



NHS

Black Country
Integrated Care Board

BETTER CONVERSATIONS:

Behavioural Science Strategies
for Tackling Vaccine Hesitancy
in Complex Systems

#BSPHN26

Delivered by... **ice** | leading
behaviour
change

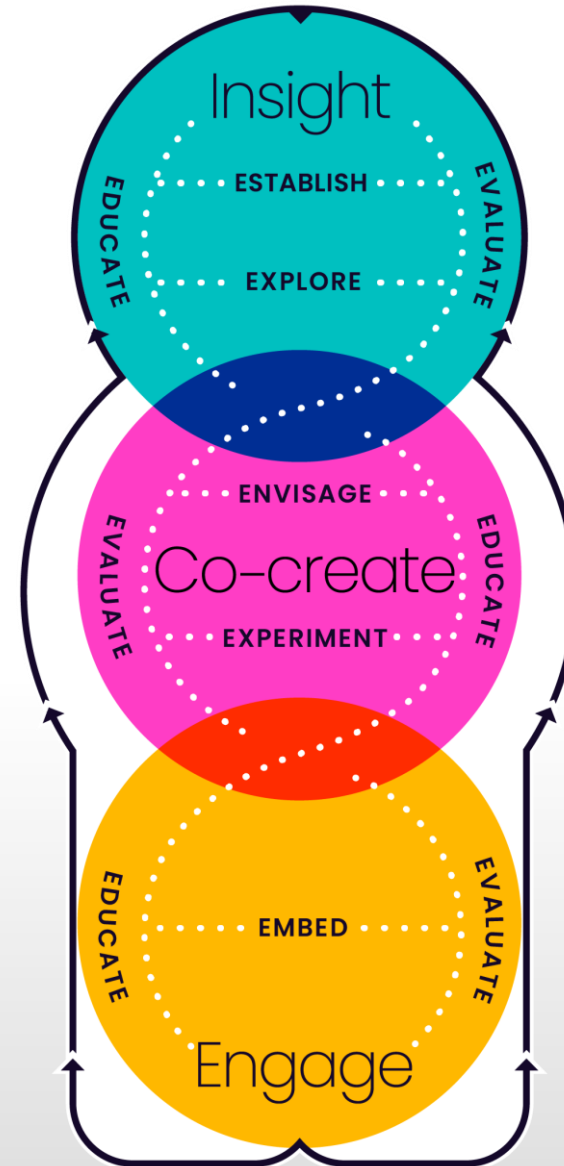
ice



We work with **people**, their **communities and organisations** to overcome their toughest challenges and **make better happen.**

We take a person-centred approach...

To **engage** people in ways that are meaningful for them, are grounded in **insight** and are **co-created** with people.



