

Recognising the Invisible Barriers:

*The Change that is Within
Our Control*



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This is David :)



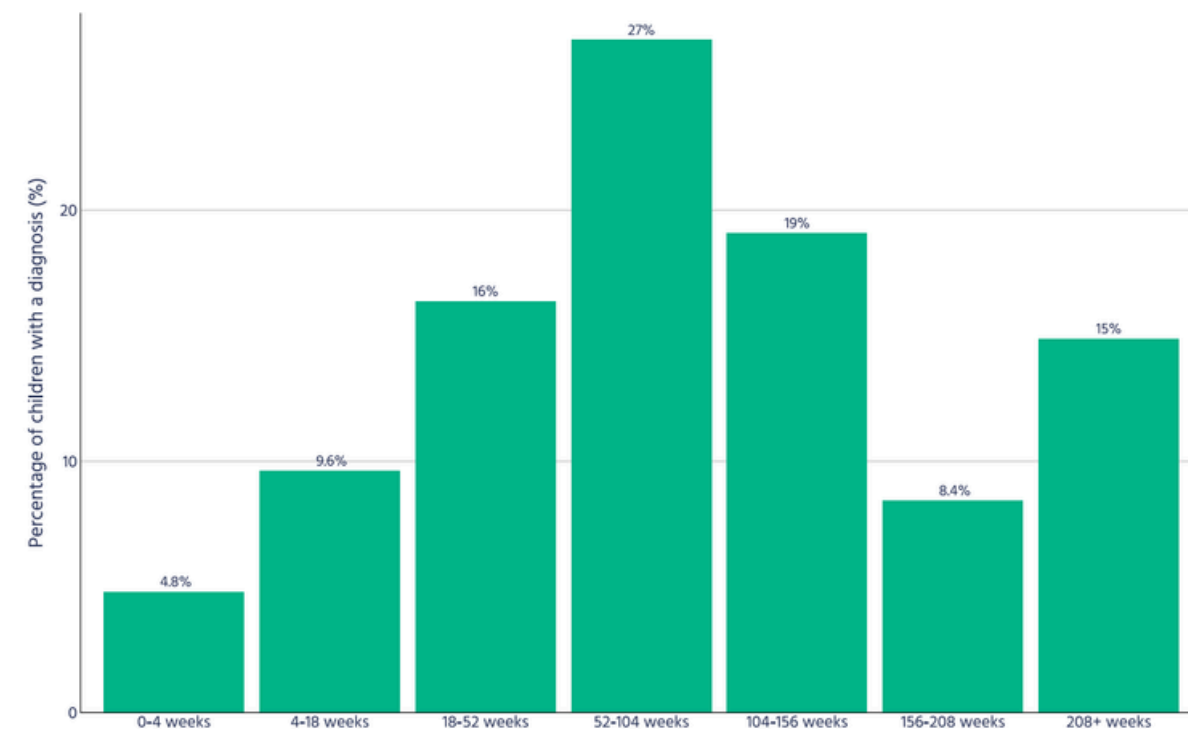
2022



2026

Unfortunately, this is the very real reality many families face...

