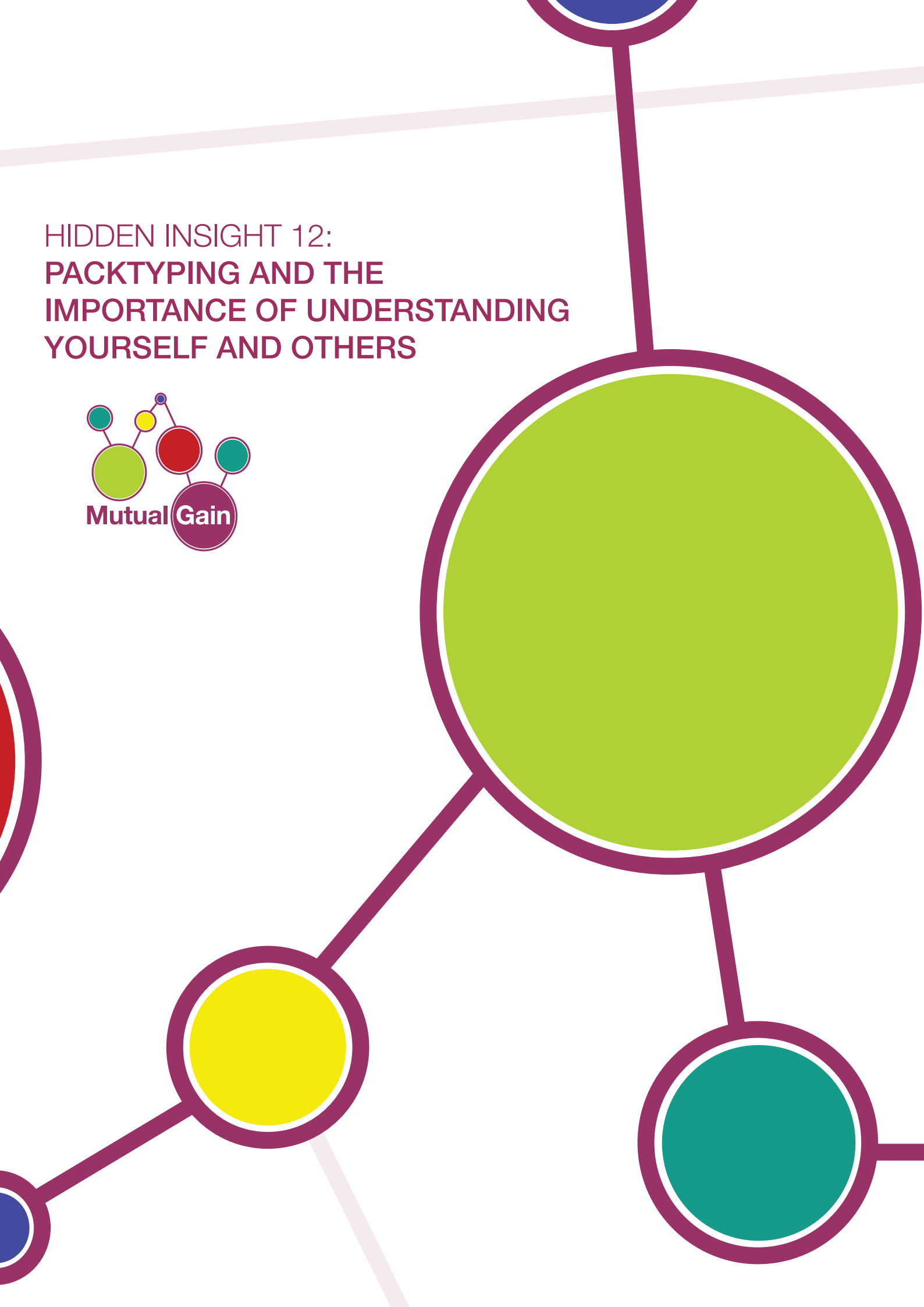# HIDDEN INSIGHT 12:
PACKTYPING AND THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Mutual Gain

This insight offers an overview of how the organisational commitment to Packtyping, (a self awareness approach) can be understood in terms of planning and experimenting with new and adapted approaches to community engagement. It considers how differing personality types can complement each other and contribute to the development of a supportive team environment where community outcomes are successfully delivered.

#Packtyping #Understandingyourself #Understandingothers #Partnershipworking #selfawareness #Teamprofiling

The MutualGain programme encourages staff to take a serious look at the effectiveness of their current beliefs and practice in community engagement, whilst engaging in a safe, fun learning environment – they are encouraged to play at new ways of doing things, test out their new learning, and experiment with new ideas in order to capture the learning.

Among other benefits, understanding your style can improve self-awareness so that staff are equipped to:

- 'Learn effectively and adapt faster.'

- 'Enjoy more fruitful relationships.'

- 'Be purposeful and cooperative at the same time.'

- 'Be more resilient and resourceful.'

- 'Build respect and trust.'

- 'Exert a greater influence on other people's thinking.'

The future of community engagement rests on sound, productive and resilient partnerships with other statutory and non-statutory agencies, and more importantly the residents within communities.

Self-awareness, strong facilitation skills, and tenacity are essential in nurturing and developing a self-reliant and resilient community who have the "willingness, capacity and opportunity to participate" as set out in the definition of community engagement for policing and partners (NPIA 2012).

MutualGain worked with its commissioning partner to profile participants during a community engagement programme.. The type of profiling the organisation uses is called packtyping.. This insight shares the learning from one cohort who had been packtyped:

- When calculating the total scores for Packtypes across the whole group, Retriever was the most common 'type' which was closely followed by Coach dog and Guard dogs. The lowest scoring types were Pointers and Sheepdog

- The profile was created immediately after a week of training in new creative methods of engagement and may not reflect the natural day-to-day working 'types' of those on the programme: many commented how different their Packtype was compared to previous profiles.

- It was noted by those who are familiar with the Packtyping process and analysis that it was particularly unusual to have low numbers of Pointers or Sheepdogs within a police programme. Pointers (firmly in the facts and certainty quadrant of the grid) and Sheepdogs (located in the 'results and action' quadrant of the grid) are often used as the stereotype of policing which often emphasises both facts and certainty, and results and action.

Using the profiles from the group the following can be summarised about the particular cohort in relation to the MutualGain programme:

1. Retrievers: MutualGain adopts an asset based approach to community engagement and encourages statutory agencies to utilise methods and techniques that enable the community and agencies to convert negative social norms into positive ones, through the building of social capital.

2. MutualGain believe that an increase in social capital is the right thing to do in public service provision. Having a cohort with a high level of Retriever types means that this philosophy and approach was seen by many as the 'right thing to do' and therefore secured much support from the group.

3. It was considered to have an ethical and sincere purpose that would develop long-term relationships of trust – the strengths of Retrievers. However, Retrievers are often challenged by change and can find it difficult to let go. Letting go is essential in taking forward new techniques, which support more effective community engagement and therefore, sometimes resulted in the group wanting to be sure that they were doing things properly prior to experimentation, play and letting go.

Example

A playful example of the Retriever being supported to let go, with a view to doing the right thing, was found in the delivery of the programme. Unsure of the potential of participatory budgeting the leader let go of skepticism and focused on the strengths of a Retriever to develop ethical and sincere long term relationships.

His playfulness and commitment to do the right thing meant that with the help of his team (comprised of a mix of Coach, Hound and Guard dog) they now had a new productive relationship with what was previously seen as a hard to reach group

The balance in the team meant that the Retriever/Coach dogs who like to take things one step at a time were encouraged and supported by the Guard dog need for results and fast progress. The quick learning from engagement activity meant that the guard dogs were more open to support the Retriever/Coach dogs willingness to take a slower approach to participatory budgeting, which was largely led by the local authority.

Coachdogs: Being 'kind, considerate and caring' is an essential characteristic of organisations seeking to protect the vulnerable in society. Having a cohort of people with this in their profile did, therefore, mean that there was a lot of peer support and encouragement especially at times when things felt tough. From a community engagement

and social capital perspective, it is important to have coach dogs in the team, as one of their strengths is to encourage and empower people – a key feature of facilitating increased social capital. They can be sensitive to the moods of others and are patient by nature – a good quality to display when working with communities who have never engaged before and who might be discovering how they want to engage in their community. However, they can be stubborn in defense of their views.

Both teams had participants with strong Coachdog tendencies, and both profiles had second dominant feature as a Retriever, which meant the individuals, had a strong, principled element to the team to do the right thing and wanted to empower others to do the same.

In one area the team had a senior manager profiled as a Hound/Terrier. The Hound is characterised by its ability to sniff out opportunities and develop new ideas, and the Terrier likes to solve practical problems through hard work and tenacity – good strengths to have in any team.

In their enthusiasm and optimism the Hound can often forget to communicate effectively and ignore things they aren't interested in. This, coupled with the Terrier tendency to feel like the world is against them, and the tendency to resist imposed change to their routine can prove problematic when they are under pressure to deliver on a range of programmes, and as a result, can't always be part of the ongoing dialogue and decision making.

In a position of power over other team members this proved challenging for Coachdogs at times, who felt strongly that the team should be empowered. Sensitive to the mood of others, the Coachdogs were concerned that shared decisions had been overruled and they picked up on the feelings of frustration in the group. But Coachdogs don't deal with conflict easily and find confrontation difficult, which led to a conflict between the need to talk about issues, and a concern that it may come out in a noncaring way.

