Using participatory research methods to facilitate wide stakeholder involvement: Experiences from a community public health workshop

Jo Brooks, Alison Bravington, Alison Rodriguez, Nigel King and Barry Percy-Smith
Background to the study: changing times for public health in the UK

- Health and Social Care Act (2012)
- Increased focus on **ABCD** and an **assets approach**
Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Key messages from the Marmot Review

• Health inequalities result from social inequalities

• Action on health inequalities requires action across all the social determinants of health

• Effective local delivery requires effective participatory decision-making at local level. This can only happen by empowering individuals and local communities.
Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

- Balances traditional focus on health *deficits* with an equal focus on health *assets*

- Assets may be at *individual, community, and organisational/institutional* level

  (Morgan & Ziglio, 2007)

- Focus on assets rather than needs → increased community efficacy in addressing own needs

  (Foot & Hopkins, 2010)
Our project

• Undertaken by University of Huddersfield for Hull City Council Public Health team (Brooks et al, 2015)

• Qualitative work undertaken from an Assets Approach focus:
  - What assets exist in different communities throughout Hull?
  - How can these assets be utilised?
Overview of study design

- **Phase 1:** Half-day city wide stakeholder workshop;
- **Phase 2:** Community focus groups (n = 12) with a diverse range of groups in contrasting local areas;
- **Phase 3:** Case study interviews (n=12);
- **Phase 4:** Presentation of findings to community groups and stakeholders;
- **Phase 5:** Final report
Purpose of workshop

• To explore local and national issues and challenges in responding to different public health needs;
• To identify areas of good practice and reflect on how these might be developed further;
• To identify issues and questions to inform the focus for qualitative inquiry in subsequent stages of the research;
• To achieve all this from multiple stakeholder perspectives;
• To allow the research team to learn about local context and make contacts
Underlying principles

- Appreciative Inquiry
- Action inquiry
- World (or Knowledge) Café
Participants

- Representatives from council (public health; members of HWB; social care; early years; housing; housing)
- Representatives from health services and CCG (inc. professionals, PPI, commissioned services)
- Community groups

- 40 attended in total (from 80 invitations)
Workshop plan

- Welcome and introductions
- Warm up activity
- Initial inquiry – photovoice
- Plenary
- Identifying questions
- Answering questions
- Whole group discussion
- Final discussion and reflections
Welcome/ Introductions/ Warm up activity

• Seating arrangements and ‘colour-coding’

• Introductions

• Warm up activity: what are the most important considerations in improving Public Health outcomes in Hull?
Initial inquiry – photovoice

• Choose a photo that captures something about: “What it might mean to make health and wellbeing everybody’s responsibility?” Discuss in groups.
Plenary and identifying questions

• What are we learning here?
• What seems really important in improving Public Health outcomes?
• How do these issues and questions challenge us in our own roles?

• In small groups (at ‘home table’) discuss:
  “If there were one question that if answered would best help us focus how we might respond better to Public Health priorities, what would it be?”
Answering questions

- Questions from research team (N = 10) and from previous session (N=7) stuck to walls

- Participants added responses, comments, questions using colour coded Post its (previously assigned)
In your opinion, which community groups should we be talking to in this research?

How can public health individuals’ knowledge be used effectively?

How might we make ‘healthy’ a ‘cool’ state to aspire to?
Whole group discussion, final discussion and reflections

• “Based on your collective inquiry and reflections today, let’s return to our original question. What are we learning about how we might make H&WB everybody’s responsibility in Hull?”

• “What should we do differently? What are you taking away from discussions today?”
Then what?

- Successfully built relationships between research team and participants, research team and funder and between participants themselves
- Overwhelmingly positive delegate feedback
- Event written up as interim report to funder
- Collated information usefully informed next research stages
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References