Making a difference with psychology

Edited by:

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH PSYCHOLOGY

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About The Contributors

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Tim Lomas is a Lecturer in Positive Psychology at the University of East London. Tim is the author of numerous papers and books relating to positive psychology, mindfulness, Buddhism, and gender. His main research focus is currently on 'untranslatable' words relating to well-being (to find out more about this research, see www.drtimlomas.com/lexicography). Tim's research was funded by the Richard Benjamin Trust in 2014 and is summarised in Chapter 12 *'Can mindfulness help at-risk adolescent boys?'*

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summarised in Chapter 16 *'Environmental predictors of suicide rates and helpline calls in Scotland'*.

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Karen Poole is a Clinical Psychology Trainee at the University of Liverpool, and was formerly a Lecturer in Applied Psychology at Liverpool John Moores University. Her interest in well-being, social justice, and safer communities for all prompted her recent career transition. In particular, Karen in interested in positive factors of change including resilience, hope, self-compassion, and associated well-

being. Karen's research was funded by the Richard Benjamin Trust in 2015 and is summarised in Chapter 7 *'From fact to fiction: reducing the adverse impact of homo-negativity among adolescents through real-life drama'*.

Katrina Pritchard is an Associate Professor in the School of Management, Swansea University. Her research interests include the construction of identity and professional knowledge, digital media and devices at work, and diversity, with a specific focus on age. Katrina is interested in a broad range of methodological issues in organisational studies including digital and visual approaches. ***Rebecca Whiting*** is a Lecturer in the Department of Organizational Psychology at Birkbeck, University of London. Her research interest is in taken-for-granted aspects of the contemporary workplace, including the construction of work identities (e.g., the older worker), concepts (e.g., age and gender), and the ways in which work is organised. She is also interested in the particular challenges of qualitative e-research and visual methodologies. Their research was funded by the Richard Benjamin Trust in 2011 and is summarised in Chapter 26 *'Investigating understandings of age in the workplace'*.

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Cristina Quinones is a Lecturer in Organisational Studies and Human Resource Management at Open University Business School. Her research focuses on a variety of aspects of the well-being of individuals, both in the workplace and in wider society. Her reseach shows how work conditions, socio-economic variables, and individual characteristics interact to 'tip' the well-being balance in one way or another, and how this, in turn, influences the way people experience work. She is particularly interested in the increasingly problematic area of work and non-work boundaries, where the professional and the personal intersect and often blur. Cristina's research was funded by the Richard Benjamin Trust in 2015 and is summarised in Chapter 20 *'Can a brief mindfulness intervention reduce early signs of compulsive internet use and enhance relationship quality?'*

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organisations on projects in this area, and continues to do so today. Jermaine's research was funded by the Richard Benjamin Trust in 2015 and is summarised in Chapter 24 *'Do zero-hours contracts effect the personal and work lives of care workers?'*

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particularly how developing our understanding of ourselves can bring about beneficial outcomes at work and home. Anna lectures on a range of courses in Management and Human Resources, and is also the author of the popular textbook *Work Psychology in Action*, which helps students to learn and apply cutting edge psychological knowledge to their current and future work. Anna's research was funded by the Richard Benjamin Trust in 2011 and is summarised in Chapter 22 *'Who am I at work and home? Authenticity and well-being in different roles'*.

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Keon West is a Lecturer in Social Psychology at Goldsmiths, University of London. His research focuses on group-based

identity and behaviour, particularly on improving communication and interactions between different groups of people. He has lived and worked in multiple countries including Jamaica, the US, France, and the UK and has investigated several types of prejudice including sexism, racism, anti-gay prejudice, religious prejudice, and mental health stigma. Keon's research was funded by the Richard Benjamin Trust in 2013 and is summarised in Chapter 8 *'Does imagined contact work, even when initial prejudice is strong?'*

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Lara Zibarras is a Senior Lecturer in Organisational Psychology at City, University of London. Her research focuses on two key areas: pro-environmental behaviour in the workplace (where she is interested in understanding how to encourage employees to be more 'green') and employee selection and assessment. She has published widely in over 25 peer-reviewed journals and she is co-editor of the popular text *Work and Occupational Psychology: Integrating Theory and Practice*. Lara's research was funded by the Richard

Benjamin Trust in 2011 and is summarised in Chapter 28 *'What encourages employees to go 'green'? Towards an understanding of pro-environmental behaviour in the workplace'.*

FOREWORD FROM THE BRITISH PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

This little book, funded by the Richard Benjamin Trust, is, I would suggest, a real treasure trove. I have to confess immediately that I am not a social or organisational psychologist, but, instead, a clinical psychologist, although one who has very much been influenced by the fields of social and organisational psychology that I studied as an undergraduate. My reacquaintance with these areas of psychology, came in large measure when I was honoured to be elected as the 81st President of the British Psychological Society, and to spend two further years as President Elect and Vice President, during all three of which I have been privileged to spend a good deal of time with social and organisational psychologists, both at their conferences and in meetings of their divisions and sections.

And so to this book.

One of the major themes is the work of social and organisational psychologists in investigating ways of increasing and enhancing well-being, identity, purpose, and belonging in people from across the lifespan. Thus, in respect of young people, Tim Lomas writes about mindfulness and at risk adolescent boys; Emily Oliver and Catrin Roberts report a study aimed at enhancing young people's community engagement; Pete Robertson writes on careers guidance for disempowered youth; Karen Poole discusses ways to reduce prejudice towards adolescents who identify as transgender; Charlotte Kerner and Victoria Goodyear explore how to increase physical exercise among

teens; and Laura Taylor and Shelley McKeown describe work looking at the peace-building potential of youth. At the other end of the spectrum, Katrina Pritchard and Rebecca Whiting discuss their study about people's understanding of age in the workplace.

Other chapters looking at the world of work range from Jermaine Ravalier's chapter on the impact of zero-hours contracts on well-being, through Luke Fletcher and Dilys Robinson's work on enhancing meaningfulness in the workplace and Emee Vida Estacio's chapter on life as a migrant nurse in the UK, to Karen Niven's fascinating study on the use of prosocial music in call centres. Cristina Quinones tackles the issue of compulsive internet use at work, while Lara Zibarras looks at how proenvironmental behaviour can be encouraged in the workplace, Madeleine Wyatt explores how ethnic minority employees can navigate organisational politics, and Anna Sutton examines the relationship between authenticity at work and well-being. Emma Russell has investigated a topic that is very close to my heart – and, I suspect, the hearts of many others – dealing with work email. Her conclusions were not what I had expected!

Meanwhile, insight into vulnerable populations comes from Julian Manley and Alastair Roy's investigation of recovery from drug use using visual images from dance theatre, Keon West's research on attitudes towards homeless people, transgender women, and immigrants, and Catherine Purcell and Sally Scott-Roberts' chapter on guides for success for 'neurodiverse' adults. Specific understanding of mental ill-health within vulnerable populations is offered within Lisa Marzano and colleagues' study into self-harm from using

smartphone technology, Fhionna Moore and colleagues' examination of the environmental predictors of suicidality, and Rochelle Burgess's research into an intervention for depression among HIV affected women in South Africa. There is also a fascinating study by Robert Nash into the memory of witnesses during crime investigations.

The remaining chapters major on the themes of attachment, identity, and engagement. Some concern certain populations, such as the work of Simon Goodman, Helen Liebling and Shani Burke on refugees' lives and Janelle Jones and Miguel Ramos' study on promoting engagement, health, and well-being in ethnically diverse societies, while others are connected to place, such as Minna Lyons and Bethan Jones' chapter on local history, knowledge, and 'belongingness', Sharon Coen's study looking into the role of community archaeology in promoting identity and attachment, and Georgina Hosang's chapter on people's feelings towards the cities in which they reside.

During the past three years, and in addition to my work on the BPS Presidential team, I have been able to work closely with a number of social and organisational psychologists on a range of projects involving refugees and asylum seekers together with other work and action aimed at understanding and minimising the psychological effects of poverty, food poverty, unemployment, and homelessness. Some of this work has direct policy implications on the way in which Government acts, both in its treatment of certain populations and with regard to the legislation that it applies to the work environment, the built environment, and the health and social care systems.

Social and organisational psychology, of course, have a vital role to play in all of these areas, and this book gives an excellent insight into some of the work currently being undertaken together with a taste of things to come.

Professor Jamie Hacker Hughes CPsychol FBPsS

Vice President, British Psychological Society 2016-17

FOREWORD FROM RICHARD BENJAMIN'S BROTHER

My older brother, Richard Benjamin (and I) had a stressful childhood as Jewish schoolboys in Nazi Germany. Eventually our parents managed to send us to a boarding school in Switzerland but, soon after, they were sent to a Nazi concentration camp, where they eventually were murdered, so we ended up in a Swiss refugee camp. Through the efforts of a widowed aunt, who had been married to an English artist, Richard was enabled to come to England just before the outbreak of war (and I a little later). Although Richard had fine intellect, these experiences left him with difficulties in maintaining his focus and concentration: he was too busy jumping from one task to another, helping other people, to earn an effective living. After our aunt died, he received a very small compensation pension from post-war Germany. An uncle, who had managed to escape from Germany early, on his death left some money to Richard. Believing (rightly) that Richard would spend it promptly on good causes rather than on his own continuing support, he left it in trust, with regular small monthly payments. However, Richard refused to touch any of it, and so it built up the nest egg which, on Richard's death became the memorial trust.

Richard, whilst recognising that the physical and natural sciences were essential to create the resources to support humanity, believed passionately that the social sciences had a vital role to play in ensuring that these resources were spent wisely and sensitively in support of an integrated compassionate society. So the aim of the Trust was to

provide seed-corn support for research to further these objectives. I believe this little book shows that, through wise management by the trustees, the Richard Benjamin Trust has been remarkably successful as a catalyst to valuable innovative research in the social sciences.

Professor Ralph Benjamin CB

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH PSYCHOLOGY

Many of us care about making a difference, whether to those closest to us, to the lives of those less fortunate than ourselves, or to society more generally. For some people, the desire to make a difference even influences their choice of profession. Teachers, social workers, medical professionals, and many others have selected into occupations that enable them to make a difference in their daily lives.

You might be surprised to read that academic psychologists also care about making a difference and that this is what motivated many of them to join the profession. Academics just care about writing books, preaching to students, and sitting in their ivory towers, right? Wrong.

Academically speaking, psychology is about using scientific methods to try to understand how people think, feel, and behave. But practically speaking, psychology is all about using that knowledge to have an impact, to make a difference. The work in this book focuses specifically on two areas of psychology that seek to make such a difference: social and organisational psychology.

Social psychology is the study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and actions are influenced by others around them. Research on social psychology can make a difference to communities and healthcare, among other domains. Organisational psychology focuses on understanding how people think, feel, and behave in the workplace. Research from this area can therefore make a difference to working contexts.

Of course you might be thinking that we, as editors of this book and academic psychologists, are pretty biased in our claims about what psychology can achieve. But it's not just us that realise the potential for psychology to make a positive impact. This book is dedicated to one such person who believed in the promise of psychology to make a better world.

Richard Benjamin And The Trust

Richard Benjamin was born in Germany in 1921. As his younger brother, Ralph Benjamin, explains below, their parents sent them to Switzerland in order to escape the rising discrimination and aggression against Jewish people like themselves. His parents, however, were taken to a Nazi concentration camp, where eventually they perished.

The stress of schooling in Germany as a Jewish boy, and later life in a Swiss refugee camp, left Richard with a strong desire to help vulnerable people. In today's troubled times, with many countries around the world reluctant to respond adequately to the refugee crisis, Richard Benjamin, like many other former refugees, attests to the strength of human spirit that can convert experiences of evil into a drive, not for revenge or hatred, but to spend their lives helping others. When he inherited a substantial sum of money, Richard immediately decided he did not want this for himself, but wished to use it to establish a trust fund for research for the public good. He did not manage to complete this project during his lifetime but left a bequest in his will stipulating that the money should be used to fund projects

in social or organisational psychology likely to have an important social impact.

And so the Richard Benjamin Trust was born. Dedicated to fulfilling the wishes of its benefactor, the Trusts' aims were to support innovative research from early career researchers in social and organisational psychology that had the potential to make a positive difference to people's lives.

Following Richard's death in 2005, the lawyers dealing with the bequest contacted academics from the institutions specified in the will, including the British Psychological Society and the Economic and Social Research Council. A board of trustees was established and a Discretionary Trust deed was set up in 2008. After some initial teething problems, the Richard Benjamin Trust was established and registered as a charity, and following a call for research proposals the first projects were selected for funding in 2010.

Since its inception, the Trust has funded 50 projects, covering a diverse range of topics (see the Appendix for the full list of projects funded). Many of these projects have involved developing and testing new interventions in order to make improvements to people's lives, including helping people to manage their stress levels and mental health pressures, enhancing community engagement and co-operation, increasing physical activity levels, and promoting more positive attitudes towards a range of vulnerable groups in society. A further set of projects has sought to understand the experiences of various 'at risk' groups whose voices are often not heard (e.g., adolescents from deprived backgrounds, neurodiverse adults, refugees, recovering

addicts), and to translate those experiences into recommendations and strategies for coping and acceptance. Several of the projects have studied emerging issues, such as the impact of newer technologies (e.g., smartphones, Facebook, Fitbit), and current pressures in society (e.g., the ageing population, the increasing reliance on migrant workers, the widespread use of zero hours contracts).

The common thread linking all of the projects funded by the Trust is their commitment to making a positive difference to society. This positive difference has been reinforced by the various, innovative strategies used by the grantees to disseminate the findings of their research in order to have impact. Such strategies have included developing toolkits (i.e., sets of resources that aim to provide instruction or guidance to particular sets of people) and sharing those through networks, rolling out successful interventions to wider groups, and using the research findings to guide discussions with policy makers and work organisations, in order to challenge their thinking and make new, evidence-based recommendations.

In 2015, the Trust awarded its final set of grants. However, the work on the Trust will live on, not just in the careers of the young researchers it has boosted, or the academic impact its projects have had, but in the impact on society. We hope that Richard Benjamin would have been proud of the work of the grantees.

This Book

To celebrate the work funded by the Trust, we decided to mark the end of the Trust by producing a book to showcase the enormous impact of the projects that have been funded. Our aim was to produce an accessible collection that would highlight not only the cutting-edge research funded by the Trust, but more importantly the potential for psychology to make a difference to people's lives. Each book chapter reports the research conducted within a different grant funded by the Trust, culminating in a set of practical recommendations informed by the work that can help readers to make a positive difference to their own lives and the lives of others.

We have organised the book into three sections, each reflecting a different area in which our grantees have made a difference through their research.

Making a difference to communities. The chapters in our first section all summarise projects that intended to make a difference to communities. The first four chapters focus on the issue of enhancing community engagement and co-operation, both in general (*Coen*) and among particular risk groups, who would be especially likely to benefit from such engagement, including people from deprived communities (*Lyons & Jones*), adolescents (*Oliver & Roberts*), and youth affected by ethno-religious conflict (*Taylor & McKeown*). The next two chapters concern the experiences of refugees (*Goodman et al.*) and migrants (*Jones & Ramos*), and enhancing their integration into their new communities. These chapters are followed by two chapters seeking to tackle prejudice: towards LGBTQ+ (i.e., people who identify

as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, or other) adolescents (*Poole*) and towards adults who are homeless, transgender, or immigrants (*West*), aiming to work towards greater acceptance within communities. The final chapters in this section shed light on two notorious issues that threaten community safety, namely the feelings of fear that people often experience in urban environments (*Hosang*) and the inaccuracy of statements made by witnesses of crime (*Nash*).

Making a difference to healthcare. The chapters in our second section all summarise projects that intended to make a difference to healthcare provisions. The first four chapters concern enhancing healthcare services and support for particular at risk groups, including trialling interventions to improve physical health (*Kerner & Goodyear*) and mental health (*Lomas*) among adolescents, creating guides to better living strategies for neurodiverse adults (*Purcell & Scott-Roberts*), and understanding the experiences of recovering addicts in order to inform services for this group (*Manley & Roy*). The next three chapters focus on suicide, self-harm, and depression, trying to provide insight into various possible causes in order to tailor healthcare provisions more appropriately and provide better services and support mechanisms (*Marzano et al.*; *Moore et al.*) and investigating whether primary healthcare interventions can be used to tackle the social causes of depression, such as poverty (*Burgess*). The final chapter in this section (*Estacio*) focuses on the experiences of healthcare providers themselves, tackling the shortage of nurses in the UK and seeking to understand this through the experiences of the migrant nurses whose services we currently rely on.

Making a difference to workplaces. The chapters in our final section all summarise projects that intended to make a difference to workplaces. The first three chapters test novel interventions that seek to improve people's work lives, for example, using mindfulness techniques to enhance well-being (*Fletcher & Robinson*) and tackle the early signs of compulsive internet use (*Quinones*), and using a music-based intervention to reduce customer verbal aggression towards call centre workers (*Niven*). The next three chapters seek to understand factors that influence workers' well-being, including the difficulties in maintaining dual work-home personalities (*Sutton*), the issues in dealing with work emails (*Russell*), and the effects of zero-hours contracts (*Ravalier*). The following three chapters focus on understanding the experiences of particular groups of workers, including Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) employees as they navigate organisational politics (*Wyatt*), workers from particular generational groups (e.g., 'millennials' and 'babyboomers') and the stereotypes they face (*Pritchard & Whiting*), and unemployed youths seeking entry into the workplace (*Robertson*). The final chapter in this section (*Zibarras*) seeks to increase pro-environmental behaviours at work (e.g., recycling), by understanding the factors that facilitate and provide barriers to such acts.

Acknowledgements

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administrator, Paula Bibby. And last but by no means least, thanks go to all of our grantees, especially those who have chosen to share their research here with you.

Karen Niven, Suzan Lewis, & Carolyn Kagan

PART I: MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO COMMUNITIES

CHAPTER 1. I DIG, THEREFORE I AM: PLACE IDENTITY AND PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY-BASED ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS

Sharon Coen

Could taking part in, or observing, archaeological work in one's local area ('community archaeology') foster a positive connection between individuals and the people in the place in which they live? If so, community archaeology could be a tool for promoting harmony within the community. In this research, I aimed to explore the impact of community archaeology digs on people's sense of identity and attachment with the local area and local community.

The Problem

Modern society is characterised by increased mobility and diversity. Local communities see a continuous flow of incomers as well as 'outgoers'. People who are 'born and bred' in an area, or who have been living in the same area for decades, live next door to new incomers. This can lead people to feel 'strangers in their own land', or to feel an unwelcome guest in a local area. Psychological research shows that the feeling of belonging to a place plays an important role in promoting respect for the physical place (e.g., avoiding littering, respecting properties, etc.) and for the fellow residents.[1] It is therefore important to look at ways in which we can guarantee integration in the

community and help newcomers to settle while also allowing longer-term residents to feel ‘at home’.

Rationale For The Project

Community-based initiatives that aim to reconnect people with heritage are thought to have beneficial effects on local populations as well as tourists and visitors.[2] For example, researchers have found that initiatives in community archaeology can be used as a tool for promoting social justice, that is, as a way to discover and acknowledge past injustices which extend their negative effect in the present.[3] The idea behind such initiatives is that engaging in community archaeology can influence the way people make sense of the past and the historical roots of the social groups they currently belong to. In other words, by participating in community archaeology projects, people not only reassess their own personal history, but also the history of the social groups that reside(d) in the local area. Such initiatives therefore not only help to form a bridge between the past and the future, but also a bridge between the ‘me’ and the ‘us’.

The practice of involving members of the community in excavations has been reported since the 1970s by scholars,[4,5] and has gained momentum and academic interest in the last decade. The UK, for example, has a significant number of interest groups and societies related to archaeology, with at least 2030 voluntary associations (comprising about 215000 individuals) which are in some way involved in heritage-related activities.[6]

Organised by the Applied Archaeology Team at Salford University, *Dig Greater Manchester* is one such project that aims to give local communities in the Greater Manchester area of the UK the opportunity to get involved in their own history and heritage in a variety of ways. Mechanisms of involvement include giving local residents 'hands on' experience of an archaeological excavation in a safe and healthy environment, and a public open day run at the conclusion of each excavation where academics and volunteers offer guided tours of the sites, the opportunity to excavate a small trench, and the chance to explore family history. The initiative has proven successful in attracting residents from within and outside the Greater Manchester area through its promotional channels (advertisements in local newspapers, social media presence, archaeology interest groups, word of mouth).

In the present research, my colleagues and I aimed to evaluate the *Dig Greater Manchester* initiative in terms of its effects on community engagement and participants' feelings of bonding with their local area (their 'place identity').[7]

What Was Done

We conducted a series of focus groups asking local residents who took part to the excavations to talk about their experiences in participating in *Dig Greater Manchester*. A series of five locations in the Greater Manchester area, which varied in terms of the geographical area and the characteristics of the population, were selected. Whenever possible, focus groups were held in community spaces in the

area where the digs had taken place to facilitate local participation. We asked participants to talk about the reasons behind their participation, their experience of working at the dig, and the impact that working on the sites had in terms of the way they thought about the place they live in and their community.

What Was Found

Most participants reported that they had taken part in several digs organised by the *Dig Greater Manchester* initiative, experiencing a 'special bond' in particular with the digs carried out in their local area. This was regardless whether they were born and bred in the area or came to the area later in life. They often referred to the experience as a discovery of their own roots, and noted the importance of raising the awareness of fellow members of the community concerning the fascinating past of the area and its hidden treasures.

Volunteers explained how during the excavations they were frequently sharing memories and stories about the local area with each other. The act of sharing helped participants to develop a strong connection not only to the place – about which they learned history and heritage – but also to its community. Volunteers also discussed feeling a real sense of comradery during the digs, where the usual divisions within our society (e.g., based on age, socio-economic status) disappeared. There was a real sense of cohesion, where everybody was working together for a common goal. Because of this, the experience fostered the development of new friendships among the volunteers.

For a good proportion of the volunteers, their experience had led to further engagement with the community, by participating in other digs or initiatives linked to *Dig Greater Manchester*, signing up to other community-based archaeological (and non-archaeological) projects, or seeking funding to support new initiatives.

More notably, the presence of digs seems to have a positive impact not only on the volunteers but also on local residents. Volunteers reported that in the areas where a dig was taking place, the rediscovered respect for the local community and shared place identity led to reduced littering and lower criminality.

Making A Difference

The initiative being evaluated in this research, *Dig Greater Manchester*, appears to have enriched volunteers not only at a personal level, but also at a social one, by providing the opportunity to interact with other members of the community they would not normally have met, facilitating the formation of new friendships, and fostering engagement with the local community. Community archaeology digs could therefore provide an ideal context for contact among members of difference socio-demographic groups and so be promoted as a means to foster community cohesion. Similarly, participating in such initiatives may provide a means through which to initiate interest and willingness to further engage with the local community and with community-based initiatives. Community archaeology initiatives could therefore make an important difference to communities.

The results of this study were presented at the Archaeology Day at the University of Salford in front of Local Councillors and shared with different local communities. Hopefully, this will provide a solid argument in support of future community archaeological initiatives.

Recommendations

- Local councils in areas affected by criminal behaviour or vandalism can support community archaeology initiatives to reduce offences and foster cohesion
- Community archaeology initiatives may also be useful within areas that have high levels of immigration and are therefore at risk of an 'us' versus 'them' divide
- Local schools can participate in community archaeology initiatives as an enjoyable educational experience which teaches not only local history but also fosters a sense of belonging to - and a greater sense of respect for – the local area

Further Reading

The research discussed in this chapter has been published in the Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology:

Coen, S., Meredith, J., & Condie, J. (2017). I dig therefore we are: Community archaeology, place-based social identity, and intergroup relations within local communities. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, 27*(3), 212-225.

A brief online report of the research is also available at:

https://archaeologyuos.wordpress.com/2014/10/20/i-dig-therefore-i-am-place-identity-and-participation-in-community-based-archaeological-projects/

CHAPTER 2. DOES KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL HISTORY INCREASE PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND BELONGINGNESS?

Minna Lyons & Bethan Jones

How can we encourage people to help others in their local communities, especially in communities that are relatively deprived or disadvantaged? Existing research suggests that one major reason why people fail to act prosocially is that they may feel isolated and lack a sense of belonging to the area in which they live. In this research, we aimed to test whether interventions engaging people with the local history of their area could increase a sense of belonging and therefore encourage helping behaviour.

The Problem

Whether people behave in a prosocial manner (i.e., being willing to help each other) or in an antisocial manner (i.e., resorting to actions that may harm others) may depend on the circumstances that people find themselves in. Breakdown in prosocial behaviour and increased rates of antisocial behaviour are especially common in poorer areas of urban cities. For example, research has indicated that socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods have lower levels of altruism and cooperation than their richer counterparts.[1] This is an increasingly serious problem in the UK, as the income difference between the poor and the rich

deepens and an alarming number of people live below the poverty line.[2]

While poverty and lack of helping are linked, there are other common factors that relate to poverty and decreased prosociality that may help us to better understand the cause of this issue. For example, those who live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods often feel socially isolated, with a poor sense of belonging to their neighbourhood.[3] It may therefore be that forming a sense of belonging is an important route for developing prosociality.[3,4,5,] Sense of belonging is a fundamental human need that stems from a deep evolutionary history of living in cooperative social groups, and could be an essential aspect triggering prosocial behaviour. Crucially, as well as feeling connected to a group of people, sense of belonging can be about belonging to the physical place (e.g., a neighbourhood) that one lives in.[6] It is possible that sense of belongingness to the place is influenced by historical connections to that place: the knowledge that there is a deeper heritage to be proud of, even if, at present, the place is suffering from deprivation.

Although relatively under-studied, sense of history of the place may be an important factor in prosocial behaviour. An interview study found that having a sense of history had an impact on trust, cooperation, and reciprocity in an impoverished East London neighbourhood.[7] Thus, deeper connections through heritage may offer an important avenue for increasing prosociality in poor neighbourhoods.

Rationale For The Project

To our knowledge, there has not been any research investigating whether thinking about the history of one's neighbourhood or city can alter people's sense of belonging as well as their prosocial behaviour. Researching the effect of history on subsequent behaviour is important, as it may provide low-cost opportunities for increasing cohesiveness and prosociality in areas with socio-economic disadvantage.

In the present project, we therefore aimed to look at how thinking about local history affects how attached an individual feels to the place in which they live and what impact history has on prosocial behaviour. We expected that thinking of the heritage of the place would deepen the connection to the place and therefore positively affect sense of belonging. This sense of belonging may, in turn, have a positive impact on people's motivation and willingness to help others.

What Was Done

We conducted two studies investigating whether thinking about local history would have a positive effect on sense of belonging and helping behaviour. The participants were residents in the city of Liverpool, which, according to the 2015 deprivation statistics, is the fourth poorest local authority area in England. Our first study was a community study conducted with school children as participants, while our second was a laboratory-based experiment with adult participants. In both studies, half of our participants engaged in a set of activities designed to engage them with

the local history of their area, while the other half of the participants engaged in an equivalent task that differed only in temporal focus (either engaging participants with the future of the area, Study 1; or with the present of the area, Study 2). These comparisons allowed us to isolate whether it is specifically important to think about the history of an area or, rather, whether just thinking about the area is sufficient to increase prosociality.

In Study 1, we randomly allocated secondary school children to take part in one of two half-day workshops. The first workshop was about local history, while the second was about planning the future use of the local place. A few weeks before the workshops, the children completed a short measure of belongingness to the place and participated in a "sharing" game as a measure of prosociality. In this game, they had to decide how to share £10 worth of supermarket vouchers between themselves and a friend from the school. During the workshops, the children visited a local park with experienced instructors, either finding out facts about the history of the park, or planning how they would use the park in the future. After the park visit, children then carried out in-class activities based around the history or future of the park. Finally, after the workshops, the children participated again in the "sharing game" and completed the belongingness to the place measure. This allowed us to explore whether prosociality and belongingness changed as a result of workshop participation.

