expertise— are **not neutral data**. They belong to people. Ethical guidelines should address how to attribute collective insights while respecting individual contributions.

Recognition is important in PbK. Naming and crediting individuals for their contributions honours not just what they know, but also the **labour, reflection, and risk that went into sharing that knowledge.**

Even when insights are co-created, individual voices and contributions matter.

Unlike research settings with more established protocols, PbK often lacks clear mechanisms for recognising differing contributions. PbK is often co-created through informal and collective processes, which makes defining ownership complex.

> **Reflection questions:**
>
> - *Are we naming where insights came from, including informal or under-recognised sources?*
> - *Are we attributing credit to those who first or most substantially developed or demonstrated the practice/approach/learning?*
> - *Are we acknowledging the labour, risk, and reflection that went into sharing this knowledge?*
> - *Are we ensuring that contributions are acknowledged respectfully and accurately? Have we clearly identified the source of the information and whose experiences it reflects?*
> - *If the original source is unclear, have we acknowledged the collective nature of the insight and its context?*

Sample ethical PbK reflection guide: Sharing PbK

We have already explored ethics in detail. But in practice, decisions do not happen in neat sections — they often happen in messy, relational moments: during a chat with a colleague, when writing a report, or when a story comes back to mind years later. This guide is here as a companion: a way to pause and ask, *"Are we holding this knowledge with care, transparency and ethics?"*

It is for moments when you are considering sharing PbK, whether through sharing lessons in a workshop, preparing a report or publishing a blog. The reflection guide encourages moving slowly, involving others, and revisiting decisions over time.

It builds on safeguarding, confidentiality, and community accountability practices you already use, but adds reflection that is unique to PbK.

Ethics is not a one-off checklist; it is an ongoing commitment.

Before you begin

Keep two things in mind:

- **Anchor:** At every stage, ask: *Could this harm the person or community if shared? Could this harm the organisation, staff or partners?*
- **Collective:** These questions are best explored together with colleagues, communities, or contributors.

Step 0   Pause for purpose

Before moving forward, pause to ask:

- *Why are we sharing this?*
- *Who benefits — the community, the practice, or mainly our institution? Does this serve the needs of communities, or only institutional agendas?*
- ✕ If the purpose is unclear, stop and clarify before proceeding (see Intentionality and What to share: Questions to reflect on before deciding what to share).

Step 1   Universal checks for all PbK

Pause to ask:

- **Detailing context:** *Have we clearly explained where this knowledge comes from, who it reflects, and what conditions shaped it? Without that, PbK risks being misunderstood, decontextualised, or misapplied* (see Contextualisation).
- **Being transparent about limits:** *Have we shown not just what the insight is, but also its boundaries (what it does not tell us, what we are unsure about, where it might not apply)?* (see Transparency)

- **Bias:** *Have we reflected on how our bias, role, or perspective shapes what we see and share?* (see Bias and position)
- **Acknowledgement:** *Are contributors acknowledged in ways that are safe, meaningful, and in line with their wishes?* (see Recognition of information sources and ownership)
- **Evolving knowledge:** *Can this knowledge be updated, corrected, or withdrawn later if needed?*
- **Respect and agency:** *Is the way the story is told centred on people's humanity, or does it reduce them to a "lesson" or "example"? Does it reflect how they would want to be seen — or how we want to be seen?* (see Agency and voice: Involve and reflect with those affected)
- **Contributor review:** *Have we created space for people to challenge, question, or add nuance to how their knowledge is represented?* (see Agency and voice: Involve and reflect with those affected)
- **Pause or hold back:** Pause when there is a risk of harm, if anonymity is sought and cannot be protected, contributors object, or there is risk to the organisation, staff, participants or community.
- ✕ If you are unsure about any of the responses or realise that the ethical requirements aren't adequately met, pause, reflect and explore how you can strengthen the ethics.

Step 2   Identify the type of PbK

PbK arises in different ways, and the ethical pathway depends on its source.

Ask:

- **Is this one person's specific story or case?** (see Path A)
  Example: a child's account that highlights how reporting mechanisms are inaccessible.

- **Is this an insight drawn from many stories? Is this knowledge from past experiences?** (see Path B)
  Examples: lessons from 15 cases across two programmes or remembering a lesson from community work 10 years ago.

Path A: Story-based ethics

When using one person's story or experience.

- **Consent:** *Was consent given? Does it still hold? Can it be changed or withdrawn later?* (see Informed and dynamic consent)

- **Agency:** *Have they shaped the decision of how their story is told and where it is shared? Have they shared whether they are identified or anonymous? Have they got an opportunity to review and provide feedback?* (see Agency and voice: Involve and reflect with those affected)

- **Privacy:** *If they choose to be anonymous, could details still reveal who they are?* (see Confidentiality and privacy)

- **Safety:** *Could sharing cause harm?* (see Safety)

  ✕ If any answer is unclear or concerning, pause, consult, and adjust.

Path B: Learning from many cases and past experience

When knowledge comes from multiple cases or from past experience, consent may not apply in the same way it does with an individual story. Consent is central in Path A; in Path B, the focus is on safety, anonymity, and transparency rather than individual permission.

- **Representation:** *Whose stories shaped this, and who is missing? Are we lifting up marginalised voices, not only dominant ones?* (see Equity and representation of diverse voices)

- **Transparency:** *Have we made clear how this pattern emerged?* (see Transparency)

- **Anonymity and privacy:** *Can this be shared without identifying anyone? Could someone be recognised through context or detail?* (see Confidentiality and privacy)

- **Harm:** *Could this sharing harm, misrepresent, or betray anyone's trust?*

- **Value versus risk:** *Does the learning justify sharing, or does potential harm outweigh it?*

- **Attribution:** *Have we credited groups or communities fairly while also balancing credit with privacy and safeguarding?* (see Recognition of information sources and ownership)

  ✕ If any answer is unclear or concerning, pause, consult, and adjust.

Step 3 **Wider responsibilities**

Ethical PbK is not only about preventing harm — it is also about strengthening care and accountability. Ask:

- **Reciprocity:** *Are contributors benefiting from this process? Is there a way for those who shared the knowledge to benefit, learn, or be strengthened through this process?* (see Mutual well-being and enrichment)

- **Harm and safeguards:** *Have we considered possible risks and put supports in place if distress or backlash arises?* (see Safety)

- **Institutional support:** *Does our organisation provide peer reflection or safeguarding so this responsibility doesn't rest on one person alone? Are we, and our teams, supported while holding this work?* (see Creating your own organisational structures to support ethical PbK)

- **Stewardship:** *Where will this knowledge travel, and how can we ensure it is used responsibly in the future?*

  ✕ If you think more could be done, pause, revisit and collectively explore what actions you can take.