The Challenge

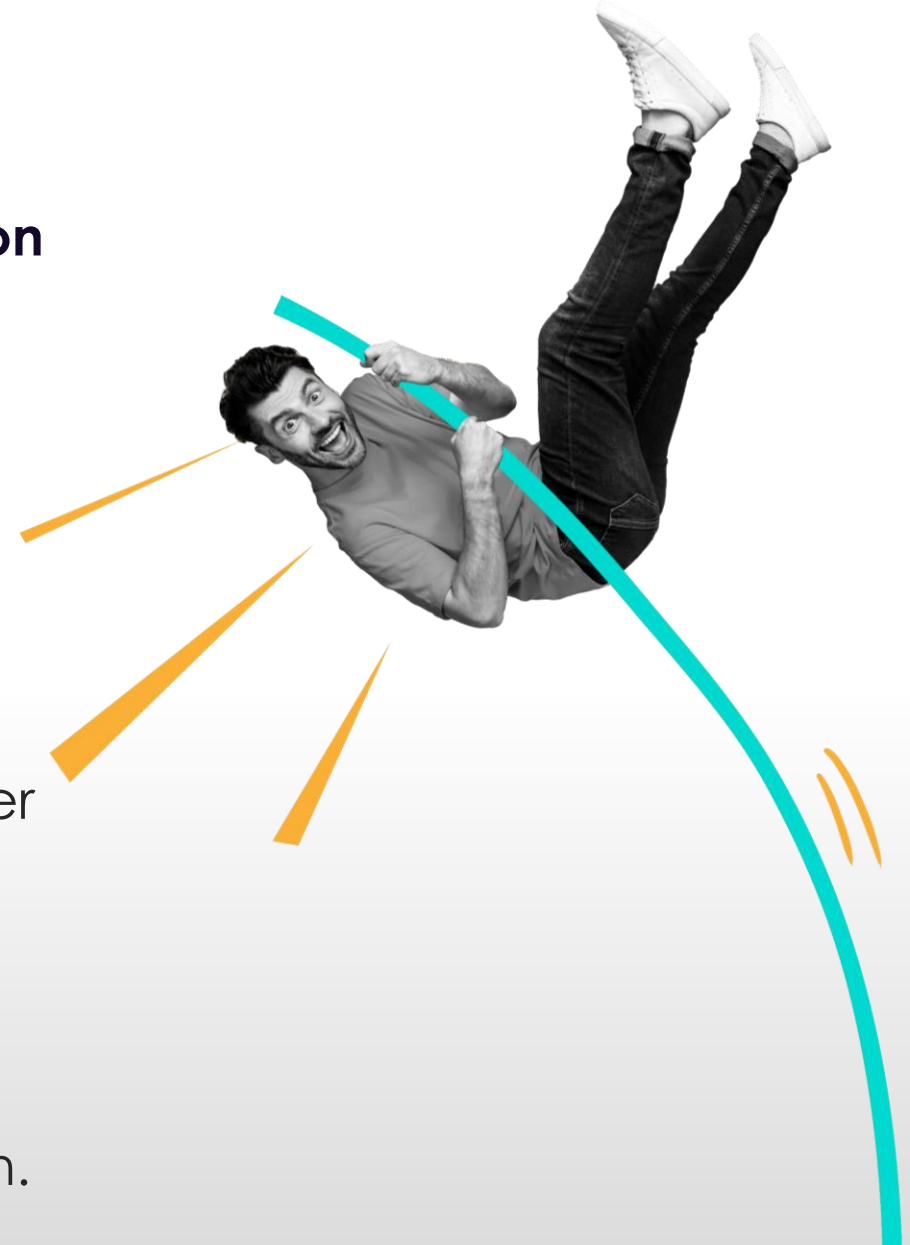
Over the past decade England has witnessed a **steady decline** across nearly **every major vaccination programme**.

Vaccine fatigue has become more prevalent.

The UK has **lost its measles elimination status**.

For **the first time in 25 years**, child mortality rates for preventable diseases are projected to increase, after having declined for 25 years.

Within the Black Country, we are supporting highly diverse communities, with 46% of the population identifying with ethnic groups other than White British.



What factors are driving **uncertainty** to get vaccinated?