In Study 2, a group of adults (all born in Liverpool) participated in a laboratory session, where they were asked to browse a website that contained images of either present or past Liverpool. In both cases, the participants were given

the task of finding three images from the website that represented what Liverpool means to them. They were also asked to write descriptions of each picture on a piece of paper, explaining why the photographs they chose were significant to them. The participants completed questionnaires on belonging to Liverpool around a week prior to the laboratory session, and then again after the task. As a measure of prosociality, the participants were asked to donate any amount of their £10 participation fee to a local charity, both at the initial testing session and after the experiment.

What Was Found

In Study 1 with the schoolchildren, we found that participants in the local history workshop slightly increased the amount of the supermarket voucher money they shared with their friend from the first testing time. In contrast, there was a small decrease in the donations among the group that participated in the planning for the future workshop. This suggests that merely thinking about the local area is not sufficient to increase prosociality; it is thinking about the history of the area specifically that increases it. We also found that the local history workshop participants had an increase in their belongingness, whereas the planning for the future workshop participants had a decrease in their belongingness to the local area. However, belongingness was unrelated to prosocial sharing, suggesting that the impact of history on prosociality does not happen because history increases belongingness.

In Study 2 with the adults, we found that participants who were browsing images of historical Liverpool donated more money to a charity than adults who were browsing images of contemporary Liverpool. However, there were no significant changes in feelings of belongingness to the place between the two different groups, or between the testing before and after the laboratory task.

Results of both of the studies indicate that exposure to local history and heritage may have a positive effect on prosociality in children and adults. However, the increased prosociality after exposure to local history does not seem to be caused by a change in how much people feel they belonging to the area. Future research should investigate if there are any other psychological mechanisms that are altered by immersion in history and subsequently have an effect on prosocial behaviour.

Making A Difference

Our results indicate that in school-aged children, it may be possible, at least temporarily, to increase the feelings of belongingness to the local area by educating them about heritage of the place. Further, in both adults and children, learning and thinking about history can increase altruistic sharing of resources. We think that these findings could be useful in devising local heritage workshops in deprived areas, aimed at children, adolescents, and older adults alike. We also think that charities could increase the donations they receive by using heritage as a feature in their advertising campaigns.

Recommendations

- Educating people about local history may have important psychological and behavioural implications
- Local history workshops could provide an important intervention strategy in places with low social cohesion and high anti-social behaviour
- Learning about local history may have an effect on how connected children feel to their home place
- Local charities may be able to increase their revenue by using local history in their advertising campaigns

CHAPTER 3. ENHANCING YOUNG PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY IN REGENERATING LOCAL COMMUNITY

Emily J. Oliver & Catrin Roberts

Prosperity and well-being are typically highest when individuals engage and work collectively within their local communities. However, programmes to increase such engagement do not always show success, especially for young people. In the present project, we examined the effectiveness of techniques drawn from psychological research on behavioural change for promoting community engagement among adolescents.

The Problem

Engaged communities contain individuals who have the opportunity, capacity, and willingness to work collectively. Such communities are more prosperous, cohesive, and have healthier and happier residents than those with disengaged residents. Enhancing community engagement is therefore desirable, and it is particularly important to find effective ways to do this for disaffected or disinterested groups within society.

One such group that has been targeted as a cause for concern is young people (e.g., adolescents), especially those in deprived or isolated communities. Young people can be engaged in education or work, yet still be politically, democratically, or communally disengaged. But young

people *can* and *do* make a vital contribution to the sustainability of their community, and we need to do more to promote and enhance youth engagement.

Thus far, community development projects and funding have primarily targeted the opportunity and capacity of citizens to work collectively (e.g., through facilitation of citizen groups, or investment in facilities and training). In the present study, we took a different approach by testing a way of enhancing the final aspect of engagement – young people's *willingness* to contribute to their communities.

Rationale For The Project

Comprehensive reviews of policy or training-based approaches to youth reengagement suggest mixed evidence in terms of intervention effectiveness, with evaluations showing either small positive, or no, effects.[1] Recommendations for enhancing the success of training-based interventions have included making additional effort to engage participants who felt forced to attend courses, and helping individuals to commit to change. So, drawing from psychological behaviour change models that are more typically applied in counselling and healthcare settings, in the present study we supplemented a training course with an intervention targeting willingness to engage. The selected intervention, motivational interviewing,[2] is a method of enhancing readiness and willingness to change. It has been demonstrated to effectively change knowledge, intentions, and behaviour across a range of settings,[3] including healthcare, education, communities, and via telephone delivery.

The key premises of the current study were that: (i) to enhance community engagement, individuals' willingness to engage is critical; and (ii) to develop and sustain willingness to engage, individuals must endorse the value of contributing to their community. Our aim was to apply motivational interviewing as a context-appropriate method, in order to foster endorsement of values and therefore to build community engagement among disengaged adolescents.

What Was Done

The location of the study was a small Welsh town (residency of approximately 5,000) with historical dependency on the mining industry. The demographics of the area were typical of those in receipt of European Union-funded regeneration projects: there was high unemployment, and the level of residents with no qualifications was higher than the United Kingdom average. Furthermore, previous studies had identified low community engagement, with 64% of residents reporting feeling a lack of influence on local decisions and 35% unwilling to get involved in local issues.[4]

The sample consisted of 52 students in Year 9 (average age 14 years) who were enrolled onto a school-based European-funded training course ('Llwyddo'n Lleol'). The course focused on enterprise-related skills, was in its second year of delivery at that location, and was provided by an external company.

Before starting the course, participants completed questionnaires measuring their motivation for community

engagement, and the extent to which they valued goals relating to community participation and helping others. We then split the participants randomly between three groups. The first group received a motivational interviewing intervention, the second a goal setting intervention, and the third received no additional intervention. These groups were selected for two reasons: (i) to attempt to isolate the effects of motivational interviewing versus more general support (i.e., goal setting); and (ii) to provide a realistic comparison based on typical experiences of participants in similar training courses.

In the week following initial course delivery, participants in both of the intervention groups received a one-hour session, delivered in a small group setting. All participants then received the final day of the course, after which the questionnaires were re-administered so that we could assess changes over time.

What Was Found

Statistical tests were run to see if there were differences between the three groups (those that received motivational interviewing, those that received goal setting, and those that just received the course). After taking out any pre-course differences in young people's scores, the analyses showed that there were differences at the end of the study.

The groups differed in terms of their motivation for engaging in positive behaviours in their community and towards others. Motivation for community involvement was the least valued and endorsed in the group who only did the course.

When we examined the values and aspirations of the groups, those who had received goal setting reported having more goals relating to extrinsic (i.e., externally rewarding) factors like financial success and fame, and fewer goals about intrinsic (i.e., internally rewarding) things like helping others and improving society, compared to the motivational interviewing group. Compared to the other groups then, the motivational interviewing group endorsed engaging in a positive way with their community and had stronger aspirations to contribute in this way.

Making A Difference

The findings of this study suggest that using brief motivational interventions can influence young people's motivation and goals regarding engagement within their community. A key success of this study was providing support for the potential effectiveness of motivational interviewing in regeneration and training contexts, and specifically for its use with adolescents. Our study also provided support for the efficacy of motivational interviewing when delivered in a group setting, which is an important practical advance, as administering the intervention this way may be more cost-effective than one-to-one approaches. Given that the pursuit and attainment of extrinsic goals can have negative implications for well-being (and pursuit of intrinsic goals can have positive effects),[5] the findings also suggest we should use goal setting interventions cautiously.

Practically, the study shows that interventions targeting motivation can be embedded within and around existing

training provision. By working with staff at both the school and in the course delivery team, the project's findings can be used to inform future training schemes. Additionally, our recruitment and training of a Welsh-language research assistant during this project built capacity for future research in the region. Sharing the findings with academics and professionals working within the regeneration sector is helping to stimulate discussions about how we can best work with young people and isolated communities.

In future studies it will be important to examine whether similar interventions influence young people's actual behaviour. Although attitudes were altered in the present study, we do not yet know whether this would translate into greater community engagement over the longer term. Identifying this would strengthen the case for funding motivational interventions.

Recommendations

- Both motivational interviewing and goal setting can enhance the quality of young people's motivation for community engagement
- Goal setting should be using cautiously; it can promote a focus on achieving extrinsic 'successes' (e.g., financial rewards) that might undermine well-being
- Delivering brief motivational interviewing in a group setting can change attitudes in the short term. Longer-term follow up is needed to see whether these changes persist and go on to influence subsequent behavior
- When commissioning or funding training projects, regeneration professionals should consider opportunities

for practical application of behaviour change techniques. This has potential to enhance long-term sustainability of investment in regeneration

Further Reading

More information about the regeneration work conducted at Blaenau Ffestiniog, can be found via the following link:
http://www.blaenauffestiniog.org/town-centre.html

For more information regarding the 'Llwyddo'n Leol' project, see the following link:
http://www.menterabusnes.co.uk/en/llwyddo

CHAPTER 4. YOUTHS' PEACEBUILDING POTENTIAL: INTERGROUP CONTACT AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION AMONGST A POST-ACCORD GENERATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Laura K. Taylor & Shelley McKeown

Are youths who are affected by conflict troublemakers or peacemakers? Although much of the research on this question has focused on the former, it is possible that conflict-affected youth could be encouraged to adopt peaceful values and constructively engage in society. In this research, we aimed to: (1) develop a way to measure peacebuilding values; and (2) understand how those peacebuilding values may facilitate civic participation. We focused our research on young people born after the 1998 peace accord in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

The Problem

Political conflict affects individuals, groups, communities, and wider social and national structures. On the rise globally,[1] conflicts between groups can have devastating consequences not only among direct survivors of the conflict, but also for subsequent generations.[2,3] We therefore need to understand how to promote positive outcomes following conflict. Youths who are affected by conflict are particularly important to study, because research has highlighted numerous negative effects of

conflict for this group and suggested that they may become troublemakers as a result of present or past conflict.[4]

One area within the UK where political conflict is highly relevant is Belfast, Northern Ireland. Despite the peace agreement among political elites, sporadic violence remains between Protestants and Catholics, and many communities have yet to see the dividends of peace. In Belfast, youths (people aged 0 to 24 years old) make up 35% of the population. Though not exposed to the height of the 'Troubles' (the most recent peak of intergroup violence between Protestants and Catholics), these young people represent a 'post-accord generation' that still faces on-going sectarianism and annual spikes in tension. For example, over 80% of youth in Belfast have experienced sectarianism directly or indirectly.[5] At the same time, young people in Northern Ireland are not merely the passive victims of sectarianism and some youth may even participate in sectarian acts against members of the other ethno-religious group.[6]

Rationale For The Project

Even though most research on conflict-affected youth has focused on negative effects, it has been suggested that young people may hold the key to understanding how to promote positive outcomes after conflict. In particular, youths may contribute to peacebuilding, that is, the long-term process of rebuilding societal relationships to promote an enduring peace. Young people who adopt peacebuilding values can become constructive change agents in society by engaging in civic participation that is both social (directed

at peers and schools) and political (directed at broader societal processes).7 In this project, we therefore focused on encouraging youths to embrace peacebuilding values and contribute to society in a post-accord setting.

Conflict societies are often plagued by group differences in their versions of history and deeply entrenched values that can prevent the movement towards a more peaceful existence. Therefore, our first aim was to develop a way of differentiating between: (1) contentious values that continue to divide groups; and (2) peacebuilding values that will have the capacity to foster more positive relations between groups.

Our second aim was to harness the power of positive interactions between groups as a way to encourage peacebuilding values among youths. Previous research suggests that intergroup contact, that is meaningful interactions between groups in conflict, is a powerful tool for reducing prejudice.[8] We built on this body of work to study whether peacebuilding values – and, in turn, social and political civic participation – would be higher amongst young people who had experienced more frequent and positive interactions with members of the other major ethno-religious community in Northern Ireland (known as 'outgroup' members).

What Was Done

We recruited 466 young people (aged 15-16), roughly split by ethno-religious group and by gender, from eight different schools in Northern Ireland. Schools were either

predominately Protestant or Catholic and were either interfaced (i.e., a homogenous Catholic/Protestant area separated from a homogenous area from the other group by a 'peace wall' or other physical divide) or non-interfaced (i.e., homogenous Catholic/Protestant area but not directly alongside an area with the other group). Young people completed an online survey during class time which asked them to respond to a series of questions about the nature and extent of interactions with people from the other ethno-religious community, peacebuilding values, and their levels of civic participation.

We developed a peacebuilding values questionnaire from salient newspaper headlines and from previous research. Through statistical analyses which consistently measured peacebuilding values across both Protestant and Catholic youth, the original 13 items were reduced to 5 items that assessed to what degree the young people disagreed or agreed with the following statements:

1. *Peace walls in Northern Ireland should be taken down to improve community relations*
2. *Integrated and shared education can help bring divided communities together*
3. *Unionist, Loyalist, Nationalist and Republican political parties are preventing peace in Northern Ireland*
4. *The peace bridge in Derry-Londonderry is a physical symbol of change and cross-community engagement; more symbols like this are needed*
5. *Mixed sports teams of Catholics and Protestants encourage cross-community peacebuilding*

Consistent with the definition of peacebuilding above, this revised measure can be used to assess young people's support for long-term steps to improve intergroup relations and build sustainable peace in Northern Ireland.

What Was Found

Statistical analyses were conducted to test whether: (1) higher quality and frequency of contact with out-group members was associated with stronger peacebuilding values; (2) peacebuilding values were associated with increased civic participation (social and political); and (3) higher quality and frequency contact was associated with civic participation through peacebuilding values.

Our results found that higher quality and frequency contact was associated with stronger peacebuilding values. We also found that peacebuilding values were associated with higher social and political civic participation. Crucially, the link between contact quality and quantity and both forms of civic participation were *because of* stronger peacebuilding values. That is, higher quality and quantity contact predicted more support for peacebuilding values, which in turn explained the higher levels of social and political civic participation. What is exciting about this finding is that it can suggest key aspects to target for future interventions.

Interestingly, our results were observed for both Protestant and Catholic young people, and there were no significant differences in the levels of quality and quantity contact, or in the levels of social and political civic participation, between Protestant and Catholic youth. Thus, intergroup

contact was associated with higher levels of civic participation through promoting peacebuilding values for both groups of youths.

Making A Difference

The findings of this study offer support for the constructive potential of conflicted-affected youth. We demonstrate that youth who are living with the legacy of protracted conflict can embrace peacebuilding values and engage in constructive societal behaviours. These results have important implications for policy and practice, and we are working with schools and community organisations to disseminate our findings to national and international audiences.

Most importantly, we offer evidence that intergroup contact can promote peacebuilding values. This suggests that peacebuilding interventions should at least consider how intergroup contact may promote societal relations and bring about social change. More broadly, our findings also support a shift in research to recognise youth as agents of change and their peacebuilding potential. Future studies should investigate how other individual, family, and contextual factors may affect youth peacebuilding behaviours.

Recommendations

- Policy makers should recognise and embrace youths' peacebuilding potential

- Youth peacebuilding values can be developed through engaging in meaningful contact with outgroup members; thus, contact between groups should be encouraged
- There is a need to further understand and foster the conditions leading to social and political civic participation among a post-accord generation of young people

Further Reading

Further reading that is relevant to this research can be found here:

McKeown, S., & Cairns, E. (2012). Peacemaking youth programmes in Northern Ireland. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, *4*(2), 69-75.

Taylor, L. K., Merrilees, C. E., Goeke-Morey, M. C., Shirlow, P., Cairns, E., & Cummings, E. M. (2014). Political violence and adolescent outgroup attitudes and prosocial behaviors: Implications for positive intergroup relations. *Social Development*, *23*(4), 840-859.

CHAPTER 5. UNDERSTANDING REFUGEES' LIVES

Simon Goodman, Helen Liebling, & Shani Burke

What does it feel like to be a refugee, seeking asylum in the UK? Many of us are familiar with the typical negative media portrayal of refugees as being a threat to the UK's economy and security. Yet the reality is that the majority of people seeking asylum are likely to be escaping from situations in which their lives are under threat. In this research, we aimed to provide a better understanding of the situations that drive refugees to seek asylum and their experiences once they arrive in the UK.

The Problem

The issue of refugees seeking asylum persists as a topical and controversial subject. For some, asylum seekers represent an economic and security threat to the countries that they are moving to, whilst for others refugees represent a group of vulnerable people fleeing persecution. During 2015, this issue reached new levels of prominence, first during what was known as the "Mediterranean crisis" and then during the "Migrant or refugee crisis" in which thousands of refugees, fleeing the Syrian civil war and other conflicts, undertook extremely dangerous journey to reach Europe.

There is overwhelming evidence that refugees are escaping conflict and persecution[1] and that they have little in choice in leaving their country of origin, as they are often forced to flee for their lives.[2] Refugees' journeys are dangerous and

their treatment and portrayal once they claim asylum is also problematic and represents discrimination.[3] For refugees, the fear of asylum claims failing and the associated threat of being returned to their country of origin,[4] confounded by the suggestion that UK policy is designed to keep asylum seekers out of the UK,[5] and the experiences of difficulties and destitution,[6] results in asylum seekers and refugees typically suffering very poor mental health.[7] Nevertheless, many politicians and major media outlets are opposed to helping asylum seekers, often presenting them as threatening and only interested in financial support, meaning that asylum seekers lack appropriate support.

Rationale For The Project

While refugees are often talked about, particularly by politicians and in the media, their voices are rarely heard. The rationale for this project was therefore to hear refugees' stories so that a better understanding of the situations that caused them to flee their homes and their lives once in the UK could be gained. By listening to refugees' stories, it was anticipated that a greater knowledge of their experiences in the UK could be generated and that their narratives could be understood in the context of the wider, largely negative, debate about asylum seeking in the UK.

What Was Done

A local refugee support centre, the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre, was a partner in the project, offering

support in recruiting refugees. A total of ten refugees (five males and five females) were recruited and were interviewed at the centre, which was a familiar neutral setting. Interviews were used to address questions such as 'What was your experience in your country before you left?', 'What was it like when you first arrived?', and 'What has been your experience of living in the UK?'. Although an interview guide was used, it was not strictly adhered to so as to allow participants freedom to guide the interviews. Interviews were conducted by all three authors and, where possible, the gender of the participant was matched with the interviewer to enhance openness. Interviews lasted between 20 and 50 minutes and included detailed, candid accounts of the refugees' experiences. Once the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed for detailed analysis.

What Was Found

Our initial analyses identified the key themes that were common to the refugees who were interviewed. A key theme mentioned by all participants was the importance of safety. Here, participants presented their home country as dangerous (*"I don't remember any good days… [there] always was fighting"*) and typically contrasted this danger with Britain, which was presented as being notable for its safety (*"I like, safe country you know I don't see any problem"*). This theme also included the fear of a forced return from Britain to the country of origin (*"I cannot go back because I face death how can I go?"*). The next theme for participants was negative experiences of the Home Office system, where the system was presented as too slow

(*"it's hard when you don't know what's going to happen to you know you think about it every day"*), confusing (*"you don't know what's going on in the Home Office"*), controlling participants' lives (*"if they saying you have to come 11 o' clock you have to be there"*), and generally as treating refugees inhumanely (*"some people coming to my house to send me back like animal"*). Support was another important theme for refugees. Lack of support included insecure accommodation (*"I don't have somewhere to relax I just walk and walk"*) and feeling unsafe (*"white people just throw eggs everywhere punch the door make me scared"*). However, positive support came from healthcare services and from friends.

The significance of family was also important, with disconnection from family in home countries (*"I can't think anything about family now"*) being presented as a key reason for leaving, while family in the UK was an important reason to stay (*"you don't want to leave your child here to go to another country"*). There were found to be some positive experiences of living in the UK, including positive experiences of British people (*"I like British people... they're kind they're good to us"*) and better justice than experienced in the home country (*"here there is higher security"*). Hopes for the future were also discussed. With the exception of the desire for permission to remain in the UK (*"I want to become British...then my mind will be at peace"*), refugees' hopes were found to be typical of what may concern UK citizens, including a desire for a job and to contribute to Britain (*"work like everybody normally work, pay your own taxes"*) and finding secure accommodation. Broadly speaking, the experiences of the refugees were very negative and led to serious emotional effects including

feelings of isolation (*"I'm just staying indoors, not going anywhere"*) and even suicidal tendencies (*"I would really prefer to kill myself because my life is bad"*).

We also conducted additional analyses focusing more specifically at the language used by the refugees when discussing safety and criticisms of the Home Office. We found that talk about safety is used as the main argument to challenge suggestions that refugees should return home. Talk about safety functioned to present asylum seekers as legitimate refugees and therefore challenged the dominant representation of refugees as illegitimate economic refugees. When criticisms of the Home Office were made, they were done in a delicate way that did not criticise individuals and managed the potential difficulties associated with refugees appearing ungrateful for being in the UK or as people prone to complaining, both of which could undermine their legitimacy as genuine refugees. Again, safety was presented as of paramount importance and as more important than happiness.

Making A Difference

The findings of this study suggest that refugees should be treated more positively because they have fled persecution and have undertaken perilous journeys to reach safety, only to be treated with hostility in the host nation. Rather than refugees being viewed as a threat to culture and to the economic security of the country, it has been shown that refugees are seeking safety and speak of wanting to make a positive contribution to their host nation. Treating refugees seeking asylum as legitimate will result in ensuring their

safety and improving their well-being, as well as allow them to contribute the host nations. In the UK, this would mean that asylum seekers could contribute their skills to the workplace rather than being forced to rely on (inadequate) benefits.

The findings of this research have been disseminated to the refugee centre where participants were recruited. The detailed understanding of refugees' experiences can allow those working as case workers and advocates for asylum seekers to better tailor their advice and to manage the expectations of what the centre is able to offer. It is hoped that our findings can be used by the media to present a more positive representation of refugees seeking asylum, and by policy makers to prioritise the safety of refugees.

Recommendations

- The Home Office should provide clear and detailed information to refugees seeking asylum about the details of the asylum application process. They should also provide individual applicants with information about the progression and status of their application
- A shift away from the 'culture of disbelief' within the asylum process, which may be responsible for sending refugees to unsafe situations and potentially to their death, is required
- Government policy needs to move away from being designed to deter and return applicants and towards protecting people in need and ensuring the provision of safety

- Refugees should be allowed to work while going through the asylum process. Refugees come to the UK for reasons of safety, so allowing them to work would not act as a 'pull factor' in attracting more immigrants as has been argued

Further Reading

The findings from this project have been published in a number of outputs, including:

Goodman, S., Burke, S., Liebling, H., & Zasada, D. (2014). "I'm not happy, but I'm OK": How asylum seekers manage talk about difficulties in their host country. *Critical Discourse Studies, 11*(1), 19-34.

Goodman, S., Burke, S., Liebling, H., & Zasada, D. (2015). "I can't go back because if I go back I would die": How asylum seekers manage talk about returning home by highlighting the importance of safety. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 25(4), 327-339.

Kirkwood, S., Goodman, S., McVittie, C., & McKinlay, A. (2015). *The language of asylum: Refugees and discourse*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave.

Liebling, H., Burke, S., Goodman, S., & Zasada, D. (2014). Understanding the experiences of asylum seekers. *Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care, 10*(4), 207-219.

CHAPTER 6. PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT, HEALTH, AND WELL-BEING IN ETHNICALLY DIVERSE SOCIETIES

Janelle M. Jones & Miguel R. Ramos

In recent years, there has been an increase in the flow of migrants around the world. However findings so far have been mixed regarding the impact of immigration, both for the members of host societies and immigrants. In this research, we aimed to understand when and for whom immigration might be associated with benefits rather than costs and considered societies with both established and recent immigration.

The Problem

The globalization of job markets and economies has increased the flow of migrants around the world. Despite the potential for economic and cultural contributions to society, immigration continues to be perceived negatively, especially within the UK, leading to questions about (the failure of) multiculturalism and the adaptation of immigrant populations to host societies, that is, the countries in which they have settled.

In particular, previous research suggests that social connection, trust, voting behaviours, and community engagement are all lower in communities with high levels of migration and ethnic diversity.[1,2] Multiculturalism also has been criticised for hindering the integration of immigrants,

and harming host societies.

Other research has challenged these findings by stressing the importance of wider social factors, such as deprivation, for the impact of immigration. This work argues that when such factors are taken into account, increases in ethnic diversity are associated with higher social connection, respect for community members, and mental health, especially among ethnic minorities.[3,4] Thus, it is possible that multiculturalism may help the integration of immigrants, and benefit host societies.

Rationale For The Project

Looking at the existing work it becomes clear that we still do not understand when and for whom immigration is related to positive outcomes. Henri Tajfel's work provides some guidance in answering these questions. Tajfel and his colleagues found that the groups that people belong to, such as ethnic groups, help people to define themselves and shapes their responses to others.[5, 6] As a result, people are more positive towards, and willing to help, others who belong to the same groups as them. This also suggests that people are less positive toward, and less willing to help, others who belong to different groups. The tendency to favour members of our own groups over groups that we do not belong to has been considered in the context of immigration – both with respect to the host communities and migrant groups. In this case, the research suggests that the more established host majority group will be negatively disposed towards the immigrant minority group (and vice versa), leading to barriers to integration, lower community

cohesion and often harmful consequences for well-being and health, particularly for immigrants.

The challenge within societies is to somehow address this phenomenon and promote positive outcomes for all. However, there are competing views about how best to approach this issue. On the one hand, some researchers have argued that emphasising similarities between groups can lead to more positive outcomes.[7] Yet on the other hand, other researchers have argued that the differences between groups should be encouraged![8] Given that focusing on similarities and differences both seem to lead to positive outcomes, uncovering for whom each focus works, and when, might help us to understand host and immigrant responses to immigration.

What Was Done

Across two studies, we compared the relative effectiveness of emphasising similarities versus differences as a means of enhancing positive outcomes relating to immigration. We were interested in whether a country with a long and complex established history of immigration might differ from one with a less complex and more recent history, and so we considered the UK (established migration) and Portugal (more recent migration). In the first study, native-born Britons and Eastern European immigrants (Bulgarians, Romanians) took part, and in the second study, native-born Portuguese and Ukrainian immigrants in Portugal participated.

In both studies, we asked everyone to write about their thoughts on immigration to either the UK or to Portugal as relevant. One half of the people from each group were then asked to list similarities between native-born people and the immigrant groups. The other half of the people from each group were then asked to list the differences between native-born and immigrant groups. In other words, participants were primed to think about similarities or differences between their own and the other group. Once they had done this, all of those involved were asked to rate whether they thought of themselves as similar or dissimilar to the other group, as well as how much they identified with their own and the other group, their sense of community, how involved they were in their communities, and their levels of health and well-being.

What Was Found

Contrary to what we expected, people who were asked to list similarities did not differ from those who were asked to list differences between native-born individuals and immigrants. We used statistical tests to see if there were any other relationships between the groups to which people belonged (native-born or immigrant), their rating of how similar they thought they were to the other group, and their reports of their identification, sense of community, community involvement, and health and well-being. In all the analyses we took participants' age, gender, race, and political orientation into account, so that if any links were found it would not be because of these factors.

Looking at responses from the UK, with its established history of immigration, we found that native-born Britons saw themselves strongly as British, but this sense grew weaker as feelings of similarity with immigrants increased. Equally, for native-born Britons, feeling similar to immigrants was associated with more positive views of immigrants. For both native-born Britons and Eastern European immigrants, feeling similar to the other group was associated with an increased sense of community and more engagement in community activities.

Looking at responses from Portugal, with its more recent history of immigration, the situation was the same in many ways, but with some important differences. As with the UK, those born in Portugal felt strongly Portuguese. However, feeling similar to immigrants was related to less reported happiness. Among the Ukrainian immigrants, as the similarities they saw between their group and native-born Portuguese increased, so did their sense of being Portuguese, their sense of community, and their reported happiness and feelings of control over their lives.