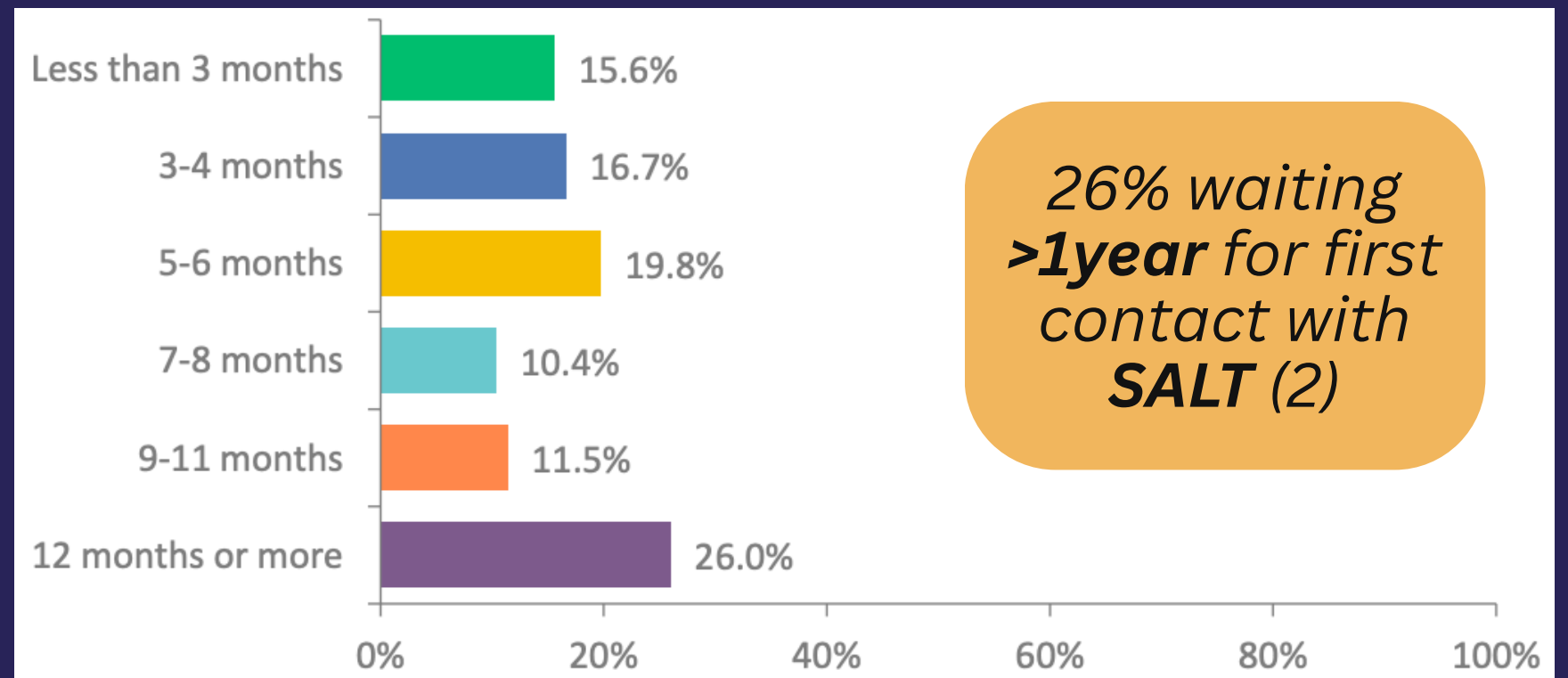
Figure 13. How long children waited from referral in or before the 2022-23 financial year to a diagnosis for autism in 2022-23 and 2023-24.



