

Edrychiad Insight

People Panel Newsletter

Rhaglen Seicoleg Glinigol Gogledd Cymru

North Wales Clinical Psychology Programme

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Croeso.

We have spent a long time discussing this newsletter, thinking about a suitable name, inviting people to write small pieces and thinking how best to promote and share with others the fantastic contributions our People Panel make to our programme generally. With time passing we have decided to just run with the very first issue.

My own involvement with the Panel began very shortly after I joined the Programme in 2008 as a Clinical Tutor. The panel had just been set up by Rebecca Williams whom we all fondly remember as a passionate champion of service user involvement in those early days. Rebecca has since left the Programme and I then inherited her role as chair of the People Panel. James Lea, another team colleague joined me in August 2013. We as a team are committed to ensuring that our trainee clinical psychologists are aware of the needs and perspectives of service users throughout their training and that this involvement will meaningfully enhance their current and

future clinical practice. The influence of the service users and carers can be found in a number of different aspects of training. Since its inception in 2006, the People Panel have been involved with a number of important initiatives and developments. These include selection, teaching sessions, designing guidelines for service user consent and feedback. We actively encourage trainees to share possible research projects with members of the People Panel and seek advice on study design, methodology and use of measures. Feedback from trainees on all sessions involving our service users is invariably extremely positive and it is clear that their input is hugely valued and appreciated.

For my own part I am always struck by the passion, commitment and energy, members of our People Panel bring to our programme and their dedication to enriching the training environment not just for our trainees but for us all as team members. It is a privilege to be part of this process and I look forward to another fruitful year of collaboration and exciting developments.

Helen Healy



Parent Representative.

Hello, I've been involved with the People Panel since the early days although the last couple of years I've been conspicuous by my absence!

I am the Parent Representative, as the proud mother of a (now adult) son with Asperger's Syndrome, and two younger boys with various special needs - they have all at some point come under the remit of CAMHS or Special Children's Services. I am currently completing a Return to Practice course so that I can resume my career as a mental health nurse (just finished my final assignment). My last two placements have been in substance misuse and forensic psychiatry. In fact, I seem to have been a student at Bangor for as long as I can remember, having studied history and social policy here as well.

I also help local disability and advocacy charities with writing tenders and funding bids - please don't get me started on the Work Programme or disability benefits. I welcome any questions about life with autism (the boys) and acquired brain injury (me) or on working in mental health, and am happy to help out with any aspect of your training should you think I might be useful. Please prompt me if you contact me and I fail to respond as my memory is a bit hit-and-miss.

Sharron Morris

Mother of a very "special" child.

As part of the People Panel, I have been approached by a few students to provide a lay person's input to their work. Mainly this has been at the beginning of research. So a recent example was reading through a proposed questionnaire and interview script which was going to be used with parents.

Some form filling can be quite challenging sometimes due to the circumstances in which the data is collected or what the data collected is about. Sometimes particular words can be confusing or cause offence when none was meant. Often the process can be lengthy and seem repetitive becoming overwhelming. I suppose as a parent, I look at the forms differently from the writer but due to working on the People Panel, I hope I can see both points of view. I realise some content has to be there, perhaps for "legal reasons" but where there is discretion, making the language and process easier for participants should bring a better outcome. I have also read papers after the research, again to give a parent/carer perspective and to discuss other methods of publication to get the message to a wider audience. I enjoy reading the papers and the subjects for research purely for the chance to learn more about psychology. It's a fascinating subject!

In addition to this, I have been part of the interviewing process for new students to the course. The responses are very impressive to what I think is an extensive and extremely challenging experience. Reading the essays written on the day, with no chance for preparation, fills me with awe, I couldn't deliver such an excellent result in those circumstances and I'm a tutor! Again it gives me an opportunity to learn about subjects I would not normally be reading. It is also great to finally meet those students who have overcome the interview challenge to become the new intake, when they start in the first term. To paraphrase Humphrey Bogart, I hope "it will be the beginning of a beautiful friendship". The People Panel is there to help.

Kay Smith



Still Alice.

Still Alice is a brilliant harrowing and very moving film, which

portrays how a young Linguistics Professor Alice Howland develops early on-set Alzheimer's Disease, aged 50. The film is based on the book 'Still Alice' written by Lisa Genova who has a Ph.D. in Neuroscience from Harvard, so the clinical information particularly in the book is detailed with a strong emphasis on subjective accounts of neuropsychological investigations and the molecular biology of Alzheimer's Disease.

The film deals with themes of identity, loss, fear, helplessness uncertainty, family and marital relationships, attachment both before and following diagnosis.

The eventual unfolding of the diagnosis is portrayed so extraordinarily well by Julianne Moore. Emotions flit across her face in a way that we can almost feel her sense of foreboding, the terror when disorientated during a run in her local park, the sense of shame that she articulates when sharing the news with her family and college boss. Family reactions are also so well captured by an excellent supporting cast where the diagnosis and changes impact on the lives of close family. It is very interesting to see how each member reacts differently



and how Alice's youngest daughter seem to 'get' how best to respond and meet her Mum's needs. She is the daughter who is brave enough to ask the questions 'how does it feel'... Visits to long stay care homes are confronting, as is the gradual but relentless decline in Alice's independence. There is also a (perhaps too neat) depiction of a life pre-diagnosis where Alice is clearly at the height of her professional career, giving a keynote conference speech in a large West Coast University.