Making A Difference

In light of the current rhetoric surrounding immigration and border controls in the UK specifically, and Europe more generally, this research can be used to promote positive outcomes of immigration in at least two ways. First, it can inform the development of messages about, and strategies for, supporting ethnic diversity and immigration. In particular, our findings suggest that drawing attention to the similarities between migrant and host communities might

help members of the host society to express more support for, and feel less threatened by, immigration. It may also help host communities to see the benefits of immigration for their society and promote a strong sense of community for hosts and immigrants. Our findings suggest, however, that the effectiveness of such messages and strategies for hosts may depend on whether immigration is established or recent in society, and for immigrants may depend on the length of time lived in the country and their race and/or ethnicity. Second, and in a related vein, this work has the potential to influence how researchers, policy makers, and governments think about the social impact of immigration. We hope that it will encourage them to take a closer look at potential benefits rather than only potential costs.

Given that priming people to focus on similarities or differences did not lead to any differences between groups, future research should focus on the development of alternative ways to assess similarities versus differences. It could be useful to identify exactly which dimensions of similarity between groups matter, such as values or appreciation of culture, and what features of the wider social context (such as employment opportunities) affect the views held.

Recommendations

- Framing immigration in terms of similarities between established host and immigrant groups could help members of the host societies to feel less threatened by immigration and to express more support for and see the benefits of immigration

- Likewise, emphasising the similarities between hosts and immigrants could help these people to feel more connected to, and engage with, their communities
- Emphasising similarities between host and immigrant groups may prove to be a more useful strategy in terms of promoting positive outcomes in contexts with established rather than recent histories of immigration

CHAPTER 7. FROM FACT TO FICTION: REDUCING THE ADVERSE IMPACT OF HOMONEGATIVITY AMONGST ADOLESCENTS THROUGH REAL-LIFE DRAMA

Karen Poole

Prejudice is rife towards adolescents who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, or other (LGBTQ+). Therefore, methods are needed to promote acceptance of young LGBTQ+ people. In this research, I worked with mentors from Liverpool John Moores University, Masi Noor and David Llewellyn, as well as Neil Edwards, playwright and researcher. Together, we aimed to create an intervention to enhance the safety and reduce the stigma of LGBTQ+ adolescents, by developing a play for educational contexts based on the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ youths.

The Problem

Young people who identify as LGBTQ+ should feel safe in their schools and communities, and they should have the same opportunities as other young people their age. However, for many, this is not the reality. Research has shown that LGBTQ+ individuals are at risk of poor school experiences, mental health difficulties including depression and anxiety, substance misuse, and homelessness.[1,2,]

Perhaps most troubling is the link between LGBTQ+ status and suicide. Gay and lesbian youth account for up to 30% of

all completed suicides. Gay teens are three times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers and four times more likely to make a suicide attempt requiring medical attention.[3] Suicide prevalence is even higher among transgender youth (35%).[4] This may be because transgender individuals are faced with both sexual identity and non-gender conformity marginalisation.[5,6,7]

Rationale For The Project

While strategies do exist to improve the mental health and well-being of LGBTQ+ individuals, many do not take into consideration the direct experiences of this population. Likewise, many approaches fail to tackle peer acceptance, which can be a major cause of some of the risks to LGBTQ+ adolescents. In this research, a two-pronged intervention was developed based around the lived experiences of a group of young LGBTQ+ people. The approach adopted aimed to have both a direct positive impact on LGBTQ+ youths as well as an indirect positive impact via tackling issues of peer acceptance and creating safer school environments for LGBTQ+ young people.

The first part of the intervention drew from a technique known as 'Playback Theatre', in which participants tell their personal stories and experiences and then watch them being re-enacted. Playback Theatre is created through a unique collaboration between performers and audience, wherein trained actors dramatise the life stories of the audience members and the story-tellers watch as their stories are immediately recreated and given artistic shape and coherence. Playback Theatre has been shown to enhance

well-being and resilience in previous research,[8] and so was considered a unique and engaging way to improve the resilience, self-acceptance, self-esteem, and psychological well-being of young people who identify as LGBTQ+.

The second part of the intervention built on the experiences captured during the Playback Theatre by incorporating these into a play for use in schools. While LGBTQ+ individuals are becoming more accepted, there is still an associated stigma and a need to educate people about the consequences of homo-negativity in relation to social identity, specifically gender identity and sexual orientation. Developing a realistic play based on actual experiences was hoped to improve perspective taking and therefore contribute to the reduction of prejudice towards LGBTQ+ young people. A focus within the play was on transgender young people, whose experiences to date have been given relatively less attention within research.

What Was Done

An initial focus group was conducted with four LGBTQ+ young people, to learn about their lived experiences. Playback sessions, in which the LGBTQ+ participants' experiences were performed back to them, were facilitated by an experienced playback director who carefully drew out the stories from the young people and who directed the trained playback theatre actors to perform the life stories to the LGBTQ+ adolescents. The life-stories were re-enacted immediately following the narratives. Feelings about the playback experience were sought through feedback from the participants immediately after the sessions and then two

months later (to see if positive effects were maintained) using a further focus group.

A play was then developed, based on the lived experiences discussed by the participants in the focus group. Psychological techniques, inducing perspective-taking and prejudice-reduction, were integrated into the play. The play was performed in two schools in Merseyside. The audience's attitudes, including levels of prejudice and acceptance towards LGBTQ+ individuals, were measured before and directly following the play to determine if any changes occurred as a consequence of the intervention. In total, 166 school students provided information about their attitudes before and after watching the play.

What Was Found

The LGBTQ+ adolescents who took part in the Playback Theatre described their experiences as being *"beautiful"*, *"eye-opening"*, *"transformative"*, *"helpful"*, making them *"feel better"* about themselves, and *"providing a new perspective"*. Not only did the participants describe improved well-being, resilience, and self-acceptance immediately after taking part in the sessions, but also after two months when they took part in the follow-up focus group. The Playback Theatre therefore appears to be an effective means of improving LGBTQ+ young people's well-being, through capturing and working with their own lived experiences.

To determine whether watching the play based on these lived experiences had any influence on peer attitudes,

statistical tests were conducted looking for differences between school students' attitudes before and after the play. The results suggested that audience members' attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people did significantly improve. The biggest improvements were seen among adolescents who had moderate levels of empathy (i.e., who are moderately able to take the perspective of other people and feel what other people are feeling). However, even individuals with low levels of empathy showed some improvements in their attitudes after watching the play. This suggests that dramatising the real experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals may prove helpful in trying to promote peer acceptance and to reduce prejudice within the school environment.

Making A Difference

This research made a clear difference to the LGBTQ+ young people who took part, who reported enjoying the experience of the Playback Theatre immensely and feeling a sense of closeness to, and understanding of, those others who took part. Likewise, there was a clear difference in attitudes towards LGBTQ+ young people from their peers in the schools that watched the play developed for this research. Some individuals even found the courage to 'come out' following the play and staff members at both schools reported their increased confidence in understanding how to best support young people who may be struggling with their identity, or experiencing conflict because of it.

The key resource developed through this research (i.e., the play) can be used in other schools and youth groups, in order

to develop best practice and effective strategies to enhance acceptance and well-being among adolescents with diverse sexual orientation and gender preferences, and to create safe communities for them. Moreover, the Playback Theatre method can be applied for other LGBTQ+ youths, especially those who are identified as being at high risk of poor well-being and mental health issues.

Recommendations

- The twin approaches described here should be used to include more LGBTQ+ people and in more schools, in order to facilitate better mental health among LGBTQ+ youths and greater peer acceptance
- Playback Theatre could potentially be used to improve the well-being of young people who are part of any minority group. Youth groups and schools should consider using Playback Theatre to increase understanding of young people's diverse experiences
- Theatre that is based on the lived-experiences of participants is potentially more effective in changing attitudes, and so it would be beneficial to use such theatre as a strategy to improve attitudes and educate the wider community

CHAPTER 8. DOES IMAGINED CONTACT WORK, EVEN WHEN INITIAL PREJUDICE IS STRONG?

Keon West

We know that imagining a positive interaction with someone from a different group – 'imagined contact' – can improve people's attitudes towards that group, for example, making them less biased against members of the group. What we don't know is whether this strategy only works for relatively weak prejudice, or if it could work even if a person's attitudes toward another group are very negative. In this research, I aimed to establish whether imagined contact could provide an effective strategy for reducing bias towards homeless people, transgender women, and immigrants, even among people with high initial prejudice against these groups.

The Problem

Holding negative attitudes or behaving in a biased way towards people from different groups than ourselves ('intergroup bias') is an unfortunate reality in every society.[1] Whether it's due to race, gender, sexuality, socio-economic status, or some other demographic variable, we tend to behave more kindly toward people who are similar to ourselves and less kindly toward those who are different. Sometimes we behave this way deliberately, while at other times it happens outside of our awareness. In any case, this intergroup bias can affect every area of life including intimate relationships, health, education, and employment.

Social psychologists have found some solutions to the problem of prejudice. One of these solutions is called intergroup contact, which means having positive interactions with people from different groups. Over 60 years of research involving hundreds of thousands of participants has shown that intergroup contact is one of the best and most reliable ways to reduce prejudice, including racism, sexual prejudice, and religious prejudice.[2] Intergroup contact has also been shown to work in many countries around the world and under a variety of conditions.

However, despite the success of intergroup contact, it does have limits. In particular, contact is sometimes difficult or impossible to achieve due to geography, segregation, legal restrictions, or secrecy on the part of some oppressed groups. In a severely anti-gay society, for example, gay people might keep their identities to themselves to avoid the related stigma and discrimination. This helps the individual, but reduces opportunities for contact.

One way around this limitation is the use of mental imagery. As odd as it might sound, mentally imagining something has been shown to have similar neurological, emotional, and motivational effects to actually experiencing it. The idea of imagined contact comes from the application of this knowledge in a social-psychological domain; imagining interactions with members of other groups should improve our attitudes toward those groups in much the same way as direct intergroup contact. Hence, imagined contact seems to offer a solution to the limitations of direct contact. But does it work when we need it to work? Specifically, does it work when prejudices are strong?

Rationale For The Project

The first imagined contact experiments were performed in 2007 by Turner, Crisp and Lambert.[3] Since then, a large and growing body of research has found that imagined contact can reduce prejudice against several different groups and in a wide variety of social contexts.[4] One problem with this research, however, is that it has generally tested imagined contact's effects on mild prejudice. Because of this, it's not clear whether imagined contact remains effective when prejudice is strong or if its effectiveness is reduced in these circumstances. While a few studies have investigated imagined contact in more challenging environments,[5] we don't yet know if or how the strength of the initial prejudice alters imagined contact's effects.

This is a serious problem that meaningfully affects the application of imagined contact as a way of reducing prejudice in society. Imagined contact is supposed be a feasible option in situations where opportunities for direct contact are reduced, that is, situations where direct contact is difficult, costly, or impossible. However, these are exactly the situations in which prejudice is likely to be stronger. Therefore, if imagined contact doesn't work, or works less well, in these circumstances, its application will be severely limited.

What Was Done

In order to find out if imagined contact works differently as initial prejudices grow stronger, my colleagues and I conducted three experiments. These experiments all

followed a similar pattern. Participants first reported their attitudes toward a particular group, then were randomly assigned either to a condition in which they imagined a positive interaction with a member of that group, or to a different (control) condition in which they imagined something else (e.g., a pleasant outdoor scene). After this, all participants once again reported their attitudes toward that group.

Each experiment also had certain unique features and specific advantages. Experiment 1 (103 participants) investigated imagined contact's effects on self-reported attitudes and behavioural intentions toward homeless people. Experiment 2 (95 participants) investigated imagined contact's effects on attitudes and actual behaviour toward transgender women. To measure actual behaviour, I gave participants the option of signing a real online petition for more support for transgender women in abusive situations. An interesting feature of this experiment is that I measured attitudes using a computerised test (called the 'implicit association test') that uses reaction times to determine how we feel about certain people, whether or not we are aware of it or want to show it.[6] Experiment 3 (78 participants) investigated imagined contact's effects on anxiety about and prejudice against immigrants using particularly detailed measures. Taken together, these three experiments provided a very clear picture of what happens to imagined contact's effects when initial prejudice is stronger.

What Was Found

I first checked that participants' initial attitudes towards the focal groups in the imagined contact and control conditions of each study did not differ significantly at the start of the experiment. I also checked that there were no floor- or ceiling-effects (i.e., that changes were not just the result of very extreme starting values), and that other characteristics, like participants' age or gender, were not affecting the results. In all experiments, these checks were passed, allowing me to continue with the rest of the testing.

I then conducted statistical tests to determine if imagined contact was reducing prejudice and, if so, whether the strength of the initial prejudice made a difference. In particular, I wanted to determine whether imagined contact would have a better or poorer effect on reducing prejudice when prejudice was initially stronger.

In all three experiments I found the same, clear pattern of results; imagined contact did reduce prejudice. I also found that participants' initial level of prejudice did alter the effectiveness of imagined contact, but this did not occur in the direction that some researchers have worried about. Indeed, it was the reverse: imagined contact became *more effective* when initial prejudices were higher.

Importantly, these results were found in three different experiments, all of which used different measures and different, dissimilar target groups (homeless people, transgender women, and immigrants). The use of a reaction-time measure of attitudes in Experiment 2, which made it harder for participants to mask their feelings, also gives

confidence that the results were not due to participants changing their responses to help the experiment or to make themselves look better. It appears that imagined contact really does work better when prejudices are stronger.

But why would this be the case? Why would imagined contact work better when initial prejudices were stronger? The answer may be found in the anxiety we feel about other groups. People who have stronger prejudices generally view members of other groups as potentially threatening.[7] Thus, they are likely to have very negative expectations of interactions with those groups and to experience more anxiety about these interactions. Imagined contact targets this kind of anxiety by getting the participant to imagine a positive script for the interaction. Anxious, high-prejudice people thus have the most to gain from imagined contact and experience the biggest reductions in anxiety and subsequent prejudice. I found some evidence for this explanation in Experiment 3, in which changes in anxiety drove the changes in prejudice caused by imagined contact.

Making A Difference

Although previous research has suggested the potential promise of imagined contact for reducing prejudice, the present research provides the necessary evidence to support its application in the contexts in which it is most needed – in challenging circumstances where prejudice is strong and intergroup interaction is difficult to achieve. In doing so, the current research has expanded the practical usefulness of imagined contact as a means of reducing prejudice and bias in society.

The studies conducted have made a difference when it comes to prejudice against three often-stigmatised groups (homeless people, transgender women, and immigrants). For those who took part in the studies, particularly those with high initial levels of bias against these groups, the simple exercise of imagining contact is likely to have a positive impact in terms of improving their attitudes towards members of these groups, which will also have benefits for any members of those groups they come across in the future. Benefits for members of other stigmatised groups could similarly be experienced if the use of this type of exercise is applied more widely.

Recommendations

- Intergroup contact – interactions with people from different groups – is a useful tool for improving attitudes and reducing prejudice against a wide variety of people
- When intergroup contact is not available, imagined intergroup contact – imagining positive interactions with people from different groups – can be a good substitute
- Though imagined contact is often used in situations where prejudice is mild, it seems to be even more effective in situations where prejudice is stronger

Further Reading

The full research article reporting this study is published in the Journal of Applied Social Psychology:

West, K., Hotchin, V., & Wood, C. (2017). Imagined contact can be more effective for participants with stronger

initial prejudices. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 47*(5), 282-292.

CHAPTER 9. WHY ARE CITIES THREATENING?

Georgina M. Hosang

Some people find cities threatening, which has been linked to several characteristics such as poor street lighting. To date, research trying to understand this phenomenon has focused on large surveys and experiments. In contrast, qualitative methods have been relatively ignored, even though these would provide opportunities to gain insight into the experience of threat within the urban context by allowing people to describe their experiences in their own voice. In this research, I aimed to use a qualitative approach to understanding why people find cities threatening, in order to better inform the design, planning, and maintenance of cities.

The Problem

Cities are metropolitan areas that are usually the heart of economic activity and growth; they are also referred to as urban areas or locations. City residents benefit from improved health care and sanitation, and are on average wealthier than rural dwellers.[1] But city living has its drawbacks; in particular, it is thought to have a negative impact on people's mental health.[2]

Mental health is important to us all and can be defined as a state of well-being where an individual is able to achieve their potential, whilst coping well with the stresses of life and making a contribution to their community. Individuals

who experience extreme difficulties with their mental health may develop mental illnesses, such as clinical depression and schizophrenia. In urban areas, higher rates of such mental illnesses are recorded compared to rural locations; a pattern observed across the globe.[2] Hence, research has been dedicated to identifying the factors that explain the relationship between city living and mental health. Such work has implications for policy, urban design, and better ways to help people. This research is urgently needed given the rapid growth of urbanisation; for example, it is estimated that 69% of the global population will be living in urban areas by 2050.[1]

Rationale For The Project

Fear of crime and perceptions of threat to personal safety are high in cities and have been shown to affect the mental health of urban residents. Perceived threat can impact on a person's sense of safety and in turn their well-being and mental health.[3] Various factors that influence people's perceptions of threat and safety within cities have been identified, including population density, crowding, and the availability and quality of public lighting.[4, 5]

Researchers have used different methods to investigate what might influence perceived threat within the urban context, such as large-scale surveys and experiments. Methods which allow people to openly and freely report their thoughts and feelings on a given subject (qualitative studies) have been lacking in this area, despite opportunities to gain greater insights into people's individual experiences, which

could potentially help to identify issues not previously considered.

What Was Done

One-to-one interviews were conducted with seven people living in Greater London. Three men and four women, aged between 18 and 60 years took part in the research. They were recruited from a larger study that investigated the relationship between city living, mood, and well-being (the LondonMood project).

During the interviews, participants were asked to identify a specific outdoor urban location that they found threatening or unpleasant. They were then asked to discuss the characteristics of the area they thought contributed to it feeling threatening and unsafe.

What Was Found

Written versions of the interviews were read in detail to identify common themes. The results of this analysis were discussed and confirmed by two researchers. A major theme that emerged from the interviews was the important role played by other people in making spaces feel threatening. In particular, the presence of certain 'types' of people was seen as relevant. Some participants described threatening environments as being those occupied by people who were intoxicated, seemingly homeless, or without any clear purpose (for example, loiterers). This was especially true when participants anticipated that these people might pose a threat to their safety. Other participants reported the

absence of people as a characteristic of an unpleasant or threatening urban location. The following participant quote illustrates the point, *"I was actually completely on my own in a sort of dark urban environment but I know that the absence, the complete absence of people, I do find scary…"*

The sensory features of the environment were also highlighted as being a key contributor to people feeling unsafe or threatened in a city environment. Insufficient and inappropriate street lighting was commonly reported as a cause of feeling unsafe. As one participant put it, *"There's definitely not enough like public lighting… I couldn't see there were people unless I got like, maybe, I dunno maybe 15 metres away from them…I couldn't see their faces and stuff-I could see their silhouette and their shadow. So, that was quite scary."* Unpleasant smells were also discussed as a feature of threatening city locations. The source of these smells was sometimes interpreted as indicating that the area was likely to be unclean. Noise was another topic that was raised, although the views among participants differed. Some participants found noisy places to be a characteristic of a threatening location, while others felt that the absence of noise made a location threatening since this may indicate the absence of people and therefore that one is alone and potentially vulnerable. The types of sounds were also identified as being pertinent, with the constant sound of sirens highlighted as a feature of somewhere where one might not feel at ease.

The experience of threat in urban areas was reported to be influenced by both the design and maintenance of the location. A common theme was the poor maintenance and chaos of a space, discussed by one participant in their

interview, *"It's just kind of messy… there is no order, just chaotic, and that sort of chaos makes me feel frantic…"* The latter was particularly important in terms of one's ability to 'escape' a location if required. The flow and use of a space was described as being influenced by its layout, with street furniture and services informing people's behaviour (for example, queuing at a bus stop).

Finally, the issue of gender was a recurring theme in the interviews. Female participants often referred to their gender as contributing to their perception of environments being threatening. Several participants focused on being approached by strangers (mainly men) – or the threat of this happening – as a feature of spaces in which they felt unsafe, especially when there were limited opportunities to escape or seek help. As one participant put it, *"... being a woman specifically, we are constantly getting harassed on the streets…men just think they have this power that they just think they can say what they want, and do what they want and I'm very aware of that, and that makes me upset and so when I'm in a place where I can't walk away from someone that is potentially going to harass me, that's upsetting."*

Making A Difference

The city can be experienced as a threatening place. In this study, a number of characteristics were reported as potentially influencing the sense of threat and fear experienced within urban environments, including the maintenance, design, and sensory experience of urban spaces. Many of these characteristics could be modified

through better urban design, planning, and maintenance that could reduce the perceived threat associated with them. In turn, this could improve the well-being and mental health of city residents. Therefore the results of this study has been communicated to urban planners, town planners, and policy makers at a series of dissemination events, with the aim of better informing their practice.

In future studies, I plan to explore the effect of modifying city areas on residents' feelings of threat and well-being. I also plan to study the characteristics of urban districts that are judged as being pleasant and desirable by locals and visitors, in order to identify how these differ from those seen as threatening.

Recommendations

- Physical changes, such as improving the availability and quality of street lighting, could potentially reduce the threat experienced in the city
- Design (such as open spaces) and social solutions (for example, support of wardenship) can also be used to tackle the physical and social characteristics associated with threat in urban areas

Further Reading

Information about this project, and the larger project that this was related to (LondonMood) is published in the Journal of Urban Design and Mental Health:

Hosang, G. M. (2016). Using smartphone applications to better understand the links between urban design and mental health. *Journal of Urban Design and Mental Health*, *1*, 10.

CHAPTER 10. COMPARING WITNESSES' MEMORY PERFORMANCE IN REMOTE VERSUS FACE-TO-FACE INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEWS

Robert A. Nash

Statements from witnesses can make or break cases against criminals. But often police are not able to interview witnesses until several days or even weeks after a crime has occurred, which could threaten the completeness and accuracy of their memory reports. A possible way to overcome this issue is for police to use videoconferencing technology, which might allow witness interviews to be conducted sooner after crimes occur. However, little is known about how the use of this technology could influence witness statements. In this research, along with my collaborators, I explored the impact of videoconferencing technology on witnesses' capacity to provide detailed and accurate accounts.

The Problem

Imagine that you've just witnessed a robbery, after which the perpetrator escaped unapprehended. Any of the details you can remember about the perpetrator's appearance or about what happened—no matter how trivial they might seem—could be crucial leads for a criminal investigation. But because of the frailties of everyday human memory, you will begin to forget certain details almost immediately. Many details you will remember well, of course, but our forgetting

typically occurs most rapidly in the minutes, hours and days following an event, rather than in the longer term.[1]

For this reason, it is of utmost importance that investigators such as the police are able to interview witnesses at the earliest possible point following an incident. Achieving this goal, though, is often much less straightforward than it might sound. In many countries including the UK and USA, the job of policing (and indeed the judicial system as a whole) operates under increasingly tight resourcing constraints. As a consequence, the police necessarily need to prioritise certain cases over others, and to prioritise certain avenues of investigation within those cases over others. Many witnesses, therefore, often experience delays of several days or weeks—or even longer—before investigators have the resources and opportunity to interview them. As these delays unfold, it seems inevitable that potentially crucial evidence can be lost.

What investigators need, then, is tools and techniques that make it easier for them to conduct effective interviews, despite this relative paucity of human and financial resources. One such tool is the Self-Administered Interview (SAI), a paper-based interview *pro forma* designed for witnesses to complete independently, in preparation for a formal police interview at a later time. Research has shown that by providing this formal opportunity for witnesses to rehearse and document their memories, completing an SAI can mitigate the extent of their subsequent forgetting over a longer time-frame. The SAI has proven extremely valuable in real-life investigative interviews[3]; however, in an ideal world it would be even better to find solutions that help to

reduce the delays, rather than only mitigating against their effects.

Rationale For The Project

An alternative solution could be to interview certain witnesses remotely, via videoconference. This solution might at first sound costly and impracticable, but in fact the justice system as a whole is already turning increasingly to videoconferencing as a means to address systemic cost and resourcing issues.[4] For instance, in countries such as the UK many major police stations already have videoconferencing suites, inside which officers and suspects regularly 'appear' before criminal courts.

Remote investigative interviews with witnesses could potentially address a number of issues facing policing. Because they do not require a physical meeting of both parties, videoconferencing could cut the time and cost of travelling to conduct investigative interviews – a particular problem when a witness lives outside the locality in which the crime occurred, or indeed in a different country. It might also permit expert interviewers to be involved in gathering valuable evidence in circumstances where no such expert is otherwise locally available.

There are, however, many potential shortcomings to interviewing witnesses remotely. Most importantly, there is good reason to expect that building mutual rapport via a videoconference is more difficult than in face-to-face communication.[5] This is problematic because witnesses who have built a good rapport with their interviewer tend to give

a better quality and quantity of detail in their memory reports.[6] Witnesses may also find remote communication difficult and uncomfortable, which could lead them to be less co-operative. In principle then, videoconferencing might entirely undermine the problem that it is intended to resolve. Our research aimed to explore the quality and quantity of evidence gathered from face-to-face versus remote interviews, and the extent to which conducting a remote interview at an early stage could be better than waiting longer to conduct the interview in person.

What Was Done

My collaborators and I invited 77 volunteers to participate in a 'mock-witness' experiment, which began with them individually watching a short film depicting a car theft. After watching this film, the volunteers were randomly assigned to one of three different groups. Participants in one group returned two days after watching the film, and met individually with an interviewer who was trained in the Cognitive Interview Technique – a gold-standard interviewing procedure that all police in the UK and several other countries are trained to use.[7] The interviewer conducted a full Cognitive Interview with the participant, using memory techniques designed to prompt them to recall as much detail about the crime as possible, but without guessing or making up details. The performance of participants in this group—whom we called the *Early-Physical* group—was compared to that of participants in two other groups. In one group, the *Late-Physical* group, the procedure was the same, except that the interviews took place 1-2 weeks after watching the crime film, rather than

after only 2 days. In the other group, the *Early-Virtual* group, the interviews took place after 2 days, but participants did not meet their interviewer in person. Instead, they interacted remotely via a videoconferencing network.

Comparing these three groups enabled us to test whether conducting an interview early, but without direct face-to-face contact, would provide better quality evidence than would waiting longer to permit an interview to be held in person. All of the interviews were audio-recorded, and we later transcribed and coded these recordings to assess how much correct and incorrect information was reported by each witness. To gather additional information about how the interviews were subjectively experienced by the witnesses, we also asked them to privately complete a questionnaire in which they made various ratings of their interview and interviewer.

What Was Found

Overall, our participants performed well, recalling substantial amounts of correct information with only a relatively small amount of incorrect information. However, the most important aspect of our analysis was to compare participants' performance under the different interview approaches. These analyses suggested that what mattered was the delay, rather than the format in which the interview was conducted. Specifically, people in the Late-Physical group reported significantly less correct information than did those in the Early-Physical group. However, people in the Early-Virtual group actually recalled just as much

correct information as those in the Early-Physical group. We also saw significant overall differences in terms of the accuracy of the information that was reported. The information reported by Early-Virtual participants was significantly more likely to be accurate than was the information reported by Late-Physical participants (with the accuracy of Early-Physical participants falling between the two).

These analyses provide initial evidence, then, that conducting interviews remotely does not harm the quality of the evidence gathered. Equally importantly, we found that the interviews conducted in this way were no longer in duration overall than those conducted in person. Nevertheless, one common critique of videoconferencing is that it is difficult to communicate and develop rapport in this way, and that people find it uncomfortable. If this were the case, it would be problematic for investigative interviewing despite the lack of a detrimental effect upon memory reports.

Did Early-Virtual participants find the remote interviews uncomfortable, or their rapport with the interviewer poor? No. In fact, these participants were just as optimistic about the interviewer's friendliness, rapport and attentiveness, about their own comfort during the interview, and about the overall difficulty of the interview, as were those participants who were interviewed face-to-face.

