Thinking Hats Activity – January 2023

Blue Hat – Process

Outline thinking hats process and introduce topic for discussion

Yellow Hat – Benefits

What are the benefits of researching this topic? Think positively!

Group 1

- Honest opinions – lived experience- multiple angles/perspectives
- Bi-directional value
- Engagement
- Community voice
- Safety
  - Less intimidating/fearful
  - Won't self- censor as much, don't sugar coat
- Authority/control
- Real world change

Group 2

- Upskilling
- Non-academic
- Accessible
- Grounded/real
- Meaningful research
- Treated as an equal
- What I say is equally important
- Use different ways to explain things 'we don't use the speak'

- Topics are more authentic, more important to that group of people
- Gets to the 'real' topics

Group 3

- Access to populations (community)
- Applicable impact
- Accurate, trusted findings
- Finding ways to build trust
- Getting useful insights from others with lived experience

Group 4

- Data integrity – honest feedback
- Builds trust/relationships
- Active participation in research
- Dissemination champions
- Skill building/persona; development
- Heterogeneous knowledge generated without 'academic bias'
- After opportunities 'task shifting'
- Involve 'neglected communities'
- Break down cultural barriers to research

Group 5

- More meaningful projects
- More reflective of real experience
- Opportunities to improve
- Bringing people together
- Personal development
- Collaboration
- Better insights – better practice
- Feeling comfortable to share

Group 6

- Appropriateness of research topics & question
- Real world applicable
- Capacity building
- Access & reach
- Strong on qualitative (feelings & perceptions)
- Adaptability

- Validity (people open up more)
- Communication flow
- Get lots of info from participants/quality
- Small group but hear lots of voices
- Break down distinction between producing and mobilising knowledge

Purple Hat : - Cautions

Identify reasons to be cautious and conservative when researching this topic

Group 1

- Biased perspectives – not always representative of wider perspectives – different experiences
- Risk of burden
- Tax & benefits risk
- Communicating risks
- Confidentiality
    - Disclosing sensitive information
    - Distress
- End of project – how to bring to a close e.g. at the end of funding cycles

Group 2

- Peer researchers have lives not just research
    - Time
    - Money
    - Turn down other work
    - Child care
    - Other priorities
- Feelings and emotions
    - Need support
    - Emotional needs not being considered/managed better
- The topic has value to more than just a small group

- Talk to the right people, not just those easy to access
- Quieter people still have a valuable contribution
- Payments can also cause problems
- Bias – individual experience

Group 3

- Red tape & systems/admin
- Don't lose individual uniqueness through training
- Emotional wellbeing of peer supporters
- Perceived barriers & assumptions
- Funders might be concerned 'peer research' is a buzz word
- Structures to support people when it's difficult
- Clear expectations about what's involved
- Careful to share the nuances/specifics of how it works in practice
- How to resolve projects at the end
- Experiences can be very specific
- Money
- Reports can be too brief – lose the detail
- Don't 'drop' people when project ends

Group 4

- Ensure you know what's involved & what budget is & how it would work (clarify)
- Manage expectations for those involved
- Communicate with all those involved
- Understanding motivations
- Risks of personal bias
- Funding –who? What? When? – in advance
- Careful planning
- Use of language
- Triggering content
- Reporting requirements

Group 5

- Make sure peer research is not exploitative
- Recognition of the value of peer research. Not tokenistic
- Avoid stereotyping groups

- Forcing peer researchers into academic roles

- Try to avoid leading & prescriptive research

- Avoid hierarchy

- Be aware of bureaucratic processes and how to manage them

Group 6

- Bias

- Different focus and priorities

- Time/training

- Those most comfortable/confident might volunteer

- Not trained in ethics

- Workload/boundaries/expectations

- Difficulties & complexities around payment

- Need flexibility around payment

White Hat – Facts

What research evidence is already available on this topic/ what do we know already?

Group 1

- Anecdotal evidence – skill building

- Importance of inclusion and making a difference

- Make relevant research questions and more impactful research

- Lack of positive connotations

Group 2

- Guidelines/guidance

- Toolkits

- Talking to others who have already engaged in peer research

- Pros & cons of involving peer researchers

- Benefits V challenges

- Info on recruitment & implications for participants/peer researchers

Group 3

- Does peer research lead to different findings?

- There are gaps
- The experiences of peer researchers
- Different people have different knowledge
- Might not record the impact of peer researchers
- Mostly positive impact when done well
- Lots of case studies/anecdotes
- Sometimes specifics of what/how not available
- Different terms/roles e.g. peer researcher/peer supporter

Group 4

- Tokenistic peer research
- Is it really 'peer research'?
- Relatively new topic
- Are all groups buying into the model?
- VCSE
- Academics
- Clinicians
- Different levels of appropriateness

Group 5

- Have resources from big funders
- Fulfilling Lives
- Examples online
- More examples of co-production than peer research
- Need more access to info about training process

Group 6

N/A

Blue Hat – Recap

What gaps are there in the evidence generation, translation and use?