Final pause

If you feel confident that your approach centres on rights and dignity, honours contributors and upholds community well-being, then proceed.

✕ If doubts remain, listen, pause, and invite others into the decision-making process.

Aftercare commitment

Check in with contributors or communities where appropriate, explore if you can monitor how the knowledge is received, respond to concerns, and update or withdraw if needed.

3.3.b 'Peer reviewing' PbK

Establishing a peer review process enables other practitioners and people with lived expertise to assess PbK products, ensuring accountability and maintaining quality standards. It is helpful to create organisational and community processes to review insights (see also Creating your own organisational structures to support ethical PbK).[19] This collaborative scrutiny serves as a vetting process that enhances the relevance and safety of the knowledge produced.

Side note: How is peer review of PbK different from academic peer review?

Unlike academic peer review, which primarily focuses on scholarly rigour, peer review in PbK encompasses broader consideration tailored to practical applications, learning processes, and real-world impact.

1. **Accountability:** PbK peer review must hold practitioners accountable to the communities they serve, while academic peer review ensures alignment with academic expectations and evidence-based practices.

2. **No pass/fail:** PbK peer review is not about passing or failing but about supporting growth, learning, and adaptation, whereas academic peer review often evaluates work based on set criteria.

3. **Collaboration:** PbK peer review is intended to promote continuous dialogue between reviewers and practitioners, whereas academic peer review is often a one-time evaluation.

4. **Support:** PbK peer review should provide constructive, empathetic guidance aimed at improvement, while academic peer review assesses quality and adherence to scholarly norms.

Setting up ethical oversight

An ethics review process or committee can provide valuable oversight. This group can help:

- Review your plans and materials
- Ensure key ethical questions have been addressed
- Monitor the process to protect those sharing knowledge

Who could you involve in PbK peer review?

In a PbK peer review, it is essential to include a diverse range of voices to ensure the review is holistic, inclusive, and context sensitive. Here are the key stakeholders you can consider involving:

1. **Community representatives:** Local leaders or community-based organisations who offer feedback on the programme's cultural relevance, community integration, and its alignment with local needs and norms.

2. **Peer practitioners:** Colleagues from other regions or similar programmes who can provide comparative insights, identify common challenges, and share innovative solutions from their own practice.

3. **Survivor/community-led groups:** Individuals with lived expertise of CSV, or those from survivor-led organisations, to ensure that the programme is trauma-informed, respectful, and truly responsive to the needs of those it seeks to support.

4. **Subject-matter experts:** Child protection specialists or academic experts who can offer insights based on evidence-based practices and help ensure the programme's technical integrity.

5. **Existing ethics review committees (if any):** They can ensure adherence to ethical principles such as consent, confidentiality, and participant safety, safeguarding the rights and dignity of those involved.

6. **External observers:** Independent evaluators who can assess the programme's quality, identify potential biases, and ensure the review process is impartial and transparent.

Involving these diverse perspectives ensures the PbK is critically examined and ethically sound.

Sample peer review guidelines

Before beginning their work, it may be helpful for reviewers to receive information that explicitly outlines core guidelines and values, helping them approach the review process with a PbK-friendly mindset.

Step 1 **Before you begin**

Many of us work in systems where outcomes and tangible success indicators lead the conversation. A PbK review invites a different way of thinking than M&E, programming, or much research: stay curious about context and constraints, the steps and small adaptations people made, how community voices shaped decisions, and the ethical judgement behind them.

1. **Focus on the journey, not just the destination**

- The review should **value the process of implementation** as much as the outcomes. Practitioners often work in challenging environments, so emphasis should be placed on learning from the process, including mistakes, adaptations, and real-time adjustments.

- Reflect on the journey by asking:
  - *What challenges did practitioners face, and how did they adapt?*
  - *What innovative solutions did they come up with when facing limited resources or unexpected obstacles?*
  - *How did they involve the community, and what did they learn from that engagement?*

- This approach encourages practitioners to view challenges and imperfections as opportunities for learning rather than shortcomings.

2. **Nurturing and growth-focused language**

- Provide feedback in a nurturing and supportive manner. The goal is to uplift and mentor, not critique harshly.

- Use positive, growth-focused language. For example:
  - *"This part is really powerful…"*
  - *"You have done something important here."*
  - *"One way this could be even stronger is…"*

- Framing feedback as a conversation rather than an evaluation fosters a sense of collaboration and shared purpose.

3. **Know the context**

Reviewers should understand the context in which the project is taking place. For instance, practitioners often work in complex, under-resourced environments, and this should be acknowledged.

Step 2 **How to run the review**

1. **Peer learning and knowledge-sharing**

- Create opportunities for peer-to-peer learning instead of a one-way process.

- Organise group review sessions or roundtable

discussions where practitioners share experiences, challenges, and solutions. This decentralises authority and emphasises collective wisdom.

2. **Engage the practitioner in the review process**

- Co-construct the review by allowing practitioners to self-reflect and provide input. Questions to facilitate this could include:
    - *What areas of their work are they most proud of?*
    - *Where do they think they need more support?*
    - *What feedback would they like to receive from the reviewers?*
- This encourages a sense of ownership and makes the process less hierarchical, enabling practitioners to feel like equal partners in the review rather than being evaluated by distant "experts."

3. **Continuous dialogue and iterative feedback**

- Create a feedback loop where the practitioner is encouraged to respond. Instead of a one-time review, foster continuous dialogue that evolves as the project adapts and grows.
- Encourage iterative improvement by having regular check-ins, allowing feedback to be dynamic and responsive to changing needs.
- Use open-ended, reflective questions to help practitioners articulate what is working, what is challenging, and where they might need more support. For example:
    - *What surprised you during the implementation?*
    - *How did the community's feedback influence your approach?*
    - *What could make your work easier or more effective going forward?*

Step 3   **What to include in the review**

1. **Supportive guidance for improvement**

- The feedback process should be solution-oriented, offering actionable suggestions, not just pointing out areas for improvement.
- Suggest manageable changes that enhance impact without overwhelming the practitioner. This could include new ideas for community

engagement or stakeholder collaboration that fit the local context.

- The reviewer's role should be that of a mentor, walking alongside the practitioner, offering support as they continue their journey.