Making A Difference

Our results indicate that interviews conducted remotely could be effective for gathering quality evidence from witnesses. Of course, this approach may not be suitable in all circumstances; for example, interviewing a victim of serious assault via videoconference might be considered insensitive and could create undue stress, as might interviewing somebody in this way who was highly anxious about using technology. These circumstances should be debated and explored. At the least though, this research provides an avenue worth exploring in response to the problem of delays in securing justice.

In fact, we do have some evidence that remote interviewing could sometimes lead to poorer interview outcomes than face-to-face interviewing. In our subsequent research, witnesses described a face, which they had seen one day previously, to a forensic sketch artist.[8] The interview took place either remotely or in person, and the artist created facial sketches based solely on the witnesses' verbal descriptions. When independent volunteers later looked at these sketches and judged their likeness to the original faces, we found that those created in face-to-face interviews were better likenesses than those created in remote interviews. This finding makes clear that remote communication may indeed have some disadvantages in this context; the important thing is to weigh up these disadvantages against those associated with forgetting over long delays.

On a more optimistic note, remote interviews may also have advantages over their face-to-face equivalent, even aside

from the capacity to conduct them expeditiously. For example, remote witnesses in our research often said that the lack of physical co-presence meant they felt less pressured to make eye-contact with their interviewer, and that this helped them to focus and concentrate. There may be a lot of mileage in exploring these kinds of advantages further, and considering how this information could be exploited to improve the effectiveness of investigative interviews in general.

Recommendations

- Accuracy and completeness of witness statements might be enhanced through the strategic use of remote interviewing
- More empirical evidence should be gathered to measure the effectiveness of remote investigative interviewing
- Issues surrounding the practical and legal feasibility of this interviewing format should be explored both by researchers and by practitioners
- We should aim to better understand those circumstances in which physical face-to-face contact in interviews is imperative (certain kinds of witness, certain kinds of crime etc.), and those in which face-to-face contact might in fact be detrimental

Further Reading

The full research article reporting this study has been published in Psychology, Crime, & Law:

Nash, R. A., Houston, K. A., Ryan, K., & Woodger, N. (2014). Remembering remotely: Would video-mediation impair witnesses' memory reports? *Psychology, Crime & Law, 20*, 756-768.

PART II: MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO HEALTHCARE

CHAPTER 11. DOES WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY AFFECT ADOLESCENTS' MOTIVATION TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE?

Charlotte Kerner & Victoria Goodyear

Wearable health and fitness devices, such as Fitbits, FuelBands, or Jawbones, are marketed as tools to motivate people to engage with physical activity. In theory, these tools might be particularly useful for young people, given their propensity to engage with digital and wearable technologies. However, as yet there is limited evidence about whether these devices actually do enhance motivation to exercise. In this research, we aimed to test the effects of one such device on adolescents' motivation for physical activity.

The Problem

Studies of American, European, and Australian youth show that considerable proportions of young people do not meet their national physical activity guidelines for daily physical activity.[1] During school time, for example, children spend over 60% of their day sitting at desks.[2] Equally, changes to leisure time activities in the home are thought to be increasing the amount of time young people spend inactive. As such, the United Nations, Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recently stressed that substantial action is required to address rising levels of youth physical inactivity and the substantial increase in associated

non-infectious diseases.[3] Yet while interventions in youth are particularly important, as they provide the foundation for an active lifestyle in adulthood, so far physical activity interventions targeting youth have only produced modest effects.[4,5] Finding new ways to motivate youth to be active is therefore vital.

Rationale For The Project

Wearable technology has been positioned as a tool that has the potential to motivate young people to be physically active. Despite this, little is known about the actual relationships between wearable technology, motivation, and physical activity. In this research, we tested the efficacy of a specific wearable technology device: the Fitbit Charge. The Fitbit Charge is a physical activity wristband, which has a visual display that indicates the number of steps its wearer has taken, distance travelled, calories burned, and floors climbed. Data from the Fitbit can be synchronised with an application that can be downloaded onto a mobile device. The Fitbit app allows users to monitor physical activity progress, tailor physical activity goals, record workouts, share and compete with friends, earn badges, log food consumption, and track sleep patterns.

Self-determination theory can be used as a framework to understand behaviour change associated with digital technologies.[6] According to this theory, individuals have three basic psychological needs. First, they need to feel competent, e.g., experiencing a sense of effectiveness in their physical activity behaviours. Second, they need to feel that their actions are autonomous, e.g., experiencing a

sense of choice in their physical activity behaviours. Third, they need to feel relatedness, e.g., experiencing a sense of connection to their physical activity peers. The theory proposes that people only experience the highest levels of motivation (referred to as 'autonomous motivation'), where they feel their actions are self-chosen due to interest and pleasure, when these needs are satisfied, and research suggests that engagement in physical activity is only likely to persist under such levels of motivation.[7] Thus, if wearable technology devices like the Fitbit are to be seen as effective tools for sustained behaviour change, they must fulfil these three basic needs.

In theory, features of devices like the Fitbit might help to satisfy each of the three psychological needs in their users. For example, they might promote competence through the provision of feedback, badges, alerts, and prompts. They might also foster autonomy through the tailoring of physical activity targets, and enhance relatedness through providing the opportunity to connect with friends via the associated applications. However, whether or not these devices actually do help to satisfy users' needs and therefore boost their motivation remains to be seen.

What Was Done

One hundred 13-14 year olds (53 females, 47 males) took part in the study. Each adolescent was provided with a Fitbit Charge to wear for eight weeks. In order to see if the Fitbit changed adolescents' motivation, the adolescents completed questionnaires which assessed their motivation for physical activity and their basic psychological need

satisfaction twice: once before they were given the Fitbit and once eight weeks after wearing the Fitbit. This allowed us to assess if their basic psychological needs and motivation for physical activity changed during the period of wearing the Fitbit. At the end of the eight weeks, the participants also took part in focus group interviews to discuss their experiences of using the Fitbit.

What Was Found

Statistical tests were conducted to see if adolescents' motivation for physical activity and basic need satisfaction changed after wearing the Fitbit for eight weeks. The results suggested that the Fitbit did affect the adolescent's motivation for physical activity, but not in the way that we expected. Given that wearable technology devices such as the Fitbit are marketed as tools to motivate people to engage in physical activity, we expected that the adolescents would experience higher levels of autonomous motivation, where they would want to engage in physical activity due to interest and pleasure. However, we found was the opposite. After wearing the Fitbit, adolescents were actually less motivated to engage in physical activity.

After analysing what happened with the participants' basic needs during the study, it became clear why the adolescents were experiencing lower levels of motivation. Across the study period, there were significant decreases in all of the three basic psychological needs, such that the adolescents had lower levels of competence (i.e., they felt less able), lower autonomy (i.e., they felt like they had less choice in their physical activity behaviours), and less relatedness

(i.e., they felt less connected to their physical activity companions). In turn, these decreases were responsible for the reduction in motivation we observed.

It seems that, while we expected certain features of the Fitbit to help satisfy people's basic needs, other features may have undermined them. In relation to competence, for example, adolescents could have felt less able if they did not manage to achieve the physical activity guidelines the device prescribes (60 minutes per day) or if they were unable to beat their peers in physical activity competitions. In relation to autonomy, the pre-set targets (e.g., 10,000 daily steps) could have lead them to perceive that they had less choice in the physical activity behaviours they took on. Finally, in relation to relatedness, the competitive element associated with the Fitbit app and physical activity competitions could actually have created a sense of isolation from peers, as there is inevitably only one winner.

The findings from our surveys were supported by evidence from the focus groups. The adolescents reported only short term motivational benefits and suggested that these benefits only lasted around five weeks. They also reported feeling a sense of pressure to obtain physical activity targets, and a sense of guilt when these weren't achieved. The adolescents also extensively discussed the competitive elements associated with the Fitbit. For some, this resulted in increased physical activity as they strived to beat their peers. For others, however, striving to beat their friends resulted in negative perceptions of the self. Overall, the results suggested that the Fitbit may have negative motivational outcomes.

Making A Difference

Findings of this study provide useful insight into understanding how young people are engaging with wearable technology and some of the potential negative implications on healthy lifestyle behaviours that aren't portrayed through marketing campaigns. Our findings suggest that even though these devices are marketed as tools to motivate people to be active, wearable technology should be used in caution with young people. The results from our study could inform future guidance notes for the use of wearable technology with adolescents in schools. The guidance notes may detail the type of support needed when using wearable technology with this age group (e.g., this could include educating pupils regarding the meanings of health-related data, such as the calculation of basal metabolic rate). Support may also be required to help young people to tailor physical activity goals (e.g., relating to how many steps they should be taking) to their individual requirements. Additionally, education should be provided on understanding health from a holistic perspective and the limitations of quantifying health (e.g., by aligning 10,000 steps with a healthy body).

It will be important for future research to determine what impact wearable technology has on people's physical activity as well as their motivation, by assessing how physical activity changes over the duration of wearing a Fitbit or other such device. It will also be important to take a closer look at how such devices influence other perceptions of the self, such as body image, self-esteem, and self-confidence.

Recommendations

- Wearable technology should be used with caution by young people
- Schools, teachers, and parents or guardians should help young people become more critical of the health-related messages from wearable technology. In the school context, physical education could be a key space to address concerns
- Young people should be encouraged to appreciate health as a holistic concept that cannot be fully captured by quantified measures

CHAPTER 12. CAN MINDFULNESS HELP AT-RISK ADOLESCENT BOYS?

Tim Lomas

Could the practice of mindfulness help at-risk adolescent boys manage the challenges in their lives, do better at school, and generally increase their well-being? Mindfulness is a practice that is thought to develop people's attention and awareness skills. It has been found to have positive effects in diverse populations, from pregnant mothers to military personnel, and in relation to varied problems, from depression to eating disorders. In this research, I aimed to test whether mindfulness might be of benefit to at-risk adolescent boys, whose characteristics make them more likely to suffer issues with well-being.

The Problem

Males are a source of considerable concern in society, faring worse than their female counterparts on numerous indices. Health-wise, they have higher mortality rates, which is partly attributed to a greater likelihood to engage in risky behaviours like alcohol use, and men account for three-quarters of all suicide deaths and two-thirds of those detained under the mental health act.[1] Men are also far more likely to engage in antisocial behaviour, comprising 95% of the UK prison population, while in education, boys are outperformed by girls at all ages.[2] Such is the prevalence and gravity of these issues that males are frequently asserted to be 'in crisis'.

While traditionally it was assumed that sex differences like those described above were biological in origin, more recent explanations have focused on socialisation processes and the way in which people are encouraged to act on the basis of gender norms. According to this perspective, males tend to take on behavioural patterns that reflect the masculinity norms that are dominant in their culture. Unfortunately, the dominant masculinity norms in many societies tend to value relatively unhealthy behaviours, such as toughness, risk-taking, alcohol use, and aggression.[3]

As dispiriting as this summary may sound, the socialisation perspective leaves room for optimism. Males aren't by nature drawn towards risky or anti-social behaviour, they *learn* to be this way. And if these behaviours are learned, they can perhaps be *un*learned. Better yet, it ought to be possible to help males develop more adaptive ways of 'doing masculinity' *before* more unhealthy patterns take root. Indeed, research with young populations show that while children are certainly aware of gender norms from a very young age, it is really only in adolescence that they truly feel strong pressure to enact these themselves.[4] As such, early adolescence is an ideal time to try to help boys resist toxic masculinity norms and instead learn more adaptive ways of being.

Rationale For The Project

Based on the evidence above, we know that adolescence represents an ideal time to help boys take on more adaptive patterns of behaviour. Some boys may be in particular need of this kind of help, such as those who are 'at-risk', since by

definition they are more vulnerability to adversity and poorer outcomes. Indeed, such boys may be especially liable to fall into toxic masculinity patterns because they lack some of the resources available to their more affluent peers, making them feel compelled to compensate by engaging in 'hypermasculine' behaviours, e.g., extra-forceful displays of toughness and aggression.

How best, then, to help? I decided to create a mindfulness-based intervention (MBI), tailored specifically for at-risk boys. Mindfulness can be conceptualised as an open, receptive, non-judgemental type of awareness. The word can also be used for the forms of meditation practice that enable people to cultivate this kind of awareness. Such practices first emerged in the teachings of The Buddha around 2,500 years ago, although they have their roots in Brahmanical practices stretching back as far as 3000 B.C.[5] In the 20th Century AD these practices were brought to the West, most notably by Jon Kabat-Zinn, who in 1979 created a clinical 'Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction' programme for the treatment of chronic pain.[6] The intervention was soon used in the treatment of other conditions, from cancer to migraine, before being adapted for the treatment of specific mental health problems, such as depression.

The theory behind MBIs is that these help people to train and develop their attention and awareness skills.[7] As a result, people have better control over their internal world and are empowered to manage their emotions more effectively. Here we can see why this remedy might be particularly helpful for at-risk males. Masculinity norms around toughness might lead males to disconnect emotionally, leading to difficulties dealing with stress. Consequently, any

intervention that might help males to *re*-connect would be valuable.

What Was Done

My research team and I created a bespoke four-week MBI, tailored specifically for at-risk boys, in conjunction with a school in East London. The school picked nine boys, all aged 13-14, who they deemed to be at-risk and who they felt would benefit from the intervention. Four intervention sessions (one per week) were designed to introduce participants to a range of mindfulness practices that might be helpful in the context of their lives. Each session lasted an hour, and featured a set of activities, each lasting 5-10 minutes. For example, one such activity was a savouring task, which involved participants mindfully eating chocolate! This meant paying attention to its colour, texture, aroma, as well as taste. Another such activity was a breathing-based meditation, where the boys practiced breathing slowly, counting their breaths as they did so.

The activities were interspersed with brief teaching segments. For instance, in one segment, we discussed the mind using animal metaphors: the tendency of the mind to jump from one thought to another was described as the 'monkey mind', while times when thoughts feel slow and lethargic were depicted as the 'sloth mind'. After this, we could encourage the boys to report on their own mental state by getting them to compare it to an animal (an activity which not only helped the participants to self-reflect, but which was also quite fun, generating quite some laughter!). After each of the first three sessions, the boys were set

homework to practice particular activities they had learned during the sessions.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the intervention, interviews lasting around 30 minutes were conducted with each participant before the start of the course and after its completion. Themes in the interviews were then identified. The interviews and the intervention all took place on school premises, during the school day.

What Was Found

In the analysis, one overarching theme emerged: 'pressure'. In particular, the boys identified three main sources of pressure: school, age, and gender. In terms of school pressure, the boys had a sense that their life outcomes would likely be determined by doing well at school, yet were aware that they were doing poorly and were being judged negatively as such. On top of school pressures, age pressures referred to the particular burdens of adolescence. There was a sense of this age as a difficult threshold between childhood (which was perceived and reported as relatively carefree) and adulthood (which both offered an appealing sense of independence, yet also loomed as imposing new responsibilities). There was a sense of the boys both embracing yet fearing adulthood, all the while not entirely being able (or willing) to break free from childhood.

Added to pressures relating to school and age were those around gender. As expected, the boys reported an increasing pressure to live up to a particularly toxic idea of what masculinity is. As one pupil put it, "*You're not supposed to*

kind of like be wet, you're not supposed… to act kind of like weird and girly, you're supposed to act tough". When asked what would happen if people transgressed these norms, one participant revealed an unsettling sense of coercion, referring to "*one boy, everyone judges, everyone stays away from because he's a certain type of person*". Taken together, the boys gave a sense of weighty and escalating pressure.

In this context, mindfulness was thoroughly embraced by nearly everyone (except one boy, who struggled to concentrate on the activities). Essentially, they portrayed it as a 'pressure valve', a tool that could take the edge off the pressure they felt. More specifically, mindfulness was reported as facilitating three beneficial processes: concentration, relaxation, and coping with negative emotions. These are all interlinked, as this excerpt highlights: "*I found it kind of helpful in general life… Like the breathing techniques keep you focused, and it could relax you as well, like say when you're angry in school*". Regarding concentration, the boys reported being able to focus better in class, which in turn impacted positively on their studies. They also suggested that they used the practices *in-situ* to relax if they were feeling stressed, e.g., counting their breath if they began feeling agitated. This meant that participants were empowered to better cope with negative emotions. For instance, one pupil often got "*stressed*" because of his brothers "*shouting and fighting*", but said that he had "*used the meditation to calm me down and feel more relaxed so I don't overact, and just keep on my feet*".

Making A Difference

The results showed that, for this group of at-risk boys, mindfulness was experienced as a very beneficial activity, providing a much-needed means for dealing with the pressures of school, age, and gender norms. While a few other studies have suggested that mindfulness can benefit at-risk youth,[8] this is the first intervention focusing on at-risk *boys* specifically. Given the worrisome issues connected to masculinity, as discussed above, mindfulness shows real promise as a way of helping boys learn more adaptive ways of being. In particular, the intervention may have helped those who participated in the intervention to (re)connect with their emotional world, and more generally to develop emotional management skills, like being able to cope more effectively with stress or anger.

Of course, there are caveats here. Firstly, this was only a small pilot sample, so the results cannot necessarily be generalised to other at-risk boys. Secondly, being a pilot, we did not follow a control group of similar participants who did not engage in the intervention, which would have enabled us to see more clearly any effects that the intervention had. Future work on the MBI will therefore involve larger scale trials, including the deployment of a control group. Finally, although interviews can be illuminating, there are limitations surrounding self-reported outcomes. It is possible, for instance, that the boys did not 'genuinely' deal with stress more effectively, but rather were just *saying* that they did. In future it will therefore be helpful to gather other types of data (e.g., objective data on school performance) to help analyse the impact of the intervention. On the whole though, it can be concluded at the very least that

mindfulness does have the *potential* to help at-risk boys to manage the challenges in their lives, do better at school, and generally increase their well-being. Further research can now help substantiate these possibilities further.

Recommendations

- Schools could consider using MBIs with at-risk boys, and indeed young people generally, to manage the challenges in their lives
- The interventions should be specifically tailored to the group in question, e.g., shorter and more focused interventions for adolescents to account for shorter attention spans
- Mindfulness may not be for everyone; not all people may be receptive to it, or able to benefit from it. It should be targeted carefully and thoughtfully
- More data collection and analysis will be needed to fully explain any benefits mindfulness may have for young people

CHAPTER 13. NEURODIVERSITY: DEVELOPING GUIDES TO SUCCESS USING PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

Catherine Purcell & Sally Scott-Roberts

Within the population, the majority of people are considered neurologically 'typical' in that they share a relatively common way of viewing and interacting with the world. However, a minority can be seen as 'neurodiverse', presenting with characteristics or conditions that can challenge their ability to deal with daily life. The present research aimed to develop a series of guides to success to support adults with neurodiverse profiles, by drawing on the experiences of other neurodiverse adults whose strategies for coping had led to positive outcomes in education, employment, relationships, and daily activities.

The Problem

Within any typical population around 10% of individuals will present with neurodiverse profiles. Neurodiversity is a concept that aims to promote the recognition and respect of neurological differences as being just the same as any other human variation.[1] The term was coined in 1999 by Harvey Blume and Judy Singer in an attempt to create a move towards a more inclusive way of viewing people who have neurological differences, recognising their strengths as well as their difficulties.

Although there is not an exhaustive list of conditions that qualify a person as being neurodiverse, those considered part of this group and those that took part in this project had conditions such as Developmental Coordination Disorder (sometimes referred to as Dyspraxia), Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Autism Spectrum Conditions. Many of these disorders have traditionally been associated with childhood, but there is now a growing body of evidence that clearly demonstrates that for many they are life-long conditions that still bring with them daily challenges.[2]

Despite the lifespan evidence, there are relatively limited resources for neurodiverse adults to help to support them with daily life. Furthermore, the body of research on neurodiversity traditionally highlights the challenges that individuals face rather than also recognising their resilience and the expertise that they have in adapting to a different ways of managing daily activities. As such, this group of individuals still tend to manage in isolation from others who might have similar characteristics.

Rationale For The Project

Of the resources that are available for adults with neurodiverse profiles, the majority have been developed by professionals working in the field. Whilst these resources are certainly valuable, they often miss the authenticity that could be gained by gathering first-hand information from neurodiverse adults. In addition, they can also fail to celebrate the successes that members of this group have in overcoming their difficulties on a daily basis with things like

motor skills, social interaction, literacy and numeracy skills, planning and organization, and secondary issues such as anxiety and tiredness.

From practice it is evident that members of this group use the many strengths they have, often associated with their condition (for example, an above average attention to detail for someone on the Autism Spectrum), to help succeed in daily life. Neurodiverse adults also use their ability to adopt strategies and develop adaptations in order to manage a range of daily activities to ensure they can successfully fulfill their roles as parents, partners, friends, students, and employees.

From discussion with this group of adults, it is evident that each has developed a 'tool kit' of strategies and adaptations, often simple adjustments to the way a task or situation is approached. Importantly, many of these techniques could potentially work for others. The aim of the present research was therefore to produce a series of *Guides to Success* for neurodiverse adults that would share and celebrate the expertise of this group, by working with a group of adult volunteers with neurodiverse profiles as co-researchers and co-authors.

What Was Done

A collaborative project was undertaken to co-produce a series of *Guides to Success*. The research team included ten volunteers who all had neurodiverse profiles. Initial discussions with these volunteers suggested a need for four different guides to be produced: 1) Activities of Daily Living;

2) Employment; 3) Relationships and 4) Further and Higher Education.

The research team got together for a residential weekend to begin the first stage of the compilation of the guides. Meeting over the course of a weekend meant that the group could spend time together both socially as well as in the work space, and so any potential difficulties people had with feeling secure enough to discuss their ideas were quickly overcome.

The weekend was the team's opportunity to share ideas and to gather the information that would become the content of the *Guides to Success*. The two days were split into four sessions to ensure we could focus on the four themes that had been decided upon. Working within the group's rules, one of the academic team facilitated discussion to elicit the sharing of strategies and adaptations that the members used to manage the various aspects of their life. It was evident early on that the group had an amazing amount to share and the walls quickly became full of post-it notes and flip chart paper on which these were captured. These notes plus the field notes taken throughout the sessions became the content that would eventually form each guide, capturing the group members' tried and tested tips for managing aspects of daily life.

The task of pulling the wealth of ideas together within each of the four topics fell to the academic team members. The first drafts of the guides were then sent out to co-authors for their comments before a second draft was formulated taking into consideration all the feedback received. This process was conducted for all four *Guides to Success* and

they were eventually sent for printing once the whole team had approved the final copy.

What Was Found

A wide range of successful strategies emerged from the group members' discussions. Many of the co-authors commented that they had become unaware of just how many strategies they were using. Often group members had found similar strategies successful to those being suggested; equally, new strategies were positively received and taken home to try out. Most of the suggestions offered an alternative way of approaching a task or modifying the environment. Where any equipment was suggested for use, these tools were not specialist but were things the co-authors had sourced online or in local shops.

Interestingly, for many of the co-authors, the adjustments they discussed had become habitual and for some asking them to share their expertise felt like an odd request (*"I am not certain what I can contribute")*. Informal discussions revealed that without the time that the weekend offered to reflect and overtly discuss aspects of daily life, the co-authors would not have given themselves credit for or been credited with their successes. Many had only ever considered their daily modifications in a negative way, simply a means of managing their deficits.

Feedback about the research process has been positive and all the participants have spoken of their sense of pride in the finished product. Group members have stated that they *"felt valued and part of a team"* and were generally

"*thrilled to be involved*" and "*encouraged to find that I am not alone in the need to develop such strategies just to function day to day.*" Throughout the process and final formulation of the guides, the co-authors demonstrated a high level of commitment to ensure that the guides would be a useful resource for others. To further help contextualise the guides, the co-authors initialed and prepared between them the inclusion of a foreword for each of the *Guides to Success*.

Making A Difference

The process used to develop these guides has been empowering for the co-authors, who have recognised their successes and their own resilience. One member has recently told us that she has started proclaiming herself as *"neurodiverse and proud."* From the outset, the co-authors stressed that the guides were intended to share a range of adaptations and strategies with others who have a neurodiverse profile. Through the production of these four *Guides to Success* they have shared their expertise and knowledge and offered easily accessible ideas and suggestions that others can try for themselves. This much needed resource is already proving popular, indicated by the number of requests for copies. In compiling the guides, it is hoped that the co-authors involved will appreciate that they have a specialist area of applied knowledge that others will want to tap into.

As a professional team we have learnt much from our co-researchers about working collaboratively to develop and support such a study, and have clearly seen the benefits of

spending time from the outset to ensure that barriers to participation are carefully managed to ensure that everyone who wants to take part can do so. Reaching those that traditionally may not have felt able to tell their story has ensured that an authentic resource has been produced.

Feedback from the co-authors has further suggested the value of having the opportunity to reflect on their past successes. Co-authors reported that they had often lost sight of the 'tools' in their 'tool kit' in times of difficulty, and that reflecting on past successes was an empowering process. As such, one of the authors, who is an occupational therapist, wherever possible now spends time discussing at the assessment stage of the process the current solutions to everyday problems that an individual has introduced so that they can be built upon to tackle current challenges.

It is hoped in the future that a similar project can be undertaken with younger experts to co-produce a resource they can share with their neurodiverse peers.

Recommendations

- Learning from and sharing the expertise of the user group is beneficial for all parties when developing resources for particular communities or groups
- A collaborative approach ensures that the voices of relevant user groups are captured and disseminated
- If 'neurotypical' people want to help to support individuals with neurodiverse profiles, we need to allocate time to truly listen to their lived experiences

Further Reading

A copy of the Guides to Success can be accessed by contacting:
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CHAPTER 14. THE USE OF VISUAL METHODS DURING RECOVERY FROM SUBSTANCE MISUSE: A COLLABORATION WITH FALLEN ANGELS DANCE THEATRE

Julian Manley & Alastair Roy

Sustained investment in treatment by successive UK governments has not always been accompanied by reductions in substance misuse problems. Recent policy empahsises 'abstinent recovery' and full re-integration into community life. But what can we say about the complex emotional dilemmas and real life decisions that accompany people's attempts to recover from substance misuse? In this research, we aimed to address these issues by exploring the use of visual images and dance as an aid to understanding and expressing feelings and hopes related to recovery, in order to assess to what extent dancing and thinking in pictures might add value to existing services and support.

The Problem

Despite the exponential growth of the substance misuse field over the last 30 years, addiction remains a pervasive social problem in the UK. According to the British Medical Association's 'Drugs of Dependence' report, the cost to the nation of drug strategies, from recovery programmes to law enforcement, is in the region of £4bn per year. The social effects of drug-related violence and crime can be devastating on family life and communities.

Under New Labour (1997-2010), the drug treatment sector expanded significantly, leading to increasing numbers of people using treatment services. Over time, policy has changed from an emphasis on services prescribing substitute drugs to those with a focus on recovery, to the current policy, which aims to achieve full recovery, emphasising abstinence and social inclusion as goals.[1,2]

Yet many commentators argue that full recovery is only feasible for people who are no longer subject to stigma and exclusion, who feel able to access the same opportunities as others in society. The barriers to recovery include social, psychological, and wider structural barriers and these are difficult to overcome, perpetuating the exclusion of problem drug users from mainstream society.[3] Little research has focused on complex expressions of the emotional dilemmas that accompany people's real life decisions around recovery from substance misuse.[2,4]

Rationale For The Project

Fallen Angels Dance Theatre is one agency that uses an approach to recovery that is centred around artistic expression and movement. They incorporate dance, bringing people together to develop the emotional rather than practical aspects of recovery. This method of working is not commonplace amongst strategies for recovery, which on the whole stress cognitive behavioural approaches (which challenge the way people think and behave) rather than shared emotional understanding. Researchers have shown the power of making mental images and sharing these in a group-based setting in the context of public art and

community well-being.[5] In this research, we wanted to see if these methods could also be used by recovery agencies, including the Fallen Angels Dance Theatre, in establishing an innovative approach as part of recovery.

