

# ADVANTAGED THINKING



## CHAPTER NINE REACHING FOR THE FUTURE

An Advantaged Thinking call to action

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# REACHING FOR THE FUTURE

“Advantaged Thinking to me is like a pair of magical glasses I get to wear all day, every day which, in the simplest of terms, sharpen my view of the important things in life”

“These Advantaged Thinking glasses clear up how I talk about people. They remove the fuzziness around how I work with and understand people, and they even help me stay on the pathway to thriving which, at times, can be difficult to see. When I’m wearing my Advantaged Thinking glasses, just the knowledge that I am wearing them is enough to remind me to truly hold high expectations for people and to seek out their stories and listen with sincere curiosity so I can better understand them and look for ways of empowering them to reach their potential. I also like to offer my magical Advantaged Thinking glasses to others around me just so they can try them on for a bit as this often sparks incredible conversations around what they now see and how this new ‘clarity’ affects their thoughts and ideas.”

Dan Frost, Colony 47, Tasmania

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## AN ADVANTAGED THINKING CALL TO ACTION

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Each section includes two ‘Taking Action’ questions to help you to reflect on insights.



## 1. INTRODUCING THE OFFER AND CALLS TO ACTION

An Advantaged Thinking call to action is not about encouraging people to act in response to a problem – the definition used in the Cambridge Dictionary – but inspiring people to take action to create good. It is the potential that Advantaged Thinking promotes. Our call to action is an invitation to take up a pair of ‘Advantaged Thinking glasses’ and use their clarity with purposeful intent. Behind this invitation sits an offer that highlights why Advantaged Thinking should always be someone’s approach of choice.

**We have directed our Advantaged Thinking offer and three Advantaged Thinking calls to action at service managers and funders, but they can be meaningfully applied to anyone in any context.**

### 1. THE OFFER:

Why Advantaged Thinking should be an approach of choice

### 2. CALL ONE:

The aspirational ‘ask’ to commit to

### 3. CALL TWO:

How to make an immediate start to take action with Advantaged Thinking

### 4. CALL THREE:

Challenges to inspire future success

### TAKING ACTION:

- Q1 Which of the offers and calls to action is most important to you?
- Q2 Who else beyond service managers and funders could these be addressed to?

## 2. THE OFFER TO SERVICE MANAGERS AND FUNDERS

While the context and needs for each person’s Advantaged Thinking journey will be different, our insights highlight shared positives in terms of what Advantaged Thinking can offer:

1. **Advantaged Thinking is a powerful, proven framework for delivering an asset-based approach** with a decade of practice impact that is far richer than just ‘positive thinking’, being strengths-based or delivering psychologically informed environments. Advantaged Thinking brings these different aspects together into something that is centred on the person, service and system.
2. **Advantaged Thinking works** for services, the staff who run them and, most importantly, the people who use them. There is a compelling evidence base for its asset-based approach, with a growing bank of inspiring Advantaged Thinking examples.
3. **Advantaged Thinking can help to address both practice development and systems change.** It supports advancing the quality of services as well as influencing the policies and systems through which services must work.
4. **Advantaged Thinking has developed tools** you can use to resource your journey, including a range of off-the-shelf examples you can instantly plug into.
5. **Advantaged Thinking has an international community of practice** to learn from. There is a growing number of leaders willing to share their insights, from the UK to Australia.
6. **Advantaged Thinking has the power to inspire people** at all levels of decision making because it is interested in the people we are as practitioners, as well as the people we are responsible for. It has far more meaning than just another set of words to adopt.
7. **Advantaged Thinking can be measured and quality assured** to safeguard its value. There is a track record of quality assurance and performance measurement approaches that offer both existing frameworks and bespoke new ones that meet the requirements of different organisations and commissioners.

### TAKING ACTION:

- Q1 Which of these offers has the most value for you?
- Q2 Why might you see Advantaged Thinking as a go-to approach?

### 3. CALL ONE: THE ASPIRATIONAL ASK FOR SERVICE MANAGERS AND FUNDERS

To progress Advantaged Thinking, we ask that service managers and funders:

1. Offer flexible approaches that enable services and staff to personalise their approach around the goals of the people they are working with
2. Support consistent, asset-based policies and procedures that move practice away from transactional, deficit-based models of support
3. Invest in purposeful staff, training and mentoring those who care for Advantaged Thinking to develop their skills and capabilities over time while allowing those who do not share that passion to move on
4. Share power with people to create meaningful space for the those using services to shape how the services operate and take up positions of influence at all levels
5. Be collaborative and relational with other services to join up provision in ways that suit the goals of people and generate the most effective outcomes
6. Focus on improvement journeys that are about discovery, challenge and development – not quick-fix outcomes that rarely work in the long term
7. Think creatively about capturing impact in ways that involve all people and track progress over time to truly understand people's lived stories

#### TAKING ACTION:

- Q1** Which commitment do you feel most passionate about?
- Q2** What might help you overcome any obstacles to you achieving these?

### 4. CALL TWO: HOW SERVICE MANAGERS AND FUNDERS CAN TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION WITH ADVANTAGED THINKING

Advantaged Thinking is ultimately about taking action. These 'action stations' below are where a service manager or funder can make an immediate start:

1. Reflect on how your values and intentions align with Advantaged Thinking
2. Look at how the 7 Tests promote things that matter to you and measure yourself against them, identifying areas you can take action on within your own practice and processes
3. Take stock of how your current approaches can encourage Advantaged Thinking, challenging yourself to remove any blocks that might get in the way and to shape new paths where they are required
4. Be authentic and accountable to those you seek to benefit through your work by involving them in your Advantaged Thinking journey, seeking their advice and inspiration at each stage
5. Reach out to those who have experience with Advantaged Thinking to learn from and ally with them
6. Shape a plan for what you can achieve through Advantaged Thinking – and how you can do it
7. Commit at every level – from the governance of your organisation to its staffing, processes and funding. Everything matters to bring Advantaged Thinking to life

#### TAKING ACTION:

- Q1** Which of these 'action stations' are best for you to make a start from?
- Q2** Is there anything else you need to help you begin to advance Advantaged Thinking?