Even a brief (and what is proved to be a later hugely significant slip) where Alice forgets the word 'lexicon' is dealt with confidence and aplomb. Then there is the striking contrast with how all of this is lost as the disease progresses and a marked sense of then and now being two completely different universes. Alice in the final minutes of the film is seen shuffling uncertainly behind her husband as they go to see her new grandchild in hospital. She is wearing a bracelet with the phrase 'memory impaired' and yet in ways still manages to resist this diminishment of her sense of self by feistily retorting that 'she can still hold a baby'.

While the film was excellent, and well worth seeing I also strongly recommend the book which captures the nuanced feelings and behaviours of Alice and her family during this process. The chapter on neuropsychological testing alone is worth the investment!

Helen Healy





On a Boris bike in front of Buckingham Palace

A trip to London

As Trainees we are extremely privileged to receive an annual training budget to enhance our learning in our fields of interest. I recently used this budget to head to London for a 2 day workshop on Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis or IPA. I was very excited to attend this course as IPA is my chosen methodology for my LSRP.

But first for some context, as part of my LSRP I will be interviewing participants to gain an in depth insight into their experiences of preparing for and starting Peritoneal dialysis (PD). I wanted to make sure I was completely skilled up to give these guys a voice and understand their experiences in the best way I can.

So what is IPA? IPA is a qualitative research methodology which will help me to analyse and make interpretations from interviews I will have with my participants. The course was fantastic, after the first morning my mind was pickled with in depth German philosophy and I was grateful we moved onto a 'how to' afternoon of constructing interviews. The second day was again practical and based on making and analysing transcripts to begin to understand the processes someone goes through when starting PD.

One of the great things about this budget is it is a chance to leave Bangor and learn in a different environment, to meet different people and hear about their work or projects. It was also an opportunity to take some leave and spend a little time in London, I went to visit the Natural History Museum, wandered around Covent Garden and tormented pedestrians on Boris bikes. It was an intense 4 days of being an *intellectual tourist* but the course left me feeling better prepared and skilled up to start my research.

Kate Shakespeare

CBT for Psychosis Talk

On May 7th 2015, Keith Laws, Professor of Neuropsychology and Head of Research at the University of Hertfordshire, visited The School of Psychology to present a provocative talk entitled 'Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Schizophrenia – more politics than science' as part of the School's Seminar Series.

Over the course of an hour, Prof. Laws raised a number of interesting points regarding the current evidence for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Psychosis (CBT(P)), and the wider political issues regarding National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) and what treatments are recommended and offered to service users in the NHS.

Prof. Laws presented evidence from his own meta analysis which combined the findings from a number of previous trials for CBT(P). His conclusions were that, when filtering these trials based on their scientific rigour, CBT(P) no longer seems effective. He placed this finding within a wider historical context, highlighting the difficulty in challenging a widely held point of view. Specifically, he raised the potential conflict of

interest for NICE in having members involved in CBT(P) research sitting on the committee that decides on therapies for psychosis in the NHS. In addition, Prof. Laws commented on the large amounts of money that continues to be awarded to conduct research that he believes shows no effect.

Whilst the points raised by Prof. Laws regarding the quality of the evidence for CBT(P) appear to be valid, further important points were raised afterwards in discussion, which went beyond the rather one-sided nature of the talk. These included how therapy delivered in research trials is different to how it's delivered in practice: therapy is manualised and less flexible. But maybe more importantly, the published research trials outlined by Prof Laws measured treatment success in terms of a reduction of symptoms of psychosis (e.g. hallucinations or delusional thoughts), and not considering well-being and quality of life.

The talk was attended by all first year trainees and some Programme staff, and helped highlight the importance of questioning assumptions and research evidence, and asking the question: what does 'effective therapy' look like?

David Oakley & Leah Jones



Farewell to James.

The Programme recently bade a very fond farewell to James, who takes up his new post as Clinical Tutor with the Manchester Programme.

James will be so missed and has made invaluable contributions to all aspects of the Programme during his time here.

We wish him every success and warmest wishes for the future, and we will continue to keep in regular contact.

Trainee Publications.

Congratulations to Megan Marks and Gill Toms and their published papers. It is also so wonderful to see the hard work trainees put into their LSRP rewarded by published papers in two very prestigious journals.

Toms, G., Totsika, V., Hastings, R. & Healy, H. (in press). Access to services by children with intellectual disability and mental health problems: Population-based evidence from the UK. *Journal of Intellectual Disability*.

Marks, M. Huws, J., & Whitehead, L. (2015). Working with uncertainty: A grounded theory study of health care professionals' experiences of working with children and adolescents with chronic fatigue syndrome. *Journal of Health Psychology*, (1-10)