What Was Done

Building on previous work, we designed a programme with Fallen Angels to develop an innovative, creative way of working with those in recovery.[5,6] Six people who had been in recovery for more than a year got together with three researchers and an artistic director from Fallen Angels. At the start, we all took part in a movement exercise to get us thinking about pictures or metaphors of the recovery journey. We then sat down together and shared images and related feelings with each other on the subject of recovery. Following this, each person created individually choreographed dance movements, linked to those images. The whole session was video-recorded. After the session, researchers met with an expert in dance and movement to make sense of the performance of the images through dance.

What Was Found

The images produced were varied. For example, one image was of an icicle. The discussion that took place around the sharing of the image included the following comments:

-icicles
-support

-Brings to mind an artist who makes sculptures out of ice. They are so beautiful but they start to melt, drip by drip, and eventually, by the end of the day, they have melted away. It's both beautiful and then sad when it's gone
-I'm reminded of that hotel made of ice. They have to remake it every year, it's something that keeps rebuilding
-Brings to mind sand art. The Tibetans or Buddhists creating mandalas in the sand and then at the end of the day they brush it up and go
-That brings to my mind how the Ego builds up so quickly in recovery and how you have to smash it every day, so you are rebuilding the ego every day
-A friend of mine has a garden and small rocks in it, like a Japanese Zen garden style. They are stones from a glacial shift
-You don't know how far they have travelled. In the long journey, and how they have been rounded
-They start somewhere and they snake along and they are all taken down to somewhere else, could come to somewhere else, like Birmingham

The central themes of change and transformation within recovery were reflected in images of icicles that start to melt, drip by drip: what was once made into a beautiful shape inevitably disappears with the passing of time. The image evokes a sense of acceptance of the inevitability of change. Our sense of home, safety, and shelter is also acknowledged to be transient, and through this image the participants accepted that we have to work and rebuild our homes: they are not permanent but rather like ice hotels. Finally, glacial ice, both strong and powerful, is depicted as carrying stones to distant places and grinding them into something new, subsequently used creatively to design a Zen

garden. The overarching image of the ice connects all the images together, and in this way, the members of the group seem to understand how the recovery journey may be slow and hard but it can lead to creative transformation, as symbolised in the Zen garden. Linked to the spirituality implied in the Zen garden, is mention of Buddhists and the practice of creating sand art that is only temporary and needs rebuilding with renewed effort every time one is created. There is a moment where one of the group offers a direct comparison between his own work in recovery and the images emerging from the visual matrix.

Inspired by the images, the participants then expressed their feelings about recovery through movement. The idea of transformation in the extract above led to the themes of gradual metamorphosis and rebirth. Metamorphosis took two forms. The first was a horrifying Kafkaesque metamorphosis, where someone wakes up and finds himself like a beetle, totally transformed. The second was a more benign image of a cocoon and a butterfly emerging, previously trapped:

-Reminds me of a metamorphosis
-Reminds me of pebbles being washed from the canals when I was little
-Brings to mind Kafka's novel Metamorphosis, where someone wakes up and finds himself like a beetle, completely transformed, that's unsettling
-I can relate that to recovery and spiritual awakening, the defining moment
-Reborn
-Feels right
-It's a spiritual moment

The individual themes that were expressed in the dances, namely, 'family relationships/home and community', 'change/transformation', and 'time/temporality' are not new to recovery agencies. However, what was new was the demonstration of complex emotions and their sophisticated, creative expression. The wish to become someone new as the result of recovery was not imagined to be a simple matter, but rather a complex transformation akin to metamorphosis or the melting of ice. Change could be uncontrolled and horrific, or beautiful and wished-for. In this way, the creative process encapsulated conflicts that are present in addiction and personal accounts of struggles and recovery.

Making A Difference

The participants in the study pointed to a number of benefits of the creativity for understanding their recovery journeys. Comments ranged from discovering new things about themselves to feelings of connection with others. The kinds of things said included: *"Felt creative, never thought of myself as creative*"; "*Thought I would have nothing to say, but it came easily, pictures too*". "*[the image] sticks in my head…you remember better what you can see rather than verbal*"; "*I enjoyed it, made me start thinking out of the norm*"; "*Everybody was more relaxed and in the drawing exercise, a feeling of sharing and being connected, bonded and connections*." The positive experiences of those taking part suggests ways in which working with images can help people in recovery discuss complex emotions and think realistically about their relationship to substance misuse.

This initial research demonstrated, within the limits of a small project, that working this particular way with images and movement facilitates thinking in a creative way about the tasks facing people in recovery, helping to create a stronger basis for that recovery. We have subsequently built on this research, using the same method with the other agencies who participated in the project.

Recommendations

- Agencies should encourage people working towards recovery to express some of their ambiguity and feelings about recovery through using creative, visual methods. This removes the need for people to provide coherent and rational accounts of their recovery objectives and experiences
- Working with images will allow agencies to encourage people in the expression of the often contradictory emotions that accompany recovery. The abstract nature of the image encourages a freedom of expression without blame or judgment
- The sharing of individual images in a common space can encourage people in recovery to discover new ways of relating to peers, families, friends, and communities
- Agencies supporting people to recovery should introduce more playful and enjoyable ways of working so as to take people beyond their negative feelings about recovery

Further Reading

Further discussion of this work can be found in:

Manley, J., Roy, A., & Froggett, L. (2016). Researching recovery from substance misuse using visual methods. In L. Hardwick, R. Smith, & A. Worsley (Eds.), *Innovations in social work research* (pp. 191-212). London, UK: Jessica Kingsley.

Roy, A., & Manley, J. (in press). Recovery and movement: Allegory and 'journey' as a means of exploring recovery from substance misuse. *Journal of Social Work Practice*.

CHAPTER 15. MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH 'SMARTPHONE PSYCHOLOGY': CAN MOBILE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES HELP CREATE NEW INSIGHTS INTO SELF-HARMING BEHAVIOURS?

Lisa Marzano, Laila Al-Ayoubi, Bob Fields, Andy Bardill, Kate Herd, David Vale, Nick Grey, & Paul Moran

Can technological advances be harnessed to provide insight into complex health problems such as self-harming? The increasing use of and access to smartphones suggests potential opportunities to take advantage of these technologies to find out more about why people self-harm and what support can be offered to protect those who engage in this behaviour. In this research, we aimed to develop and pilot a prototype system for collecting real-time data about self-harm from at-risk individuals.

The Problem

Self-harm is a major risk factor for suicide and an increasingly common phenomenon amongst young men and women.[1] Yet our understanding of the mechanisms involved in this behaviour remains limited, particularly in relation to men (who are three times more likely than women to die by suicide).[2] With up to 1 in 5 young adults worldwide affected by self-harm (mostly in the form of self-cutting),[3] increasing understanding of underlying mechanisms and preventative factors is therefore an important research and public health priority. For example, increasing awareness and

understanding of self-harm is a key part of the UK government's broader strategy to reduce suicide rates.

In trying to understand the complex factors that may lead to self-harm, previous research has traditionally focused on a relatively narrow range of variables and 'risk factors', and often relied on individuals reporting triggers and experiences of self-injury after these have occurred. However, people are not always comfortable or able to accurately report on their emotions and activities, or on the forces influencing their behaviour or mental states, especially retrospectively. A new approach to studying this issue is therefore needed.

Rationale For The Project

The main aim of this project was to test the feasibility of using smartphones and commonly available wearable technologies to explore the experiences, motivations, and concerns of individuals who self-harm, whilst measuring a range of factors that may precipitate or maintain their behaviour, in a safe, empowering, and impactful way. Digital technologies and smartphone applications ('apps') are increasingly user-friendly and able to capture people's moods, thoughts, and activities, as well as other factors that may influence their well-being and behaviour. This includes real-time information about location, heart rate (which can be an indicator of stress), sleep (including insomnia and nightmares), and exercise. In turn, this can help us to understand how people's moods and symptoms change within the flow of daily life and in response to different events, activities, and environments.

In addition, compared to more traditional research methods (e.g., interviews and surveys), mobile digital technologies (including smartphone apps) allow individuals to tell their stories in their own time and space, more flexibly and informally (for example, by writing about their experiences and/or documenting them using photographs or videos). This is likely to produce richer information about the meaning, context, and triggers of people's emotions and behaviour.

What Was Done

To assess the feasibility of researching self-injurious thoughts and behaviours using smartphones and wearable technologies, we developed and tested a prototype system ("INSIGHT") to collect real-time or near-real time information about a range of variables through various sources and devices, including:

1. A smartphone app which functioned as a multi-media blog/diary (*"My Diary"*) of a) daily moods and activities, b) intensity, duration, and contextual features of any self-injurious thoughts and behaviour (including triggers, motivations, consequences, and alternative behaviours), c) other risk-taking and impulsive behaviours and (maladaptive) strategies to manage emotions (e.g., binge eating or drinking), d) flashbacks, e) nightmares, and f) other participant-specific symptoms or concerns (e.g., physical pain, medication compliance, significant life events). The app was linked to a secure website (also available to participants on other devices, e.g., PCs, tablets), where participants could post pictures, videos, and text about their broader life histories and

experiences ("*My Story*"), as well as recording daily moods and activities. An additional function of the app was to record users' geographical location and movement (with easy opt-out options for privacy).

2. A wristband measuring physical activity, sleep quality, and duration.
3. A chest strap and custom-made wearable data logger for continuous measurement of heart rate and heart rate variability (the latter represents the change in time intervals between individual heart beats, which has been linked to physical and mental health).
4. Novel tools to combine and visualise these multiple streams of data, to explore how key variables interact with each other and identify potentially significant chains of events, emotions, and behaviour in relation to self-harm.

The system was piloted with a small group of five men recruited through a voluntary organisation that supports individuals with personality disorders. Recruitment followed initial consultations with staff and service users of the organisation about the nature of the study. All volunteers were older than 18 years, and had a history of self-harm. Staff at the service advised on the suitability of potential participants for the study, based on suicide risk, and provided appropriate care and crisis support as needed.

For the three-week duration of the study, participants were prompted to make a *My Diary* entry at least twice a day (at specific times set by them), but could make as many additional entries as they wanted, in written, audio, picture, or video format. Participants' diary entries were monitored regularly throughout the research (with their

informed consent), to encourage continued compliance and ensure ongoing risk assessment and support. In addition, one-to-one semi-structured interviews were carried out at the start, mid-point, and end of the study, to explore participants' experiences of the research and general well-being.

What Was Found

Although it is not possible to generalise from a small pilot study, our findings suggest much promise for digital systems such as the INSIGHT prototype to increase understanding of self-harming behaviours.

All participants took part in the study for the three-week study period initially agreed, and two of the participants actually volunteered to continue their participation for longer (one for a total of 56 days and one for 79 days). It is notable that there was no financial reward for participating in the study or incentive for high compliance rates. In total, 230 *My Diary* entries and 209 *My Story* entries were made (the latter were mostly text-based, but included 34 videos and eight photographs). In turn, these entries provided information about 92 episodes involving thoughts of self-harm and 21 separate incidents of self-harming behaviour. In addition, we gathered data about sleep quality and duration for a total of 43 nights, physical activity data relating to 68 days, and heart rate data for 26 days.

At the end of the study, all five participants reported that participating in the study had been a positive, meaningful, and personally beneficial experience, with no negative

impact in relation to triggering self-harming thoughts or behaviour.

Making A Difference

One of the most important lessons learned from this study was that this new approach to investigating self-harm has real potential to make a difference – and not only from a research perspective. As the study progressed, it became increasingly apparent that the information gathered using these new technologies may not only enable researchers to develop a better understanding of self-harm, but also help individual participants – and potentially their therapists or others – to learn more about their own emotions and behaviour. In other words, what was originally conceived and developed as a data collection tool may also have clinical utility.

All five participants reported that they had gained insight into their experiences through the study. For example, three participants commented that the diary entries had helped them learn about themselves and see patterns in their thoughts and actions: "*Doing the study made me more aware of how often I get anxious and stuff like that. It made me more aware of those things…[which] I suppose it can be beneficial because you can go back and see what you've been saying and you can see a pattern and stuff like that…I've learnt something about myself so that's a good thing*."

Another participant showed his video-diaries to his therapist, so that he could "*see what I am like when I'm*

feeling depressed and down" – something he had previously found difficult to describe in therapy sessions. Other benefits mentioned by participants were the possibility of *"venting"* and expressing their emotions in a safe way, without feeling like they might burden or potentially anger others, even whilst surrounded by other people "*who assume you are just on Facebook or texting*". In addition, using these digital tools had helped one participant with "*what I should eat, even as a diabetic…and keeping me in touch with my sleep patterns and when to go to bed, which is fantastic*".

Clearly, for some individuals, the process of self-monitoring may alone have vicarious therapeutic effects, possibly by facilitating self-knowledge, reflection, and behaviour change. Whilst this may not be a new discovery as such (encouraging clients/patients to monitor their symptoms is standard practice in many areas of medicine and psychology, e.g., blood glucose testing in diabetes), what is exciting about this finding is that this process of self-monitoring can be made easier and perhaps more accurate by using digital tools that are part of many people's everyday lives and that do not necessarily or entirely rely on individuals actively monitoring themselves (e.g., GPS location detectors or automated activity sensors). This might reduce the burden on users and potentially overcome some of the other difficulties and inaccuracies associated with self-report.

Another important implication of this pilot is that, although self-tracking tools and apps are mostly designed for the consumer health and fitness market (e.g., to help people to diet or exercise), these devices may also be usefully adopted in more complex health areas, including in relation to

mental health difficulties. This is especially significant as recent technological advances mean that it is not only possible to monitor emotions and behaviour in real time and in naturalistic settings, but also that it is also relatively easy to re-present some of the data collected to users and/or their clinicians for feedback (e.g., using simple graphs and other visual techniques to help them to identify clinically important factors or chains of events). The same devices can also be used to deliver timely personalised support, such as supportive text messages or verbal feedback, medication and appointment reminders, telemedicine/remote video-consultation, and a range of self-help tools (e.g., meditation, breathing exercises, and other cognitive-behavioural techniques).

Through engagement with the media (e.g., on BBC radio and in news articles), the academic community, and practitioners, our research team has been spreading the message about the utility of these new tools. The interest our work has received arguably reflects the growing optimism amongst academics, clinicians, and the NHS concerning the potential of digital systems such as INSIGHT as viable and cost-effective solutions to enhance clinical practice and improve access to psychological treatment via mobile healthcare.[4] However, more research is needed to establish how this can be done in a safe, scientifically robust, and clinically effective way, as well as more guidance to ensure that these new technologies are used in ways that are respectful of an individual's privacy and autonomy.

Recommendations

- It is feasible - with some caveats - to use smartphones and wearable sensors to research an issue as complex and sensitive as self-harm
- Digital technological innovations may also provide useful adjuncts to traditional intervention methods and therapeutic approaches that help people monitor, understand, and change individual problem behaviours (e.g., by enabling mood monitoring and bio-feedback mechanisms, and encouraging individuals to reflect on the triggers, circumstances, and consequences of their emotions and behaviours)
- In this new and rapidly expanding field, more research is needed to test the efficacy, safety, and acceptability of the new technologies that we have at our disposal, and to develop new guidelines to ensure that those using them are appropriately protected

Further Reading

The research article reporting this study has been published in The Lancet Psychiatry:

Marzano, L., Bardill, A., Fields, B., Herd, K., Veale, D., Grey, N., & Moran, P. (2015). The application of 'mHealth' to mental health: Opportunities and challenges. *The Lancet Psychiatry, 2*(10), 942-948.

Further information about the study and other research in this area can be seen at our website: http://insight.mdx.ac.uk

CHAPTER 16. ENVIRONMENTAL PREDICTORS OF SUICIDE RATE AND HELPLINE CALLS IN SCOTLAND

Fhionna Moore, Mairi Macleod, & Trevor Harley

Is emotional distress clustered in time or space? And can we predict where and when these clusters will occur? If so, we would be better able to target support services to those most in need. In this research, we aimed to test whether key aspects of the social and physical environment (population density, socioeconomic deprivation, the weather, and rates of prescriptions of drugs used in mental health) predicted the rates of suicide and calls to an emotional distress helpline in Scotland.

The Problem

Scotland's suicide rate has declined by 18% since 2003, approaching the Scottish Executive's 2002 'Choose Life' target (a reduction of 20% by 2013), and placing Scotland around the EU average.[1] This decline coincides with national suicide prevention efforts, which have included interventions relating to problem drinking, depression in primary care settings, access to psychological therapy, and workforce training in suicide awareness.[1] Scotland's female suicide rate, however, is the highest in the UK, and its total rate remains higher than those of England and Wales.[2]

In its Suicide Prevention Strategy 2013-2016, the Scottish Government acknowledged the importance of building a

Scottish-specific evidence base.[3] The present research focuses on helping to build this evidence base, which can better inform future intervention strategies.

Rationale For The Project

In this research, we aimed to address a significant gap in our understanding of trends in Scotland's suicide rate by analysing the following potential predictors: population density,[4] socioeconomic deprivation,[5] prescription rates of medicines used in mental health,[6] and the weather.[7] As suicide can be conceptualised as the 'tip of the iceberg' in terms of emotional distress, we also modelled patterns of emotional distress more broadly in the form of the frequency and nature of calls to the Scottish NHS24 national telephone helpline 'Breathing Space'.[8] Launched in Glasgow in 2002, and becoming a national helpline in 2004, this service is manned by trained advisors who provide a free, confidential, listening service. The service is available 24 hours a day at weekends, and from 6pm to 2am on weekdays.

We were specifically interested in being able to identify times and places of high risk for emotional distress and suicide. We therefore modelled social and physical environmental predictors of suicide rates and the rates of calls to Breathing Space in Scotland across time and across Health Boards. We also tested whether call and suicide rates varied in accordance with the season, whether Breathing Space advertising strategy influenced the call rate, and whether call rates were related to suicide rates.

What Was Done

We obtained data on Breathing Space calls for the period of 1st of June 2010 to 31st of December 2013, along with monthly numbers of suicides for Scottish Health Boards for the period January 2003 to December 2013, from Breathing Space and the Scottish Records Office respectively. Data on the following social and physical environmental variables were also sourced for Health Boards over time: intensity of Breathing Space advertising; monthly hours of Breathing Space staff availability; population densities (from the Office for National Statistics); socioeconomic indices (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, employment rates); meteorological variables of hours of sunshine, maximum and minimum temperatures, and rainfall (from historical records publically available from the Met Office); and prescription rates of drugs used in mental health (sourced from Information Services Divisions Scotland).

We analysed trends in suicide and call rates over time (*temporal analyses*) and across Scotland (*spatial analyses*), and analysed effects of Breathing Space advertising intensity on call rates. We also tested for variation in temporal patterns across Health Boards. Finally, we tested for relationships between call and suicide rates.

What Was Found

Rates of calls to Breathing Space

Concerning the rates of calls to Breathing Space, a larger proportion of callers were female than male, reflecting a

substantial change in the profile of users, which was originally biased towards male callers at a rate of 3 men to 2 women. There were more calls from the 45-54 age group than any other, and the most frequent callers were those reporting mental illness or loneliness. Rates of calls in which the caller reported feeling suicidal were very low (less than 1%). Call rate and suicide rate were not related to one another, and the call rate did not vary with season.

Higher call rates came from those Health Boards with denser populations. In other words, there were more calls *per person* from more densely populated areas. More sparsely populated Health Boards, such as Orkney, Shetland, the Western Isles, and Highland, had particularly low call rates per person. We found that this was due to increased outdoor advertising intensity in high-density regions. In particular this form of advertising most strongly predicted variation in male call rates, suggesting that these advertising strategies are most effective in attracting men to use the service.

Across the study time period, amount of rainfall was positively related to both male and female call rates. That is, during times of heavier rain, men and women used the service more often. Warmer temperatures and greater hours of sunshine were associated with fewer calls concerning loneliness and self-harm. It is possible that weather conditions affect the likelihood of potential callers being inside, in turn influencing isolation and the opportunity for self-harm.

The rate of prescriptions of drugs used in mental health was inversely related to the female call rate. That is, at times of high prescription rates, women called the service less than

at times of low prescription rates. It is possible that prescriptions for such medications reduces the impact of mental health problems and, therefore, reduces the need to use services such as Breathing Space. In support of this, fewer calls concerning suicide and self-harm were recorded during times of high prescription rates. For men, however, there appeared to be stronger effects of socioeconomic factors, with positive relationships between the male call rate, male unemployment, and the proportion of the economically inactive who desired work. In other words, at times of economic hardship men made greater use of the service. It is important, then, to acknowledge that the environmental factors which influence emotional distress and the likelihood of calling seem to be gendered.

Suicide rates

Looking now at predicting suicide rates, consistent with historical patterns there was a higher suicide rate among men than women. As has been previously reported, male rates have declined since 2003 while female rates have remained stable. Rates are highest in those areas with both the highest and lowest population densities, perhaps mirroring patterns of health more generally (i.e., the optimum setting for health is accessible countryside).

Like predictors of calls to Breathing Space, environmental predictors of the suicide rate differed for men and women. The male rate was higher in Health Boards with the highest socioeconomic deprivation and during times of low rainfall and high numbers of hours of sunshine. This replicates a well-known association between socioeconomic deprivation and suicide rates. It is not clear, however, why measures of

deprivation were associated with male, and not female, suicide rates. Of those studies to date which have tested effects of the weather on suicide rates, there has been great inconsistency in findings, although if any pattern were to be described it would be that suicide rates increase more often during times of pleasant weather conditions, suggesting that there may be important – and poorly understood – interactions between multiple dimensions of an individual's circumstances and their suicidal behaviour.

Male and female suicide rates were highest in Health Boards with the highest rate of prescriptions of drugs used in mental health. While some evidence points towards an increased risk of suicide soon after commencing use of anti-depressants, the association is not apparent at population levels. Alternatively, the prescription rate may serve as a proxy of mental health problems in the population at the time.

Making A Difference

Identifying times and places at high risk of population-level emotional distress and suicide allows support services (such as NHS24) to better target their efforts to those most in need. For example, as a direct result of this research NHS24 have initiated a new advertising strategy, which targets remote and rural areas of Scotland. We will help them later this year to analyse call rates to see whether this strategy raised awareness and increased rates of calls from these regions of Scotland. A similar research approach could be applied in other regions, such as countries or occupational groups known to have higher suicide rates (e.g.,

Scandinavia, and groups such as vets and farmers), in order to inform interventions amongst these high-risk populations.

Recommendations

- Community-based advertising (e.g., on buses, bus shelters, and in pubs and bars) of support services should be more evenly distributed across Scotland, in order to raise awareness in rural areas. Our results show that this form of advertising has a significant effect on the call rate, particularly among men
- Both men and women call more often during times of heavy rainfall, which should be taken into consideration when scheduling availability of support services. Furthermore, it is also worth noting that the male call rate was affected by socioeconomic conditions, such that men were more likely to call during times of economic hardship
- Our findings suggest differences in the predictors of help-seeking, emotional distress, and suicide, amongst men and women. Future research should therefore explore in greater detail the stressors inherent in the lives of Scottish men and women, both at individual and population levels

Further Reading

Full details of the project are available in the following report to NHS24, available on request from the lead author:

Moore, F, Macleod, M, & Harley, T. (2015). Social and physical environmental predictors of the Scottish suicide

rate and of rates of calls to NHS24 breathing space. Report to NHS24.

CHAPTER 17. CAN PRIMARY HEALTHCARE INTERVENTIONS BE USED TO MOBILISE COLLECTIVE ACTION TO TACKLE POVERTY?

Rochelle Ann Burgess

Much discussion in the global health arena has argued that attention to wider determinants of health – the places we live in and the social issues that shape it – is critical to improving people's mental and emotional well-being. But alongside this acknowledgement has been a process of 'passing the buck' between health and social welfare sectors in terms of taking ownership over action on social determinants of health, such as poverty. In this research, I aimed to explore whether primary healthcare settings can effectively integrate efforts to promote community mobilisation in response to poverty within brief mental health interventions.

The Problem

Globally, more than 1 in 4 people are affected by a mental disorder at any point in time. In parts of the world where resources are scarce, up to 90 percent of individuals go untreated for conditions like depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorders.[1] As part of growing calls to increase access to much needed help and support, high- and low-income countries alike have become focused on providing cost-effective services.[2]

Financial and human resource limitations in mental health arenas mean that the interventions on offer are often 'brief', blending both medical and psychological treatment strategies. Whilst recent studies highlight symptom improvements using such interventions, the successes they have resulted in are rarely evenly distributed among populations.[2] In particular, effects among deprived communities tend to be short-lived, with positive consequences rarely lasting three months beyond the intervention.[3] Furthermore, many of the broader social issues at the heart of experiences of mental health conditions, such as poverty, unemployment, social isolation, and stigma, remain unaddressed by such brief approaches, which at best incorporate referrals to external services to provide support for such issues.[4,5]

Rationale For The Project

Mobilisation of community resources has been identified as crucial to tackling social determinants of mental distress. Communities can be defined as geographical spaces, but beyond this can be developed through collectives of people with shared characteristics, including patients, their families, and wider networks of social actors and services. Not only do communities provide an opportunity to focus on both individual *and* social dimensions of well-being, they also enable health improvement efforts to be anchored to the physical spaces where mental health is actually 'lived'.

In support of the importance of community in mental health treatment, studies in both South Africa and the UK have highlighted how mental health support groups could develop

into sites of wider action on challenges in their lives, beyond just the prescribed treatment. [6,7] These studies indicate that by working with communities, whether they are pre-existing or develop around new groups with a shared experience, we create opportunities to address aspects of well-being that move beyond biology and towards damages linked to wider society. In the case of mental health, this may mean a shift from focusing simply on individual aspects of treatment, such as adherence to medication, and attending to wider societal struggles, such as poverty and exclusion, that can also drive mental ill health.

Despite growing acknowledgement of the potential ability for community mobilisation to improve mental health and well-being,[8,9] there is little documented research on how this process could be formally integrated within primary health care settings, or the efficacy of anchoring community mobilisation efforts with brief mental health interventions. In the present research, I therefore pilot and evaluate an attempt to integrate community mobilisation strategies into an 8-week problem solving group counselling intervention for depression. The setting for the intervention was the primary healthcare context in rural South Africa.

What Was Done

The intervention examined in this research was delivered in partnership with a Department for International Development-funded research consortium ('PRIME') within a trial of brief-intervention approaches in Klerksdorp, South Africa. The intervention was delivered within a primary healthcare clinic, by a counsellor local to the community. In

South Africa, women are more likely to experience depression and HIV. Studies have shown the combined burden of these two conditions exposes women to a range of vulnerabilities, including other chronic diseases. As such, HIV-affected women with depression who attended the local primary healthcare clinic for treatment linked to other chronic conditions were screened for depression. After screening, those women with depression were given the choice of either individual or group counselling.

In this research, I followed the experiences of groups of women who chose to engage in group counselling. In order to introduce a more explicit community angle to the intervention, the 8-week problem solving group therapy programme was modified so that the second session, which was on the theme of poverty, included support for developing poverty alleviation strategies through collective action, within the new 'community' of the treatment space. The session included opportunities for women to identify and expand on pre-existing skills and capabilities together, as part of efforts to combat poverty-related drivers of their depression. The lead counsellor was trained by PRIME colleagues to provide support to women during the remaining sessions, and provided opportunities and support in linking wider agencies in the local area if they were needed.

From October 2015 to March 2016, 15 groups completed the modified intervention. We invited 24 women from those groups that were identified by the lead counsellor as having actually engaged in collective action around poverty during the intervention to complete interviews to explore how the intervention affected their lives. Of these 24 women, 10

volunteered to participate in home visits, where group discussions with family members reflected on how access to the intervention had an impact on all of their lives.

In addition, two support groups were observed across the life-course of the intervention. This provided an opportunity to explore the realities of the intervention and the mechanisms of its delivery, in the hopes of exploring the feasibility of blending community mobilisation efforts within brief-mental health interventions.