Group 1

- Not enough peer research – how to recruit peer researchers
- Not enough time to document things

- Academic/funding processes not conducive to doing real pewter research
- Feelings comfortable – less formal, more approachable
- Being human
- A lot of public unaware of peer research
- Could benefit from more cross disciplinary use?
- Terminology – different places calling it different things
- Credibility in scientific world

Group 2

- Lack of research (fashionability)
- Getting research into the right place
- Cost implications of possible changes
- Organisational readiness/willingness

Group 3

- Joining the dots
- Making sure evidence is shared, distributed & cascaded
- Difficult to know who else needs to know?
- Maintaining a legacy when funding ends?
    - Online
    - Social media
- Reinventing the wheel

Group 4

- Does peer research involve bias?
- Why are people doing peer research?
- Does upskilling peer researchers change how much they are 'peers'?
- How can you evidence how it works when it's part of your way of working?
- How to evaluate peer research? Who is best placed to evaluate it?
- How do we know if the research participants feel peer researchers represent them?
- What constitutes a 'peer'?
- Are researchers relatable?

Group 5

- Training, delivery, pragmatic
- Not addressing diverse populations
- Language & cultural barriers
- Peer research interest developing

- How to get it out there?
- Focus on extremes
- Funding – more people & time
- Seen as risky – not as clear of an outcome

Group 6

- Procedural/how to info
- Best practice guidelines?
- Guidance about '£' implications on individuals on benefits etc.
- Pre-projects funding for set up –pot of money
- Impact/use of peer research – shaping future policies/services/practice
- How is it cascaded to community?

CREATIVITY

Green Hat - Creativity

What can we do to address these gaps?

Think creatively, outside the box

Group 1

- Language & terminology – lack of clarity consensus in language – lay terminology
- Teaching – bring peer research into degree teaching modules
- Accreditation – credibility
- Standardised training courses

Group 2

- Key preparation & guidelines e.g. around ethics & consent
- An accreditation – peer research training standard
- Defined principles
- Evaluating the impact of peer research
- Open conversations about risks
- Shared understandings & definitions
- Promote peer research more to a wider audience

Group 3

- Raising awareness
- Creative ways to resource this

- Using term 'research' puts people off – makes people think they have to be clever

- Artistic, creative ways to disseminate work

- Remove the fear – hearing real life stories

Group 4

- Exposure/events to deliberate on issues

- Academic & community involvement & support

- Respect & value for addressing issues

- Independent funding for peer researchers

- Training for academics for peer researchers

- Embedding of peer researchers within practice

Group 5

- Join up funding bodies to find a strategy on how to fund peer research sustainably

- Feedback mechanisms – involving participants

- Generating what is good practice

- Transparency

- Accessible dissemination to all trough more creative methods
  - theatre
  - arts
  - film

- Plain English

- More F-F events

Group 6

- Spread the word

- Educate funders on peer research

- Have to push back against funders

- Showcases of good practice – clinicians/researchers/communities

- Link into Clinical Research Network & make less clinical

- More projects like Youth Focus NE example

- Find organisations instead of only universities

- Push back around ethics (NHS – based) committees

- Show impact (real world)

- Qualification for peer research

- Champions model

Blue Hat - Conclude

Which suggestions do we want to prioritise?

Group 1

- Accreditation – standardised, qualifications
- Teaching & training – including peer research in academic syllabus
- Clear definition – breadth of what peer research is
- Co-ordinated approach to peer research opportunities

Group 2

- Integrate peer perspectives from the start
- Don't reinvent the wheel for each project
- Network across the whole region
- Share what works/what doesn't
- A blueprint
- Promote in ways which resonate us & potential peer researchers
- Connecting researchers and potential peer researchers
- Finding & promoting
- A network to share informal resources

Group 3

- Training for academics (on peer research)
- Language/ barriers/ acronyms
- Peer freedom/independence
- Academic bias
- Removing gatekeeping aspect
- Even playing field

Group 4

- Push back and champion
- Good practice examples/online hall of fame
- Qualification & impact (how are recommendations used?)
- What happens next for peer researchers? Can they keep going with it?
- Merge PPI & peer research more effectively

Group 5

- Sharing resources
- Sharing expertise/signposting
- Building capacity

- Time & resources

Group 6

- Collating resources, '£' for setting up peer research guidance
- Bringing together what already exists
- More patient/client/resident/community members to events
- More consultation with potential peer researchers
- Making conclusions as accessible as possible i.e. through more creative methods
- More engaging – theatre, arts, film etc.