

## Transcript of F4A podcast 'In conversation with Professor Julie Selwyn'

Chris

Welcome to the First4Adoption podcast.

Our guest today is one of the most respected figures in UK adoption and fostering. Since 1993, she's worked at the University of Bristol, where she runs the Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care Studies. Her research has shaped and improved social work practice, as well as changing the way in which we think about children in care. This was recognised in the 2016 New Year's honours, when she was awarded a CBE for services to adoption and looked after children.

Professor Julie Selwyn, welcome.

Julie

Thank you, Chris.

Chris

Can I call you Julie?

Julie

Absolutely call me Julie. Yes.

Chris

So, Julie, you originally trained as a social worker. Why did you decide you wanted to work with children and families?

Julie

That's quite a hard question, actually, because I think, looking back, I fell into social work. I'd got my A levels and I was thinking, well, what do I want to do? And I went into a job centre and on the wall was an advert for a residential unit and it said 'Wanted, House Mother', as you were called in those days. I thought, that looks interesting, so I applied for the job and got it. I began my career as a house mother in a large residential unit. It was 50-bedded. This was in the north of England. There was a central house, with little cottages all the way round and suddenly I

found myself in charge of 16 children, aged between about 1 and 16 and I was eighteen myself. <<laughs>> And that was the start of my career.

I was actually horrified by what was happening in this residential unit. I'd got no training at this point, but I knew this wasn't right. It was a unit where there were no pictures on the walls. There were no books. We had to wear a uniform, with keys. We were told not to touch the children. And these children had grown up in this unit. They'd been there virtually since birth, most of them. And on the day they were 16 - actually, it wasn't 16 - they were 15 in those days - a suitcase was packed and it was left on their beds and that was it. There was no celebration, no farewell. And that experience affected me deeply, actually. From there, I went into other jobs in social work. I worked in child protection. I worked in family support. I worked in therapeutic units for children. My last social work job was managing an adoption team in Kent. It was there that I really began to see the transformative nature of family life and what it could do. I looked back on those early experiences and thinking what those children had suffered in their time at that residential unit and thought how life might have been different for them, if they'd been adopted. I should say residential's changed an awful lot since then. There have been massive improvements in the care system. We don't have units like that anymore, but there are still big questions about the importance of family life for children, who are unable to return to their own birth families.

Chris

So you've explained very clearly how you've honed in over a period of time on this idea of how can we improve chances for people, the children in care and how can we help strengthen families, whichever way they're formed. And that's now, in a sense, in very simple terms, what you do. You're the Director of the Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care, which is part of Bristol University and at the forefront of research into adoption and fostering and children in care, as well as working with social workers to promote best practice. Can you - I know we've got limited time - can you talk a little; give us a few of the headlines about the kind of work you do. I know it's many and varied...

Julie

It is. Every day's different and that's what I love about my job. Some days, I'm teaching or training social workers at the university. Or outside, speaking to local authorities. I speak to judges - a whole range of professionals. I also try to respond to all the emails I get from adoptive parents and birth parents as well and young people who've been adopted, asking what do we know about different areas. They ask for the research evidence. We also have several research studies on the go at any one time, so part of my job is to make sure that research is of high quality. I support the researchers in my team. And, whenever a research study's on the go, I also try to do some of the research myself. I think it's really important that I keep my feet grounded and I continue to listen to what adoptive parents are saying and what social workers are saying.

Chris

You've kind of captured one of the questions I was going to ask you a little later, so I'll ask it now. I've not seen you at work, but I've seen you working, I've heard you speak a couple of times. I've met you a number of times and I don't think of you - and this is meant as a

compliment, I think - I don't think of you as a professor. I think of you as a doer. I think of you as someone who likes to get down and make things happen. Get your hands dirty as it were.

Julie

Yes.

Chris

Do you miss being on the front line, as it were? Or do you feel from - maybe from what you've said to me, you still are, in a sense. You don't leave it to other people. You like to be involved.

Julie

I do like to be involved, but it's different than being... I think that one of the hard things I've found, when I first became a researcher was not being part of a team in the same way. A researcher's quite a lonely life. You're out interviewing on the road, staying in not very nice hotels all over the country. Sometimes you're listening to some quite difficult stories and you have to learn to manage that yourself. Whereas when you're a social worker, you think 'right I'm going into action, I'm going to do something about this', as a researcher, you've got to be a bit more reflective and sit back and think and write and try and advocate in a different sort of way. But I think I'm still a doer, yes. I'm still trying to change things and make things better for children.