What Was Found

Analysis of rich, qualitative data like the type generated in this research is a long and intensive process. The analyses I have conducted so far suggest that providing support for collective action around poverty within the modified intervention was feasible within the primary care settings. But despite this, only 6 of the 15 groups that took part in the programme were identified by the counsellor as actually having worked collectively within the treatment groups to tackle poverty, even though poverty affected 1 in 3 individuals in the community.

One reason why many of the groups did not engage in community-based action around poverty might be the fact that a different topic was covered during each week of the programme, meaning that participants' attention may have shifted away from collective action after the second session. The counsellor was able to counteract some of this shift in attention through seeking feedback on poverty reduction activities planned in week two over the remaining six

sessions, but this may not have been sufficient. Another reason is that attendees reported struggling to meet up outside of clinic spaces, due to lack of transportation.

Among the groups where collective action did take place, it became clear that the reality of collective action took on different meanings in each group, beyond what was suggested within the intervention. In some groups, participants developed smaller 'communities' of pairs and trios who worked together on income generating projects, which were still identified as having a significant impact on their lives a year later. A handful of participants took collective mobilisation out of therapy spaces, instead working with and mobilising family members to tackle poverty. Even in cases where participants stated they didn't 'work together', group members reported encouraging each other while working individually on tackling their poverty during group sessions. As such, even though the collective action that was taken differed from what was expected in some cases, the findings of this research have highlighted the value of creating spaces to engage collectively with important social concerns, such as poverty, in primary care settings.

Making A Difference

The global climate of austerity and increasing demands on health systems means that mental healthcare services are under increasing strain. Approaches that integrate attention to community concerns within the structure of brief, cost-effective interventions are therefore relevant across the world, in rich and poor countries. With a programme like the

one studied in this research, communities can develop tools and resources to respond to challenges linked to mental health issues and the social challenges that frame illness.

A key implication of this research is that it is both feasible and desirable to integrate attention to the social determinants of health within care offered directly by health sectors, rather than relying on external referrals. In an ideal world, health systems should be able to attend to emotional *and* social dimensions of well-being at the first point of contact. Innovations such as those highlighted in this study provide an example of how this could become a reality.

Recommendations

- Primary healthcare settings in resource-constrained contexts can provide opportunities to support engagement with social determinants of health, such as poverty
- Mental health counsellors delivering brief interventions could also be trained to provide advice and support for clients in relation to issues like poverty. They can identify local capabilities and resources, as well as provide ongoing support for clients who are working to address poverty in their lives, instead of referring outwards

CHAPTER 18. LIFE AS A MIGRANT NURSE IN THE UK

Emee Vida Estacio

What does it feel like to come from overseas and work as a professional nurse in the National Health Service (NHS)? Growing demands for healthcare mean that the NHS needs to consider ways to attract and retain nurses from overseas. Yet the rates of recruitment of nurses from outside the UK are falling, which may indicate that nursing jobs in the NHS are seen as less desirable than they once were. In this research, I aimed to explore the experiences of migrant nurses working in the UK in order to understand how the NHS can improve their working lives and therefore avoid further loss of migrant nurses.

The Problem

Managing nursing recruitment and retention is an ongoing challenge for the NHS.[1] This challenge is expected to increase with the ageing of the UK population leading to growing demands for healthcare. While there was evidence of an increasing trend in the inflow of internationally recruited nurses in the earlier years of this decade, overseas recruitment has fallen dramatically in recent years.[2]

Reasons for this declining trend are still unclear. However, factors such as workload, overall job satisfaction, and the subjective experiences of nurses would be expected to contribute to an explanation. For instance, in a report on

nurses' employment and morale, 61% of NHS nurses stated that their workload was too heavy, while more than half said that they were under too much pressure at work (55%) and were too busy to provide the standard of care they would like (54%).[3] Crucially, overseas nurses were more likely to say they felt their workload to be too heavy (73% compared to 58% of UK qualified nurses). Furthermore, it was noted in the same report that nurses from black and minority ethnic backgrounds were less satisfied in their present job and were more likely to say that bullying and harassment is a problem and that 'they would leave nursing if they could' (p.8). The deskilling of overseas nurses recruited in UK hospital trusts,[4] the devaluation of the contributions they make to health care,[5] as well as cases of institutional racism[6] are additional factors that could explain declining rates of overseas recruitment.

The everyday working and living experiences of migrant nurses might also be important contributors to the reduction in applications from overseas nurses. Not only do they have to deal with the usual pressures of the work environment, but overseas nurses also have to cope with additional stresses including adjustment to a new environment, dealing with separation from home, and the differences in communication and nursing practices. Likewise, migrant nurses' motivations to emigrate might also affect their experiences of working in the UK. For many overseas nurses, the motivation to emigrate stems from financial reasons and the need to support their families from their home countries. However, this does not explain decisions to emigrate from previous migratory destinations (e.g., Saudi Arabia) where such economic needs are already fulfilled.

Professional and social aspirations may therefore also play vital roles in overseas nurses' decisions to emigrate.

Rationale For The Project

Given that there is growing competition for the supply of nurses from other developed countries, it is important to understand the factors that influence the uptake and retention of migrant nurses in the UK to help ease staff shortage in the NHS. It is particularly relevant to gain an understanding of the issues from the perspective of the nurses themselves, to ensure that policies and action plans are meaningfully and practically informed.

What Was Done

This research aimed to explore the subjective experiences of migrant nurses in the UK, focusing in particular on the following questions:

- What factors influence migrant nurses' decision to come/leave the UK?
- What are the opportunities and barriers to the recruitment and retention of migrant nurses?
- What is it like to live and work in the UK as a migrant nurse and how can migrant nurses' experiences be improved?

A participatory action research (PAR) approach was adopted, which involved collaboration between the researcher and the migrant nurses to identify issues relevant

to them and to generate insights to address these.[7] The project was carried out in three stages:

Stage 1: Establishing rapport and planning. This stage aimed to establish partnerships with relevant stakeholders. Migrant nurses from two hospitals in the West Midlands were engaged in a series of project initiation meetings to discuss the research and to amend research aims and questions, as necessary.

Stage 2: Compilation of insights and experiences. This stage aimed to generate insights and to compile the experiences of the participating migrant nurses through diary-writing. Twelve participants agreed to keep a reflective diary of their experiences for a period of six weeks. They were contacted by a member of the research team every fortnight to monitor progress and to offer support if needed. All participants were female and had been living and working in the UK for at least 6 years.

Stage 3: Analysis and synthesis. Diary entries were discussed with the participants through a World Café event.[8] A World Café is a facilitated event whereby participants are encouraged to raise their views within a comfortable and relaxed setting. This event helped to highlight the key points raised by the participants in their diaries. Involving participants in this way is part of the participatory nature of the project and is also a way of ensuring that the insights generated from the research are grounded within the participants' views. After the event, participants' diaries were transcribed and analysed in conjunction with the issues raised in the World Café. During analysis, key themes were

identified in the data, especially those themes that reflected the experiences of multiple nurses.

What Was Found

Findings from the research suggested that living and working as a migrant nurse in the UK could include both positive and more negative experiences. With respect to first impressions, the nurses often described feelings of homesickness and shock about the weather ("*Dark, gloomy, cold, brrrr… this is my first minute in the land of the Queen*"), which were tempered with excitement and feeling fortunate to be working in the UK, where they could earn money to help their families, gain new experiences, and progress professionally as a nurse.

In terms of their work, participants voiced some frustrations concerning the NHS. These included having to deal with too much paperwork, under-staffing, and other structural issues that they believed impinged on their ability to provide good quality care to their patients ("*There's always tons of paperwork that is needed in every shift, and sometimes I feel that the patients are being neglected because of this*"). Management issues were also raised by the participants, who said that there were times when they felt that they were let down by management because of the lack of organisation in some wards. However, participants praised some of their managers who showed appreciation and concern for other nurses.

Concerning their relationships in the workplace, participants felt that some colleagues had a welcoming and supportive

attitude towards migrant nurses, while others tended to segregate themselves and could behave unprofessionally towards them. Moreover, racism was a major issue for many of the migrant nurses. Their accounts included acts of bullying, unfair treatment, and competencies being downgraded simply on the basis of being a migrant. Barriers to professional progression were also reported, where participants felt that they weren't being given the same opportunities as others for further training or promotion. Patients were a further source of racism ("*'Sometimes it seems like some service users are not thrilled by my skin colour"*).

Finally, difficulties were reported by the nurses in terms of language. Although all nurses who come to work in the UK are proficient in English, some of the migrants struggled with differences in terminologies used, slang words, the distinctive British humour, and the range of accents ("*Though I knew and understand English, I later found out in the UK there are so many accents*").

Taken together, all of these issues meant that participants felt that working in the UK was a balancing act, especially for those with very young children. Given that the participants discussed prospects for professional growth as an incentive to live and work in the UK, rather than just financial motives, the findings of this research suggest that the NHS will need to address structural issues, such as poor ward management and institutional racism, in order to avoid further loss of migrant nurses working in this country. More equity and transparency over opportunities for professional development is needed, as well as more support to enable

migrant nurses to establish a good work-life balance in the UK.

Making A Difference

To ensure that this research could make a difference, insights from the research were presented to a wider audience through a stakeholder event. Participating nurses and their families were invited, as well as hospital staff, the media, and other interested parties. Posters summarising the themes that came out of the data were also prepared for public viewing. During this event, the participating migrant nurses also discussed how they would like to take this research forward.

There was a general consensus among the participants that taking part in the various events organised in this research made them more aware of the similar issues they faced as migrant nurses. They appreciated being given the space to reflect on these issues and being able to voice these concerns within a supportive environment. This gave them the reassurance that they were not alone in their struggles and that they belonged to a community of migrant nurses who are ready to support each other. Thus, as an action point for this project, the participating nurses felt that it would be useful to carry this forward by setting-up a migrant nurses' support group so that they could continue to discuss their concerns in their own time and to provide support to each other. The participants also felt that having a strong network of family and friends could help them to cope with the unique stresses they face as migrant nurses. Thus, they suggested organising an annual 'family day' to facilitate

networking and bonding between migrant nurses and their families.

Recommendations

- To avoid further loss of migrant nurses, the NHS must deal with structural issues and institutional racism
- More equity and transparency over opportunities for professional development is also needed to retain the much-needed migrant nurses in the UK workforce
- Further research should consider the effectiveness of support groups for migrant nurses in helping to cope with the stresses of working and living in the UK

Further Reading

A journal article examining the issue around racism experienced by migrant nurses discussed in this chapter has been published online:

Estacio, E.V. & Saidy-Khan, S. (2014). Experiences of racial microaggression among migrant nurses in the UK: A diary-based study. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*.

PART III: MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO WORKPLACES

CHAPTER 19. ENHANCING MEANINGFULNESS IN THE WORKPLACE: TESTING THE EFFECT OF A PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Luke Fletcher & Dilys Robinson

We often have little time to reflect on what is worthwhile and significant to us at work and how we could make our day-to-day working lives more meaningful. But what if we were given the capacity and capability to do this? Would we be more engaged, more proactive, and more enriched as a result? In this research, we aimed to examine whether a personal development intervention focused on meaningfulness (i.e., thinking and feeling that the work you do has worth, value, and significance to you and to others) could help facilitate: a) positive psychological states, such as feeling safe to express true feelings and thoughts; and b) proactive behaviour, such as taking the initiative and making suggestions for improvement.

The Problem

There has been a great deal of attention paid by organisations in recent years to helping all employees 'give their best' in a way that promotes a healthy, optimal level of performance and well-being.[1] However, due to a number of factors, including the recent global recession, many working people are feeling increasingly under pressure to work harder and longer with no additional reward.[2] Traditionally, organisations have dealt with this problem by

focusing on interventions that aim to increase employees' resilience by providing them with knowledge about stress and its causes, and techniques about how best to cope with work-related stress (known as 'stress management' interventions).[3] Such interventions tend to focus primarily on preventing negative well-being and a decline in performance. They therefore help organisations to prevent negative outcomes, but do not necessarily promote positive, optimal outcomes.

Rationale for the Project

An alternative way of tackling well-being and performance issues in the workplace is to try to promote positive outcomes, such as employee engagement. Although there has been a lot of discussion about how to foster and maintain high levels of engagement in the workplace, there remains a lack of evidence for a coherent and cohesive set of practical interventions.[4,5] Drawing on psychologist William Kahn's influential work on engagement in 1990[6], together with recent research that shows that the experience of meaningfulness is fundamental for a person's sense of self-worth and life experience.[7, 8] we propose that interventions focused on meaningfulness may hold the key for optimising the engagement of workers.

To test our ideas, we designed two personal development interventions; one focused on meaningfulness within the workplace and the other focused on stress management. We wanted to examine the effects of each type of intervention against a control group (i.e., people who did not undertake any personal development workshops or activities). The

primary objective was to establish whether taking part in a meaningfulness intervention could increase levels of engagement and behaviours that can enhance performance at work. Comparing the effects of this intervention with the effects of a more traditional stress management intervention enabled us to examine what was unique about the meaningfulness intervention and its effects.

What Was Done

Employees from a central government department ('Public Co') and a private sector engineering company ('Engineering Co') were asked to take part in the study. We recruited groups of workers who had been highlighted as experiencing threats to their meaningfulness, for example those who had experienced significant deskilling and alterations to core duties within their work role over recent years. A total of 70 participants completed the study (30 from Public Co and 40 from Engineering Co). Twenty-five people took part in a meaningfulness workshop followed by weekly personal development activities lasting for four weeks, while 23 undertook a stress management workshop followed by weekly personal development activities lasting for four weeks. A further 25 people were part of a control group who did not take part in any workshop. As far as possible, participants were randomly allocated to one of the three groups.

There were three stages to the meaningfulness intervention. First, participants were given an overview of the concept of meaningfulness and why it is important within the workplace. Second, participants took part in a series of

group discussions, facilitated by the researchers, on the different aspects of life from which they might find meaning. They talked about finding meaning in themselves and their family, their close social circle, their work, and their workplace. Third, the workshop leaders explained the weekly personal development activities. For each of the four weeks following the workshop, participants completed three discrete personal development activities (each lasting around 15 minutes) where they were asked to: a) identify, describe, and reflect on a relatively meaningful event or situation that happened at work; b) focus on a different broader source of meaningfulness and discuss how this could be strengthened within the workplace, for example how their personal beliefs and values could be reflected in their work and by management; and c) set themselves a goal relating to changing their behaviour at work in a way that they felt would have a positive impact on themselves and their colleagues (an example might be challenging cynicism amongst members of their team). They were also asked to plan how they would achieve this goal.

The stress management intervention began by giving participants an overview of what stress management was and why it was important to the workplace. The workshop focused on techniques for coping with stressful work tasks and for prioritising, planning, and evaluating tasks. A number of group discussions were conducted to share ideas and experiences. Finally the group leaders explained the weekly personal development activities. For each of the four weeks following the workshop, participants completed three discrete personal development activities (each lasting around 15 minutes) where they were asked to: a) categorise and plan their upcoming tasks; b) reflect on different

elements of performance evaluation and monitoring; and c) reflect on a difficult and demanding work task they undertook over the previous working week.

What Was Found

Statistical tests were carried out to see whether the meaningfulness and stress management interventions had a positive effect on participants' sense of well-being at work as well as on their behaviour at work. Measures of these outcomes were taken before and after the study to see whether they changed as a result of the intervention, and the two interventions were compared against the control group to see whether doing something was better than doing nothing at all.

In addition to the statistical tests, information from the group discussions in the workshops, and feedback from participants at the end of the study, were analysed to help us understand people's views about meaningfulness, and their experience of the intervention, in more depth.

The results suggested that the meaningfulness intervention had a positive impact on experiences of meaningfulness itself, psychological safety (i.e., feeling able to express your true thoughts and feelings at work without fear of negative consequences), and job engagement (i.e., feeling enthusiastic and intellectually stimulated by your job, as well as feeling socially connected to your work colleagues). Those who had taken part in the meaningfulness workshop also showed more personal initiative at work, e.g. actively tackling problems and realising goals, as well doing more

without being asked. In contrast, those in the stress management intervention showed relatively similar results to the control group in that there was little change observed in these outcomes.

Although participants from both interventions reported that they had, on the whole, enjoyed the study and gained something useful from it, those in the meaningfulness workshop were more likely to say that the workshop and activities had helped them to really think about their work, challenge their colleagues in a constructive way, and adopt new, more positive behaviours in the workplace.

Participants also shared their thoughts on what could help embed meaningfulness interventions within their organisation. One key suggestion was to promote a sense of community through sharing experiences and ideas with colleagues from different areas of the organisation and holding regular social events. Another was for managers to build enthusiasm, provide support, and devote time and resources to meaningfulness interventions. A final idea was to provide coaching for employees, including one-to-one discussions with managers to facilitate the reflective and personal skills needed to engage fully with the meaningfulness process.

Making a Difference

The findings of this study indicate that personal development interventions focused on meaningfulness could help to facilitate positive experiences and behaviour in the workplace. Our results provided the two organisations who

participated in the research with useful recommendations for facilitating meaningfulness and engagement within particular workgroups who were at risk of disengaging and feeling alienated from their work. We will be sharing our findings and the experiences of the participants with other organisations and HR professionals over the coming year through events and publications to help disseminate a wider understanding of the value of meaningfulness as a more 'employee-centric' way of raising engagement levels.

We would encourage other practitioners and researchers to further examine how meaningfulness could be facilitated through workplace interventions. For example, meaningfulness could form an essential part of management development and could be used within a performance management system to discuss how performance could further rewarded through goals that create meaningful impact. It is also worth exploring how best to gain buy-in and embed such interventions, for example by using staff champions or employee-manager working groups.

Recommendations

- Meaningfulness interventions may be promising for helping to engage workers and enabling workers to use more personal initiative, and are more effective for enhancing these outcomes compared to traditional stress management interventions
- Meaningfulness interventions may be particularly useful where groups of workers have been identified as at risk of disengagement or losing their sense of identity within the organisation

- Personal development, coupled with initial coaching or training, could be a useful starting point to embed meaningfulness interventions within the organisation. Managerial support and involvement will also be crucial for the success of this kind of approach

Further Reading

A report on this research can be found in the Institute for Employment Studies repository:

Fletcher, L., & Robinson, D. (2016). What's the point? The importance of meaningful work. In *Thoughts for the Day: IES Perspectives on HR 2016 (pp. 14 - 20)*. Report 608. Brighton, UK: Institute for Employment Studies. Available from: http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/thoughts-day-ies-perspectives-hr-2016

CHAPTER 20. CAN A BRIEF MINDFULNESS INTERVENTION REDUCE EARLY SIGNS OF COMPULSIVE INTERNET USE AND ENHANCE RELATIONSHIP QUALITY?

Cristina Quinones

Excessive working and compulsive internet use are problems for many workers. Interventions that teach people to engage in mindfulness techniques, which focus on acceptance and being in the present moment, are generally found to be effective, for instance in terms of reducing workers' stress levels. However, such interventions are time-consuming and may not be ideal for the kinds of busy employees who are at risk from excessive working and internet use. In this research, I aimed to evaluate a much shorter mindfulness intervention (involving daily 10-minute practice for 2 weeks), to see if it would be effective for reducing the early signs of compulsive internet use and for improving people's romantic relationships.

The Problem

The amount of time that people spend working has increased at a great pace over the last two decades, with many full-time employees struggling to keep under the traditional 40-hour week. The growing adoption of flexible working patterns supported by technology advancements has also resulted in many people increasing the amount of hours they put in.[1] Often, the ability to respond to work demands that

our smartphones provide is mistaken with a perceived obligation to do so, particularly when organisations reward "24/7 connectivity".[2] Within this context, the ability to detach and recover from work, which allows people to replenish resources and avoid chronic stress, has become a challenge for many.[3]

In addition to enabling us work anywhere at any time, the internet also plays a large part in our leisure. This inexhaustible source of stimulus can make some people struggle to integrate the tool adaptively in their lives, to the point of experiencing a loss of control over its use, which has been labelled 'Compulsive Internet Use' (CIU).[4] Although core CIU symptoms (i.e., withdrawal, loss of control, interpersonal conflict) are only suffered by a minority, a much larger proportion of adults report high engagement with the internet and some of the early signs of CIU (e.g., excessive use).[4,5] Importantly, this high engagement increases the likelihood of developing more harmful CIU symptoms, particularly if stressful life events arise.[6,7] Thus, it is important that those who exhibit initial signs of CIU are given strategies to prevent this from developing into a more harmful relationship with the internet. Given that there seems to be a reinforcing mechanism in the relationship between excessive internet use and working excessively and compulsively, those who work long hours and who also have high internet engagement could stand to benefit most from effective coping strategies.[1]

Rationale For The Project

One set of strategies that might prove useful in helping people to deal with the early signs of CIU are mindfulness interventions. Mindfulness has been defined as "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally", and interventions involving mindfulness are proving effective in their application to treat a wide range of mental-health problems, including depression, anxiety, and addictions.[8] Mindfulness interventions typically include: awareness of the body; mindful movement; and sitting meditation. The focus in the present moment, accepting unwanted thoughts and emotions, can be particularly suited to treat addictive behaviour, as addicts are often absorbed with finding the next opportunity to engage with the object of addiction.

Though highly effective, mindfulness interventions typically require an 8-week commitment and a minimum of 25-50 minutes practise a day. The length of such interventions makes them a less attractive option for people showing the early signs of CIU, who may have limited spare time, or who may not prepared to invest long time in a treatment when the problem has not fully developed. Some preliminary evidence supports the use of shorter, self-guided mindfulness interventions.[12,13] However, such interventions have not been tested rigorously. The main aim of this research was therefore to test the effectiveness of a shorter and flexible self-driven intervention (10-minute a day for two weeks), which would be easier to integrate with people's busy lives, among people who exhibited early signs of both CIU and working excessively.

Finally, giving that a key dimension of CIU is the family conflicts caused by excessive use, a third aim of this study was examining the impact of the intervention on relationship quality both from the perspective of the participant and his/her partner.

What Was Done

A randomised controlled trial was used to test the short MBI. This is a study design in which participants are randomly allocated to different intervention groups (one of which has no intervention; a 'control' group), and in which variables of interest are measured before and after the intervention occurs in all groups. In this research, three groups are compared: the brief mindfulness intervention group; a control group; and a group who received a brief muscular relaxation intervention. This latter group was included to determine if the mindfulness intervention had positive effects over and above a strategy that has previously been found to be effective in reducing stress in general.

Participants were recruited through a market research agency. To be eligible to take part, people had to: work long hours (i.e., more than 40 hours per week); show initial signs of compulsive internet use; live with their partners; lack mindfulness experience; and be happy for their partners to be asked questions about themselves and their relationship with them. Partners were included in the study because a key dimension of CIU is family conflicts caused by excessive internet use, so it was pertinent to see whether the mindfulness intervention had a positive effect from the perspective of participants' partners.

Those who passed the screening criteria were randomly assigned to one of the three study groups for a period of 2 consecutive weeks. Those in the mindfulness group were given a code to access a well-known mindfulness application, where mindfulness is explained to users step by step. Users were given daily access to 10-minute meditation podcasts through the app or directly from the website. The application sent daily reminders to participants. The muscular relaxation group was given access to a 10-minute muscular relaxation podcast. The control group received no specific intervention. After the study, all participants were allowed to access the different intervention resources, so that they all could enjoy the benefits of different practice if they wished to do so.

What Was Found

Statistical tests showed that the mindfulness group experienced a significant decrease in their compulsive use of the internet across the study, and increased on two of the mindfulness practice dimensions (observation and non-reaction) in comparison to the control group. In view of these results, the brief mindfulness intervention seemed to have been effective to reduce the early signs of CIU.

In the post-intervention survey both the mindfulness and relaxation interventions received similarly positive feedback from participants and their partners on the long-term duration of the effects of the intervention (e.g., 75% of the mindfulness group and 86% of the relaxation group claimed that positive effects were likely to endure), and on the likelihood that participants would continue practicing the

exercises (with over 80% in both groups claiming it was very likely they would continue with the practices).

The key significant difference between the two types of intervention studied was found in partners' qualitative evaluation of the impact of the intervention in their relationship quality. It was found that 65% of the mindfulness participants' partners claimed their partners' intervention had a positive impact on their relationship quality, whereas only 33% of relaxation's partners claimed the same.

Making A Difference

The increasing intrusion of smart technology developments in our lives calls for a more mindful approach to the use of this technology in order to engage with it in a healthier way. Current mindfulness interventions are often costly and time demanding; hence only those who are highly motivated and have the resources can benefit from them. These findings of this research suggest that a very small investment of time (10 minutes a day) can really make a difference in relation to our well-being, our relationships with romantic partners, and the way people use technology for leisure purposes. Such an investment of time would help to prevent compulsive behaviours and to promote healthy lifestyle choices in particular among those with initial signs of compulsive internet use.

By publicising the findings of this research at business breakfast events attended by local business people, I will be able to increase people's ability to spot the early signs of

compulsive internet use as well as their knowledge of the benefits of using brief mindfulness interventions within their businesses. Disseminating the findings of this research to HR practitioners will also help to ensure that the benefits of using mindfulness techniques are more widely known, and may help to establish the use of these techniques, e.g., during stress management training sessions. A final way in which the findings of this research will have impact is through the targeted publicising of the findings in internet addiction support groups, so that concerned individuals can incorporate mindfulness in their lives as the first step to perhaps looking for more specialised help.

Recommendations

- Having a busy life is not an excuse to ignore one's well-being. A small investment of time (i.e., 10 minutes a day) can really make a difference to prevent stress and help people to use technology in a healthier way
- Work organisations might enjoy the benefits of a healthier and more productive workforce by providing free access to brief mindfulness podcasts and even encouraging practice during the work day
- Although muscular relaxation is an effective recovery mechanism, mindfulness also shows the added benefit of enhancing the quality of romantic relationships, and might therefore also be useful as a means of strengthening bonds with others

Further Reading

More information on compulsive use of the internet and excessive working can be seen in the following academic article:

Quinones. C., Griffiths, M., & Kakabadse, N. (2016). Compulsive internet use and workaholism: An exploratory two-wave longitudinal study. *Computers in Human Behaviour, 60*(1), 492-499.

Further information on the impact of the 'always on' workplace and some strategies to deal with it can also be seen in the following practitioner paper:

Quinones, C. (2016, February). The 'always on' workplace: Risks, opportunities and how to make it work. HR Magazine. http://www.hrmagazine.co.uk/article-details/the-always-on-workplace-risks-opportunities-and-how-to-make-it-work

CHAPTER 21. CAN PROSOCIAL MUSIC REDUCE CUSTOMER AGGRESSION IN CALL CENTRES?

Karen Niven

Could listening to songs with prosocial lyrics, like Michael Jackson's 'Heal the world', make people act less aggressively? Although this may sound unlikely, research conducted in strict laboratory contexts suggests that listening to such music might really help to make people feel less angry and to be less susceptible to lashing out at others. In this research, I aimed to test whether prosocial music could have similar benefits in everyday work life, in the specific context of a call centre.

The Problem

People ought to be able to do the jobs they are paid for in a safe environment. However, for some people, being exposed to aggression is part of their everyday reality at work. Aggression constitutes any negative acts perpetrated against workers, ranging from acts of verbal aggression (e.g., being sworn at) right through to physical acts like being hit or spat at. Aggression can come from one's manager, coworkers, or people outside the organisation, such as customers or members of the public.

Call centres are an environment in which workers are particularly susceptible to aggression, in this case, from their customers. The purpose of many calls is to complain about a product or service, meaning that customers may

start their call feeling angry. Waiting 'on hold' for a call to be answered can further increase anger levels as customers grow impatient. As representatives of the organisation, it is little wonder that this anger can end up being taken out on employees. In fact, research suggests that, on average, call centre workers are exposed to around 10 aggressive customers per shift.[1]

Unsurprisingly, the detrimental effects of workplace aggression on workers and organisations have been well-established. Not only does aggression harm the mental and physical health of those exposed to it, but it also damages their productivity and causes absence from work.[2] For such reasons, costs of aggression to UK work organisations have been estimated at around £13.75 billion per year.[3] Yet, despite the clear impetus to protect workers from being subjected to aggression at work, researchers have yet to identify an effective method of intervention to reduce the occurrence of aggression at work.

