Practice-led Critical Reflection on the Ethics of ‘An Internet of Soft Things’

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Aims of the project

• To develop a **co-design methodology** for **multidisciplinary** design teams working in the **mental health sector**, informed by the **Person-Centred Approach**
Overview

• Ethical Research, the Person-Centred Approach and Working with Mental Health
  – From Pilot Study to Workshops
  – Film-making and Ethics
  – Reflecting on Reflexivity in Research
Ethical Researchers

• ‘Each of us is responsible for being aware of our own values and beliefs and being able to articulate their relevance’

(Proctor, 2014: 199)
BACP Ethical Framework

• Being Trustworthy
  – Honouring the trust placed in the researcher

• Autonomy
  – Respect for the participant’s right to be self-governing

• Beneficence
  – Commitment to promoting the participant’s wellbeing

• Non-maleficence
  – Commitment to avoiding harm to the participant

• Justice
  – Fair and impartial treatment of all participants

• Self-Respect
  – Fostering the researcher’s self-knowledge and care for self
Person-Centred Approach

• **Trust** in the individual:
  – To know themselves and their experience
  – To grow and change

• Facilitative effect of therapeutic relationships
  – Empathic understanding *(trying to put yourself in someone else’s shoes)*
  – Unconditional positive regard *(warmth, valuing, prizing the other person and their experience)*
  – Congruence *(being real, genuine, self-aware)*

• **NOT** a deficit/disease/normative model

• ‘it is not that this approach gives power to the person; it never takes it away’ *(Rogers, 1978:289)*
From Pilot Study to Workshop at Bassetlaw Mind

• Pilot Study
  – 6 weekly workshops, 3 hours long
  – 4 facilitators (2 x textile; 2 x mental health)
  – 8-12 participants each week

• Smart Textile Workshops at Mind
  – 6 weekly workshops + 1 extra reflection session
  – 6 facilitators (as above + 1 design + 1 co-design)
  – 7 regular participants (Mind service users)
Ethical approach & changes made as a result of practice-led critical reflection

• Information about the session and informed consent
  – Face to face; familiar setting and support workers

• Group agreement
  – How do you want to be with each other?
  – What are your hopes and fears?

• Check-in
  – How has your day been so far?
  – Is there anything you want/need to let us know?
Ethical approach & changes made as a result of practice-led critical reflection

• Facilitators
  – 1:1 forms naturally; consistency

• Record-keeping (data)
  – Include emotional/psychological experience as well as content/skills
  – Variety of materials and formats
  – ‘Recovery Star’ became ‘Starfish’

• Check-out
  – Invitation to reflect in group
Ethical approach & changes made as a result of practice-led critical reflection

• Debrief for facilitators
  – Informal meetings across disciplines
  – Spirit of person-centred supervision

• Flexibility in design of sessions
  – Take account of settings
  – Support individuals
  – Transparency and consistency
Film-making and Ethics

• Informed Choice
  – Consent process
  – Supportive of difference
  – Salamanda Tandem Working Principles

• Flexibility in materials collected
  – Preconceptions of Film versus Audio / Visual work
  – Individual Contributions
  – Open outcomes
Process of Developing Empathy

• Recording Process
  – Developing a relationship
  – Dialogue, timing and listening
  – Moment by moment checking in continues

• Edit Process
  – Evocative of Real Time
  – Careful of post editing techniques
  – 3 films reflecting 3 different individuals
Film as a Process of Attunement

• Tracking the process of attunement
  – Timing, breath, and body language
  – Moment by moment checking in continues
  – Empathy and Psychological contact
  – Engagement with sharing the work with participants, friends in their environment
The Final Film

• A dialogue in co-design
  – 20mins, 16 seconds
  – Can be de-constructed into component parts
  – Watch today on ‘An Internet of Soft Things’ stall
  – Or find on Youtube https://youtu.be/YixEuzl0Wfc

Reflecting on Reflexivity in Research
Participants

- Difficult to move away from an instrumental form of non-directivity in facilitation

- Striving for principled non-directivity in facilitating reflection felt risky – how would we answer our research questions?
• But with mental health participants this was important
  – Introducing instrumental approaches or more direct questioning did not work; communication closed down

• If you want to find out about anxiety, don’t ask about what makes a person anxious
researchers

• We’re not all trained to do this
• It is more familiar to some than to others
• People may not be in the right place to reflect on their practice with others in the team
• Relationships involve power – multiple roles make things more complex
• Team members are likely to reflect on their relations with participants
• Provide tools and a safe context where possible
• Informal tools can facilitate self-reflection
  – eg debriefs, personal notes
  – Neutral spaces help: outside of normal disciplines and institutional spaces

• New formal tools for reflection can generate new insights into the familiar
  – eg, IPR (Interpersonal Process Recall)
Final challenges

• Did team members sign up for this?

• What of informed consent for these processes?

• How can we ensure team members feel valued, as well as participants?
We propose that the model of personal therapy and supervision to underpin therapeutic practice might be extended to reflexive research.

What if all members of the team had access to such support?
Thank you

Any questions?