Chris

Can you give me an example - obviously without betraying confidences, which I know you would never do - just to make it clearer to people who may not be familiar with the work you do. Can you give me an example of the kind of research that you will be doing. The kind of subject, as it were. I've been quite general - maybe something you're working on now or that you've just completed. The question you've set yourself to try and answer, I suppose, is the question.

Julie

If I think about the present work we're doing, we're working with PAC UK, who are an adoption agency in England. They've developed some support and some training for adoptive parents who are experiencing violence in the family. And when I say violence in the family, I mean it's the child who's being violent and aggressive and very controlling. So they've asked us to come and evaluate whether this is effective, this training, and to see whether it makes a difference. As part of that, I'll be talking to adoptive parents, I'll be talking to the social workers, to see - has this training had an impact. So that's one thing we're doing.

Another thing we're doing is working with is Coram Voice, developing ways of asking children in the care system 'how is it going for you?' What's being in care like? And we've developed a sort of online survey that children in care can complete. It's done often in school, so we're able to get to children as young as 4 and up to 18. We're finding some really interesting things there about what children are saying about care. Many of them find care very positive and are saying

'it's made a real difference to my life.' So when we publish this report, which will be out soon, I think it will make people sit up and think about care in a different way.

Chris

Fantastic. You mentioned that sometimes it can be quite solitary what you do.

Julie

Yes.

Chris

And lonely out on the road. I know you're a mum. You have a family. 3 boys.

Julie

Yes.

Chris

And you mentioned too, that, by definition, some of the stories that you hear can be upsetting and distressing. Are you able to switch off?

Julie

Well, you'd probably have to ask my husband that and he'd probably disagree. Do I ever switch off? I try to. But sometimes I'm touched, you know. I remember a young researcher ringing me when she'd... She'd actually been reading the child's case file and there were pictures and things in there that she'd found very distressing and she said to me, "Is it alright if I cry?" I said "Yes, of course it is. Go and put yourself somewhere quiet and then, you know, sob and wipe your eyes and off we go again. But of course it's alright to cry and hopefully we keep our humanity. I think the day when you stop feeling is the day it's time to stop work.

Chris

Coming on from that - we've mentioned that children in care have, sadly and usually, experienced neglect and varying degrees of trauma and even abuse. Looking specifically at adoption - and we can't generalise - but in a sense we have to, to start trying to help individuals - do children placed for adoption and finding themselves in an adoptive family have specific needs that it's possible to identify?

Julie

The question is it possible to identify... Yes, they have specific needs. We know that adopted children are more likely to have been maltreated than the children who stay in care. It's because of the extent of that maltreatment that the children can't go home, usually, and they are available for adoption. And sadly for some of those children, that abuse begins in the womb and we're learning much more now about the impact of drug abuse during pregnancy. We

know that those children are more likely to suffer anxiety and depression as they're older and attention deficit disorder, so they'll be more hyperactive - those sorts of problems. Older children who have come into the care system have usually experienced neglect and they've had parents who've not been able to meet their needs. They've not been available when the child needs them and neither have they been responsive, so for those children, they've learnt to be very independent. They've learnt that the only way I'm going to survive in this world is to control and to control my environment, so that I stay safe. So we know that children have multiple and overlapping needs and they may not be apparent until they start school, so they might have speech and language delay. They might not even be able to play. They may never have learned to play. They may have problems making or keeping friends. They don't go to adults for comfort. We've talked about the problems eating some of them have or problems sleeping. They might have nightmares. But it's really important to say that not all children have these difficulties. I've read case files and I've talked to families where the children have had really traumatic early lives, but being placed with a family has made a tremendous difference and they've recovered quite quickly, but others do continue to struggle.

Our science is still not at a point where we can reliably - reliably - predict which children are going to be affected and which aren't. It's probably about a third of the children continue to struggle.

Chris

So some are more resilient than others.

Julie

They are.

Chris

Can one, for want of a better word, recover more quickly from what's happened?

Julie

Yes.

Chris

It sounds like your scientific work has reinforced your hunch all those years ago that family, rather than an institution, can help.

Julie

Yes. And that's evidenced across the world, that institutional care is not good for children. A family... It's the experience of just normal family life that is transformative. It's having a parent or parents there that are absolutely committed to your welfare. That makes the difference.