Rationale For The Project

Although applied research in the workplace has so far failed to identify a robust means of reducing aggression, a recent body of social psychology research suggests that there may be a promising way to intervene. The research, conducted by Tobias Greitemeyer, has considered the potential for music to play a role in reducing aggressive feelings and actions.

Greitemeyer's research focuses in particular on 'prosocial' music, that is, music with lyrics about benefitting other

people. The idea is that listening to such music will generate positive feelings and so encourage people to act in ways that promote cooperation and helping others. In his studies, Greitemeyer typically invites students to his laboratory and through some kind of ruse asks them to listen to a series of songs. Half of the students listen to prosocial songs (such as Michael Jackson's 'Heal the world'), while the other half listen to 'neutral' songs (i.e., songs by the same artists that have non-prosocial lyrics), and then all students perform some type of task to surreptitiously measure how happy and helpful, or angry and aggressive, they are. In several studies, Greitemeyer has demonstrated that the students who listen to prosocial music are more helpful and less aggressive towards others.[4-6]

To date, the effect of prosocial music has largely been restricted to very controlled, artificial laboratory settings. But if prosocial music could reduce actual aggressive behaviour in the workplace, it could provide a simple, low-cost means of intervention. In call centres especially, where customers are often played music while they are waiting for their calls to be answered or when put on hold by the employee, prosocial music really could help to heal the world.

What Was Done

Employees from a medium-sized call centre in Northern Ireland were asked to take part in a study about the effects their customers have on them. Taking part involved completing diaries every working day for three weeks. In the diaries, employees were asked to rate the extent to which

the customers they had spoken to had been angry and aggressive towards them at the end of every hour of work, and to rate how exhausted they felt at the end of the day.

Meanwhile, the call centre agreed to change the music that was played to customers while waiting or on hold. On one third of the study days, the music was changed to prosocial music. On another third of days, the music was left as the original music used by the call centre (typical background, instrumental music), to check that the prosocial music was beneficial. On the final third of days, customers were played the same neutral music used by Greitemeyer, to check that it is prosocial music specifically that is important in reducing aggression.

Employees were deliberately not told that there was to be any intervention during the study so that if any differences were found it could be attributed to the changes in music and not to their prior expectations about how the music might affect their customers. The music was also changed daily so that any differences would be due to the music itself and not to customers on a particular day or week being more irate, for example.

What Was Found

Statistical tests were run to see if there were differences between the days on which each type of music was played in terms of customer anger and aggression and how exhausted employees felt. The average amount of time that customers on each day had spent waiting for calls to be answered was taken into account to ensure that any

differences were not simply due to the call centre being busier on particular days.

The results suggested that changing the music that was played in the call centre did affect customer anger and aggression and employee exhaustion… but not in the way that was expected! Based on Greitemeyer's research, it was expected that customer anger and aggression and employee exhaustion would all be lowest on the days when prosocial music was played compared to days when neutral music was played and days when the music was not changed. Instead, the tests showed that customer anger and aggression and employee exhaustion were all lowest on the days when neutral music was played.

So why would it be the neutral music that would reduce customer aggression in this setting? It seems likely that, given the neutral nature of the lyrics, it is the music itself that leads to better consequences than the instrumental background music usually used in the call centre. Because instrumental background music is so often used in the call centre context, it may be that customers have learned over time to associate such music with complaining and waiting. In contrast, popular music is used more rarely, and so would not automatically prime such negative thoughts and feelings.

But why would prosocial music then not show the same benefits as neutral music? This question is especially puzzling given the strong evidence from Greitemeyer's previous research showing that prosocial music leads to lower aggression than neutral music. The answer may lie in understanding the differences between the contexts in

which Greitemeyer's and the current study were conducted. Whereas Greitemeyer's studies took place in a controlled laboratory where participants probably started out in neutral moods, we know that in call centres many customers begin their call angry because they are complaining about something. When already angry, being played music with messages about 'healing the world' and helping other people might act as an irritant (indeed, research has shown that people typically do not like listening to songs that clash with their current moods[7]). As such, in call centres, prosocial songs might fail to reap the rewards of other popular music pieces.

Making A Difference

The findings of this study suggest that playing popular music with neutral lyrics might be a promising way to reduce workplace aggression from customers towards call centre employees. By collaborating with the call centre involved in this study, the work of the RBT has helped to reduce the amount of aggression that employees in that organisation are exposed to while at work. This is beneficial not just to the call centre and its employees, but also to its customers, given that feeling angry has negative health consequences. Sharing the findings at events for other call centres and with fellow academics who research ways to reduce workplace aggression is also helping to spread the word and allow other call centres and their employees to benefit from the study.

In theory, it is possible that the positive effects of music for reducing aggression may not be restricted to call centres. There are plenty of other workplaces in which aggression can

occur and in which music can be played (e.g., in supermarkets). And of course there are contexts outside of the workplace where people can get angry and take it out on others (e.g., road rage among motorists). In future studies it will therefore be important to test whether neutral or prosocial music (or both) would help to reduce exposure to aggression and therefore promote better well-being.

Recommendations

- Workplaces in which employees may be subjected to aggression should consider using music as a way to reduce the risk to their workers
- We can also use music to manage our own levels of anger and aggression
- In contexts where people are likely to start out angry, popular music with neutral lyrics (i.e., lyrics not about helping others) might be most beneficial
- In other situations, prosocial music (i.e., music with lyrics about helping others) might be more effective

Further Reading

The full research article reporting this study has been published in the Journal of Applied Social Psychology:

Niven, K. (2015). Can music with prosocial lyrics heal the working world? A field intervention in a call center. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 45*(3), 132-138.

CHAPTER 22. 'WHO AM I?' AT WORK AND AT HOME: AUTHENTICITY AND WELL-BEING IN DIFFERENT ROLES

Anna Sutton

When we think about the idea of 'personality', we often assume that people have a stable and consistent persona (e.g., you might be outgoing and friendly, or hard-working and anxious). However, for many of us, our personality differs according to what context we are in, so that we might appear quite different at home and work. In this research, I examined whether trying to maintain different personalities at work and at home could harm people's well-being, or whether feeling like we are being true to ourselves, regardless of how we behave in different contexts, is more important.

The Problem

Anyone who has completed a personality questionnaire will know that it is sometimes hard to decide how to answer the questions. The instructions usually ask us to answer based on what we are "generally like", but for many people what they are like at work and at home are quite different. Researchers call this *role personality* and studies have found significant differences in how we behave when fulfilling different roles at work and home.[1] For example, we tend to be more hardworking and less outgoing at work than we are at home.[2] Unfortunately, while having different role

personalities seems to be widespread, the strain of maintaining this differentiation seems to have negative implications for our performance, satisfaction and well-being.[3]

These negative implications are significant in the context of the increasing importance being placed on well-being at a national, European, and even international level. There have been recent calls for measures of societal progress to include a consideration of the population's well-being alongside traditional measures such as GDP (Gross Domestic Product, i.e., national economic activity).[4] Well-being is also important to work organisations because of its links with performance.[5] But how can organisations promote well-being at work while still expecting certain professional behaviours from their employees that may well differ from their non-work personality?

The answer may lie in our sense of authenticity, that is, being *true to ourselves*, regardless of how different our work and home role personalities might be.

Rationale For The Project

There is a lot of interest in the idea of authenticity at work. We tend to believe that if we are able to be ourselves at work, we will enjoy it more and be more productive. Previous work has tended to view *authentic* people as those who have *consistent* personalities across their various roles.[3] This study took a different view, that it might be possible to have quite different role personalities yet still feel authentic. By viewing personality consistency and

authenticity as two separate concepts, the effect of each of them on well-being can be better understood and we can develop better recommendations for individuals and organisations wishing to enhance well-being at work.

What Was Done

The first phase of the study involved people in full time employment completing a questionnaire on two different occasions: once when they were at home and once when they were at work. Each time they completed the questionnaire, participants answered questions about their personality, how authentic they felt in that particular context, and their well-being. In asking people about their personality, the study looked at five key factors: (i) how hard-working or conscientious they are; (ii) how outgoing or extraverted they are; (iii) how open they are to new experiences; (iv) how emotionally stable they are; and (v) how friendly or agreeable they are.

A sub-group of people from the first phase of the study was invited to complete the next phase. We contacted people in each of four categories, made from a combination of the size of differentiation in their role personality between work and home (small versus large differentiation) and the degree to which they felt authentic (high versus low). This sub-group of participants was asked to reflect on a series of issues in an online questionnaire, once a week for six weeks. Reflections concerned how participants felt their personality differed in work and home roles; how feelings of authenticity and inauthenticity affected their work and

home lives; and the importance of authenticity for their work relationships.

What Was Found

Statistical tests on the phase one data showed that, averaged across the group, work and home role personalities were very consistent, with the single exception of people reporting they were more conscientious at work than at home. However, when role personalities were compared for each individual, there was significant differentiation between the two roles on all five of the personality factors.

Comparisons between people's feelings of authenticity and the extent of their differentiation in role personality revealed that they were mostly unrelated. This means that being authentic is unrelated to how consistently we behave across different situations. In fact, it is perfectly possible to feel authentic even when behaving in a very different manner in different roles.

The study then took this a step further to find out whether it was authenticity or personality differentiation that had the most important effect on well-being and found that it was authenticity that was key to enhanced well-being. This indicates that to enhance our well-being we do not need to try to force ourselves to act more consistently at work and at home; instead we should focus on behaving in a way that feels true to ourselves. For some people, this will be by maintaining consistency while for others it could be by adapting to different situations.

Given that authenticity is so strongly related to well-being, what are the pressures that push people to act inauthentically at work? In the second phase of the research, participants reported having three main reasons for inauthenticity at work: avoiding conflict, acting professionally, and believing authentic behaviour would result in negative consequences: *"I acted this way because I still want to be in a job […] In reality I would have liked to tell him what an idiot I think he is, but as I said, I need a job!!! I worked within the constraints of the role to survive."* These inauthentic experiences had negative effects on participants. The strongest consequences identified by participants included stress, a sense of discomfort, damaged self-esteem, detachment from work, and lower productivity.

In dealing with their work and home roles, some participants described having almost a 'double self'. For some, this meant that they were themselves at home and put on an act at work: *"…my true self comes out at home, whereas my work persona is often an act."* For others, it was the work personality that they were more positive about: *"…work is the priority and that being at work gives my life meaning […]. I feel more alert and motivated at work than at home […] I try to be a better person."* But when asked about their ideal situation, participants were unanimous in describing an ideal workplace as being one where they could be authentic, without being unprofessional: *"the ideal would be a work place that gives us space to be truly ourselves."*

Making A Difference

This project has enabled a new approach to supporting well-being at work, by considering the role of authenticity. This study has shown that employees who feel they are being authentic, regardless of the extent of their role personality differentiation, are less stressed and more satisfied with their roles.

The findings from this study have been shared at academic conferences and research seminars to encourage other researchers to use more innovative and robust methods and to consider a more nuanced understanding of authenticity. The findings have also been used in workshops with human resources professionals as a basis for developing organisational strategies to enhance employee well-being. Key to this is the finding that the work role can be a positive influence on employees' sense of self and personal development. By encouraging personal development within the work context, organisations and managers can help employees to develop a sense of authenticity at work, with all the well-being and productivity benefits that brings.

Recommendations

- Authenticity is perfectly compatible with having quite different work and home personas. Rather than feeling that we have to behave consistently at home and work in order to be ourselves, we can start to look for opportunities to 'be ourselves' in different ways
- It is normal and very common for people to maintain different role personalities. While this can be stressful,

developing a sense of authenticity in the midst of these differences can enhance our well-being

- Organisations can promote well-being at work by finding ways to help their employees to be their authentic selves at work. This can include activities that help to 'bridge the gap' between home and work, e.g., family fun days, or simply a recognition that a diversity of behavioural styles can be beneficial

CHAPTER 23. DEALING WITH WORK EMAIL: WHAT ARE WE DOING AND WHY ARE WE DOING IT?

Emma Russell

Each day, many of us receive scores or even hundreds of work-related emails. But what strategies should we be using to deal with these emails in order to best achieve our work goals and preserve our well-being? Should we be attempting to limit our use of email at work? In this research, I aimed to investigate ways in which people deal with work email in the UK and to explore links between people's email strategies and their goal achievement and well-being, in order to understand whether recent calls to ban or restrict access to work email are well-founded.

The Problem

In today's working world, the use of electronic (e-)communications has become integral to how we disseminate information, arrange meetings and appointments, and share knowledge. E-communication systems include tools such as email, instant messenger, and social networking forums (e.g., Jabber and Yammer). The elegant flexibility of these tools, along with the arrival of Wi-Fi and G4 technology, has allowed us to engage in more home-based working and to continue to keep in touch with our colleagues when we are on the move and working after-hours.

Despite the apparent freedoms that e-communication technology has afforded us, in many ways we have become increasingly shackled to our work, unable to resist that tempting 'ping' of our smartphone, no matter what we are doing. This is affecting our work-life balance and ability to detach from work, which are essential to our daily well-being.[1,2] As such, some organisations have begun to introduce culls, specifically on email activity. Atos aimed to make internal email a thing of the past by 2014. Volkswagen, Daimler, and BMW have raised policies to cut emails to employees during annual leave or after work-hours. In France and Germany, the issue has become a matter of national policy, with ministers and employment federations announcing new legislation to restrict employees' connection to email servers after the working day.[3] But if email is so bad for us, why do we keep using it and why aren't we turning off our devices when we are not at work? In this project, I wanted to better understand what strategies people are using to deal with their work email, why they use them, and how these strategies affect both their goal achievement and their well-being.

I also wanted to find out whether there were personality differences between people in how they used email. Previous research has indicated that some people are much more disposed to viewing email in a positive light, as a tool to enhance communication and increase efficiency.[4] In contrast, other people struggle with feeling overloaded and out of control when it comes to dealing with their daily email load.[5] If there *are* personality differences in whether email is having a positive or negative impact on people's well-being and goal achievement, then some of the blanket bans

being proposed and implemented by policy-makers may be at best unnecessary and at worst unwise.

Rationale For The Project

Action Regulation Theory (ART) was used to frame this research programme.[6,7] ART is a German theory of work activity, developed in the 1990s. It offers an interesting perspective on how we manage our work, by viewing work in terms of our multiple goals. ART suggests that goals provide a mental picture of what we should be doing, whilst also acting as motivational constructs. We choose actions and strategies at work in order to meet our goals and are continuously weighing up the extent to which our strategies are working and whether they need to be amended to increase efficiency in goal progress.

Applying this to how we deal with email, ART offers a useful research agenda. Email has traditionally been studied as an interruption to people's work – something that distracts us from achieving our 'real' work goals. However, because ART acknowledges that we have many goals relating to different tasks and projects, we can examine how people deal with email as embedded in our work and serving goals in its own right. What ART overlooks somewhat, however, is the notion that our strategies are chosen not just in terms of increasing work goal efficiency, but also in terms of improving well-being. Additionally, whilst ART appreciates that different people have different styles of working (with some being more planful and goal-oriented than others), they do not address this within an established framework of personality.

In this research programme then, I wanted to use ART to help to identify the different strategies that people use to deal with their email, but also to understand which goals people believe these strategies will satisfy. It was also expected that some people would engage in actions that were dysfunctional and not related to goal-achievement (i.e., 'maladaptive' emailing behaviours). Further, in order to broaden understanding and contribute to ART, I was keen to examine how different strategies related to well-being and differences in personality characteristics.

What Was Done

I conducted two studies with UK knowledge-workers. Study 1 involved interviewing 28 email-users, from a range of backgrounds and industries, about the strategies they used to send, receive, and manage their work email. The aim of this study was to enable the development of a taxonomy of email strategies and to identify any key maladaptive behaviours. I also asked the interviewees to explain why they used the strategies that they did, in order to identify the goals underlying their actions.

Study 2 then took the 22 most-often reported strategies from the first study that had at least three positive and negative reasons attributed to their use. I designed a survey that asked over 400 email-users, from a range of backgrounds and industries, to indicate how often they used each strategy and why (using the goals identified in the first study). I also asked participants to tell me about their general well-being at work and to complete a personality questionnaire. Finally, participants were asked to indicate if

they demonstrated any maladaptive behaviours in their use of email.

What Was Found

In Study 1, I identified 88 different strategies that people used to deal with their work email, which cut across 10 themes. For example, under the theme of "Inbox management strategies", the strategies of *"marking unactioned email as unread"*, and *"reviewing and clearing inbox at regular intervals"* were amongst those reported. Strategies were said to fulfil any of eight different goals for participants, including *"work goal efficiency"*, *"needing to feel in control"*, and *"wanting to show concern for others"*.

A total of eight maladaptive email behaviours were also reported, which no longer served a functional goal (even if the behaviours had been developed to do so in the first place). These included *"phantom alerts"* (feeling phantom vibrations or hearing phantom beeps when there was no new email actually present) and *"compulsive checking"* of email for new messages beyond the normal alert. Most of these behaviours could be categorised in terms of addictive tendencies, suggesting a dysfunctional obsessive/ compulsive/mood regulating/imaginary effects component to how some people deal with email.

In Study 2, the relationships between email strategies, maladaptive behaviours, goal attainment, well-being, and personality were explored. I found that all of the strategies were related to the achievement of multiple different goals.

For example, the strategy of *"having email alerts switched on and checking incoming messages immediately"*, which was used 'always' or 'often' by 64% of participants, was attributed to goals including *"habit"* (by 76% of users), *"achieving work goals efficiently"* (73%), wanting to *"feel in control"* (71%), and wanting to show *"concern for others"* (69%). The fact that most of the strategies served multiple goals was very interesting. It indicates, from an ART perspective, that many email strategies appear to be ingrained because they are multi-functional in their application to achieving work goals.

The strategies people used were related to their levels of well-being. For example, the more likely a participant was to organise email using *"systems of folders, files and sub-folders"*, the more they reported feeling calm and at ease. In contrast, those who engaged in *"email chaining or ping-pong"* (rapidly sending messages back and forth) reported greater feelings of boredom and tiredness at work. This suggests that people may be engaging in certain email strategies as a way of regulating well-being, perhaps to enhance activity and motivation.

Personality was also related to people's email strategy use. For example, socially outgoing people reported that they were less likely to deal with email outside of work hours and more likely to use short, succinct messages when emailing people. People who are more organised and achievement-focused, and people who were less open and creative, were more likely to delete email messages without even opening them.

Finally, I found that the maladaptive email strategies were interlinked with goals, well-being, and personality. For instance, those who used maladaptive behaviours for *"compulsive checking"* of email and who experienced *"phantom alerts"* tended to report goals relating to promotion of work efficiency and also experienced poorer well-being. Organised, achievement-focused people were more likely to experience *"phantom alerts"* and those with more anxious personalities showed *"compulsive checking"* and *"anxious about deleting email"* behaviours.

Making A Difference

Given the multiple strategies that people apply to dealing with their emails, the range of goals these strategies are oriented towards, and the personality differences in preferences for these strategies, the findings of this research indicate that applying blanket recommendations about whether or not to limit email at work is far too simplistic an approach. Our use of email is more complex and its function cannot simply be summarised as being 'good' or 'bad' for us. It depends on people's personality, it depends on the work that they do, and it depends on whether or not people's strategies are allowing them to fulfil their work and well-being goals.

Crucially, the findings of this research do highlight that there are some email behaviours that are maladaptive', being linked to lower levels of goal achievement and well-being. Attempting to reduce *these* behaviours and strategies is where our focus should now lie, in terms of making policies to improve work email use.

Recommendations

- Policy makers and organisations should avoid implementing generic policies in the workplace to limit use of email
- We should focus instead on developing strategies for dealing with e-communications well, rather than seeing particular tools (e.g., email) as a problem. In particular, we should train people to use more adaptive email strategies and to avoid those strategies identified as maladaptive
- Further research is needed into how different strategies relate to goal achievement and well-being on an email-by-email basis
- Research should also explore how people may use their email strategies as a way of managing their mood at work

Further Reading

A summary of the key insights from this research can be seen in this article in The Conversation:

Jackson, T., & Russell, E. (2015). Four email problems that even titans of tech haven't resolved. The Conversation, February 12, 2015. http://theconversation.com/four-email-problems-that-even-titans-of-tech-havent-resolved-37389

CHAPTER 24. DO ZERO-HOURS CONTRACTS AFFECT THE PERSONAL AND WORK LIVES OF CARE WORKERS?

Jermaine M Ravalier

Zero-hours contracts have been described as exploitative and manipulative in various news outlets and have been banned from use in a number of countries. Despite this, over 1 in 7 domiciliary care workers (i.e., those who look after clients in their own homes) and care home carers in the UK are employed on zero-hours contracts. There has been little research to date on how various aspects of work can negatively affect zero-hours workers' health and well-being. In this research, I aimed to investigate the influence that zero-hours contract can have on the mental health, work, and family lives of care workers in England.

The Problem

With the average age of the UK population increasing, the number of people requiring daily assistance from carers is also increasing.[1] The job of the domiciliary care worker and care home employee is therefore an important one; they assist with personal care (i.e., washing, cleaning, and dressing), food preparation, and giving medication, among other things. However, care workers are generally low-paid and at least one in seven are employed on zero-hours contracts.[2]

While the workplace can be a source of great enjoyment and fulfilment, working conditions can also seriously damage the physical and mental health of employees. For example unsatisfactory working conditions have been linked to complaints such as cardiovascular disease, depression, and insomnia,[3,4] and behaviours such as increased alcohol consumption and lack of exercise.[5] Irregular working hours and atypical employment contracts in particular can be important contributors to poorer physical health and psychological well-being, making it difficult for workers to have a balanced work and home life and leading to feelings of insecurity.[6,7] Thus, care workers who are on zero-hours contracts may be at risk of poor health and well-being.

Rationale For The Project

Although much has been discussed in popular media and among policy makers about the issues relating to zero-hours contracts, little research has actually been conducted to examine what effects such contracts have on workers. In the case of care working, where such contracts are rife and where poor worker well-being and health could potentially impair the quality of care such workers are able to provide, such research is particularly crucial. A better understanding of exactly how zero-hours working affects care workers, and the aspects of the work environment that are sources of stress for such workers, is therefore needed.

What Was Done

Employees of twenty two care organisations across the south of England took part in the project across two phases. In the first phase, employees on both zero-hours contracts and more typical employment contracts were invited to complete a questionnaire, in order to compare the experiences of these two different groups. The questionnaire, which was completed by a total of 199 people, asked the employees about their working conditions, how engaged they were in their job (i.e., whether they had a positive attitude toward the job), and their general mental health, as well as their age and the amount of experience they had as a care worker. In the second phase, a series of 20 interviews with care workers on zero-hours contracts was conducted, to investigate the nature of their work, the pressure associated with care work and zero-hours contracts, and how these two things influenced their work-life balance.

What Was Found

A series of statistical analyses were conducted on the questionnaire results, to investigate differences between those with and without zero-hours contracts in terms of their working conditions, general mental health, and their engagement.

We found no real differences in average mental health scoring between those with zero-hours contracts and those with contracted hours. This was surprising, given the criticisms of zero hours contracts and what we know about

other working conditions (such as shift work) adversely affecting mental health.[6] However, results did show that care workers on zero-hours contracts were at a greater risk of developing mental distress in the future. Despite this, those on zero-hours contracts were also more engaged in their work. Whichever contract people worked under, front-line care staff reported more demands and lower levels of control over their jobs than management.

By transcribing the interviews word for word and reading people's accounts carefully, several overall themes emerged from the data. The first of these themes concerned the stressors that zero-hours care workers faced in their role. One of the main stressors identified was poor pay. Despite performing a role that they saw as being vital to maintaining the lives of their clients, the care workers were often paid little above minimum wage. Another major stressor was 'critical incidents', such as violence from clients, or experience of death and dying in their role. A further stressor concerned the lack of time available to spend with clients. While interviewees described the most enjoyable aspect of their role being the relationships and rewarding nature of working with their clients, they thought that they did not have enough time with them (typically 15 to 30 minutes) to do the job to the standard that they believed was required. The care workers suggested that this limited time also made it difficult to build the kinds of relationships with clients that would reduce the pressures of the work. Interestingly, the zero-hours nature of these workers' employment contracts made this limited time more of an issue because they would only get paid for the time actually spent with clients and not their travel time. Thus, a care

worker might only get paid for a 15 minute visit, even though there might be long travel times to get between clients.

The second major set of themes to emerge concerned issues specific to working under a zero-hour contract. Power relations between employees and management emerged as an important issue. In particular, the balance of power was seen to lie firmly with the employer. This meant that, for example, employees could not refuse hours of work offered to them, even when that work clashed with events in their personal lives or was offered at the very last minute. Indeed, workers reported that should they turn down any hours offered they feared they would be offered no further hours in the future, and thus would effectively lose their job. The lack of support offered by management (who perhaps felt less invested in the zero-hours workers) and the difficulty of maintaining an appropriate balance between their work and personal lives, due largely to the unpredictable nature of their working hours, were also raised as key issues specific to zero-hours working.

A final issue of zero-hours working among care workers, which was linked into the issues of balance of power and lack of managerial support, was that of whistleblowing. While this was not a problem which was described for all workers (and therefore all organisations), some of those with zero-hours contracts described their reluctance to report or 'whistleblow' if they witnessed poor or inappropriate care being given to clients by either their colleagues or clients' family members. Their fear was that if they reported something, they would essentially lose their job by not being offered any further hours. Consequently, there was reluctance by some to report these problems.

Making a Difference

The findings from this project have already been presented to a number of care organisations in the UK in an attempt to improve the working conditions for care and support workers in the UK. There are also plans in place for wider implementation of the findings; I am going to put together a toolkit consisting of a series of recommendations for care organisations in order to improve the working conditions for employees, as well as improving the care that is provided to those who need it.

Crucially, zero-hours contracts are not only used widely in the care sector. For example retail organisations also have a high percentage of individuals employed on zero-hours contracts. It is therefore important to determine whether the issues discovered in this project extend more widely. As such I hope to be able to demonstrate that while zero-hours contracts may have a part to play in certain job roles and organisations, there also need to be certain checks in place in order to prevent the imbalance in power relations between those on zero-hours contracts and management in organisations.

Recommendations

- Due to the importance of the work that care workers undertake, care workers should be offered protection over their jobs and their working hours
- Care organisations should offer some protection to their workers so that they feel able to report any inappropriate care that they witness, whether from their

colleagues or clients' family members. This is particularly important for zero-hours contract workers

- Care workers need adequate time with their clients to ensure they are able to develop beneficial relationships and deliver the appropriate level of care. The time available should be linked to the client's particular needs

CHAPTER 25. ETHNICITY AND ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS: MAKING SENSE OF THE GAME AND LEARNING ITS RULES

Madeleine Wyatt

Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) employees are underrepresented in senior roles. One possible reason for this is that the informal or political side of organisations might be difficult to navigate for these individuals because they are 'left out of the loop' when it comes to learning about workplace politics. In this research, I examined how BAME employees learn about and make sense of workplace politics.

The Problem

The number of BAME employees entering the UK workforce is rising, yet their representation in senior positions remains disproportionally low. Just 5% of senior UK managers are BAME compared to 12-15% of the working population and this gap is reportedly widening.[1] These figures are corroborated by calls from diversity practitioners and policy makers to address this issue, highlighting the urgent need to understand and support BAME employees in their career progression.

There has been a great deal of work, particularly in practice, that has aimed to enhance the workplace and career experiences of BAME individuals. However, most research, legislation, and policy on this issue focuses on *formal*

workplace processes. This has involved formalising and standardising selection, appraisal, and promotion procedures to increase transparency and reduce the influence of bias. While this work has been important, much less attention has been paid to the *informal* and *political* workplace processes that run parallel.