Top drivers of uncertainty

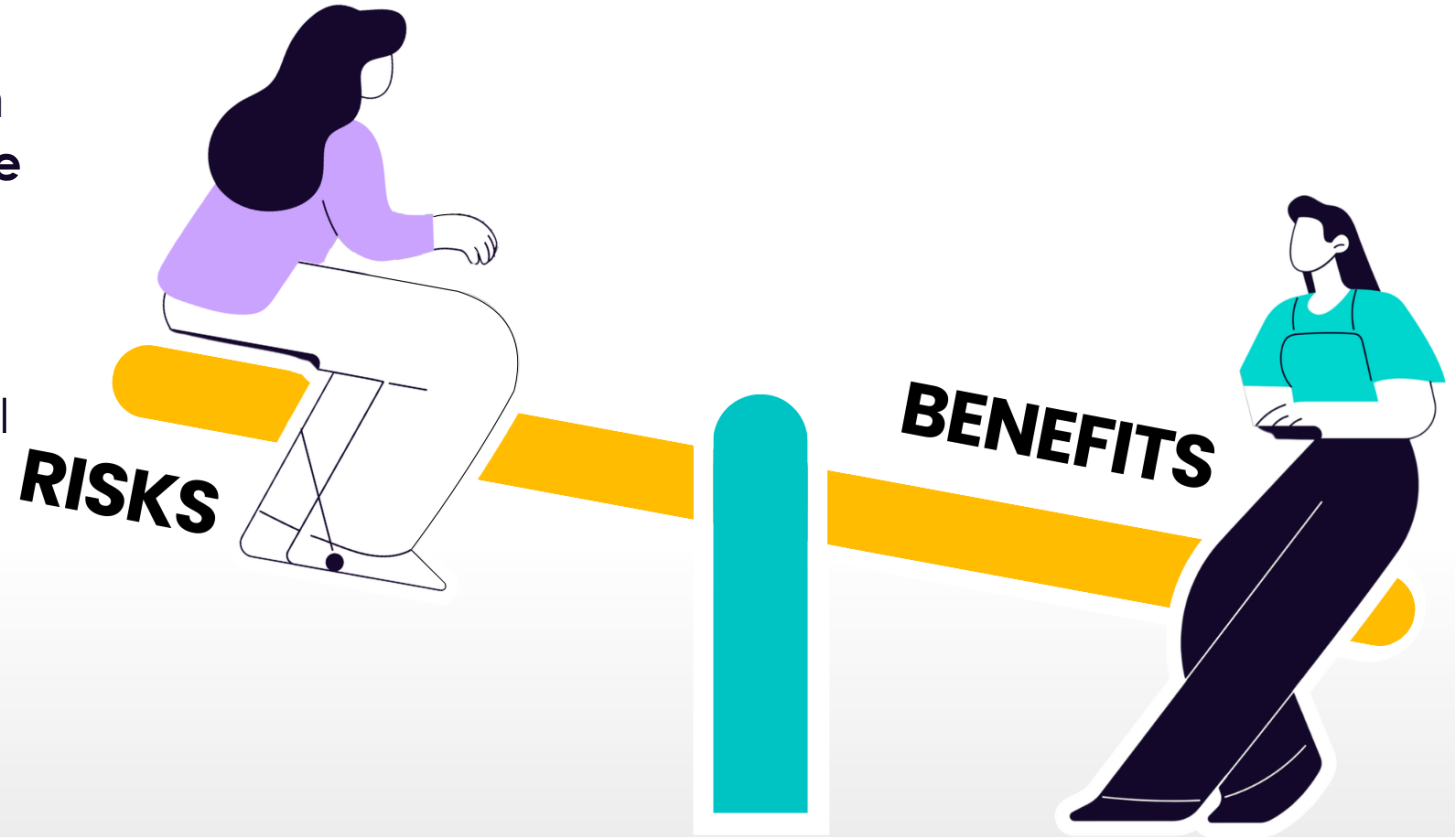
- Lack of understanding of the risks
- Perceived risks vs actual risks
- Persistent autism myth and developmental concerns
- Misunderstanding vaccine effectiveness and immunity
- Cultural/ingredient concerns (e.g. gelatine)
- Low trust + strong influence of misinformation
- Practical access barriers and service fragmentation
- Confusing or rapidly changing national guidance



The issue of risk

Processing and making decisions on health risks involves a complex, often subconscious, combination of intuitive risk perception and conscious, analytical risk cognition.

People rarely act as perfectly rational agents; instead, they use mental models to simplify, interpret, and manage potential threats based on cognitive shortcuts (heuristics), emotional responses, and existing beliefs.

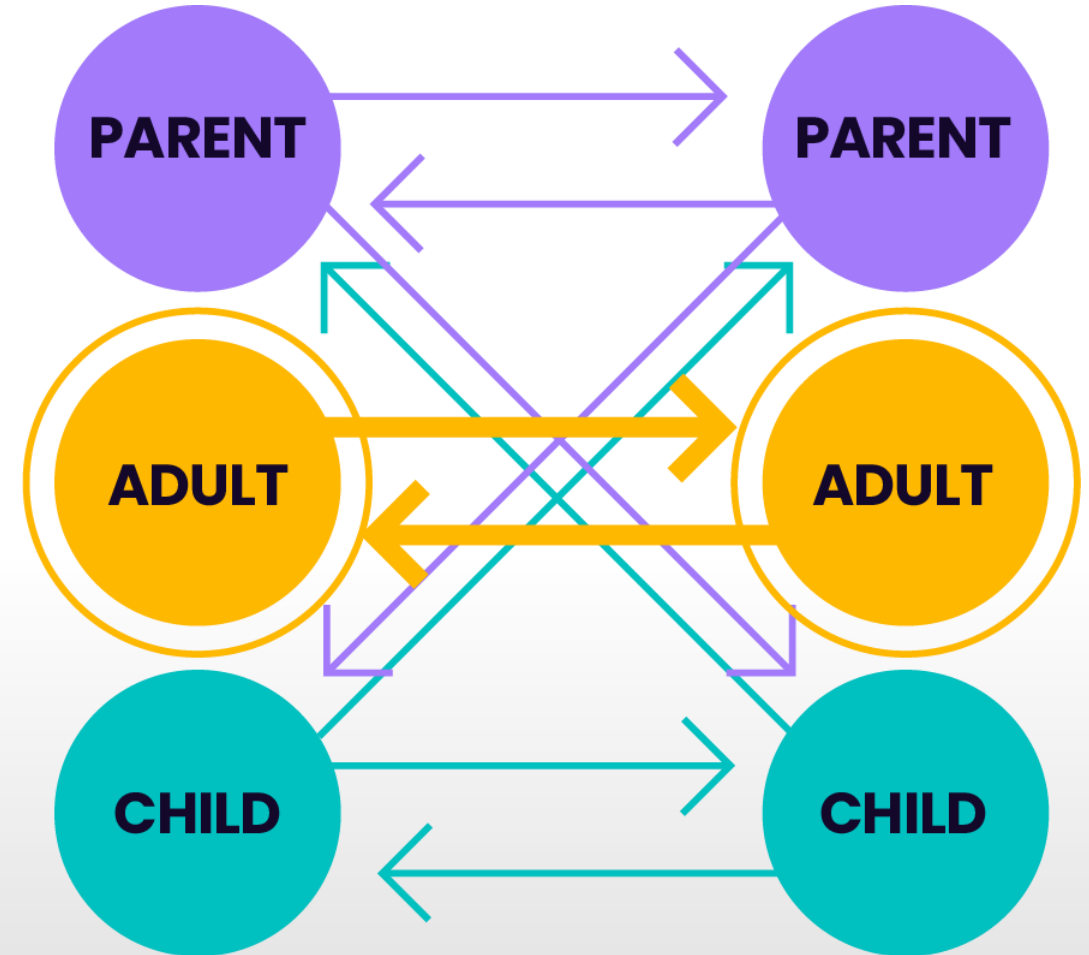


The Parent Adult Child (PAC) Model

According to the Transactional Analysis PAC Model, we all have an inner “Parent,” “Adult,” and “Child.”

By identifying which one is manifesting itself in any given moment, we can take more control over our thoughts and behaviours.

Each “ego state” in the PAC Model represents a different way of being we learned throughout life.



The dreaded conversation

The main concern was that vaccination conversations are **contentions** and **could ruin relationship**.

