

Developing and Demonstrating Co-production in PhD Research: Studying Power in Conversations After Self-Harm.

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The PhD..

- This research explored the experience of power, and mechanisms which enable this, during conversations following self-harm, which take place in UK community mental health settings.
- Participants included people working in and those accessing services. The study drew on participant-developed imagery, interview and mixed focus groups.

Why Co-production?

- There is a broad consensus that public involvement in health research improves relevance³, acceptability⁴ and knowledge exchange⁵.
- As a democratising⁶ methodology, co-production values multiple ways of knowing, bringing experience-expertise⁷ to an identified gap in power literature.
- Co-production aligns with a critical realist position, reducing the inherent limitations of single 'researcher perspective'.

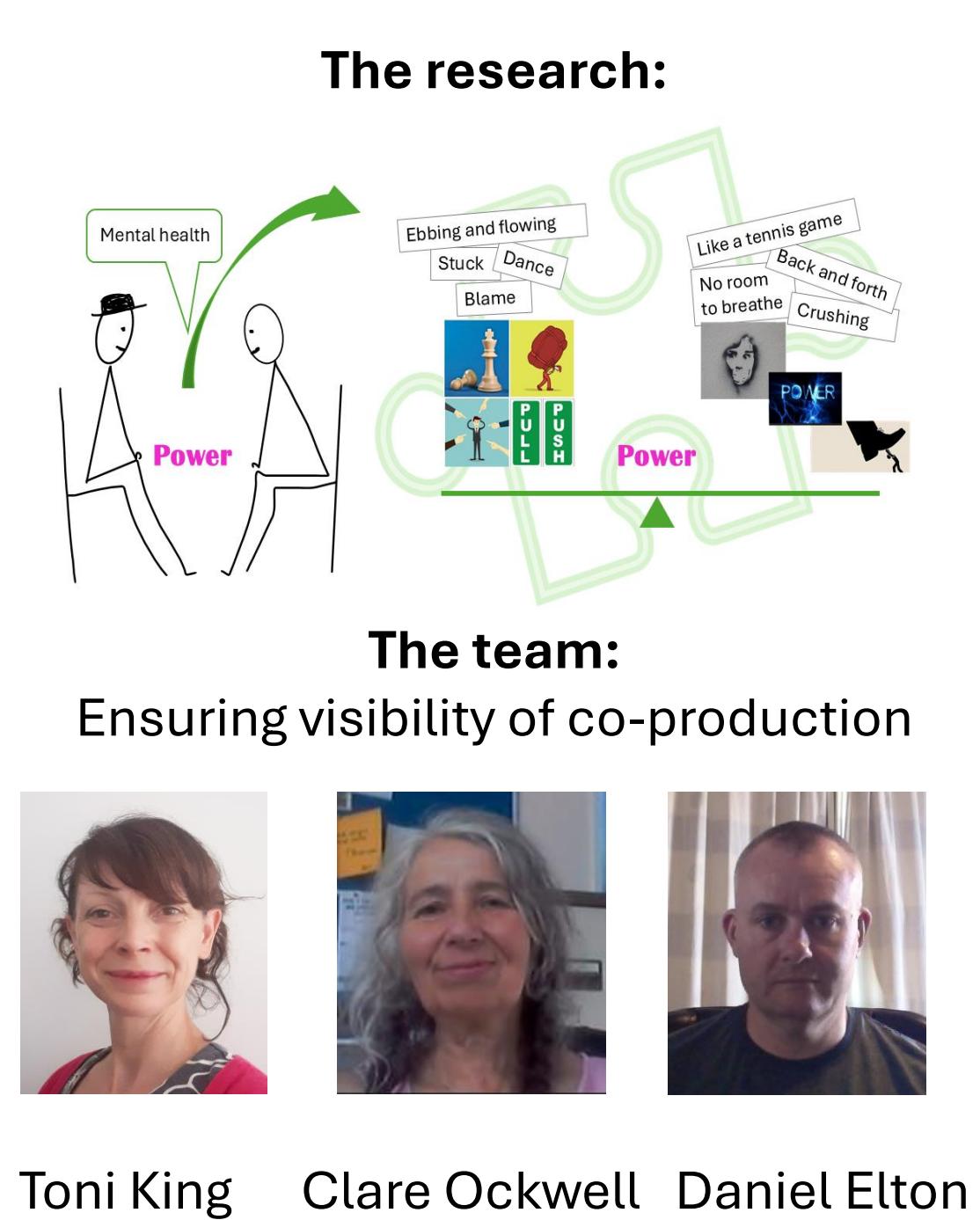
Caution..