2. **Celebrating effort and growth**

- Include a section dedicated to celebrating successes, no matter how small. Acknowledge:
    - *The practitioner's commitment to their community.*
    - *Their resilience in the face of challenges.*
    - *Any innovative approaches they have employed to solve local problems.*
- By celebrating progress over perfection, the review process motivates practitioners to continue refining their work without fear of failure or judgement.

Sample reviewer checklist

- ✅ I understood the context before giving advice.
- ✅ I avoided jargon and kept comments short and clear.
- ✅ My wording is kind, specific, and non-judgemental.
- ✅ I invited the practitioner to choose which ideas to adopt.
- ✅ I considered confidentiality, consent, and anonymisation needs.
- ✅ I looked for possible unintended harms and noted mitigations.
- ✅ I named at least one strength.

Tip: PbK peer review can be light and simple

Peer review does not have to be long and complicated. It could be:

- A 30-minute Zoom call with a fellow practitioner
- A voice note exchange with a mentor
- A group reflection session with community members
- A shared Google Doc with comments

3.4. Using and sharing PbK

3.4.a Using PbK to improve practice within organisations

PbK can sometimes be treated as something to package and share externally. However, its most powerful role may be within frontline organisations themselves. High-quality, rigorous PbK is crucial for informed internal programme decision-making, agility, and effective course correction. It enables teams to adapt in real-time based on what is emerging on the ground — often before formal data or evaluations catch up. When used intentionally, PbK strengthens programmes, sharpens ethical judgement, and builds institutional memory.

Just as importantly, it supports deeper accountability to the children, victims and/or survivors, as well as to the communities that programmes serve. This helps ensure that the insights gained through practice are not only recorded but also actively used to guide action.

Gathering PbK isn't the end. It is the middle

> You have gathered insights. You've made space for reflection.
>
> Now the question is: How will you let this change us?
>
> That is what using PbK means.
>
> Internal use is not secondary: it is the heart of PbK.

Using PbK does not need to be resource-intensive, but it does require time, intention, and follow-through.

How PbK improves practice

When PbK is actively used, it helps shift teams:

- From reacting > to responding
- From repeating routines > to asking why
- From feeling stuck > to experimenting with care

It can:
- Make invisible knowledge visible, so what's

already known can be talked about, learned from, and carried forward
- Improve communication and alignment across teams
- Strengthen programme quality through reflection, not just compliance
- Build staff confidence in their own knowledge and insights
- Support ethical decision-making in complex cases
- Help teams stay aligned with their values, especially under pressure
- Encourage leadership to listen more deeply to practitioners
- Identify emerging patterns and gaps that formal monitoring may miss
- Create spaces to navigate ethical dilemmas together
- Bring survivor and community perspectives closer to decision-making
- Make programmes more relevant, survivor-centred, accountable to communities

Turning insight into action: How to use PbK to improve practice

CSV practitioners are constantly adjusting. When necessary, they shift how they speak to children, how they support victims and/or survivors, and how they work with families and communities. They do this because they're learning all the time—from what goes well, what feels off, and what no one prepares them for. However, unless they apply it, this learning often remains locked in their minds or is lost in the rush of daily work.

Using PbK is about asking:

- *What is this telling us?*
- *What do we want to do differently now?*
- *Who needs to be part of this conversation?*

Even a 30-minute check-in or a whiteboard with *"what changed this week"* can make a difference. The goal is to **get the learning out of people's heads and into collective learning and decision-making.**

There are several ways for organisations to use the insights they have gathered to sharpen their practice, strengthen their teams, and stay grounded in the lived realities of the work.

Using PbK in practice

1. Use PbK like a compass in planning and strategy

What to do:
When reviewing work plans or shaping strategy, lay your PbK insights alongside M&E data.
Ask:

- *What directions were we pulled in last year?*
- *Where did we adjust course — and why?*
- *What path are practitioners already walking, even if it is not on the formal map?*

Preparation challenge:

Be prepared to integrate PbK insights into formal planning, even if it may be perceived as secondary to structured M&E data. Organisational commitment is key to ensuring that PbK, rooted in real-world practice, is valued alongside formal data. You can draw from the Background Paper, which emphasises the integration of PbK into decision-making to guide action and improve practice.

2. Redesign tools based on what's already happening

What to do:
Identify instances where staff members adapted or revised existing tools to enhance practice. Use them to:

- Annotate your tools and forms (e.g., *"We changed this because a survivor told us…"*)
- Adapt protocols with practice insight — not just compliance
- Include frontline edits in formal tool revisions and acknowledge the PbK

Preparation challenge:

Navigating potential resistance from staff or leadership in adapting tools based on real-world practice may require careful planning. Try to overcome this by showing how adjustments have led to better outcomes for both staff and the communities they serve.

3. Bring PbK into training and orientation

What to do:
Fill your onboarding or refresher trainings with real stories from the work. Some ideas are to:

- Use PbK scenarios to role-play dilemmas or adaptations
- Show how the team's current practice came to be (and what did not work)
- Let new staff inherit wisdom — not just standard operating procedures

This builds shared memory and values, not just technical knowledge.

Preparation challenge:

A potential challenge is institutional buy-in. PbK stories might often be viewed as anecdotal or secondary in formal training settings. This means addressing potential resistance from those who prefer structured academic content over practice and lived expertise. One way to do this could be using the Background Paper and the arguments made in it.

4. Curate a living library of practice

What to do:
Create a simple, searchable space to store PbK insights. This could be on a shared drive, a whiteboard, or even a WhatsApp thread. You could:

- Sort reflections by themes or questions
- Use it during check-ins or proposal writing
- Let staff browse or add

Preparation challenge:

Keeping PbK insights easily accessible and organised can be difficult without consistent engagement from all team members. Ensure that creating and maintaining PbK in whichever form is seen as an embedded and essential—not optional—task for the team.

5. Build bridges across teams

What to do:
Set up short, informal exchanges across departments/teams in your organisation or regions. These can be:

- 15-minute *"what we're trying"* spotlights
- PbK swaps — exchanges where one team presents a learning and others respond
- Cross-team feedback on adaptations

Preparation challenge:
Departmental silos, a lack of communication, or conflicting priorities can hinder cross-departmental or team collaboration. Regular, structured opportunities for cross-team interaction can be embedded into team schedules. This prevents regular PbK reflection from being an "extra" task that's often neglected.

6. Make PbK part of supervision and care

What to do:
Incorporate PbK into supervision and peer support as a way to invite team members to reflect. Specifically:

- Use PbK to unpack ethical tensions
- Celebrate adaptations — not just outcomes

This affirms that learning is part of the job.

