

# Mental Health and Quality of Life: An exploration of the experiences and needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the North-East and North Cumbria

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# INTRODUCTION

- With the existence of significant health inequalities and lower life expectancy, Gypsy and Traveller communities are some of the most marginalised groups in UK society (Greenfields and Brindley, 2016).
- The availability of evidence on the mental health needs, and the prevalence of suicide amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities is scant. Where evidence does exist, it conveys a picture of significant unmet need (Friends Families and Travellers, 2022).
- Factors including discrimination, bereavement, culture stress and homophobia adversely impact members' mental health and are growing concerns from within the community (The Traveller Movement, 2019).
- Paradoxically, discussing mental health can be seen as shameful within communities, and when compounded by a deep mistrust of some healthcare services, the experience of living with poor mental health can be especially distressing and isolating (McKey et al, 2022).



# METHODOLOGY

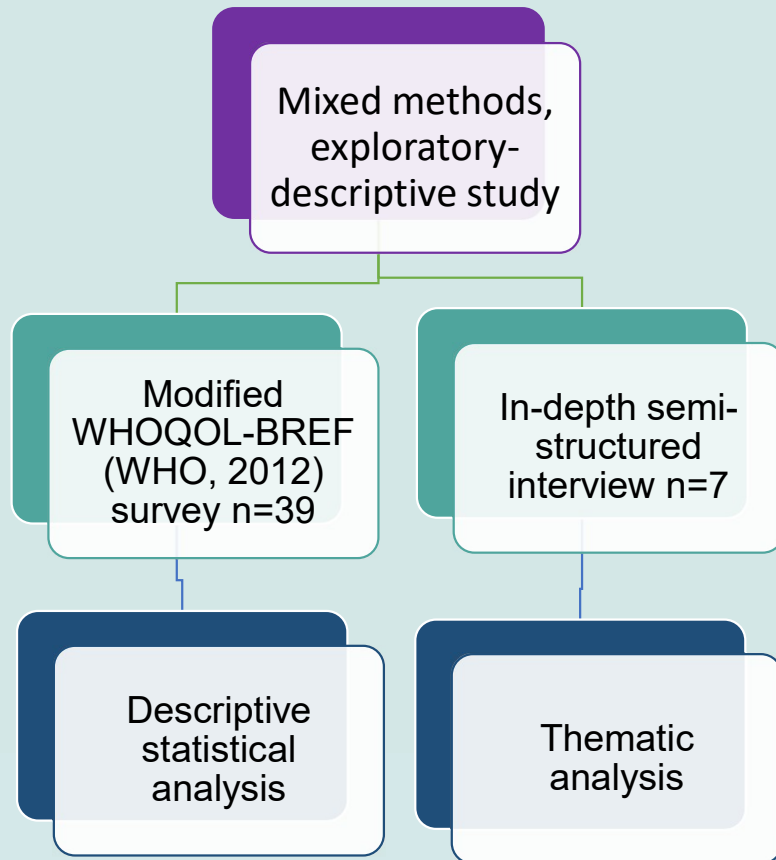


Figure 1. Methodology summary

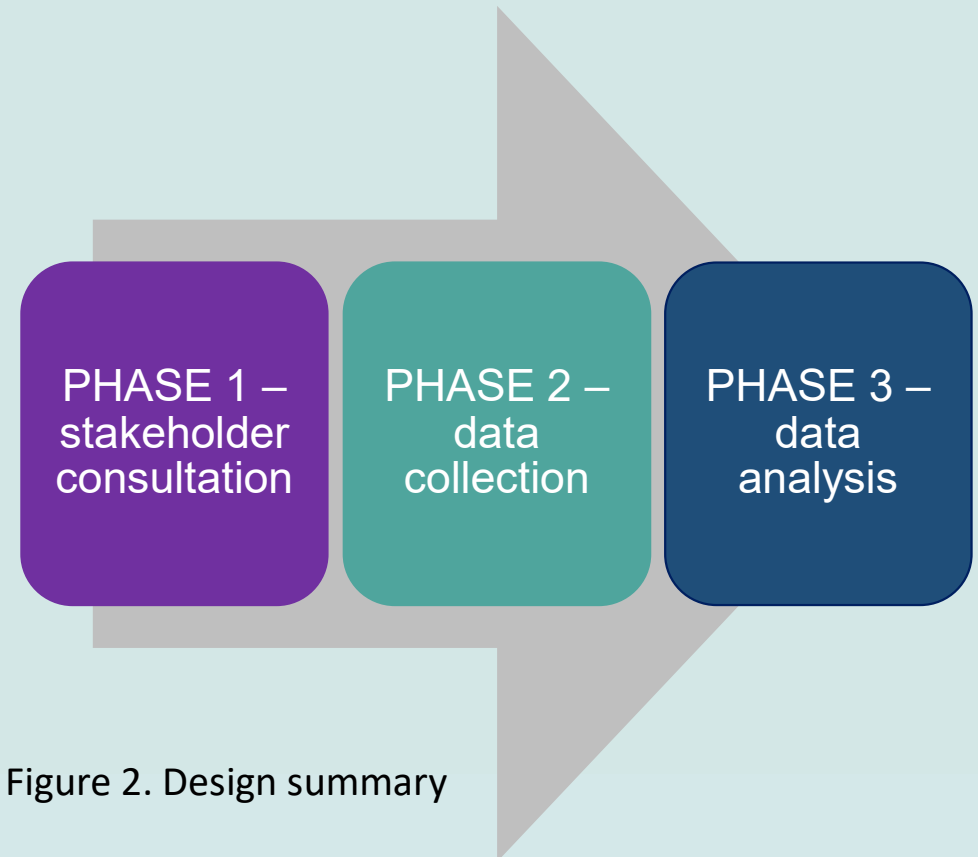


Figure 2. Design summary

## AIMS

To better understand the mental health needs of Gypsies and Travellers and develop appropriate engagement strategies to support communities to achieve improved health outcomes.

## OBJECTIVES

- Explore psychosocial and anthropological perspectives of mental health and wellbeing.
- Examine self-perceptions of social standing and quality of life within context of culture and values.
- Identify and explore barriers and enablers to optimal mental health.
- Determine how mental health services can be designed to deliver culturally appropriate and acceptable care.