Whilst there were moments of conflict and disappointment within the team, the Coachdog prevalence meant that the team retained a strong, supportive approach to each other. As with any large team, the dynamic fluctuates and the 'storming' element can be more obvious through the sheer numbers of people expressing their feelings. Having Coachdogs in a team of people working on community empowerment is an essential ingredient for success – they are patient, supportive and caring as they and their peers experience and respond to new feelings.

We have seen in the programme that **playful reflection can lead to effective action**.

The MutualGain programme and Packtyping philosophy together encourage constructive play, and enable the growling of the packs to be de-personalised so that communities become the pack leaders!
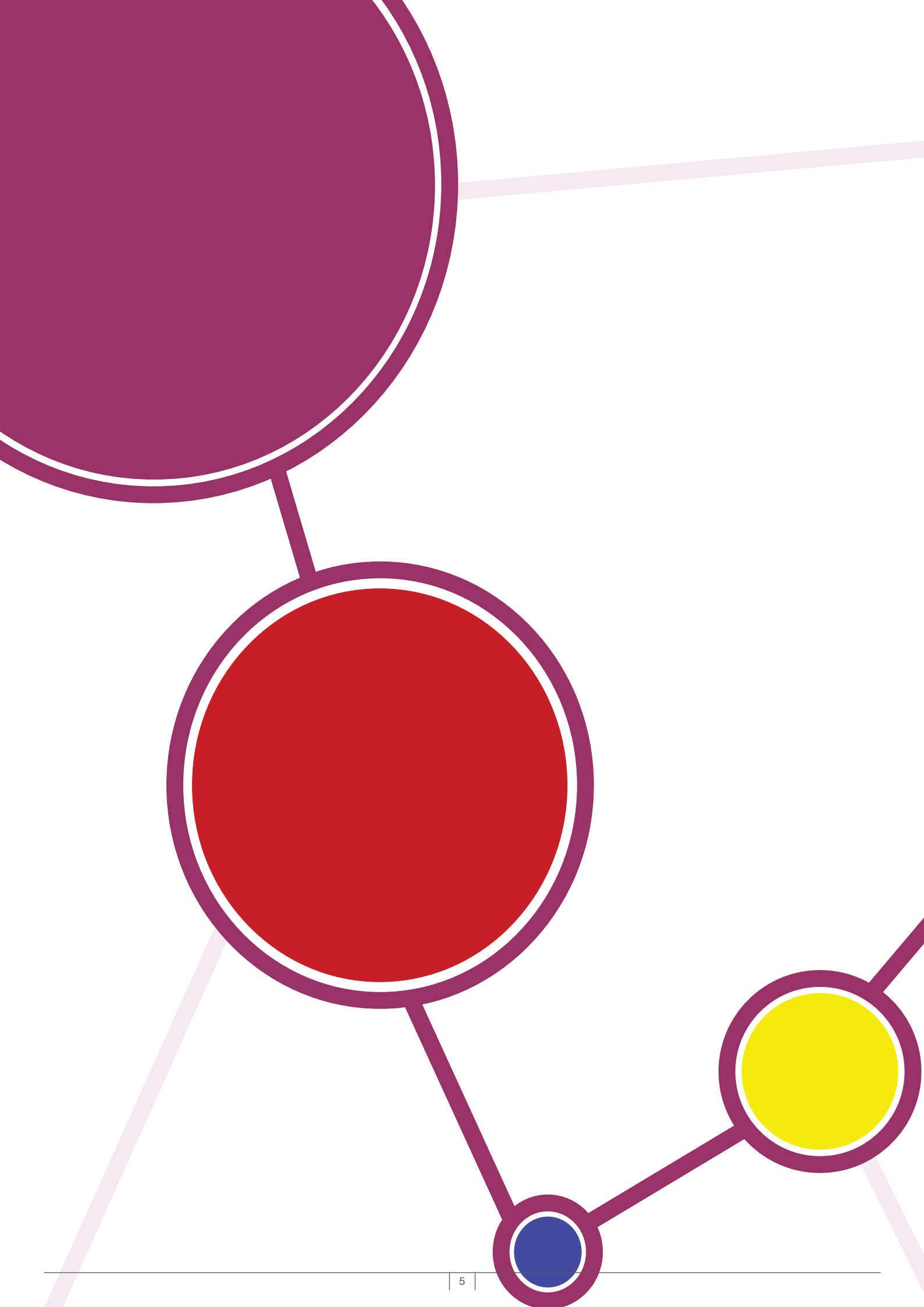
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