Preparation challenge:
Incorporating PbK into supervision may face challenges, especially if the focus is largely on reporting. To prepare, emphasise that learning and reflection are key components of supervision and central to ethical practice and growth.

7. Revisit and reflect — don't let insights fade

What to do:
Every quarter, pick 2–3 key insights and ask:

- *Did we act on this?*
- *What changed, or didn't?*
- *Do we still agree with what we learned?*
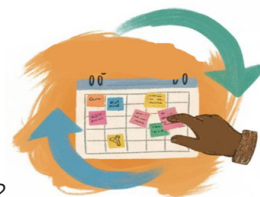
Preparation challenge:
Making time to revisit insights can be difficult when teams are busy. Address this by establishing a routine—such as a quarterly reflection meeting—and demonstrating how revisiting insights can lead to real-time improvements.

8. Let PbK also shape external conversations

What to do:
Use PbK examples to influence donors, peers, or policymakers:

- Share adaptations that emerged from real-time reflection
- Illustrate how survivor feedback changed programming
- Push back on rigid models with grounded alternatives

This elevates practitioner wisdom and protects it from being sidelined.

Preparation challenge:
External stakeholders may prioritise quantitative outcomes over PbK insights. To prepare, link PbK insights to meaningful change and demonstrate their relevance to broader conversations. The Background Paper provides examples to support these claims.

3.4.b Sharing PbK

Sharing PbK can amplify the valuable insights gained from practice for other practitioners, as well as for future research.
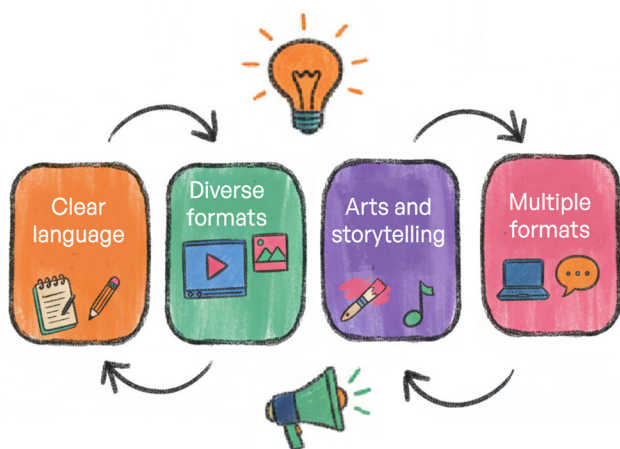
However, sharing PbK is not always simple. One key informant who developed insightful PbK case studies shared:

> "We struggled because we didn't always reach those who would benefit from these case studies."

Another noted that:

> "When academics speak, people take them seriously...we need to create a space where practitioners can share their knowledge, and their voices are seen as valuable."

What to share: Questions to reflect on before deciding what to share

1. Purpose and goals

Before sharing, reflect on why you are doing it.

- *What is our goal in sharing this PbK?*
- *What is the most important learning for us to share in this context?*
- *How might sharing this knowledge help us reach our broader goals? Further:*

  - *Could it lead to new opportunities, enhance understanding, or strengthen networks?*
  - *Could it inspire collaboration, provide feedback, or open new directions in practice?*

2. Audience and impact

Think about who you want to reach and how it will matter to them.

- *Who is our target audience? Who do we hope will benefit from this knowledge?*
  - *Will our insights support practitioners, community members, researchers or others?*
  - *What type of content will resonate most with them? For example, for practitioners just starting out, consider: What would we have needed to know when starting?*
  - *If we were in their position, what would we have wanted to know?*
- *How will sharing this information impact our community and stakeholders?*
  - *What information will be most meaningful to them?*

3. Ethical considerations

PbK can lead to unintended harm if applied or shared without care. See the ethics discussed in the section on ethics and the sample ethical PbK reflection guide for sharing PbK.

4. Impact

PbK may not reflect models that can be replicated, but it provides distinct insights that help others frame sharper questions and see their work in new ways.

- *How might our experiences influence others' work, decision-making, or approaches?*
- *What questions can we frame that will help others reflect on their work?*
- *What change or outcome do we hope to inspire through sharing this knowledge?*
- *How can we minimise the chance of incorrect interpretations about our work? (see also Consider what others can learn from you)*

Reimagining knowledge-sharing strategies

PbK may require reimagining strategies for gathering and disseminating knowledge. Based on our discussions, some preliminary considerations emerged:

1. Use clear, practical language

PbK should be accessible by avoiding jargon and focusing on practical applications. Providing clear learning and actionable insights can help practitioners build on the PbK. For example, one key informant shared that using an instant messaging app to exchange clear and simple practice-based insights with other practitioners helped share real-time learning.

> **Preparation challenge:** There is a risk of oversimplifying complex insights for the sake of accessibility. To avoid this, ensure PbK is detailed enough to maintain its depth while still being practical and relatable.

2. Diversify formats

As a key informant emphasised, offering multiple engagement options—watching, listening, and reading—helps individuals access knowledge in ways that suit them. PbK can be communicated through various formats tailored to the audience's needs.[20] Examples include:

- Longer articles for researchers
- Shorter summaries for practitioners
- Audiovisual materials (e.g., videos, podcasts) for broader communities

Providing multiple options for engagement ensures that knowledge is more widely accessible and comprehensible.

> **Preparation challenge:** Diverse formats may require additional resources and time.

3. Engage creative storytelling and art

PbK is not limited to written formats; it can be shared through movies, songs, or images. Involving artists, musicians, and other creative professionals can help communicate emotional dimensions and complex insights in more engaging ways. For instance, sculptors and illustrators can provide visual representations of insights, while musicians and poets can convey emotional aspects through their art.[21]

> **Preparation challenge:** Creative approaches may require new partnerships, skills, and ways of working outside usual practice.

4. Expand platforms for sharing

Sharing PbK on platforms where practitioners are already engaged can increase reach and participation. This includes professional networks on LinkedIn, Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, TikTok, and Bluesky. Interactive spaces such as online forums, live webinars, and workshops can further facilitate real-time discussions and learning.

> "We need a suite of different options and strategies for sharing PbK."
>
> Key informant

> **Preparation challenge:** Expanding platforms means navigating different audiences, technologies, and privacy considerations.

How to share PbK: Formats and channels

There is no single best way to share PbK. What works best will depend on your context, goals, and the needs of your audience. Some methods may be well-suited for internal learning within a team, while others may be more effective for informing policy or raising public awareness. The methods outlined below offer a range of approaches to sharing PbK. Consider which methods align with your goals and resources and adapt them to fit your context. Combining different approaches can also help to reach diverse audiences and increase impact.