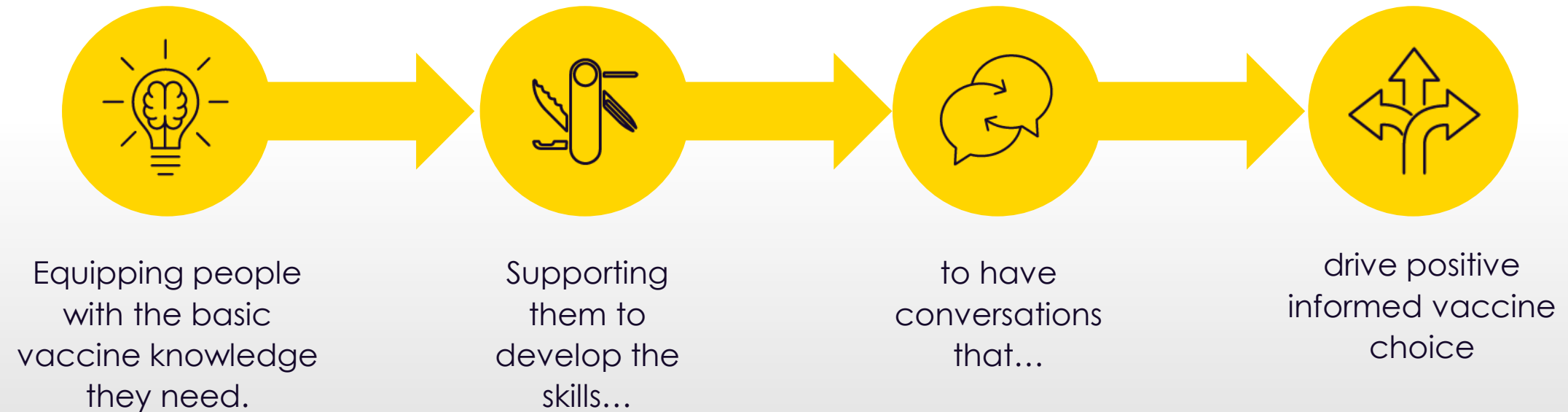


The ask...
**'Help us to have
Better Vaccine
Conversations'**

Our role...

To equip, enthuse and enable people to have **Better Conversations about vaccines**

We do this by:





Our Audiences

- Staff in Primary Care Residential and Nursing Care Home
- Maternity
- Learning Disability
- Call and recall team
- School Immunisation team
- Health visitors
- Trust vaccinators
- Public Health Team
- Family Hubs/VCFSE

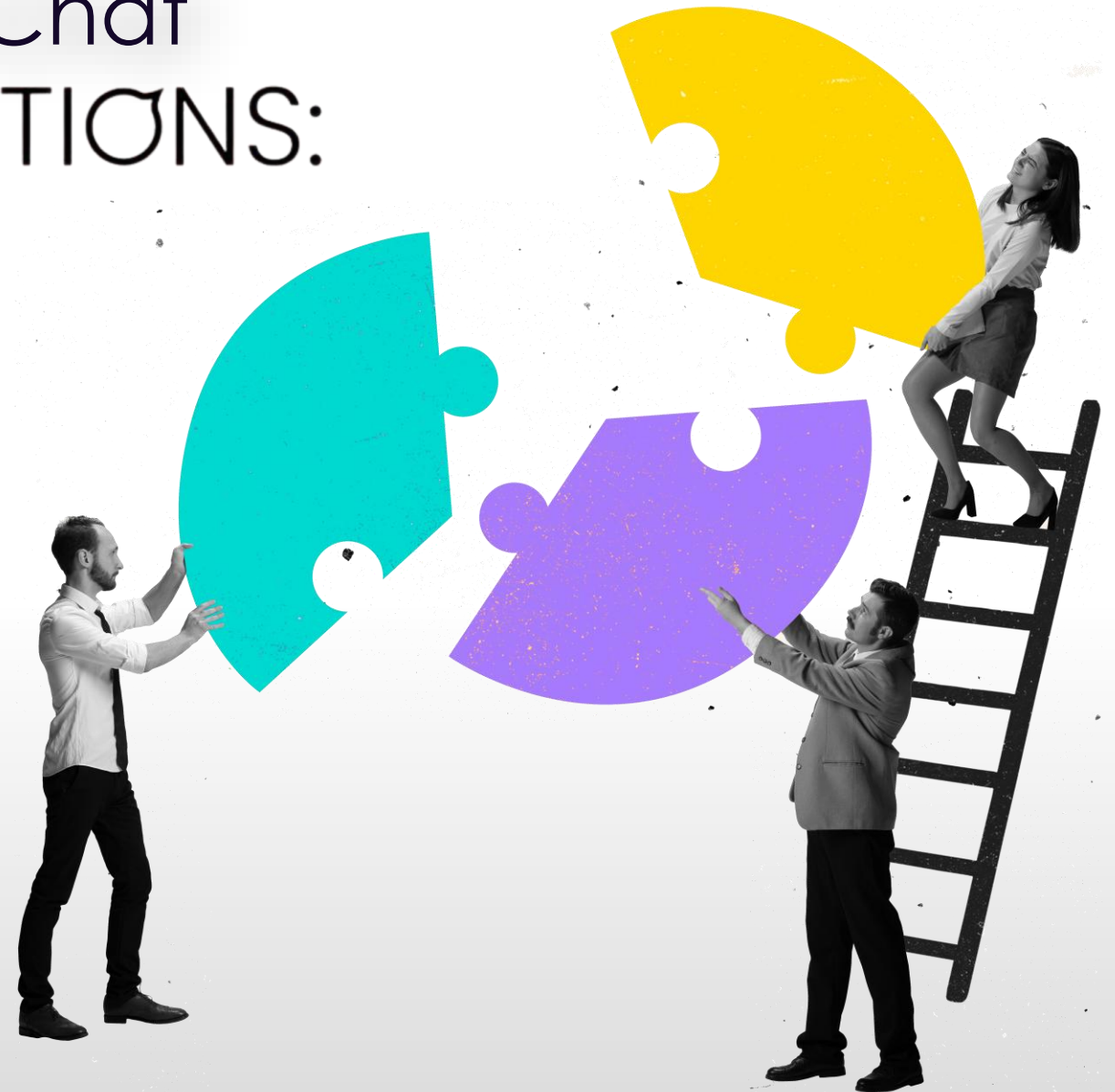
Co-designing the Vax Chat

BETTER CONVERSATIONS:

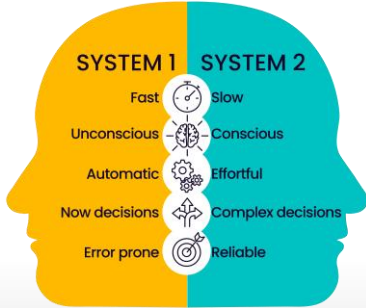
Conducted insight to understand what information people already had and needed

Co-designed the training to:

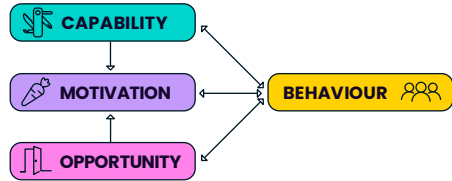
- **Upskill participants in vaccinations** – what they are, when they are given, what they protect against, the side effects and impacts of the diseases in unvaccinated
- What we mean by **herd immunity** and the fact that the risk is NOW
- **Tackling Myths** including the incorrect reported autism link.



Co-designing the Vax Chat BETTER CONVERSATIONS:



System 1 vs system 2



COM-B



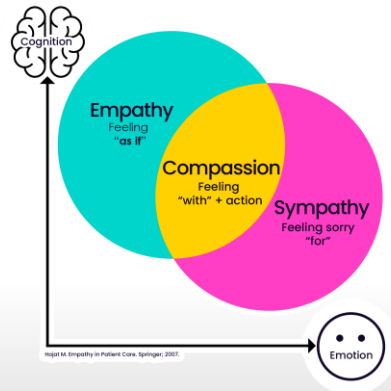
Power balanced conversations



OARS



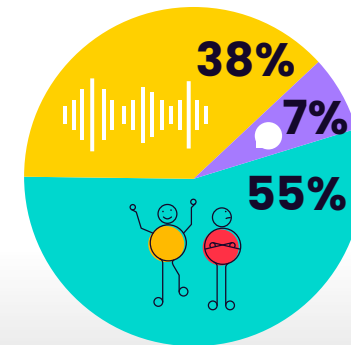
Learning styles



Empathy vs sympathy



Change Talk



Body language & tone

Training Outcomes

Over 9 months we have trained **over 600 people** over **50 sessions in BC.**

We have received an average rating of 4.7/5 for the quality of our training and 4.8/5 for the quality of our trainers.

Over **93%** of attendees have reported an **increase in vaccine knowledge** (average 3/10 point increase).

Over **94%** of attendees have reported an **increase in their confidence** to have a vaccine-based conversation (average 4/10 point increase).



Training Feedback

"This training is so valuable we will roll it out to all health visitors"

"With the skills from the training and taking a whole system approach it promotes, we have improved our rates from 77% to 91%."

"This training was very useful and interesting. It has made the new vaccine programme more clear. The better conversations part was useful as it is so easy when parents say I am not vaccinating due to the autism link, to try and share how incorrect this information is, rather than exploring their view and having an in-depth discussion. I will be more mindful of this in the future."

"I don't approach conversations with fear/anxiety now but with confidence and compassion"

"This training has impacted our wider work. We use the skills in all our conversation and not just vaccinations"

"I was given more understanding on how to speak to people in a way that also makes them feel confident."

Training is not the end.

We have gone on to build a community of practice in the Black Country for **all participants to access and use.**

Newsletters

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Black Country Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

[View in browser](#)

Better Conversations: Vaccinations

Tip of the Month
When conversations stall, try starting here:

"What's already on your mind about this?"
"What would help you feel clearer?"
"Do you want the short version, or more detail?"

Small changes in wording often unlock big changes in tone.

Upcoming Webinars	News & Events
<p>Let's Talk MMRV: Confident conversations, clearer communication - 24th February 12-1pm <i>A practical session designed to strengthen how we talk about MMRV, respond to common concerns, and improve uptake.</i></p> <p>Register</p>	<p>Good news on RSV protection for older adults in England From 1 April 2026, the NHS RSV vaccination programme is expanding to include everyone aged 80 and over, and all residents in care homes for older adults. This builds on the existing offer to those turning 75.</p> <p>Why we think this change is important Through our training and community engagement, the most common question we hear about the RSV programme is: <i>"Why aren't over-80s offered it?"</i></p>

Preparing for Flu 2026:
The programme began by focusing on people turning

Webinars

11th March 12-1pm
Preparing for Flu 2026:
Lessons from 2025 and what to do next

This webinar uses learning from the 2025 flu season to shape practical preparation for 2026.

[Register](#)

24th March 12-1pm
Better Conversations: Vaccinations
Drop-In Q&A Support Clinic

This informal drop-in Q&A clinic gives you the opportunity to bring your questions, challenges, and experiences to a supportive environment.

[Register](#)

2nd April 12-1pm
Beyond the Basics:
Advancing Your Skills in Motivational Interviewing

This webinar builds on the behavioural science foundations introduced in the Better Conversations: Vaccination training and offers a deeper exploration of Motivational Interviewing (MI) and its value in everyday practice.

[Register](#)

Online Hub



Thank you!

Got any questions?

**make
better
happen**

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