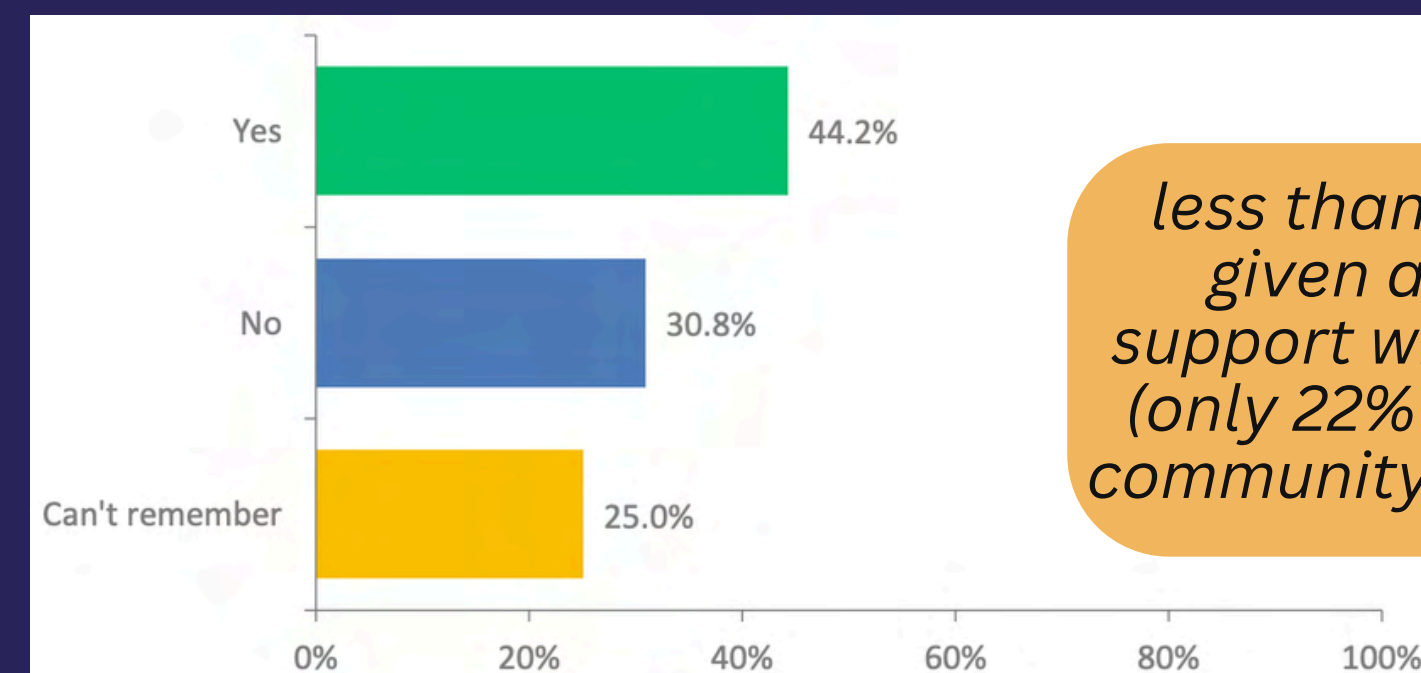
Source: Children's Commissioner's office analysis of unpublished Community Services Data Set data on NDD diagnoses.

diagnostic
assessment
waiting times up
to **4 years+** (1)

**no diagnosis =
no support?**



26% waiting
>1year for first
contact with
SALT (2)



less than half were
given advice or
support while waiting
(only 22% told about
community services)(2)

3 Invisible Barriers to Action



Destigmatisation Checklist

- ☐ ***Understanding***
behaviour in the context of autism
- ☐ ***Empathy*** - to understand the impacts on the child
- ☐ ***Compassion*** - to explore how we can support our children to maximise their potential



**Unconscious
“over-normalisation”**

Destigmatisation Checklist

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if we stop at this step...
**over-normalisation,
diagnostic
overshadowing**



**Unconscious
“over-normalisation”**

Destigmatisation Checklist

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if we stop at this step...
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diagnostic
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1

**Unconscious
“over-normalisation”**

*Destigmatisation without
empathy and compassion is just
as harmful as the stigma itself.*