# FINDINGS: SELF-RATED QUALITY OF LIFE (WHOQOL BREF)



Figure 3. Net satisfaction scores/QOL /ethnicity, age and gender

# FINDINGS: MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS (WHOQOL BREF)

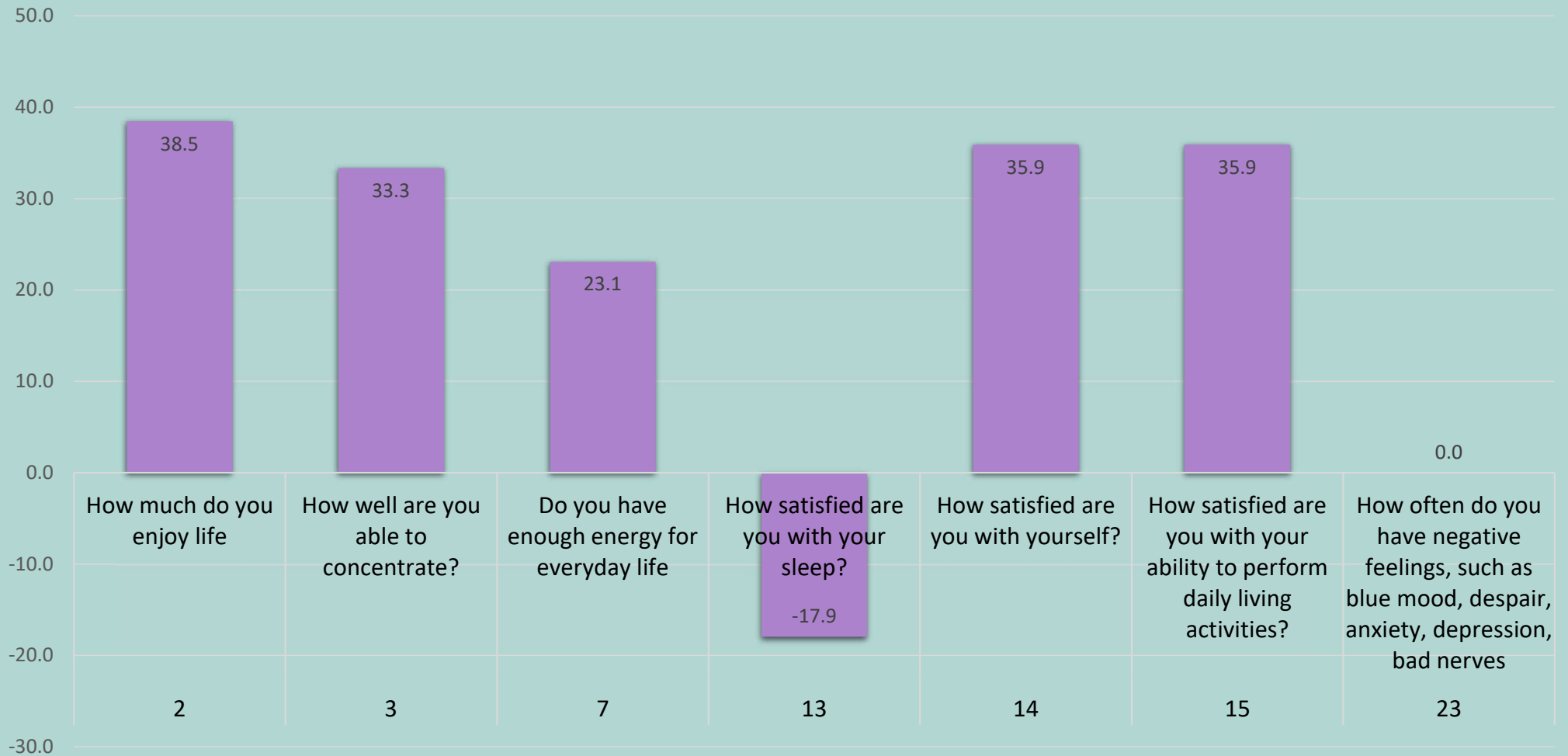


Figure 4. Net satisfaction scores/mental health Qs /all groups

# FINDINGS: GENERAL

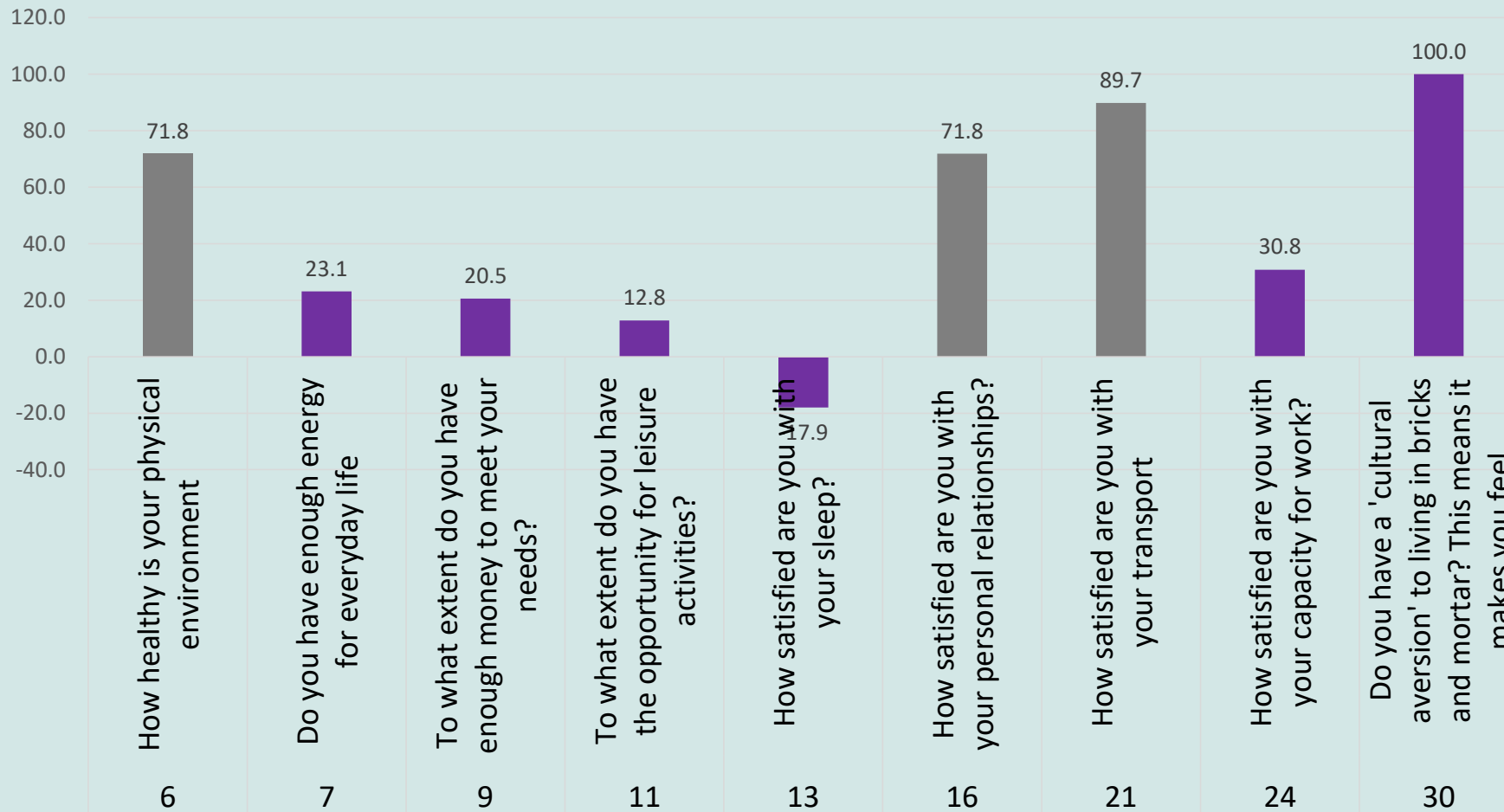


Figure 5. Net scores/general/all groups

# FINDINGS: PERSONAL BELIEFS (WHOQOL BREF)

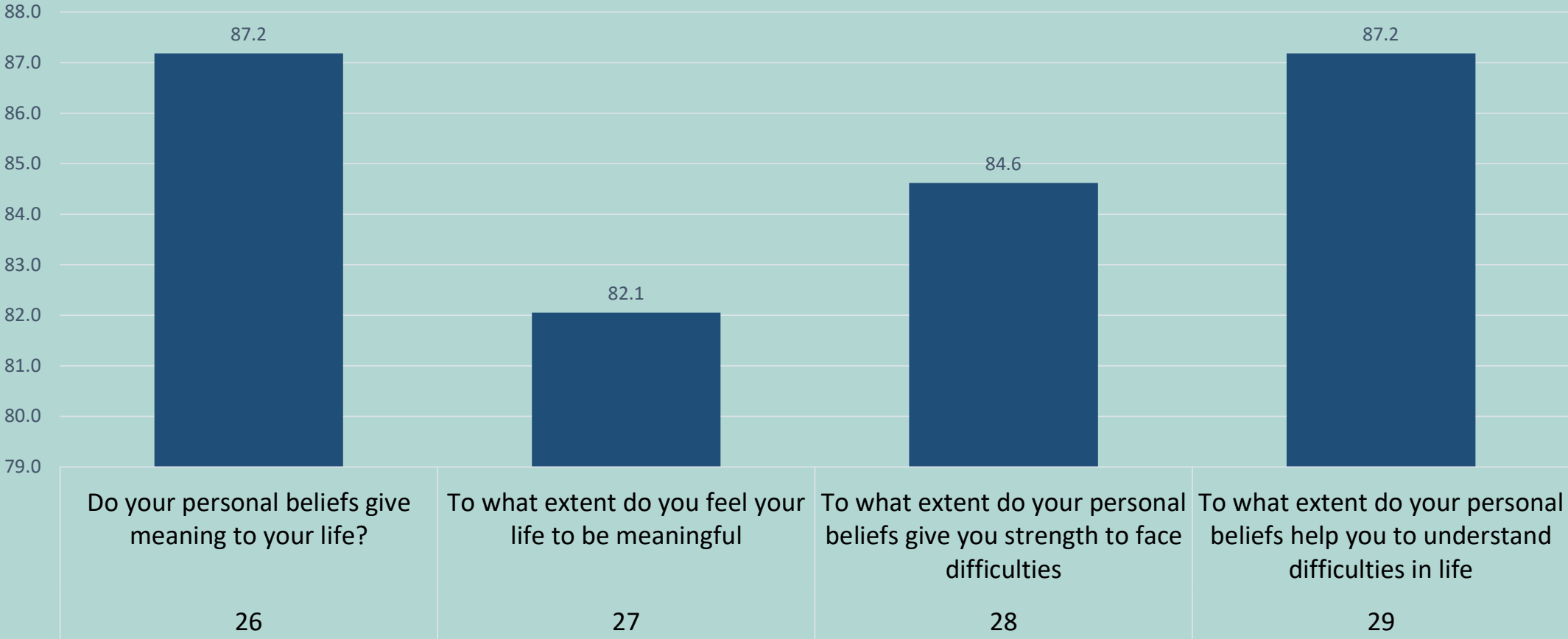


Figure 6. Net scores/personal beliefs/all groups



# FINDINGS

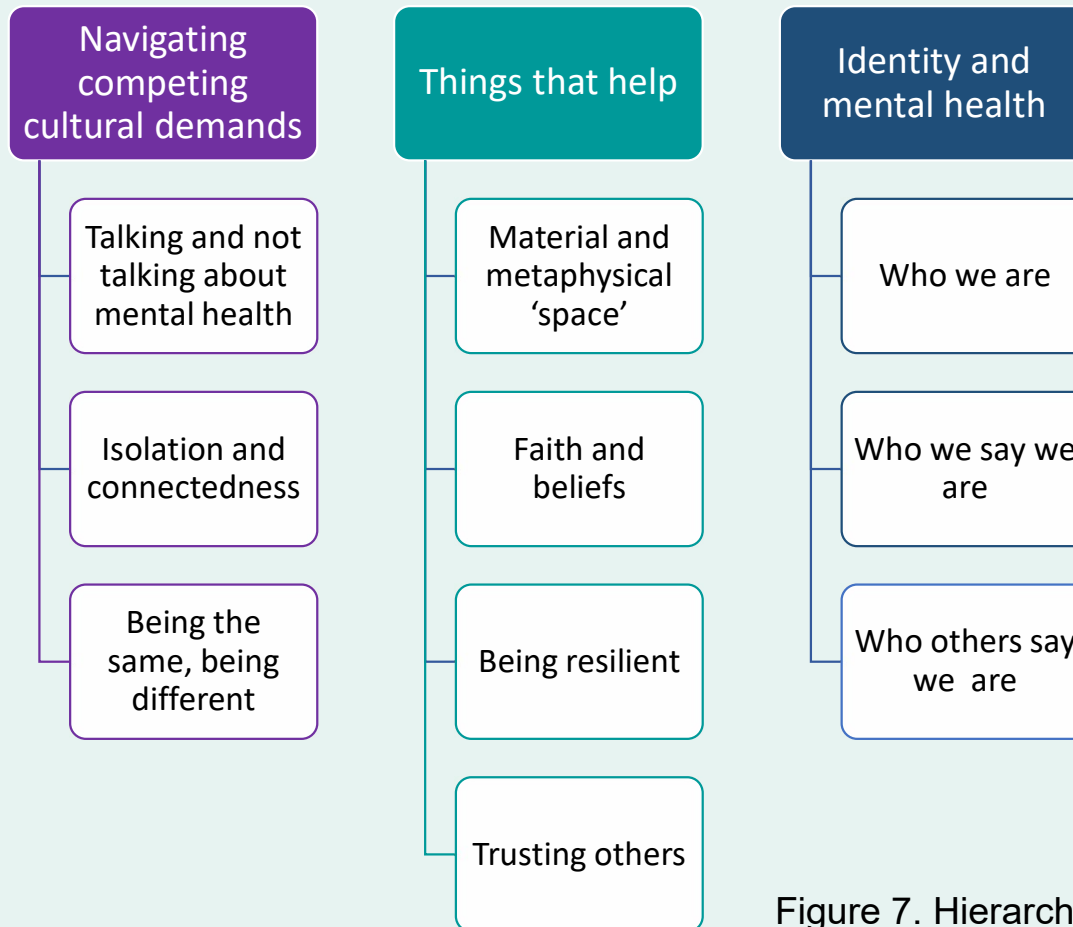


Figure 7. Hierarchy of Master Themes and Corresponding Constituent Themes

