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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?”

Inspiring tomorrow’s professionals
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 might we make 'healthy' a 'cool' state to aspire to?

How can public health individual’s improve?
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
Acknowledgements

• Hull City Council Public Health Team
• Everyone who took part in both this event and the research project
• Research team