## 5. CALL THREE: CHALLENGES TO INSPIRE FUTURE SUCCESS

Our challenge to service managers is to develop a thriving culture of Advantaged Thinking that shows:

1. Consistency across each service area
2. Strong foundations to sustain practice into the future
3. Action to influence others in your community and network
4. Aspirations to do better with and for the people a service exists to benefit
5. Authentic outcomes and role models that demonstrate positive impact

Our challenge to funders is to free services to adopt Advantaged Thinking by building funding approaches that allow:

1. Flexibility for services to work with people in personalised ways
2. A culture of trust in which the relational comes before the transactional
3. Investment in resources for services to enable them to look beyond just helping people to cope
4. A focus on holistic outcomes defined by people's experiences and achievements
5. More genuine, decision-making power to be held by the people you seek to benefit

### TAKING ACTION:

- Q1 Which of these final challenges resonates most with you?
- Q2 How could you challenge yourself or others to do more with Advantaged Thinking?

## 6. LAST WORD

Whether you are a funder, service manager or a person in a position to influence people's lives, please share your experiences with any aspect of Advantaged Thinking by connecting with the Foyer Federation's Home for Advantaged Thinking. **It is a home for everyone's voice.**

In the words of Joe Howie from Brotherhood of St Laurence,

**"Advantaged Thinking keeps us facing the right direction, focuses our effort on what matters and ultimately enables us to develop and evolve practice collaboratively."**

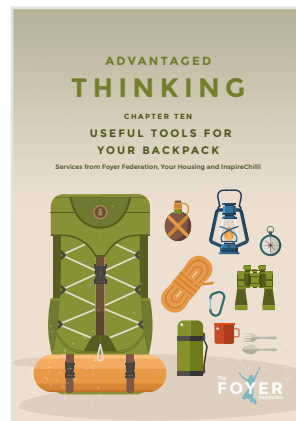
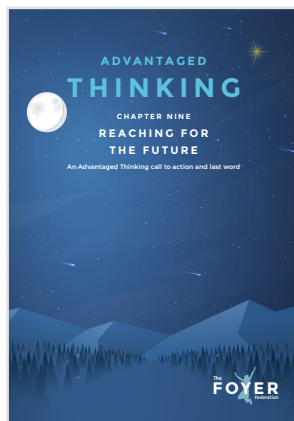
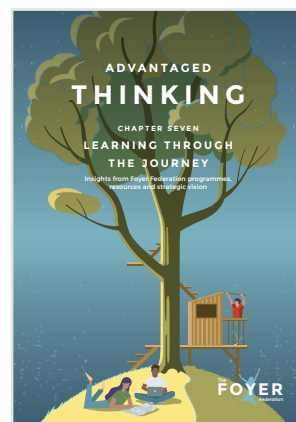
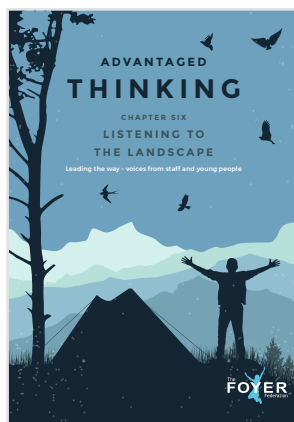
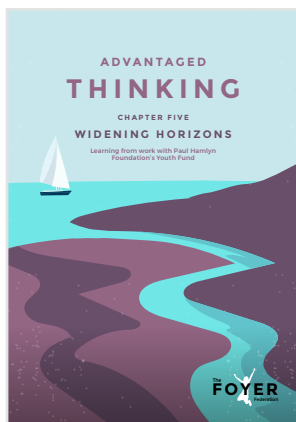
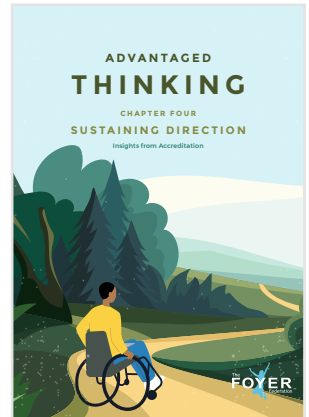
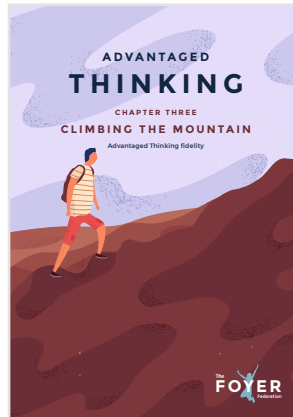
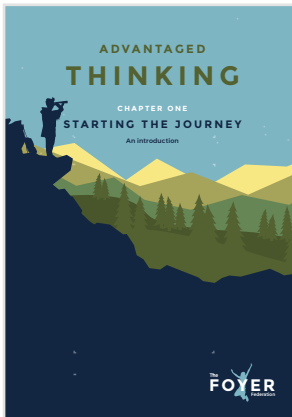
**Advantaged Thinking is the ultimate compass to signal positive direction. Use it.**

We are truly grateful for all the voices and examples referenced in our journey through these nine chapters. **In Advantaged Thinking, every journey and experience counts.**

Finally, we hope that this publication inspires your direction, whoever you are, so that you can inspire us with what you achieve. **We look forward to learning with you.**



Advantaged Thinking series of reports:



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