Deciding on a format

When deciding how to share PbK, consider the following:

- **Your audience:** *What format will best engage those you aim to reach?*
- **Your resources:** *Which method aligns with your team's capacity and skills?*
- **Your goals:** *Are you aiming to improve internal practice, share your learning for other practitioners or engage with communities?*

Combining methods can also increase the reach and impact of shared PbK. For example, using case studies

to illustrate lessons in an annual report or integrating PbK examples into conference presentations can enhance learning and engagement.

Creating dedicated practice-sharing spaces

Creating a dedicated platform can help practitioners exchange insights and strategies in a centralised space. These could include online forums, specialised subgroups within networks, or dedicated sections on professional websites.

Example: Sharing PbK through an online platform (violence against women)[22]

The United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) launched the SHINE platform in 2022, which serves as a global, multilingual community (with support in more than 50 languages) for real-time knowledge exchange on violence against women and girls (VAWG). The platform offers communities of practice, groups, discussions, resources, and events.

How SHINE supports PbK sharing

The SHINE platform facilitates the exchange of PbK through several key features:

- **Knowledge exchange:** SHINE enables partners to share and discuss VAWG prevention strategies and resources, fostering collaborative learning and improved practice.
- **Multilingual collaboration:** Instant translation allows partners to communicate and share insights in over 50 languages, breaking down language barriers and enabling global participation.
- **Resource sharing:** SHINE provides tailored resources, guidance, tools, and support related to ending VAWG, linked to specific discussions and consultations.
- **Networking opportunities:** The platform connects partners globally, creating opportunities to influence programming and policies through collective advocacy.
- **Communities of practice:** SHINE hosts communities of practice and safe spaces where partners working on similar issues can collaborate and exchange knowledge.

- **Validation and testing:** SHINE allows partners to provide real-time feedback on the UN Trust Fund's PbK findings, helping refine strategies based on practical insights.

When to create:
- When practitioners have internet access and the capacity to engage regularly.
- When long-term funding is available to sustain platform maintenance, translation, and moderation.

Communities of practice

Communities of practice help facilitate the effective exchange of PbK among members. A community of practice is a structured group of practitioners who share a common area of interest or work and come together to exchange knowledge and experiences. Communities of practice create a collaborative space for practitioners to reflect on their work, identify challenges, and develop solutions informed by the experiences of others.

Example: Communities of practice with multiple teams

Child Helpline International is a collective impact organisation comprising more than 150 child helpline members from over 130 countries and territories worldwide. Child Helpline runs communities of practice that allow members from around the world to share practices and learn from one another.

When to use:
- When there are committed facilitators to coordinate and sustain the group.
- If online, when there is a stable internet connection and available communication platforms.
- When there are enough interested practitioners to sustain engagement.
- When resources are available, such as funding for coordination, logistical support or translation. This can help sustain and strengthen the communities of practice over time.

Case studies

Case studies are valuable for illustrating how interventions have been applied in real-world settings. They help readers understand how specific approaches have worked in practice and can highlight key decision points, challenges, and adaptations, helping others identify strategies that may be relevant to their own context.

Example: Sharing PbK through case studies

ECPAT International is an international organisation working to end CSV with a membership of 142 civil society organisations in 115 countries. Their case studies document the PbK of frontline organisations supporting boys who have experienced CSV across different contexts. This includes Bolivia, Colombia, the UK, Namibia, Morocco, Thailand, South Korea, France, the USA and Cambodia, with more in process.

For example, in Morocco, ECPAT worked with two frontline organisations, Association Bayti and AMANE, to document ethnically sensitive and gender-transformative care approaches.[23] Similarly, in Thailand, ECPAT partnered with the Urban Light Foundation to capture how outreach and participatory activities were adjusted based on boys' emotional responses.[24]

Process

To gather PbK, ECPAT follows a structured process that involves visiting the site of the interventions, conducting interviews with practitioners, observing programmes, and administering structured questionnaires.

Content of the case studies

While case studies are adapted to the specific context of each intervention, they typically cover similar core elements. These include an introduction, methodology, key challenges, details of the intervention, human and technical resources required, and a conclusion on the impact and future possibilities. This flexible structure allows case studies to capture diverse approaches while highlighting practical insights that can be considered across different settings. Each case study also includes quotes from practitioners about their experiences, challenges, and promising practices.

Language

ECPAT's case studies make PbK from frontline organisations available in both English and local languages. Providing the case studies in local languages ensures that frontline practitioners in the same region can engage with the insights. English versions enable broader sharing and learning across regions.

Regular knowledge updates within networks

Sharing regular updates within existing networks keeps practitioners informed and connected. It helps to build a sense of shared purpose and collective progress. Ongoing updates also help to keep the knowledge base current and responsive to new challenges.

Example: Sharing PbK through regular updates

The Family for Every Child alliance, a global network of 51 child protection organisations in 40 countries, shares PbK regularly through their networks.

How it works:
- Monthly or quarterly updates provide a space to share new findings and emerging practices.
- Updates can be shared through newsletters, bulletins, or email groups.

When to use:
- When there is a well-established network with consistent engagement.
- When there is capacity to produce and disseminate updates regularly.
- When the goal is to maintain ongoing engagement and knowledge flow.
- When funding is available for communication infrastructure and staffing.

Integrating arts into knowledge-sharing

Utilising creative formats, such as music, art, and storytelling, can make complex issues more accessible and engaging.

Example: Sharing PbK through a music video

Protect Children, a frontline organisation in Finland, created a music video titled Pieces of Me[25] featuring quotes from survivors to expand understanding about the experience of CSV.

How it works:

- Artistic formats can engage broader audiences and create emotional connections to the message.
- Storytelling through art allows survivors and practitioners to share experiences in a more accessible way.

When to use:

- When working with people who have skills in translating complex messages into accessible formats.
- When aiming to reach broad public audiences.
- When resources are available for creative production and dissemination.
- When the goal is to increase emotional engagement and public awareness.

Annual reports

Annual reports document key insights, challenges, and outcomes, providing a structured way to share knowledge and insights. Reports create an ordered record of insights and progress, helping to track changes and improvements over time.

Example: Sharing PbK through annual reports

The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, a committee of the Catholic Church that advises the Pope on protecting children from CSV, was established in 2014. It uses its annual report as both an **accountability tool** to show the efforts being taken and as a **platform for sharing good practices** across countries such as Rwanda, Zambia, Sri Lanka, and Ghana.[26] The Commission is building a **global repository of PbK**, including good practices used to prevent CSV, which supports continuous learning for others.

When to use:

- When there is a consistent data collection and reporting infrastructure.
- When there is the capacity to produce, publish, and disseminate reports annually or on a regular basis.
- When structured reflection and accountability are key goals.
- When resources are available for professional report writing and publication.

Integrating into other knowledge forms

PbK can often be integrated into other knowledge forms, including academic research. PbK offers insights grounded in lived expertise, community dynamics, and real-world problem-solving, which can complement the structured, often quantitative focus of academic literature. When integrated thoughtfully, this combination can lead to more effective, contextually relevant, and sustainable interventions.

Example: Methodology integrating evidence with PbK insights[27]

Raising Voices is an activist organisation working on preventing violence against women (VAW) and children. They developed a structured methodology that merges PbK with evidence-based insights to revise and strengthen the *SASA!* intervention for VAW prevention. This approach ensured that adaptations were grounded in real-world experience while maintaining a strong evidence base. The process involved six key steps that captured PbK from frontline practitioners and integrated it into programme improvements:

1. **Consultation and synthesis:** Engaged practitioners and experts to reflect on key questions: *What was effective in* SASA!? *What challenges emerged? What gaps needed to be addressed?* This phase consolidated expertise to ensure that updates aligned with the evolving landscape of VAW prevention.
2. **Conceptual framework:** Refined the theoretical foundation of the intervention based on new insights from practice and research.
3. **Content revision and creation:** Adapted or developed new programme materials based on findings from the consultation phase.
4. **Review and testing:** Assessed revised content in real-world settings to evaluate feasibility and impact.
5. **Revisions:** Incorporated feedback from testing to further refine the intervention.
6. **Design and production:** Finalised materials to ensure accessibility, clarity, and effectiveness for programming.

This methodology highlights how PbK from frontline organisations was systematically gathered, analysed, and applied to improve the intervention. This demonstrates how PbK can enhance evidence-based programming and adaptation. The success of this revision process was later recognised in the academic sphere, with its insights published in the journal of *Evaluation and Program Planning.*

Example: Multi-layered integration of PbK with multi-country research

ECPAT International's Global Boys Initiative (GBI) was launched to address significant gaps in understanding and responding to the sexual exploitation of boys. Designed as a multi-country research initiative, GBI aimed to produce actionable evidence while integrating PbK at every stage. This ensured the findings were grounded in real-world experience.

The methodology included:

1. **Research and country-level legal analysis:** Conducted research reviewing the sexual exploitation of boys. This work explored causes, service gaps, and research challenges, as well as in-depth reviews across multiple countries to assess legal frameworks, service gaps, and challenges specific to boys.[28]

2. **Collaboration with network members and practitioners:** Partnered with frontline organisations to gather PbK on how boys disclose CSV, access services, and experience stigma.

3. **Survivor perspectives:** Documented insights from boys with lived expertise to highlight barriers in disclosure and support, and to validate or challenge assumptions from formal evidence.[29]

Through this process, GBI demonstrates how the structured integration of PbK can enrich formal research, sharpen its relevance, and strengthen responses to populations often excluded from CSV evidence and programming.

Journals

Academic and practitioner-focused journals offer a structured platform for sharing PbK. Publishing in journals enables practitioners to share their insights with a broader audience, thereby contributing to the formal evidence base.

Some journals have been creating opportunities for practitioners to document interventions, programme outcomes, and challenges. Journals such as the *Journal of the American Medical Association* have begun inviting submissions that innovate traditional clinical trial designs to better address practical needs and *"welcome articles of any type."*[30] This shift reflects greater openness to recognising diverse forms of knowledge, including insights from practitioners. Similarly, the Child Protection and Practice journal and the Philippine Journal on Child Sexual Abuse invite submissions on practice, as well as collaboration between academia and practitioners.

However, the publication process can be time-consuming and demanding, requiring practitioners to align their insights with formal research standards. Language barriers, complex submission guidelines, and limited access to publication support can further limit participation, especially for practitioners in low- and middle-income countries.

Conferences

Conferences can also play a helpful role in sharing PbK and integrating it with other forms of knowledge.

- Conference integrating PbK and research — SVRI Forum: With the increasing acknowledgement of the role of PbK in ending VAWG, the SVRI introduced a new abstract type for the 2022 Forum, inviting practitioners to present their insights.[31] PbK became a major topic at the forum and was featured in workshops, panels, and presentations. For the 2024 Forum, SVRI and UNTF worked to strengthen the review process to ensure that practitioners' knowledge and experience were *"firmly integrated in SVRI Forum presentations, discussions and debates".*[32] PbK was a key sub-theme of the theme on *Advancing the science: Methods and measures,* and included presentations on CSV prevention and response.[33]

- **Dedicated PbK conferences:** There are also examples of conferences solely focused on PbK. One such example is the *Reintegration of victims of trafficking: Towards good practice initiative.*

The *2nd Annual Practitioners' Forum,* held in Phnom Penh in August 2011, gathered 125 participants from 55 organisations, including government representatives, NGOs, and international bodies. The forum focused on documenting and reflecting on reintegration practices, with key outcomes including:

- Identifying practices: highlighting a range of reintegration practices
- Developing documentation templates: creating tools for practitioners to document and reflect on PbK

Collaborative knowledge-sharing

Bringing together diverse voices, including academics, practitioners, cultural experts, and people with lived expertise, strengthens the knowledge base.

Example: Webinars bringing together different forms of expertise

The National Centre for Action on Child Abuse is an Australian organisation working to prevent CSV. Their *In Conversation* series brings together four distinct voices each month (an academic, a person with lived expertise, a cultural expert, and a practitioner) to discuss knowledge mobilisation.[34]

- **Benefit:** Combining different perspectives deepens understanding and generates more holistic solutions.
- **Additional insight:** Collaboration across sectors helps to identify and address gaps in existing knowledge.

This approach transcends siloed knowledge-sharing methods by bringing together diverse, often overlooked perspectives in a structured and equal forum. Instead of privileging one form of expertise—such as academic research—it elevates lived expertise, cultural insights, and practitioner knowledge alongside it.

Multi-channel knowledge-sharing

Using a suite of strategies or multiple channels increases PbK's reach and accessibility. Combining different formats increases the chances of reaching diverse audiences. Multi-channel sharing ensures that knowledge is accessible in different forms.

Example: Suite of strategies for sharing PbK

Child Helpline International uses a suite of practices to share PbK. By integrating various methodologies, the organisation amplifies the voices of practitioners and victims and/or survivors, ensuring their insights directly inform strategies and initiatives.

- **Annual report:** Child Helpline International compiles an annual global report called 'Voices of Children'. This report goes beyond statistics by including case stories, providing insights into the real-life experiences behind the numbers.
- **E-Learning modules:** Tailored e-learning modules are developed based on members' experiences and lessons. These modules aim to share PbK within the network effectively.
- **Using PbK for advocacy:** Knowledge from the frontlines, including PbK, is utilised within evidence-based advocacy, consolidating and leveraging information to support advocacy efforts on behalf of children worldwide.
- **Community of practice:** Child Helpline International fosters communities of practice focusing on core quality standards. These communities enable effective exchange and application of PbK among members.
- **Collaboration:** Child Helpline International operates a network of child helplines, striving to incorporate PbK from its members into the services offered to other members.

When to use:
- When there are resources to sustain multiple channels simultaneously.
- When the goal is to engage different stakeholders at different levels.
- When there is capacity to coordinate and align messaging across platforms.
- When ongoing feedback and adaptation are needed.

Webinars for sharing PbK

Sharing PbK through webinars enables real-time engagement and diverse perspectives, thereby enhancing the learning experience.

Webinars provide a flexible, cost-effective way to facilitate real-time knowledge exchange across different regions. Webinars allow for immediate feedback and interaction with a broad audience. They can be recorded and shared to extend their reach.

However, challenges such as technological barriers, participant engagement, and ensuring accessibility for all audiences can hinder effective knowledge exchange.

Example: Sharing PbK through webinars[35]

From November 2021 to June 2022, the UN Trust Fund shared PbK through a series of webinars. This approach promoted global dialogue on the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) and women's rights organisations (WROs) in preventing violence against women and girls.

How it works:
The UN Trust Fund launched the *Prevention Tuesdays* webinar series, engaging over 3,000 participants, including researchers, donors, partners, and practitioners from CSOs/WROs. The series aimed to share insights, encourage dialogue, and gather feedback on violence prevention strategies.

1. **Webinar series:** Eight, two-hour webinars featured presentations of findings and recommendations from PbK, discussions with CSOs and WROs, and interactive engagement with the global audience.

2. **Content and interaction:** Each webinar included:
   - Presentations of key findings and recommendations.
   - Contributions from CSOs and WROs.
   - Opportunities for dialogue among practitioners, researchers, and donors.
   - Audience feedback sessions for additional insights.

3. **Accessibility:** The webinars offered simultaneous interpretation in multiple languages to ensure broad accessibility.

4. **Follow-up:** After the webinars, the UN Trust Fund consolidated feedback and discussions into a comprehensive report to guide future knowledge-sharing.

The *Prevention Tuesdays* series successfully sparked a global conversation on PbK in the context of violence prevention. The webinars provided a platform for sharing valuable lessons, engaging diverse perspectives, and refining future strategies based on collective feedback.

When to use:
Webinars are ideal for real-time discussion and exchange, especially when participants are geographically dispersed but have internet connectivity.

Cross-organisational learning

Cross-organisational learning focuses on how organisations collaborate to share and develop PbK together. Through partnerships, networks, and joint initiatives, organisations can learn from each other's experiences, ultimately strengthening their collective impact. This can also take place through a grant-giving entity working with multiple organisations. However, this method requires considerably more resources and time.

Example: Learning from practitioners working with boys[36]

The Global Alliance for the Protection of Boys (GAPB) unites multiple organisations[37] in a dedicated mission to prevent CSV against boys. A key initiative of the alliance is the development of a global manifesto to guide protection efforts, ensuring that strategies are not only evidence-based but also shaped by the lived experiences of affected communities.[38]

It includes the input of practitioners working with boy survivors, survivor-led organisations, feminist-led organisations, indigenous-led associations, marginalised children, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, organisations focused on masculinities and men's engagement, organisations working on humanitarian issues and survivor-led groups. This approach moves beyond traditional top-down policy development by **positioning frontline practitioners and affected communities as knowledge producers**, not just informants.

3.5. PbK in difficult settings:
Crises, shutdowns and emergency response

In difficult settings—whether armed conflict, natural disasters, public health emergencies, economic collapse, or political instability—PbK often offers the clearest and most immediate understanding of what is happening and what is needed. These are situations where decisions must be made in real-time, long before research can be designed, funded, or published. Practitioners and communities are constantly adapting in these moments, often without formal guidance. This adaptation produces powerful, practical knowledge, but it is rarely documented.

This also applies to **programme shutdowns**, a distinct form of institutional crisis. Whether driven by donor withdrawal, government restrictions, political pressure, administrative breakdowns, or reputational risk, shutdowns trigger abrupt shifts in programming, staff roles, and community relationships. Teams are stretched thin, focused on responsible exits, safety planning, service referrals, and emotional processing. These moments are overwhelming but also full of learning. Staff hold powerful insight into what was helpful, what failed, what was never implemented, and what might be possible next time. **Capturing this insight doesn't need to be perfect. It needs to be possible.**

In crisis and transition, reflection may feel impossible. But even a five-minute pause held with care can surface vital knowledge. PbK in these contexts is not about collecting perfect stories. It is about valuing the rough, raw insights that come from navigating the hardest moments. If we want future responses to be wiser, safer, and more locally informed, we must find ways to carry this learning forward.

This section outlines practical, low-burden steps that can support PbK generation in a range of crises—including shutdowns, transitions, and frontline emergencies.

What enables PbK in crisis settings?

1. Start with what people already do

- **Use existing routines.** Morning briefings, WhatsApp updates, debrief circles, and tea breaks are already moments of knowledge-sharing. Build reflection into them.
- **Add one reflective prompt.** Ask:
  - *What changed yesterday and why?*
  - *What did we learn from today that might help someone tomorrow?*

2. Keep it lightweight and doable

- **Voice notes instead of reports.** Most practitioners in such situations don't have time to write—offer quick formats like recorded voice messages, mobile check-ins, or flipchart bullet points.
- **Use what's on hand.** Paper notebooks, wall charts, or informal peer discussions work better than new tools during a crisis.
- **Capture the small things.** Simple actions like changing the order of a session or responding differently to a child can hold valuable insights.

3. Make it emotionally and politically safe

- **Avoid performance pressure.** Frame PbK as documenting survival, not proving success. It's about what was done, not what should have been done.
- **Be clear on boundaries.** In politically sensitive contexts, let people opt for anonymity or submit reflections through third parties. Avoid pushing for stories that make people relive their pain (see Safety and Confidentiality and privacy).
- **Create space for delayed sharing.** Some insights only surface weeks or months after a shutdown or emergency. Keep the door open.