Deferring Responsibility

*“It’s not my
place to say
anything”*

*acting within my remit
vs questioning things that
concern me*

diffusion of responsibility

*“surely,
someone more
qualified will do
something”*



*“It’s not my
place to say
anything”*

*acting within my remit
vs questioning things that
concern me*

2

**Deferring
Responsibility**

diffusion of responsibility

*“surely,
someone more
qualified will do
something”*

*“I don’t know what I
can even offer to
help anyways”*

*“It’s not my
place to say
anything”*

*acting within my remit
vs questioning things that
concern me*

2

Deferring Responsibility

*“Not my responsibility”
should be everyone’s
responsibility.*

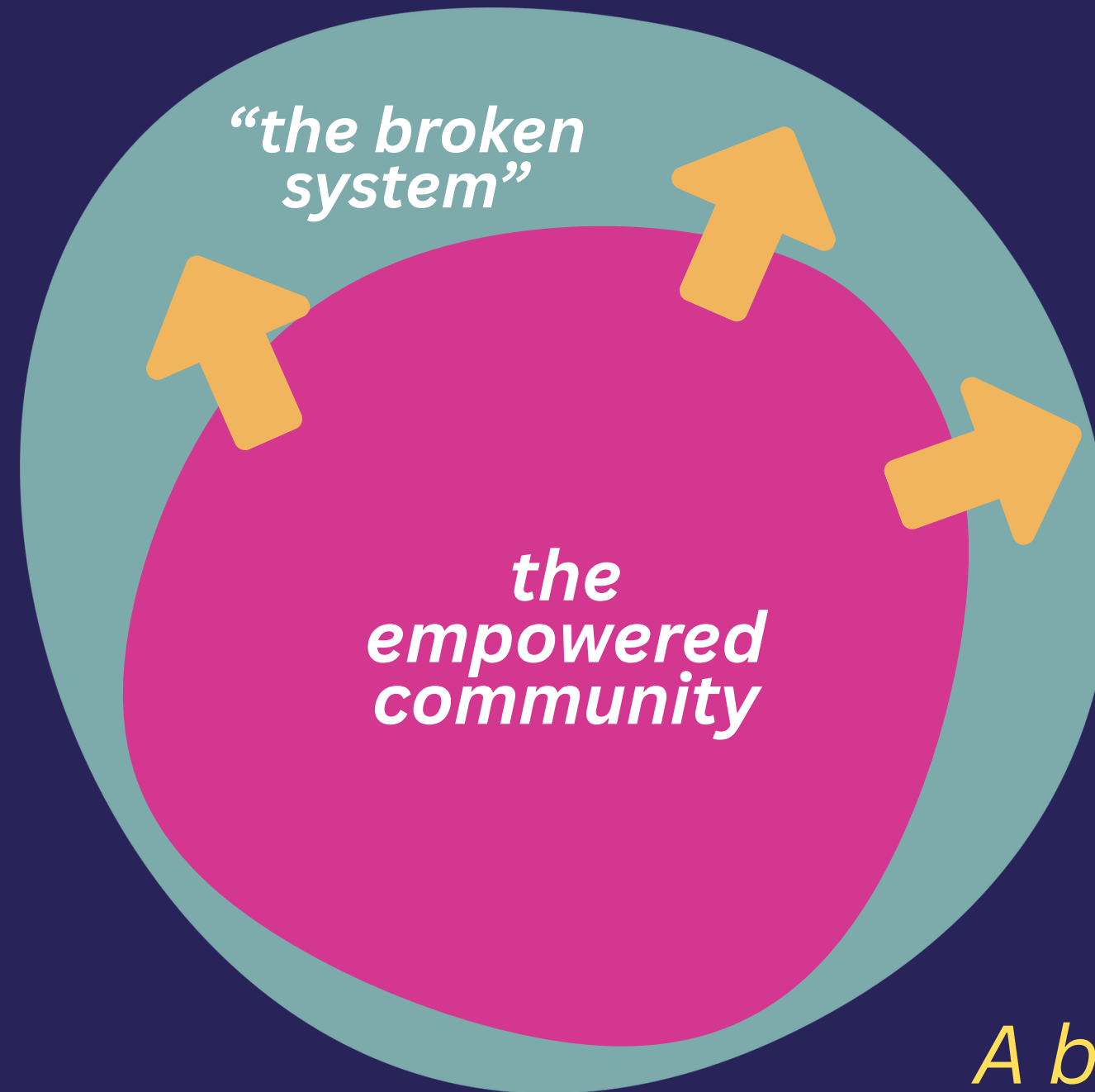
3

The Assumption of Powerlessness

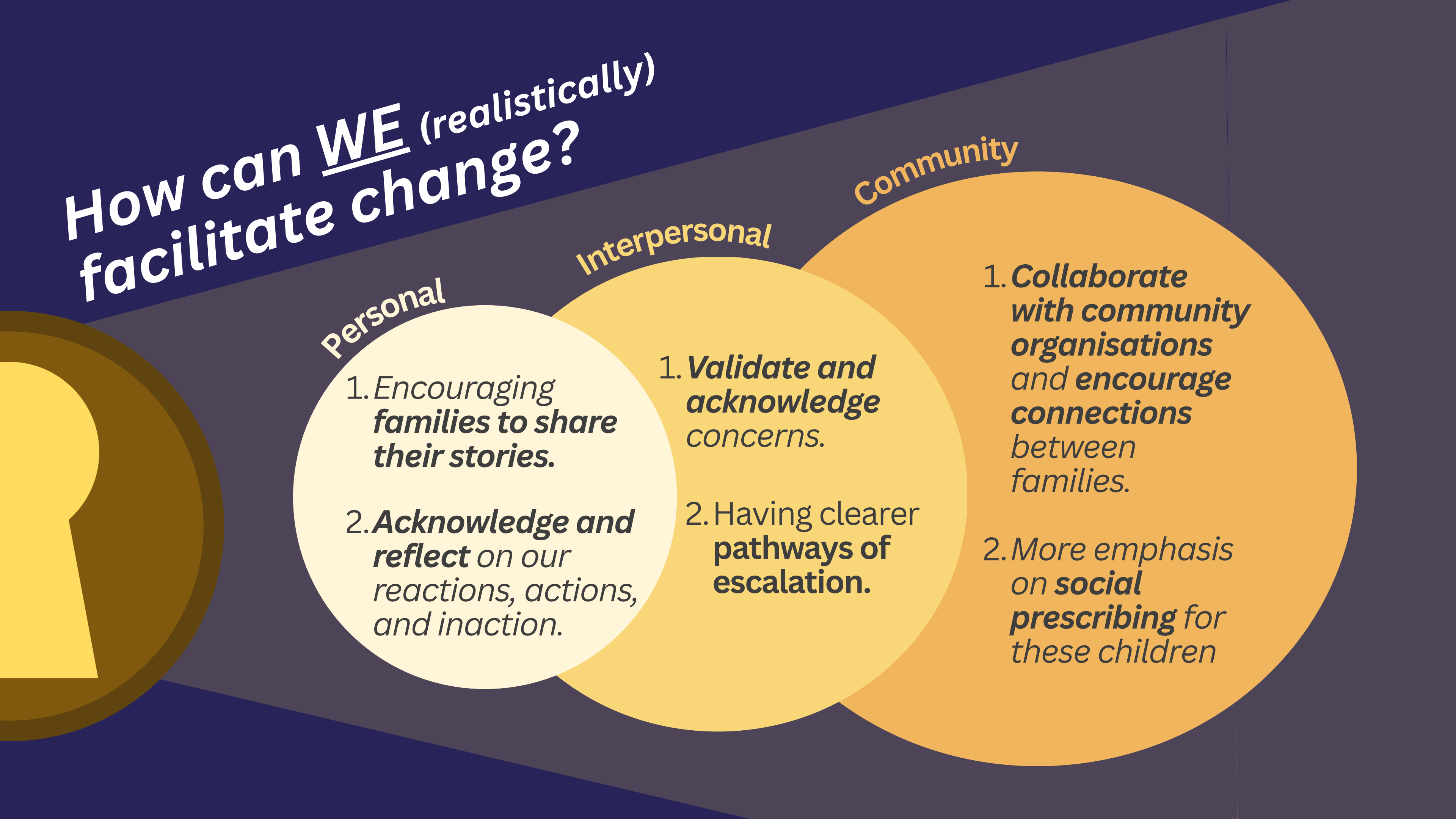


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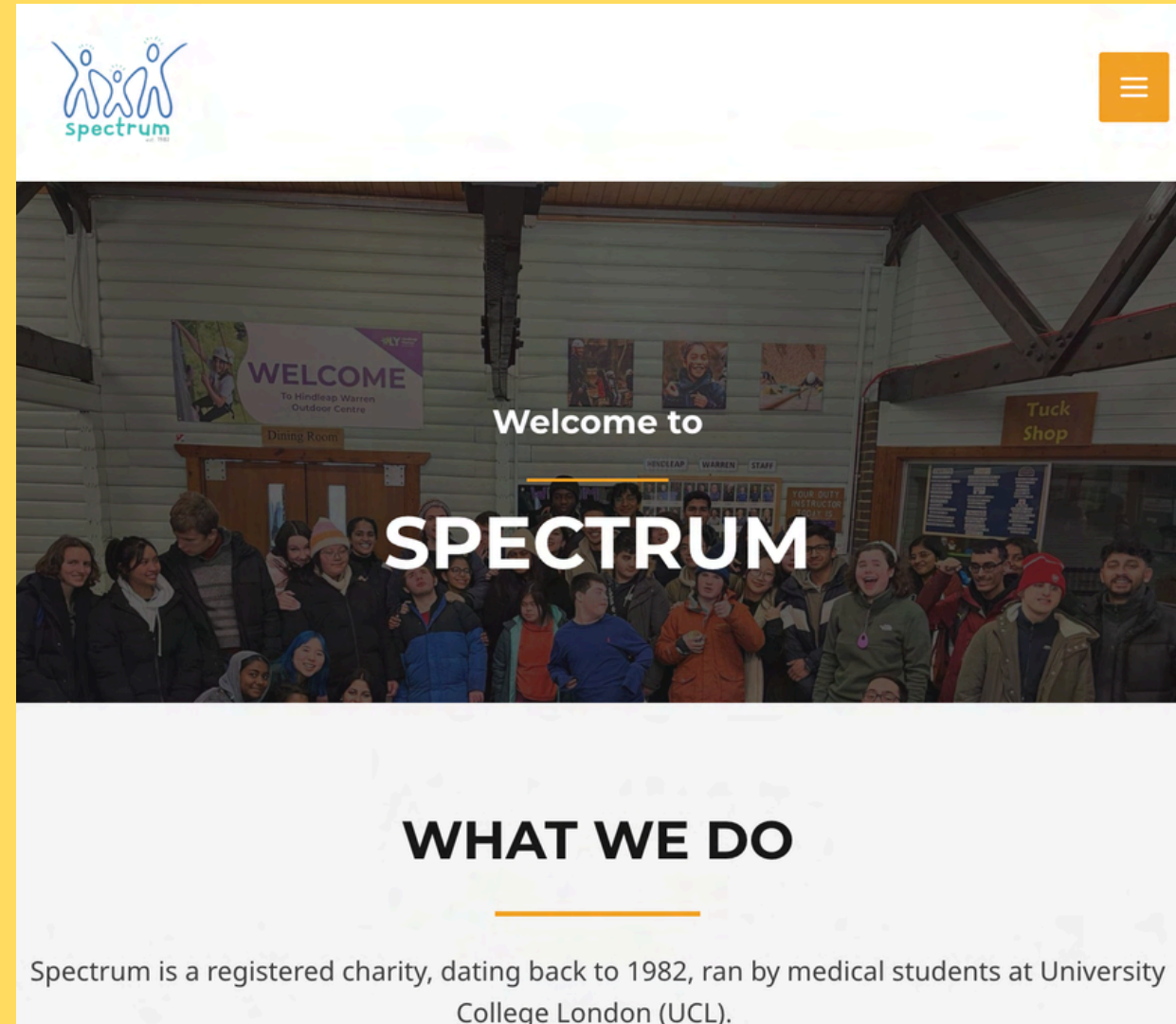
The Assumption of Powerlessness



A broken system doesn't have to mean a broken community.



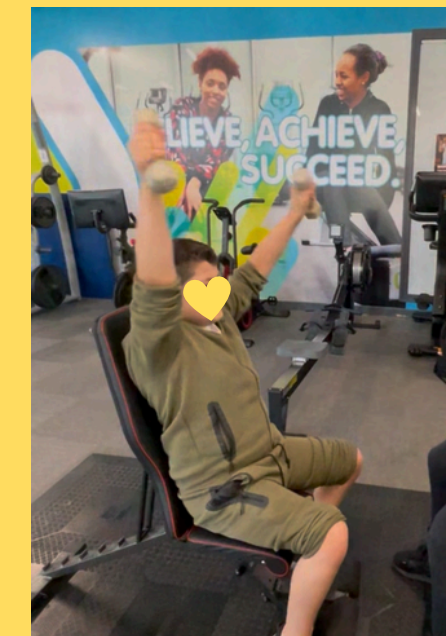
Spectrum Transitions project



*if you wanted to know
more about Spectrum :)*



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Sources

1. *Children's Commissioner. Waiting times for assessment and support for autism, ADHD and other neurodevelopmental conditions | Children's Commissioner for England [Internet]. Children's Commissioner for England. 2024. Available from: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/waiting-times-for-assessment-and-support-for-autism-adhd-and-other-neurodevelopmental-conditions/>*
2. *NHS North East and North Cumbria. Speech and Language Therapy Involvement report South Tyneside and Sunderland [Internet]. NHS; 2024 Jul [cited 2026 May 2] p. 11–6. Available from: <https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/media/nhfj0nqp/salt-involvement-report-v4.pdf>*