*“Well it's something you would never learn in a university, it's something that you've got to learn over time. When you first come amongst our people, you think well this lot is a very very complicated people. But as time goes by you get more and more confidence. You just don't open something up and say "right this is it", and they'll come, it takes them a while to get used to it and you've got to earn their trust.” P6, Male, Romany Gypsy*

*“....if non-Travellers understood our way of life. We could understand theirs. If people weren't judged on how we are...but because of how we are judged for who we are, we are kind of stuck. People don't change their mind, and we don't change our mind and we are just as stubborn. In my mind we are all broken, we are all the same on the inside”.P1, Male, English Gypsy*

*“We are British, we are British Gypsies, and we're really proud of that. And when the war comes and they need us, we're there....and when it's all over and finished and done we're pushed to one side. It is hurtful. And we say, 'if you want to stop and throw a stone at every dog that barked you'd never get to the end of your journey'. We live with racism everyday.” P6, Male, Romany Gypsy*

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1/ Promote mental health/emotional literacy within communities e.g. MECC (RCPH).
- 2/ Recognise diversity of inequality within Gypsy and Traveller communities, particularly most vulnerable groups e.g. Irish Travellers.
- 3/ Promote culturally sensitive and appropriate care, especially for Gypsies and Travellers accessing unscheduled care.
- 4/ Place mental health at the centre of local housing planning policy and recognise potential of healthful spaces as enablers of healthy Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- 5/ Confront prejudice and racism!



# REFERENCES

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# WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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**Thank You!**