Chris

And it sounds like, as you explained, there is a spectrum of potential needs there.

Julie

Yes.

Chris

And, as you say, that might be very alarming for someone who might be considering adopting, but by the same token, we shouldn't sugarcoat the idea that any child, of whatever age, comes with a blank history, because, as you say, by definition, certainly today - it might have been a little closer to the truth 30 years ago, but today

Julie

Yes, today

Chris

Are there things that adopters can do to prepare for bringing a child into their family?

Julie

Yes. First of all, read everything you can, but don't think 'this won't happen to me'. It's really important to be prepared. I think it's really important as well to go at the child's pace and recognise that whilst for the adoptive parents, they're gaining a child, and it's often the fulfilment of a really heartfelt desire and wish to do something for children, for the child, they might be feeling grief and loss. They may be grieving the loss of their previous foster carer or other children they may have been living with in foster care placement, their siblings, their foster siblings. And for some children, once they move into an adoptive family, it's the final confirmation for them that they won't be returning back home. So they may have been told many times that they're not going back home, but that move really confirms it emotionally for them. So some agencies now offer sessions for family and friends. And I'd encourage people to get their family and friends involved - you'll need their support. They need to understand the effects of trauma on children too. I think it's important that adopters in those early days don't overwhelm young children with people or with things. Lots of people want to meet the children or give them things and we know that adopters say they're absolutely exhausted with the stress and thinking about the move and getting ready for it and the children coming. And the children are exhausted too. So it's really important to just take your time. This is forever. This is for life. So go at the child's pace.

Chris

Thank you. That makes a lot of sense. I suppose as a watchword, you could do a lot worse than to try and put yourself in the child's shoes.

Julie

Absolutely.

Chris

It's fantastically good news for all involved, but by the same token, you've got to let it breathe, haven't you and let it happen at its own pace.

Julie

It can be absolutely overwhelming for the child to be suddenly in a family with, say, lots of presents arriving and people arriving and it's just too stressful. So take your time.

Chris

Thank you. Related to that, if we look at the media - because we have to - as in so many areas, news stories tend to focus on bad news when it comes to adoption. And one of the things they like to report is a phenomenon called 'adoption breakdowns'. How often do they happen and what can we do to stop them?

Julie

First of all, I should say what they mean by 'adoption breakdown'. So they mean, when a child, who's got an adoption order, leaves the adoption home. And obviously, they shouldn't be because it's meant to be flatly for life. So it's seen as a very bad thing. Our research - and we've looked at over 37,000 adoptions over a 12 year period - found that only about 3% broke down over that period, so adoption breakdown is very rare. And even when families described a breakdown, many of those parents were still parenting the child. They were saying 'things are so difficult, that child can't live in this family, but we're still the parents and we're still supporting the child. So when we went in to interview parents... I interviewed parents who were still having the young person round for Sunday dinner, still doing their washing, supporting them in a flat quite locally, so breakdown is a very emotive word that makes you think 'oh it's the end, this is it'. Whereas, actually, the experience was quite different.

Chris

So it's a change of circumstance sometimes. It's a change in the way the family operates. It's not a disruption of the family.

Julie

Not always, no. It is in a few cases. In a few cases, I interviewed parents who said, "No. That's absolutely it." At this point in time, because in any research, it's at that point in time. If I went back in five or ten years, who knows? The child may have rebuilt those bridges. This happens in ordinary families too, you know, where teenagers say, "Right, that's it. I'm off". So it's more difficult for some adoptive families, obviously, because when children reach adolescence, which is actually the most risky period for disruption, those teenagers are having to face some difficult

questions about their own identity. They're asking some more difficult questions, like "Why was I really adopted. What really happened to me? Why is this scar on my arm?" and questions like "Am I more like my adoptive parents or am I going to be more like my birth mother or my birth father? Am I going to be more like this man who I've heard about who was very violent and aggressive?" That's what the boys are beginning to think. Who am I going to be most like? These feelings are very contradictory, very difficult for teenagers to manage.

Chris

At the best of times...

Julie

At the best of times. They're trying to integrate two families into their identity, not just one.

Chris

There will be many people who will listen to this, who will be going through those teenage years with an adopted child and who know how difficult it can be. Hopefully and surely, they'll find their way through it. Are there any pieces of advice that you've gleaned from your work speaking to all those parents and families? It's a hard one, that one. Sorry to spring it on you.