4. Prioritise language and inclusion

- **Allow people to speak and reflect in their own languages.** Don't demand translation during collection—interpretation can come later.
- **Respect local terms and framings.** Concepts like "resilience," "violence," or "healing" may be described differently. Let people use their own words.

- **Share back.** Return summaries or visuals to the team, community, or partners. Let people see how their insights were used.

5. Resource what matters

- **Budget small but intentionally.** A small budget allocation for tea, flipcharts, or airtime can enable conversations that may not happen otherwise.
- **Fund facilitators and notetakers.** Do not expect overstretched staff to self-document—enable others to support, listen, and reflect with them.
- **Ensure consent.** If insights are shared beyond the team, ensure that everyone is comfortable with it.

6. Make it part of team culture

- **Leaders should go first.** When supervisors share real-time learnings—including regrets or failures—it models openness and humility.
- **Connect insights to action.** Whether it's changing an activity or shifting how risks are framed, visibly applying PbK increases its value.

Even in such situations, ensure all other ethics are reflected on. See the Sample ethical PbK reflection guide.

Concluding reflections

Every day, across diverse settings and circumstances, practitioners, victims and/or survivors, and communities are working to prevent and respond to CSV. In doing so, they generate a form of knowledge that is powerful yet often unrecognised. This is PbK — insight that emerges from experience, reflection, and the realities of navigating complexity on the ground.

This knowledge is not new. What is new is the **growing recognition that it must be taken seriously.** Too often, practice-based insights remain informal, siloed, or invisible. When prevention strategies fall short or when existing systems do not meet victims' and/or survivors' needs, it is often those closest to the work who notice first and adapt quietly. Their decisions, whether to pause a programme, adjust a referral pathway, or reframe an approach, hold vital lessons. Unless these reflections are surfaced, documented, and shared, their potential to strengthen broader CSV prevention and response is lost.

This guidance has been created to help change that. It offers a starting point — **a practical, principled invitation to recognise PbK as a vital contributor to the work of ending CSV.** PbK is not intended as a replacement for formal evidence, but rather a necessary complement to it.

Engaging with PbK is not always easy. It requires navigating ethical tensions, confronting power dynamics, and being willing to learn from what did not go as planned. It means holding space for discomfort and uncertainty, while staying grounded in accountability to children and those most affected by CSV. Yet this work is already happening — sometimes fragmented, sometimes informal, but always deeply meaningful.

This Guidance Framework provides suggestions for how PbK can be gathered ethically, used thoughtfully, and shared further. It outlines real-world approaches for surfacing practitioner knowledge, for creating space for reflection, and for translating insights into action, without compromising care, confidentiality, or context. In essence, this guidance is offered to show that **PbK is a real, valuable knowledge form that can be gathered, used and shared ethically.**

This Guidance Framework **does not seek to control or standardise the way PbK is gathered and shared**, but to encourage and inspire. It is intended to help practitioners feel more confident in naming what they know and encourage organisations to create or strengthen space for reflection and learning.

We offer this Guidance Framework as a comprehensive and foundational resource — one that brings together principles, prompts, and practices for engaging with PbK. At the same time, we recognise that practitioners need materials that are lighter, faster to use, and easily adaptable to different contexts. Building on this foundation, **we will create more accessible tools and resources to support everyday practice,** ensuring that PbK can be gathered, used, and shared in ways that are both practical and sustainable.

Ending CSV will require many forms of expertise. PbK is one of them. When we take it seriously, when we listen, reflect, and act on what is already being learned — **we take a collective step toward prevention and response that is not only more informed, but more just, more contextual, and more deeply rooted in the lived realities of those we aim to serve.**

This is a beginning.

We hope it helps light the way.

Terminology

Term	Also referred to as	Definition/notes
Academic and research evidence	Academic evidence; research evidence; research	Refers to systematic, formal knowledge generation processes, usually documented through scholarly or institutional channels.
Child		Any person below the age of 18.
Childhood sexual violence (CSV)		A broad term capturing different forms of sexual harm against children, including abuse, exploitation, and online sexual violence. While the acronym "CSV" may feel reductionist, it is used here for brevity and consistency, anchored in an expanded definition that reflects the full range and complexity of sexual violence against children.
Frontline organisations	NGOs; community-based organisations; women's rights organisations; civil society organisations; service providers	Organisations working directly with individuals and communities are engaged in CSV prevention and response.
Knowledge (broader than evidence)		Encompasses various ways of understanding, including practitioner insights, lived expertise, informal practices, and formal research-based evidence.
Knowledge creators		Anyone contributing to the development of knowledge, whether through practice, lived expertise, or research.
Lived expertise		The knowledge built through experiencing CSV or navigating its impacts as a caregiver, family member, or other person closely affected. It recognises that those directly affected develop distinctive insights into the nature of harm, the adequacy of prevention and response, and the realities of navigating systems. This language shift also resists tokenism. It acknowledges that people with lived experience are not simply sharing stories; they are producing knowledge that is vital to preventing and responding to CSV.
Practice	Intervention; programme	Terms used interchangeably to describe organised actions, strategies, or programmes undertaken to prevent or respond to CSV.
Practice-based knowledge (PbK)	Practice-based insights	Insights developed through direct engagement in CSV prevention or response. Includes knowledge from practitioners and from those with lived expertise, when experience of receiving support, navigating systems, or surviving harm is intentionally drawn upon to improve practice. PbK is often informal or undocumented but is legitimate and essential, complementing other forms of knowledge.
Practitioners	Service providers; staff; team members; frontline workers	People directly engaged in frontline practice.
Victims and/or survivors		Different individuals and communities prefer the use of different terms. "Survivor" emphasises resilience, while "victim" may be used in legal contexts or to acknowledge harm. Both are used interchangeably, with awareness that the choice of language is personal and contextual.

List of abbreviations

CSOs	Civil society organisations
CSV	Childhood sexual violence
GAPB	The Global Alliance for the Protection of Boys
GBI	Global Boys Initiative
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and other identities
LICs	Low-income countries
LMICs	Low- and middle-income countries
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
PbK	Practice-based knowledge
SFH	Safe Futures Hub: Solutions to end childhood sexual violence
SVRI	Sexual Violence Research Initiative
UN Trust Fund	United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women
VAW	Violence against women
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
WROs	Women's rights organisations

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Endnotes

1   At times, external facilitators or writers may play a supplementary, facilitative role in helping practitioners document, gather, organise, or communicate their insights. They may be involved in a way that the knowledge remains practitioner-led and grounded in practice.

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