- Co-production is critiqued for a lack of consistency in terminology & approach⁸, transparency about impact on process and output⁹.
- Literature addressing how to embed coproduction within Doctoral research is sparse^{10,11}.
- Pragmatic risks include funding and time constraints plus reliance on researcher experience to enable coproduction.

Developing Co-production

How: Our Approach

- Researcher's previous experience with coproduction ensured skills¹² required.
- Supervisory team support through 'paradigm clash'¹³ of PhD and coproduction: conflicting timelines and balancing the requirement of a unique contribution to knowledge with the collaborative nature of coproduction.
- Funding achieved (so far) through regular applications to small awards.
- NHS partnership enabled access to Lived Experience Advisory Forums (LEAF) during Embedded Consultation¹⁴ stages, including refinement of research question & method.

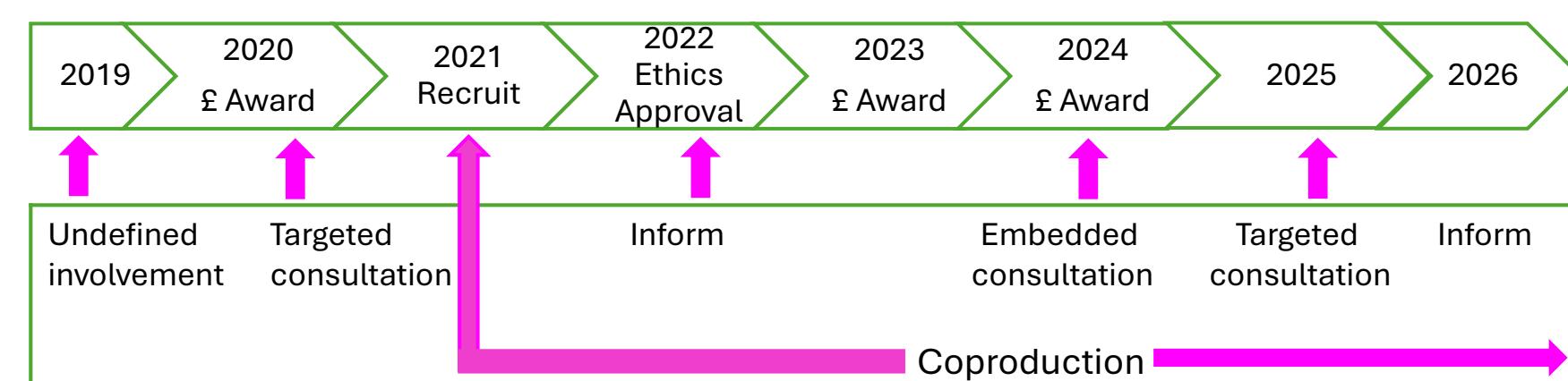


- NHS processes enabled recruitment & employment of Lived Experience Research Advisors (LERAs) to work alongside researcher from the point of ethics development onward (required NHS willingness to support non-portfolio adopted research).
- Use of GRIPP2¹⁶ to ensure transparency about where coproduction took place.
- Guided by co-production principles¹⁷ & asset-led: LERA lead development of recruitment materials, website & accounting – enabling 'positive stretch' & blurring of lead roles.
- The shared 'making'¹⁸ of regular presentations have served to highlight our progress and authentic collaboration¹⁹ - refreshing our values and commitment.
- Flex in approach required when funds run out, delaying co-analysis.

Demonstrating Co-production

Range of novel approaches developed to clearly communicate who has contributed to knowledge creation at each stage of PhD

- To ensure transparent & consistent attribution of type of engagement. Terminology selected¹⁴ and mapped across timeline:

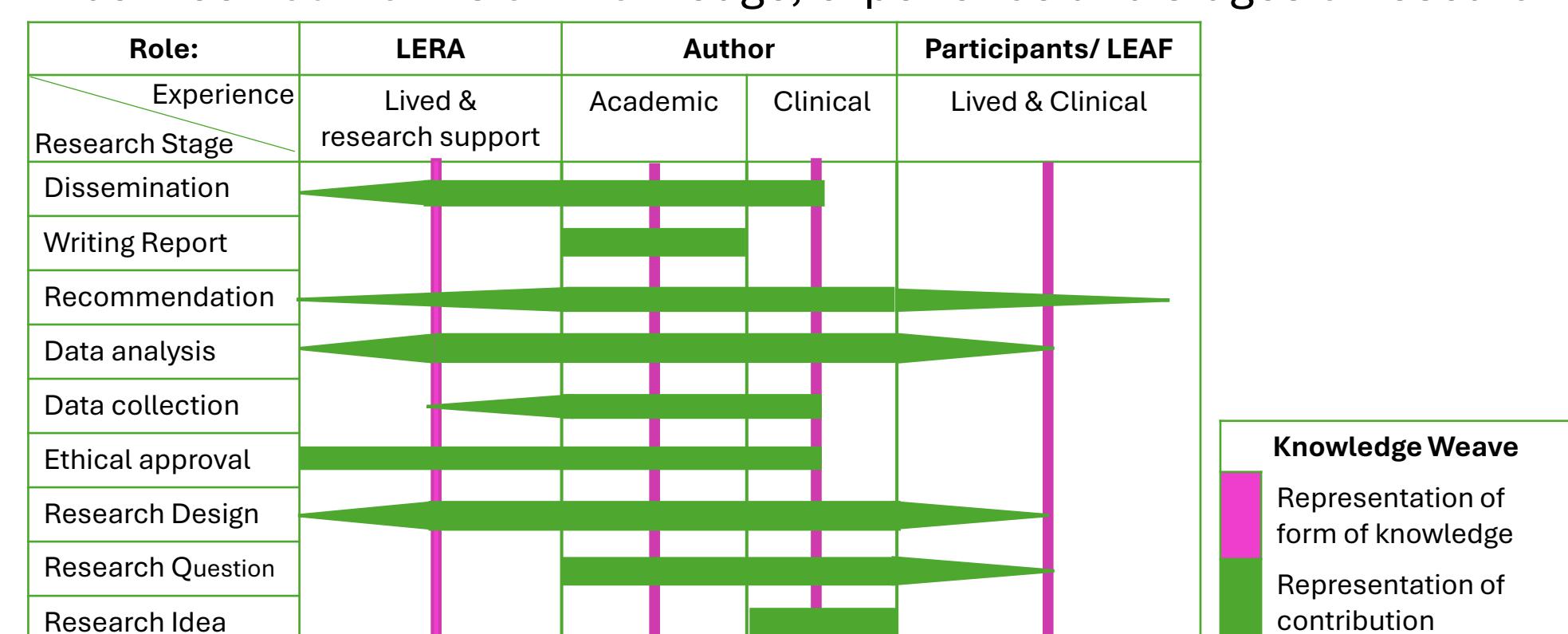


- Size of colour block to represent our contribution to each task of analysis:

Example: Metaphors	Individual Analysis	Shared Analysis	Final Decision (if no consensus)
Clare	Primary		
Dan	Intuitive Overview		
Toni	Secondary		Not Required

Who, What & When

- Size of colour block used to communicate the 'weave'²⁰ between our forms of knowledge, experience and stages of research:



- Logging the impact of co-production on knowledge-creation – collated from shared and individual reflexive diaries (example):

WHAT	WHEN	INCLUDED	SUMMARY IMPACT	EVIDENCE
AIR NHS LEAF	Aug 2019	Is the Research Q important? (Pre & post sharing Research idea and image) Could drawing help prepare someone for Research interview?	Research Q important. Include staff and service user. Important to explore community (A&E is known). Consider staff burnout / who self harm. Mixed feel re drawing – include digital / clip art / photo	

Conclusion

- This research advances how co-production in research can be approached and communicated within a PhD.
- Transparent communication about involvement approaches and knowledge contribution ensures clarity about levels of collaboration, recognition of the value of lived-experience in research, enables legacy planning for Lived Experience Research Advisors, and foregrounds the unique contribution required of a Doctoral student.
- Sharing pragmatic solutions is intended to promote coproduction in early researcher careers, thereby developing our future research capacity.

References & Info



www.spices-research.com

Acknowledgements

With thanks for:

Awards received

Warm welcome to Lived Experience Advisory Forums, LERA employment & recruitment site

Supervision, support & sponsorship



ELIZABETH CASSON TRUST



NHS
Sussex Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust



Hampshire and
Isle of Wight Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust