

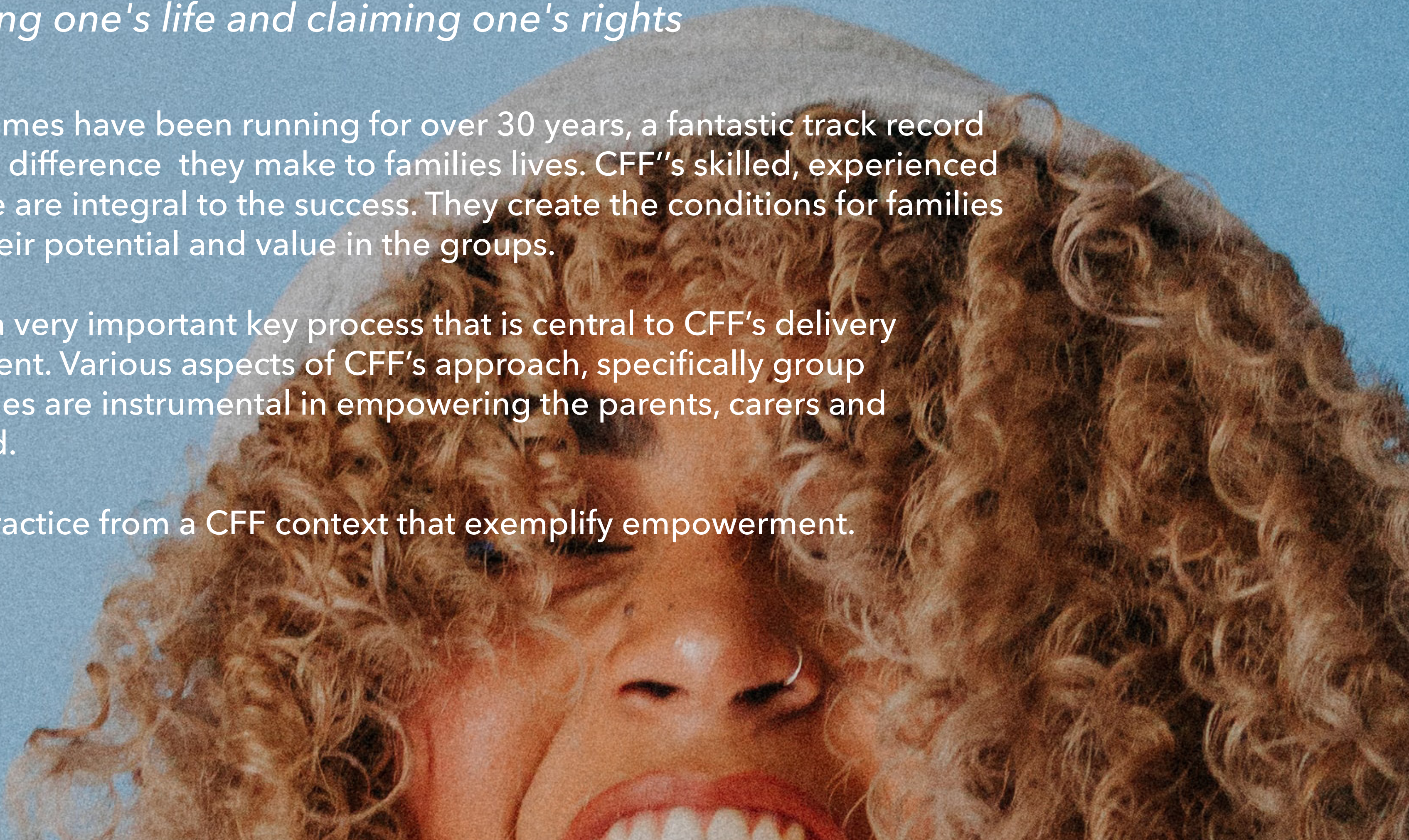
# ***EMPOWERMENT***

*The process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights*

CFF group work programmes have been running for over 30 years, a fantastic track record and true testament to the difference they make to families lives. CFF's skilled, experienced and passionate workforce are integral to the success. They create the conditions for families to discover and realise their potential and value in the groups.

I would like to reflect on a very important key process that is central to CFF's delivery and practice, empowerment. Various aspects of CFF's approach, specifically group and workshop programmes are instrumental in empowering the parents, carers and young people who attend.

Below are examples of practice from a CFF context that exemplify empowerment.







# **CHOICE**

When parents and young people are attending our programmes, the groups create the opportunity for them to make decisions about which behaviours or thinking patterns to change, they are actively involved in expressing their views and making choices and decisions that are best for their family.



A photograph of four young people (three women and one man) laughing joyfully. They are holding a long, light-colored wooden pole horizontally across the top of the frame. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

Parents and young people can offer and receive support from each other, this is actively encouraged by CFF group facilitators in our groups and workshops by drawing on the knowledge and strengths of individuals in the group. Often attendees will say they have nothing to offer, when in reality their experience of parenting their teenager or the fact that they know their teenager better than anyone, helps to reinforce and highlight what a wealth of insight and information they have to share. They are given the role of 'expert' on their own situation, both the good and bad bits, it's all information that helps to shape each stage. Having Peer mentors at CFF both young people and parents is so influential and empowering to others who may be reluctant about attending a group or workshop. Hearing about other people's challenges and being able to identify with and overcome them.

Parent and young people on a CFF programme are encouraged to choose for themselves the methods they want to use to achieve change, learning from each other and working together to find solutions from a range of alternatives. Every family is unique; we encourage families to select what will work for their family.

This is particularly empowering to families from different ethnicities and cultures who may otherwise feel that their own values and views are being overlooked.





# **NORMALISING**

Everyone has challenges in their family life at some point 'it's normal'. The theory underpinning CFF's groups is Social Learning theory (SLT). SLT does not apportion blame for behaviours but offers ways of reflecting, defining, understanding and observing behaviour patterns, which assists families to develop practical strategies that work for their family and are likely to bring about change. Because SLT always sets behaviour in context it avoids labelling anybody as a problem. It simply provides a means of identifying behaviours and the way they are maintained. It is for whoever uses these ideas to decide whether a given behaviour should be changed or not.





# **REDUCE STIGMA**

In our programmes our language and methods are down to earth and free of jargon. Strategies discussed are also down to earth, practical and can be used in everyday situations. The approach and delivery style does not make families feel they have 'failed' or that they have 'problems' referencing that the groups are designed because of the challenges families experience and the fact people attend have similar experiences or challenges removes the stigma of failure and through the process aims to improve self-esteem and confidence. The groups are designed to be non-threatening, informative, interactive and we hope even fun!





# CONTRIBUTION

Contribute to CFF group work development.

Through the process of evaluation, attendees are able to offer feedback to improve the services on offer. CFF group products have developed and continued to succeed over the years through the voice of the families and what they have told us about their needs



# **PROBLEM SOLVING**

Problem solving skills are improved.

Independent research carried out and rigorous evaluations demonstrate high and consistent success rate for families who have attended. It shows that families do continue to hold on to the progress they had made, plus examples of where families have applied the methods of problem solving to other situations in their lives.

CFF have a range of programmes on offer across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland if you would like more information or would like to attend please follow the link [www.charity.org.uk](http://www.charity.org.uk) for more information.