Informal or political processes are those not regulated or controlled by the organisation, not governed by policy, and are largely influenced by social workplace relationships that are unchecked and open to bias. There is a wealth of literature revealing that understanding this 'political arena' and being skilled in making sense of and 'playing the game' of organisational politics can lead to a number of positive outcomes for individuals, including career progression.[2]

Importantly though, theorists have argued (but not yet tested), that BAME employees may experience greater stress in political workplaces, and may find it more difficult to learn about and make sense of political processes, as this information is passed selectively to the 'privileged few' (i.e., white males).[3] Recent research on career progression has also demonstrated that successfully navigating the political side of organisations is more challenging for BAME employees compared to their white colleagues.[4] Yet we know very little about why these differences emerge.

Rationale For The Project

Despite needing to know more about BAME experiences of organisational politics, organisational researchers have not yet engaged fully with the study of ethnicity. In a review of

organisational psychology articles since 1952, Etlyn Kenny and Rob Briner identified just 32 with ethnicity as a primary focus.[5] With few articles published in the interim, there is a need for a rigorous, applied psychological approach to explore the issue of diversity and identify how unfair gaps can be addressed. Furthermore, there has been remarkably little attention paid to the *voices* of BAME individuals, so we need to hear more about how they experience their careers, and in particular workplace politics.

One area that may have an important influence on how BAME individuals navigate political environments is 'social cognition', which refers to how people process social information and apply that knowledge to social situations. According to a recent theoretical model, two forms of social cognition are particularly important when navigating organisational politics.[6] First, political learning, which is the development of knowledge about informal and political processes, or 'the rules of the game', for example, who has power, and what are their needs and strengths. Second, sense-making, which relates to how individuals understand and explain an organisation's political landscape so they can decide how to respond to political behaviour.

Despite the theoretical arguments that BAME individuals may be disadvantaged when learning about, and making sense of, organisational politics, to date there has been very little research in this area. If we can understand more about these processes, we can identify ways to support BAME individuals in their career progression.

What Was Done

BAME employees from a range of public, private, and voluntary sector organisations were asked to take part in interviews to discuss their careers, and particularly their experiences of workplace politics. Taking part involved a 40-50 minute telephone or face-to-face interview, whichever was most convenient for the participant and allowed them to talk confidentially.

At the beginning of each interview, participants were asked to talk about what their current job was, their career history (i.e., how had they got to that point), and what their definition or understanding of 'organisational politics' was. Next they were asked to talk through a specific example of when organisational politics had *negatively* affected their career, and then when it had *positively* influenced their progression. Finally, they were asked about how they had learned about politics, any support they had received, and what they wished they had known at the beginning of their career.

Following their interviews, participants were also asked to complete a short survey, which collected information about how satisfied they were with their career overall, and how likely they would be to engage in political behaviour themselves.[7]

What Was Found

To determine how interviewees learned about organisational politics, the interview transcripts were analysed for

instances where participants talked about how they had developed knowledge or understanding about political processes. These were grouped into themes and counted to determine the most and least common methods of political learning.

This analysis revealed that many BAME employees often do not learn about politics until quite late into their career. Many described being 'kept in the dark' about the important influence of politics on their careers. When looking at methods of learning, the key finding was that most interviewees had to initiate their own learning and did so by observing others. They also reported feeling excluded from networks and mentoring relationships that could help develop political knowledge, and there were very few instances of organisations providing formal development or training on this issue. Overall, this suggests that BAME employees lack access to political learning through formal as well as informal methods.

To explore how interviewees made sense of political experiences, a method called attributional analysis was used. This method is a way of examining patterns in the way people explain the causes of key events,[8] and in this study looked at the explanations made for positive and negative political experiences. The findings were in line with what was expected – that individuals would claim credit for political experiences that benefitted them (e.g., getting a job by networking), but blame external causes, such as managers or the organisational culture for experiences that were detrimental (e.g., losing out on a promotion because the manager hired their friend). This is because these

patterns reflect natural biases in the way people tend to explain behaviour.[9]

These patterns of explanations were also compared to our interviewees' responses on the follow-up survey, which measured how willing they would be to engage in political behaviour themselves. This was important because engaging in organisational politics is arguably a crucial step for career success.[2,4] As expected, individuals who took responsibility for both beneficial *and* detrimental experiences were more willing to be political in the future because they felt they had more control over their environment.

An intriguing finding, however, was that individuals who felt that political experiences that benefitted them were caused by other people, or situations (e.g., *I got the job because my manager put in a good word for me*) were also more willing to get involved in politics themselves. There are two possible explanations for this finding. BAME employees may need the support of others to engage successfully in the political workplace. Alternatively, they may perceive politics to be Machiavellian or immoral, so use these explanations (i.e., blaming others) to soften the negative implications of their political gains (*I got the job because my manager was being political, not me!*). Either explanation means that BAME employees need greater support from managers and mentors to engage in organisational politics, but future research needs to identify which explanation is most likely, in order to effectively target interventions.

Making A Difference

The findings of this study were used to produce an Employer Toolkit, which provides a summary of the research and detailed tips for how employers can tackle the prevalence of organisational politics, but also support their employees in developing knowledge about the political landscape and skill with which to navigate it. This was forwarded to all participants, as well as made publicly available, and has received a great deal of interest from diversity practitioners globally. Findings have also been disseminated via a short research insight video and a book chapter aimed at HR, diversity and organisational psychology practitioners.

Recommendations

- Organisations should aim to enhance awareness about the significance of political behaviour in individuals' careers. This can be done using methods such as storytelling, where senior role models share their career histories, how they have succeeded, and the impact of politics along the way. Those involved with inducting new employees should also consider candid conversations about the organisational culture and the impact of politics
- Training to develop BAME individuals' political skills may enhance their feelings of control and thus willingness to engage in politics, as well as their political effectiveness
- Organisations can assist individuals in accessing the 'political arena' with formal support networks and formal mentoring programmes, which should be consistent and, crucially, long term

- Managers should be trained to ensure they are inclusive in their *informal* as well as formal interactions with staff, so that they are aware of the damaging effect that organisational politics can have on individuals' careers, particularly if they experience reduced access to political knowledge

Further Reading

You can read more about this research in this forthcoming book chapter:

Wyatt, M. (in press). Informal and political processes. In D. Atewelogun, R. Briner, T. Calvard & T. Cornish (Eds.), *Psychology of ethnicity at work*. London, UK: Palgrave.

The Employer's Toolkit that was developed as part of this research is available here:
https://kar.kent.ac.uk/59771/1/Ethnicity%20&%20Politics%20at%20Work%20-%20Employer%20Toolkit.pdf

You can also watch this research insight video for further information:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzgl9epnPxc

CHAPTER 26. INVESTIGATING UNDERSTANDINGS OF AGE IN THE WORKPLACE

Katrina Pritchard & Rebecca Whiting

Age in the workplace has become a hot topic of debate across different countries and sectors. Yet, to date, age has been one of the least researched aspects of diversity at work. Instead, we tend to assume certain 'facts' about how age affects people's ability to work, usually informed by stereotypes about the talents and capabilities of different age groups and generational categories. In this research, we aimed to scrutinise such stereotypes, exploring how they are constructed and their potential effect on experiences of work and employment across different age groups in the UK.

The Problem

Concerns are growing in the UK (and indeed elsewhere in Europe) about the 'greying' of the workforce.[1] Such concerns stem from the ageing of the population (where official statistics show that half of the UK population is now over 40 years old, with nearly 18% over 65)[2] and associated changes to pension regulations and the abolition of mandatory retirement. These concerns are also mirrored by anxiety about youth unemployment, since younger workers are often seen to represent the future of organisations.[3] For such reasons, age has now become a protected characteristic within UK employment legislation.

As a result, managers are actively engaging in discussions about age at work, as organisations seek to comply with government regulation while also making sense of the implications for their own businesses. One popular means of understanding age within such discussions has been via the use of generational labels (such as 'millennials' and 'babyboomers') to distinguish between age cohorts.

Research on the use of these generational labels has noted the emergence of clear stereotypes, such as the lazy, entitled, but technologically savvy millennial or the wealthy, hardworking, but slow to adapt babyboomer. The concept of a stereotype is used by psychologists to explain how complexity and variety, for example in relation to age identities, are made simple and manageable by using readily accessible and undemanding categories.[4] However, such stereotypes can be problematic when we make generalised assumptions about an individual based on the allocation of that person to a particular category (here, a generation) rather than seeking to understand the individual's own specific characteristics, skills, knowledge, etc.

Rationale For The Project

As age and age-related categories are some of the least researched aspects of diversity at work, there is a clear need for further research in this area. Moreover, because existing research has tended to focus on a particular age group, we identified a need for research which looks across older *and* younger ages and which develops an understanding of what stereotypes have emerged and how these might affect experiences of age at work.

Based on an initial review of how and where discussions of age at work were taking place, we decided to use online sources as primary data in our research. This had the advantage of capturing debates about age as they happened, which was particularly important given the numbers of regulatory changes that were taking place in the UK at the time.

What Was Done

Following a pilot study to assess the practicalities of using online sources, we collected data via a daily download over a six month period during 2011/2012. We used freely available internet alert tools and a tested set of search terms each day to search the (English Language) internet and identify online sources that were relevant to our research. The tested key words used were: “older worker”, “age regulation”, “age discrimination”, “age diversity”, “youth employment”, and the composite “generation” and “work”. The online sources searched each day included news media and reports from organisations and institutions as well as blog posts or reader comments such as the ‘below the line’ comments on online newspaper articles.

This process resulted in a daily list of hyperlinks to review, from which we logged, downloaded, and imported data into software used to support data management and analysis. Further material was collected via snowballing from the sources identified in each day’s list by following links or connections to related online materials. After six months our dataset comprised over 1000 sources, where a source could include multiple texts, images, multimedia items, and links.

All data we collected came from public sources, i.e., those not requiring log-on or membership for access.

What Was Found

Using qualitative data analysis approaches (including thematic, discursive, and visual analysis), we identified several key themes within our dataset. Below, we outline two of the most important themes.

Comparing and contrasting generational stereotypes in online media texts

We focused our analysis on two specific generational labels: babyboomers (typically used as a label to describe those born after the second world war and before the 1960s) and the 'lost generation' (a label used to describe young people, particularly those out of work, often used in conjunction with genY or millennials, and usually referring to those born between 1980 and 1999). We identified texts describing these generations and analysed how they were described in relation to their responsibilities as well as their entitlement and ability to work.

Our first concern was how generations were being socially constructed (that is, presented through language to the reader) and understood. We found that generations are constructed as a naturally occurring phenomenon whose presence is difficult to challenge. The validity of generational cohorts as a meaningful category of difference was rarely, if ever, questioned. Moreover, different generational labels were rarely explained and their bases

were hardly ever discussed. This is of particular concern as many academic authors have noted the inconsistent use of labels and birth date ranges.[5] We found that assumptions about year of birth are used to ascribe generational membership, with very little concern given to the disputed boundaries.

Generations often become caricatured, creating extreme differences and setting up tensions between generations whilst making it harder to look past these divisions to determine how generations may share similar concerns and issues. In contrast to the flexible notions of older and younger (where category membership changes with time), generations provide a means of fixing membership (once a babyboomer, always a babyboomer). In this way, stereotypes become regarded as permanent characteristics. Crucially, using the language of generations allows the avoidance of accusations of age discrimination, thus potentially offering the means to undermine equality legislation. Further, by focusing on responsibilities, a 'blame-game' was played out between generations which largely let others (such as the government) off the hook in relation to work and employment issues.

Examining how gendered ageing is presented and understood in online images

Here we focused on the images that we found in our data; our particular aim was to examine intersections between age (older and younger) and gender (men and women). Our main attention was on the stock photo, a particular type of image which is significant, since "we gradually come to accept them as showing us how the world really is".[6] As well

as our own analysis of these images, we used views gathered from a group of 39 participants who were shown a selection of images depicting different ages and genders.

We found that many of the stereotypes reproduced in textual accounts were repeated and reinforced (that is, socially constructed) through these images. Our analysis showed that gendered ageing can be problematic for both men and women, though in different ways. We found that the precarious and disadvantaged situation of younger and older men contrasted with more positive stereotypes of the middle-aged male manager. This individual was represented at the centre of the picture and in a dominant position (for example, standing and leaning over a table whilst others were seated). The depiction of the women was more complex. In some ways femininity was shown as a potential advantage (particularly for a 'pretty young woman'). However, we found that this was only afforded in youth and when under the gaze of other (older) men within the image. Older women were less visible and more peripheral in relation to any depiction of productive activity.

These two examples highlight the ways in which stereotypes are portrayed online. We suggest that these stereotypes are rarely scrutinised or held up for debate and so have become accepted as representing reality. As stereotypes become more entrenched, so alternative ways of seeing and understanding issues associated with age become obscured. As we explore below, applying ideas from our research provides an opportunity to instead open up these issues for discussion.

Making A Difference

From presenting our work to organisations and practitioner audiences, we have found that opening up discussions about assumptions of age at work provides a useful opportunity for those who work in HR, are interested in diversity, or who lead and manage in age-diverse organisations. For example, we used a range of stock images with a large audience of MBA graduates to facilitate discussions about age at work, exploring questions such as: How did they read relationships between older and younger workers? What assumptions did they make of differential ageing between men and women? Who did they regard as old?

Organisations could apply a similar approach, taking either generic images (such as from a stock image provider) or exploring the images they use themselves (perhaps on their website, in recruitment brochures, or annual reports). We found that this 'visual audit' approach provides a useful basis for stimulating discussion about age at work. Reviewing and considering the language of age used in the workplace is also important. Our research found that while many organisations might abide by the appropriate legislation, discussing difference in terms of generation can still lead to problematic stereotypes about age, at both ends of the chronological spectrum. Managers can usefully review organisational reports and communications to look particularly for potential age-related stereotypes and aim to eliminate these.

Recommendations

- Age is more than just a number. Consider the assumptions that are made about age in your organisation
- Age is socially constructed via the language we use and the images we select across a wide range of media. Think about what you say, what you show, and how text and images work together
- Age discrimination is becoming more complex and organisations need to be careful how they engage with age-related discourses

Further Reading

Full research articles reporting this study have been published in the following journals:

Pritchard, K., & Whiting, R. (2014). Baby Boomers and the Lost Generation: On the discursive construction of generations at work. *Organization Studies*, *35*(11), 1605-1626.

Pritchard, K., & Whiting, R. (2015). Taking stock: A visual analysis of gendered ageing. *Gender, Work and Organization*, *22*(5), 510-528.

More detail on the research approach and methods used are also provided in the following publications:

Pritchard, K., & Whiting, R. (2012). Autopilot? A reflexive review of the piloting process in qualitative e-research.

Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management, *7*(3) 338-353.

Whiting, R., & Pritchard, K. (2017). Digital ethics. In Cassell, C., Cunliffe, A. L., & Grandy, G. (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative business and management research methods*. London, UK: Sage.

Pritchard, K., & Whiting, R. (2017). Analysing web images. In Cassell, C., Cunliffe, A. L., & Grandy, G. (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative business and management research methods*. London, UK: Sage.

For further details on publications and presentations arising from this research, Katrina and Rebecca's blog on age at work can be seen here:
http://ageatwork.wordpress.com/

CHAPTER 27. DEVELOPING CAREER CAPABILITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

Pete Robertson

Entry to work is increasingly difficult for young people and in recent years there have been growing concerns about the harmful effects of youth unemployment. However, new ways of thinking offer ways to design interventions to prevent such harmful effects. In this research, I aimed to provide insights into new careers guidance approaches for disempowered youth, by identifying the most effective features of support programmes for young people moving into adulthood.

The Problem

Youth unemployment represents a major social and economic challenge to European nations. In the UK, the concern about young people not in employment, education, or training ('NEETs') has been a focus for Government policy.[1] In recent years, concern has begun to focus on the possibility that unemployment may have a scarring effect, doing long term damage to the economic health and well-being of young people.

Rationale For The Project

To help young unemployed people to join the job market, programmes are now being offered for some unemployed youths. However, to date, little attention has been paid to optimising the design of such programmes. One way that might prove promising to figure out what works best for such programmes is inspired by the work of Amartya Sen, an economist and philosopher. His 'capability approach' was originally a way of thinking about promoting well-being.[2] In essence, he advocates supporting people *to be and to do that which they have reason to value*. This approach can be seen as a reaction against approaches to society and economics that consider people to be of value only if they are in paid work.

While Sen's capability approach was originally conceived with developing nations in mind, it has been applied in Europe, and to young people as they move into adulthood.[3] There is a need for this perspective, because government funded schemes to help people into work in the UK have tended to focus on rapid placement into paid employment ("work first") and, for young people in particular, vocational skills training ("human capital"). The capability approach addresses something these interventions lack: the personal meaning of career experiences, activities, and identities for young people.

The capability approach shares with psychology an interest in self-confidence and personal agency. The concept of self-efficacy is perhaps the best developed psychological theory of confidence.[4] Sen's notion of capabilities is much broader in its scope, encompassing not just how people think about

themselves and the world around them, but also the economic, political, and legal environments within which the freedom to act is helped or blocked. The approach is intentionally broad, so as to be able to apply it to different contexts, and has been suggested to be useful in the study of careers and career guidance.[5] Developing career capabilities might therefore help to engage unemployed young people who are particularly likely to be disempowered.

What Was Done

Fourteen young people (five females, nine males; aged 18-24) who were involved in the Princes Trust group programme took part in this research. The Princes Trust programme is a 12-week programme for disadvantaged youths intended to re-engage them in work or learning. It is a personal development programme involving team working. Each week is different, and it incorporates a residential week, charity fund raising activities, mini-enterprise, and work experience, in addition to classroom-based communications skills and job search training. The study participants differed in terms of their backgrounds and educational achievement, and all were close to the end of their 12-week programme, enabling them to reflect back on the experience. I analysed the recordings of the interviews, looking for things that the young people had in common and how they differed.[6]

What Was Found

The young people reported a range of difficulties prior to joining the programme, including isolation and symptoms of depression. A minority also reported difficult life events or periods during which they used alcohol or drugs, or participated in criminal activity as a gang member. A characteristic that seemed to be common in the sample is the loss or absence of life-career goals prior to the programme. Experiences such as a sense of purposelessness, lack of motivation, or apathy were reported. In the language of the capability approach, the sample had not identified '*beings*' and '*doings*' that they valued; in the absence of life goals that they had reason to value, they were unable to deploy the strengths and resources already at their disposal.

In terms of the programme itself, three kinds of stories were reported by the group. Firstly, some accounts stressed the importance of the peer group during the training. The diversity of peers was both a challenge and a benefit. Initially some young people did not necessarily feel they would belong or fit in with others, but this was overcome by shared experience, and at a later stage some valued the diversity as an opportunity to learn about different kinds of people. Many reported having fun. Peer support during the emotional challenges presented by the programme tasks was also valued.

Secondly, the programme gave opportunities to overcome fear. Several participants highlighted the outdoor residential element of the programme, which included unfamiliar activities, most dramatically one which involved coping with fear of heights. Getting through this with the

support of peers seemed to provide the young people with a sense of achievement and evidence of their ability to cope with challenging emotions. Giving a presentation to others on the course was also described in similar terms.

Thirdly, the programme represented a maturational experience. Participants spoke in terms having grown up, and having done a great deal in a short space of time, sometimes in contrast to previous long periods of stagnation. A small minority also reported that having a structure to their time or being kept busy was important. For some, it was landmark in their development to adulthood.

In terms of outcomes from the programme, improved confidence came through most strongly. Some participants reported a strengthened belief in their own ability to achieve, a sense that they can do things if they try. Some reported improved confidence in their vocational skills; although the programme included no vocationally specific training it seemed to rekindle belief in pre-existing skills. Some reported feeling better about themselves.

A majority of the young people reported developing or regaining a sense of direction from the programme. They emerged with a clearer sense of the kinds of people and the kinds of things they might be involved in. This included specific occupational goals, or study plans leading to work. Some were engaged in career exploration or job seeking activities. For some these were new goals, and for others it was reconnecting with their pre-existing aspirations. In addition several participants hoped or expected to retain friendships with peers beyond the end of the programme. Some similarly had expectations of ongoing support from

programme tutors beyond the end of the programme which gave them some comfort.

All the young people involved in the study reported finding the programme of positive value and it was clear from their accounts that it had an impact on them. However, different elements of the programme worked for different people; there was no single active ingredient in the mix. It seems that the combination of confidence-building activities and a refocusing of life goals allowed the young people to use both their own capabilities and their available resources.

Making A Difference

This research, sitting alongside similar studies in other countries, helps to demonstrate that guidance and support programmes for young people can be understood in terms of the capability approach. Ultimately this may make it possible to develop a new language with which to talk to policy makers, and can inform the development of design principles for employment support programmes. Underpinning these with the capability approach ensures that individual choice and autonomy are central to this thinking.

Recommendations

- Short programmes for unemployed or disadvantaged youth as they move into adulthood may benefit from combining diverse activities, which allow participants to

find something within a programme that is personally meaningful to them as a growth experience

- Such programmes may also benefit from providing elements that challenge the participants, which can build confidence and provide evidence of their ability to overcome anxiety and difficulty
- Short programmes may provide a good platform for complex interventions that could reduce or prevent the scarring effects of youth unemployment

Further Reading

An article outlining the methodological thinking behind this research has been published as part of a special edition on social justice and issues of methodology:

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CHAPTER 28. WHAT ENCOURAGES EMPLOYEES TO GO 'GREEN'? TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE WORKPLACE

Lara Zibarras

It is widely accepted that if we want to tackle climate change and the devastation of our environment we need to change the way that people behave. Encouraging pro-environmental or 'green' behaviours is therefore a significant challenge for society. While researchers have studied green behaviours in people's home lives, the factors that influence people to go green in the workplace are poorly understood. In this research, I aimed to explore the barriers and facilitating factors that explain green behaviour in the workplace.

The Problem

Environmental degradation and climate change are already having serious implications on human health, as well as living and working conditions. Future projections show potentially devastating risks to the earth and its population directly through storms, heat stress, and floods; and indirectly through changes in pollution, nutrition, and mental health.[1] Efforts to reverse these environmental issues are thus extremely important and there is an urgent need to bring together governments, organisations, charities, and researchers to tackle these issues.

There is now evidence to suggest that *people* have largely caused environmental changes and that behaviour change is needed to reverse the effects. In other words, if we want to halt the damage to our environment and the devastation that is predicted, we need people to change what they are doing. In the UK, recent attention has been given to encourage people to go green and reduce carbon emissions; however, much of this work has focused on households. Research has shown that work organisations account for a larger proportion of the UK's energy and waste than households.[2] Therefore, targeting people's behaviours at work to reduce organisations' waste and carbon emissions could have a greater influence in reducing environmental impact.[3] In targeting organisations, it is important to encourage employees to become more green. However, in order to encourage employees to go green, we must first understand what drives their behaviour.

Rationale For The Project

Psychological research can tell us much about behaviour change and in particular the underlying factors that predict someone's behaviour. This may, in turn, help to devise strategies and programmes to encourage behaviour change to influence employees to go green at work.

Icek Ajzen developed an approach that helps to explain how people choose to behave.[4] Ajzen's theory is that behaviour is driven by our intentions, which in turn are shaped by three things: 1) our feelings towards (or attitudes about) the behaviour and its outcomes; 2) our thoughts about whether the behaviour is positively or negatively viewed by others;

and 3) the ideas we hold about how easy it is to actually act differently. Ajzen suggests these three factors are also influenced by underlying beliefs relating to the behaviour, pressure from other people, and factors that support or block the particular behaviour.

Ajzen's ideas have been used extensively in health-related research and practice, and work has begun in exploring how the factors he discusses could influence pro-environmental actions. Studies so far show that attitudes, the thoughts about how others are behaving, and the confidence in changing one's own behaviour predict people's intentions to conserve water and energy or use public transport .[5,6] However, it is still not clear from this research whether similar factors might drive pro-environmental behaviour in the workplace context.

What Was Done

Eighty-four members of staff, working in a range of different jobs across a UK University, were asked to take part in interviews designed to explore their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours around sustainability at work. Interviews lasted between 20 and 45 minutes and were carried out in person or over the telephone. We asked employees questions in two key environmental areas: 1) waste management and recycling; and 2) energy use. We also asked what they thought about the University's approach to sustainability. The interviews were then transcribed word for word so that people's responses could be examined.

What Was Found

We examined all of the interviews, looking for themes that emerged from employees about pro-environmental behaviours in the workplace. One key theme that emerged was that people's attitudes towards green behaviours and attitudes were generally positive. Reasons for holding these positive attitudes were personal (e.g., *"I want the planet to still be here when [my children] grow up."*) as well as societal (e.g., *"I'm trying to be a socially concerned member of society."*). However, while most members of staff were positive, there were more negative attitudes about engaging in green behaviour. For example, one employee explained, "*young people don't impress me to such an extent that I have to save the planet for them…I don't recycle*", while another explained, *"it's not something I really think about a lot."*

One important barrier that people perceived to pro-environmental behaviour was confusion on how to be greener. For example, there was some confusion about what could be recycled in the recycling bins, which made people wary about recycling in case they got it wrong. Another example of this surfaced in relation to energy use; some people weren't sure whether or not they could turn off their computer at work if they wanted to access their desktop when working from home. A further barrier was frustration at the amount of effort required to be green. If someone wanted to recycle or reduce their energy use, they had to make extra effort, for example finding the correct bins.

Crucially, many people felt that the University's culture didn't support green behaviour. For example, some felt

there was no point in recycling because they'd seen *"cleaners combining non-recycling and recycling binbags and just putting it all together."* People also described a lack of facilities, e.g., suggesting that they wanted more recycling facilities rather than merely being able to recycle paper. The views about the University's lack of support may have been a result of senior members of staff being unsure of how to promote green behaviour to others, even though they were personally engaging in green behaviours. Poor communication was a key theme that emerged, with some people suggesting that they weren't aware of the environmental policies or facilities. While communication from the University's Environmental Champions was seen as playing a positive role in increasing awareness, the Champions themselves felt that they had to work hard to counter the general opinion of other employees and that often their ideas to increase sustainability were not supported.

Finally, some members of staff felt they had limited control over their ability to be green. For example, staff did not feel they could control heating or lighting (as these are centrally-controlled features); the only behaviours they could personally control were turning off their computer monitor and recycling paper. This was seen as an important barrier to green behaviour and a frustration for staff members who wanted to act pro-environmentally. For example, one person explained *"I was doing an introductory lecture in late September and the heating was on but we had to open all the windows because it was too hot."*

Making A Difference

The findings of this study highlighted a number of attitudes, social norms, and barriers, which could be addressed in order to facilitate green behaviour in the University. The findings were shared at the highest level within the University (the University's sustainability group, which reports into the Executive team). As such, a number of changes were instigated. These included: moving recycling facilities to familiar and popular areas and increasing the number of facilities available around the University; providing better support for Environmental Champions; a monthly email sent by senior management to increase awareness of environmental initiatives and reinforce the pro-environmental message; and increasing the number of inspections carried out to provide staff with relevant information for sustainability targets and current usage.

Along with the positive changes made at the University, this research led to two further research studies. The first study explored environmental intentions and behaviours amongst staff in a large public sector organisation. The second study explored the Human Resource management practices within organisations that enable pro-environmental behaviour. These later studies have reinforced the importance of the factors identified in this research and suggest that similar initiatives to those adopted in the University would prove successful in other kinds of organisations.

Recommendations

- Being green must be easy! Organisations must ensure there are plenty of facilities available so that employees can recycle and engage in other positive behaviours
- Senior management must be supportive of environmental initiatives. If leaders aren't seen to be green, then it won't be possible to encourage employees to be too
- Information and awareness should be provided in a number of different ways including emails, leaflets, and during new staff inductions
- Environmental Champions should be used to generate awareness of campaigns and should be supported by senior staff

Further Reading

The research presented in this chapter formed the basis of two peer reviewed journal articles:

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