

Co-designing guidance for inclusive Personal, Social, Health, and Economic (PSHE) education with and for autistic young people

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Background

- Personal, Social, Health, and Economics (PSHE) education **plays an important role in children and young peoples' development.**
- It has been linked to academic attainment, self-efficacy, bullying reductions, better relationships, belonging, and health behaviours (Chester et al., 2019; Public Health England, 2014; Sklad et al., 2012).
- Some elements of PSHE education are now statutory. However, there remains **wide variation in how PSHE is taught.**
- **Autistic young people's experiences are not always represented** in PSHE content and PSHE lessons can be inaccessible for them.
- **No guidance exists** for teachers to ensure neurodivergent pupils' needs and experiences are represented in the delivery and content of PSHE education.

Project Overview

The need to improve the accessibility of PSHE education presented a target for research and practice to work together. The project was a collaboration between the *Applied Research Collaboration Kent, Surrey, and Sussex (ARC KSS)*, *Brighton and Hove Inclusion Support Service (BHISS)*, and *Brighton and Hove City Council's Families, Children and Learning (FCL) team.*

We used **Experience-Based Co-Design (EBCD)** with **12 neurodivergent pupils in two secondary schools** to centre pupils' experiences and emotions about PSHE and co-develop guidance to make PSHE teaching more inclusive.

PSHE education must be accessible for all pupils (DfE, 2019).

Results

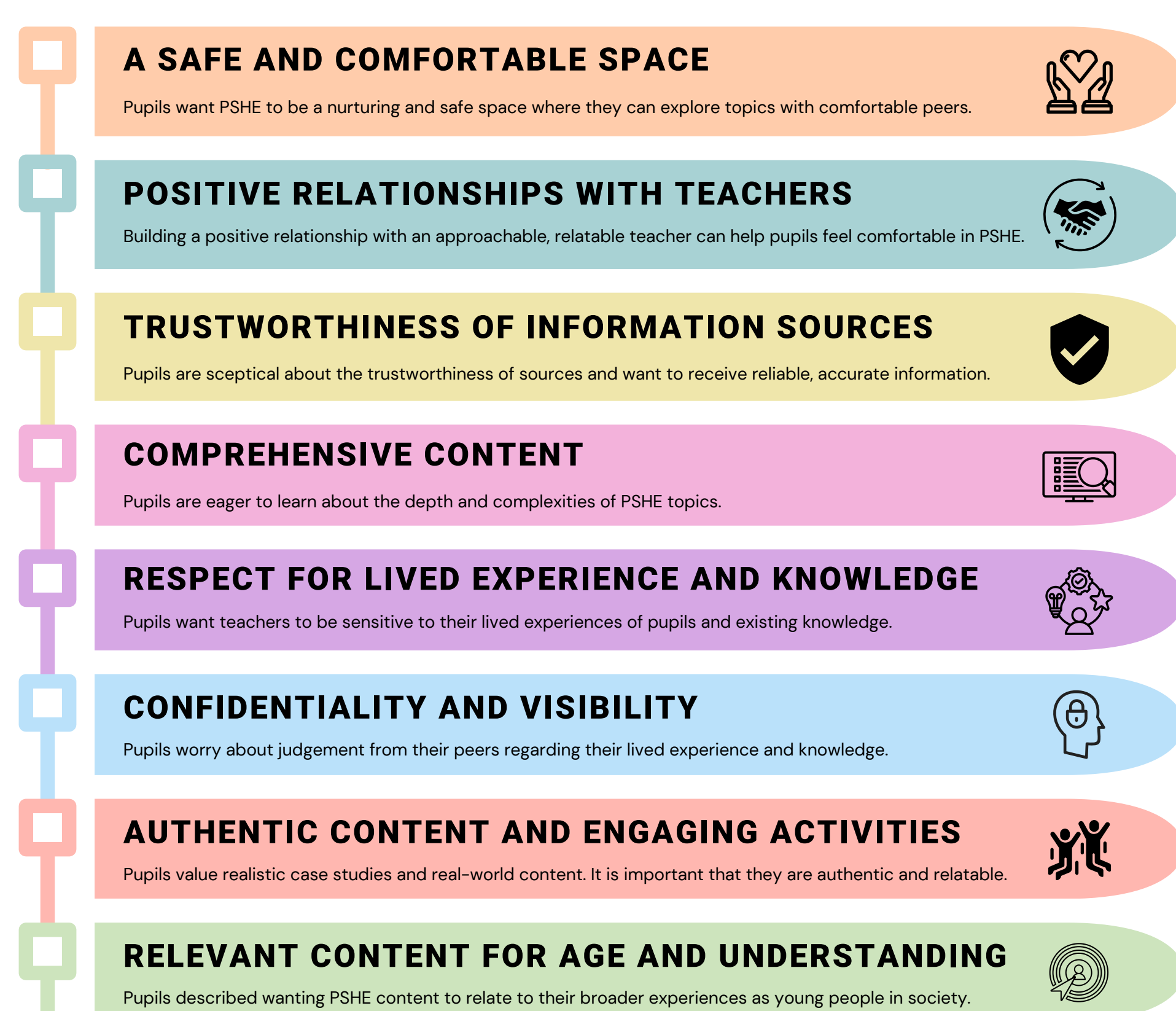
We used thematic analysis and grouped themes into 4 categories:

The teaching context: [1] Timetabled, informal lessons, [2] dedicated teachers, [3] relatable/ approachable teachers, [4] signposting processes, [5] improving communication.

The learning environment: [1] comfortable seating/ group work, [2] individualised coping strategies, [3] confidentiality/ visibility, [4] sensitive delivery, [5] removal of assessment pressure.

The content and activities: [1] comprehensive/ detailed content, [2] authenticity/ trustworthiness, [3] representation/ inclusivity, [4] engaging, interactive tasks, [5] accessibility.

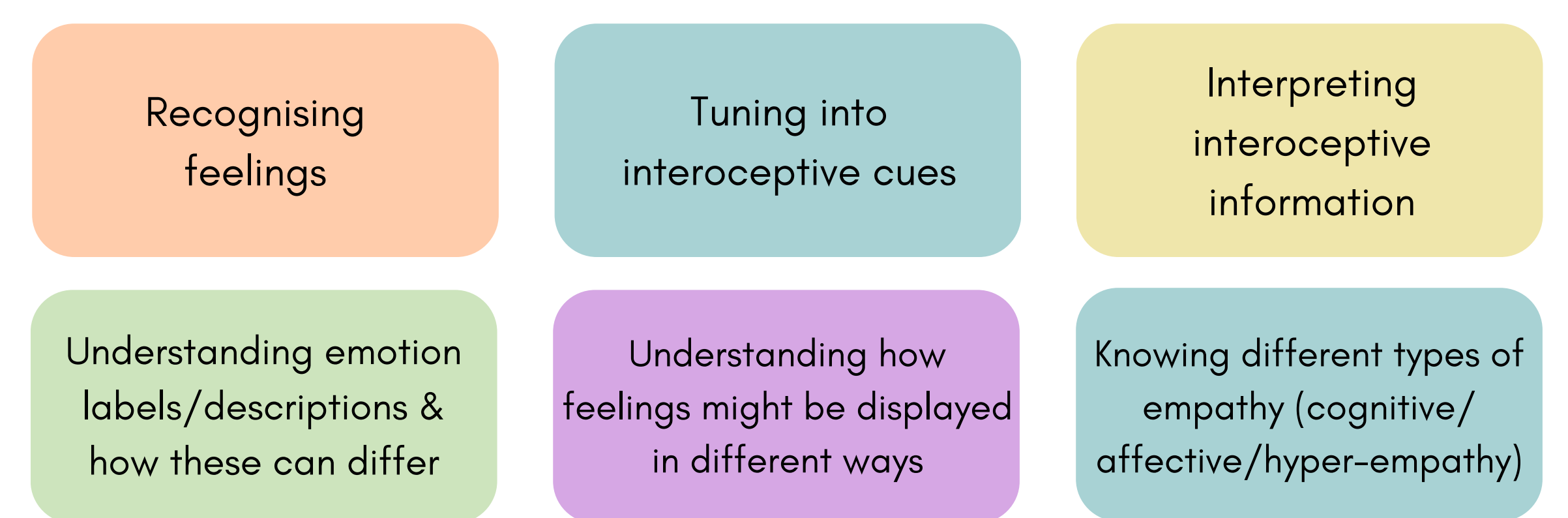
The situatedness of pupils: [1] transitions support, [2] lived experiences/ existing knowledge, and [3] relevance.



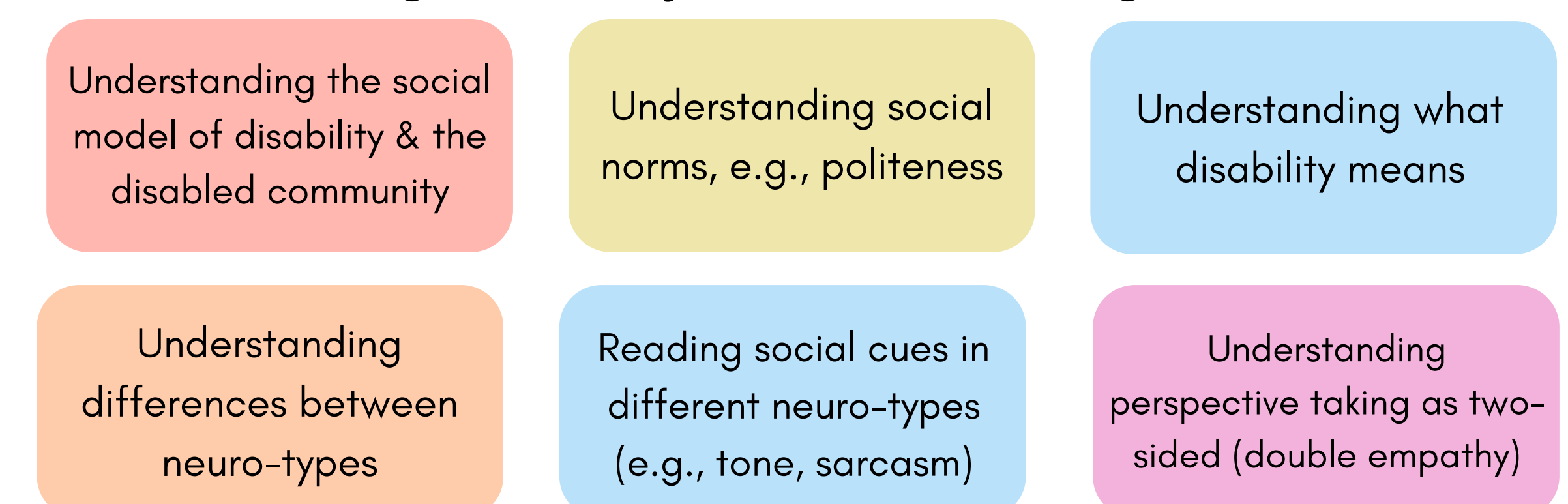
Following pupil feedback we identified 8 key elements that underpin inclusive PSHE teaching, and practical recommendations for teachers and school leaders.

Additional collaborations

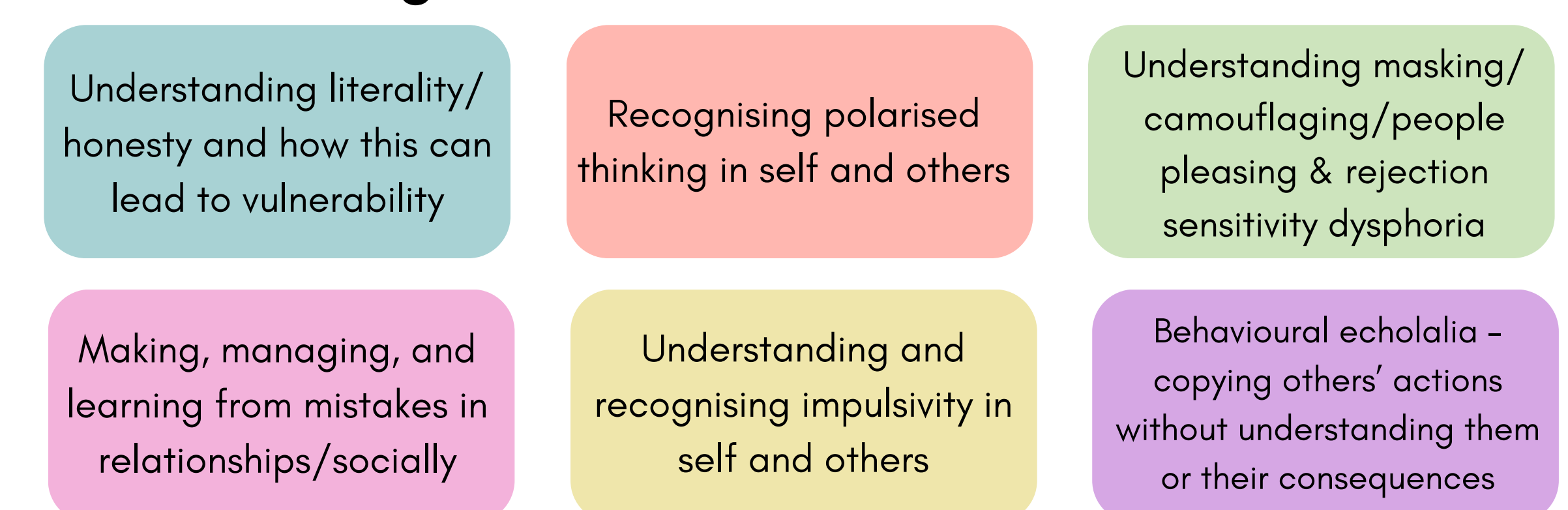
Understanding emotions



Understanding disability and neurodivergence



Understanding social differences



Pre-requisite skills for PSHE learning: In parallel, *Think Different Consulting* and *Oaks Rise* redefined the *Oaks Rise PSHE* curriculum. They identified the skills neurodivergent pupils need to access PSHE content. We worked with them to include the pre-requisites for PSHE teaching in the current guidance.

Conclusion

Pupils demonstrated excellent understanding of the complexities of PSHE topics and were passionate for their insights to be used to improve all pupils' learning experience. Employing a similar co-production approach to the design of PSHE content could enable greater tailoring to pupils' needs and experiences and could improve the novelty and appeal of tasks and activities.

Implications

This project has resulted in the **development of materials to support positive changes in PSHE education.** We are asking teachers to record their pledges so we can **assess the feasibility and impact of this guidance in the future.**