Julie

That is a hard one, but it's about sticking with it and keeping the communication open if you can. If you've got, you know... I know it's very difficult if you've got a teenager who storms out of the room and goes and stays in their bedroom for hours on end, but just trying to keep some sort of communication open and not closing it off, hoping that the storm will, you know, cease as the child - young person - moves into their early twenties. I've also spoken to adopted young people, who reflecting back on the situation have said, "You know, I was really awful to my mum and dad. I wish I'd never been like that" and to adoptive parents who've said, "I wish I'd asked for help earlier." So not leaving it until the crisis point. Sometimes people feel ashamed to ask for help. I'd say, go and ask. Don't stay quiet. Don't suffer in silence. There are people out there who can help.

Chris

I think that's really sage advice and at any stage in the adoption process.

Julie

Absolutely. Because the early signs of that difficulty often appear during the early... You know, when the children are younger. When you've got a younger child, it's much easier to manage, because they're not as independent. If they're being very difficult, you can pick a young child up and put him in another room. You can't do that when you've got a teenager. So if the signs are there early, ask for help.

Chris

Thank you. You've mentioned that adoption is a lifelong process for everyone involved in it. You've also talked about adolescence being inevitably potentially full of flash points for...

Julie

But again, not for everybody. We can't predict which ones.

Chris

Are there other situations or circumstances, life events which for an adopted person and adoptive families, we should be aware of?

Julie

The big one is the transition between junior and secondary school. That transition seems to be a spark point for difficulties. Maybe that's because of the more... You go from a more nurturing, smaller school to a huge secondary school environment. Maybe teachers in the secondary environment aren't as nurturing, aren't as attuned. But the other thing is that children have to move classes all the time. They have to move between lessons and that causes stress for some adopted children, so that's a flash point. Things happening in the adoptive family can be a stress point too, particularly things like the death of a grandparent, the death of a parent, can trigger those difficulties. It's hard to be certain about what's actually happening, but I think it's something to do with the additional stress that's placed on families and on children that seem to create some of these difficulties.

Chris

Thank you. I think it's important to talk about success stories as well, because we mustn't paint a picture in monochrome. We're flagging up some of the bad times, because we need to, but presumably you have evidence that shows us that adopted people can lead happy and successful lives.

Julie

Absolutely. Absolutely. Otherwise I wouldn't be in the job I'm in.

Chris

Do you do research around those things or is it all about trying to make the bad stuff less bad?

Julie

No. Our research typically is about looking at a group of children and seeing what happens to them. So in any group of children, you've got the majority who are doing well and inevitably you tend to focus on the ones who aren't and think what can you do to change that life trajectory. How could you make their lives better? As you said, you mustn't forget that the vast majority of children go on to lead very happy lives. Evidence from across the world. And this is evidence from the children who've been adopted out of really neglectful institutions. The big orphanages. There are studies from all over the world showing that they do well at school, they

get jobs, they have happy, successful relationships and, importantly, their children don't come into the care system. They have stable lives and that's for most children. We think it's somewhere around a third who continue to struggle. But that struggle is on a big continuum, with children who are struggling because they have some learning difficulties to children who've got major mental health problems. But the vast majority of children are doing well.

Chris

That's good to hear and important to remember.

Julie

It is. And it's really important to understand that they're coming from... they've had very traumatic early lives and the impact of family life is transformative.

Chris

In the last couple of years, the adoption situation in England, in this country, has changed a lot. This has included the introduction of a number of what are called early permanence options to children in care so tweaks, changes, alternatives to straight adoption - can you explain what these are and why they're important.

Julie

There are different types of early permanence. There's concurrent planning, where a child, usually an infant, is placed with carers, who are still prepared for the child to go back home, so the decision hasn't been made yet that adoption is the right thing. So they're working towards reunification with the birth family, but, if that doesn't work, they will become the permanent carers. There are other types of early permanence, called fostering to adoption, which is where the decision has been made by social workers, that adoption is the right thing but it hasn't gone through the courts yet. So in both cases, the prospective adoptive parents, the carers for that infant, that child, have to cope with the uncertainty that maybe the child may go back. But the benefits for the child are tremendous. It means that they're not moving round the care system. Our research shows that most children who are placed for adoption have experienced 3 foster placements even before they get moved to the adopters. Never mind what was going on in the birth family before they came into care, because often they've been passed round different members of the birth family as well. So very young children have had multiple carers. American research has indicated that children who have a lot of moves are more likely to develop mental health problems later on, even when you take into account the birth family history, the age at which they come into care, all those other risk factors that we know about. So moves are very stressful again and they're linked with one of these big risk factors. So stopping moves is really important. At the same time, there are huge benefits for the adoptive parents, because they have all those early memories of the child. I know when I speak to adopted children, they say, "if only I had a picture of myself when I was a baby. If only... because they don't have all those, the things that all children keep, that we all do as parents. Keeping all those badges and things, all those memories of our children when they were little. Those are all lost for many adopted children. So keeping those and having them provides that stability and security. If we allow children to come into the care system and not focus on trying to do something about the delays in the system, then children are missing the opportunity for that family.

Chris

I have to, anecdotally, reinforce what you just said about the early childhood memories and objects. As an adopted person, I know that I don't have anything. I remember vaguely teddies and things. If I was still able to have those, along with the photographs and stuff, that would have been really helpful for me.

Julie

It's the anecdotes as well. It's part of family life. So I say to my kids, "Oh do you remember when you did something" or whatever it was. It's those little stories that give you your identity. It's all part of building your identity. I'd urge people to consider it and to think about whether they can come forward and think about themselves as a concurrent carer.

Chris

As you said - as you hinted - at the beginning of explaining this, it's a scary prospect. You're taking a bit of a chance, aren't you.

Julie

You are taking a risk.

Chris

By the same token, you are doing something wonderful for a child.

Julie

Yes.

Chris

Which is often a big part of adopting anyway. I'm not an adopter, but I would imagine the desperate, intense need to have a family can sometimes overshadow the fact that you're doing this for the child's sake. I think it's very important to remember that, isn't it.

Julie

It is. Even if the child did return to their birth family, you've done something fantastic for that child. You've given them a stable, loving family, for however short a period or long a period.

Chris

You mentioned American studies, you mentioned studies across the world and I know that your work has taken you around the world. Is adoption done differently in different countries?

Julie

Very much so. If we look at Europe, they hardly ever do adoptions from the care system. They still have.... They don't really have adoption agencies in the same way we do, so they don't recruit adopters, they don't prepare them, they don't train them, they don't support them. They're still... It's still an adult service there. It's providing a baby for couples who can't have children. It's not trying to find parents for abused and maltreated children, who need, I suppose what you might call, therapeutic parents.

Chris

It's the opposite of what we were just saying. It's not child centred.

Julie

It's not child centred at all. It's based on finding babies for infertile couples. Most of those babies come from overseas, so they're being adopted, as we'd say, intercountry. They're coming from Russia. They're coming from, well, when China had its one child policy, a lot of girls came into Europe and were adopted that way.

Chris

Do we know where adoption came from historically?

Julie

There's always been adoption. You know, people say things like, "Well, Moses was adopted." It's been through history.

Chris

When did it become formalised?

Julie

It was formalised in 1926 in England, but it happened for hundreds of years before that. It's different throughout history, so, for example, in Roman times, people adopted teenagers because babies weren't wanted, because in those days, babies were seen as too risky, because so many babies died. They wanted, typically, a young man, who could take over the family business or inherit. So wealthy families in Roman times adopted teenage boys. They didn't want the babies, so it has changed over the centuries. Its use has changed. Often it was about having somebody to pass the family line down or to look after you in old age. That was another reason why people had an adopted child. It's so different now.

Chris

Do we compare well with the rest of the world? The adoption system in its various bits gets a lot of stick in this country from time to time, but how do we compare? I know you've travelled widely and done some work recently. I know you were in Australia. How do we compare with the rest of the world?

Julie

Well, the rest of the world often looks to us with a fair amount of awe. The other thing about some of the services we have and the approach we have to adoption, people ask me to talk all over the world, because they want to learn from England about what we've done, how we've done it and lessons we've learnt. Our preparation of adoptive parents, the way we recruit. New South Wales in Australia is beginning again to do adoptions from the care system. They're very interested in the things we've learned and about the importance of things like adoption support. They want to emulate what we've done. And even people in Wales - you know we need to think about the United Kingdom - adoptive parents in Wales often say, "Why don't we have the adoption support fund" or in Scotland. So England has some much better services and we shouldn't forget that.

Chris

Absolutely. We shouldn't. We're good at moaning.

Julie

We are good at moaning and saying what are the bad things.

Chris

Ok. Two questions

Julie

Ok.

Chris

We're nearly at the end. Thank you very much for this. You've worked extensively, as we've mentioned, on behalf of looked after children and you've continued to do so. How has adoption changed since you began your career? I would imagine in a lot of ways. That's number one.

Julie

That's number one. Ok. I look back at myself as an adoption officer and I think, if only I knew then what I know now, I would have been a much better social worker, so that's one thing. I also have to hold my hand up and say that in those days, I was one of those social workers that the adoption order was made and the case was closed. I look back at that and I think now about those families. I did keep in touch with many of them through Christmas cards, birthday cards, that sort of thing. But there was no adoption support. The idea was that people could just go off and...

Chris

Live happily ever after.

Julie

Live happily ever after into the sunset. So I think one of the things that's really made a difference - and hopefully some of our workers have been instrumental in this - is highlighting the need for continued adoption support and recognising that the extent of the maltreatment of many of the children doesn't just disappear because they go into a family. I mean, for some children it genuinely does, but we have to acknowledge that for other children, families need continuing support. I think that's the biggest difference when I think back to when I think back to adoptive parents who would never have rung up asking for help, because of feeling shame or blame. I really hope that now we're in a century where we won't see that any more. Where they will be responded to sensitively and offered help and support.

Chris

And hopefully, it's pretty much universal now that when somebody is adopting, up front this is addressed, this idea that the door doesn't close when the child or children arrive with their new family. Hopefully, that's part of the deal.

Julie

It should be and every family should have a support plan in writing that they should look at and know what's in that plan and how to contact people. Who would you contact, phone numbers, those sorts of things, but also not to leave it until the crisis point.

Chris

Thank you. And question number 2;

Julie

Yes

Chris

Cast your mind back to all those studies, because you've been at the Hadley Centre since 1993, is there a specific piece of work that springs to mind for you that you're the most proud of?

Julie

Probably the *Beyond the Adoption*, which was the study on disruption and adoption support, because for the first time, we were really able to give a statistic about how many adoptions broke down. Before that study, people were saying things like, 'Oh 25% of all adoptions break down' and we're saying, 'No they weren't'. We've looked at all of them. You know, it's no use just looking at the difficult end. You've got to look at the whole range of adoptions.

Chris

And it's 3%.

Julie

And it's 3%. Just over 3. So we challenged notions about adoption breakdowns, but we were also able to talk about the families who were struggling and their need for support. And sadly we were reporting how some of those adopters didn't get the support they needed and how when they rang agencies, they were met with a very unhelpful response. They did feel they were being blamed for their child's difficulties. I've been talking about this study all over the country and training social workers and we're beginning to see real shifts in people's thinking about adoption support. I hope that study has been absolutely a key catalyst for change.

Chris

I feel it has been, certainly amongst adoption professionals. I don't know a lot, but it was one of the first things I became aware of when I started working in adoption as a game changer, if you like. People can read the report, can't they...?

Julie

Yes. It's all online on our website. The Hadley website, which is just [www.bristol.ac.uk/hadley](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/hadley). All our research findings are on there, open to anybody. All our current work, what we're involved in, what we're doing.

Chris

And, like you, it's quite plain speaking, isn't it. It's quite - easy is pushing it, but it's quite accessible.

Julie

I hope so.

Chris

I can read it, so it must be! Final question. What's next? What are you working on at the moment?

Julie

Well, as I said, we're working on a study looking at interventions on child to parent violence. We're looking at the wellbeing of children in care, trying to improve practice. I've got colleagues in the team who are working on - this is a hard thing to describe - it's a project called 'Trove', which is about a physical object with which children can store their memories. So it's using digital technology for children to store their memories onto objects, which is a really interesting project.

Chris

Fascinating.

Julie

I've got colleagues at Bristol who are working on...

Chris

So Trove, as in a ...

Together

Treasure trove.

Julie

Yes. Children can decorate their box and make it personalised. Say you have a blanket or a letter or something from your childhood, there's a little sticker that you put onto the object and you record your memories onto it and you can play it back at any time through headphones. And other people can put their memories into that as well, so if you were in foster care, your early memories can be captured. So we're trying to find ways of making Trove cheaper for people to buy and we're seeing if we can get it into production.

Chris

Good luck with that.

Julie

So lots of very different projects and things going on.

Chris

Well, thank you. It's a pleasure to talk to you. Professor Julie Selwyn, good luck with it all.

Julie

Thank you, Chris.

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