Achieving research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

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For discussion

- What do you think you do as a practitioner that you *know* to be effective in terms of outcomes for service users and carers?

- **How** do you know it is effective?

- **What stops** practitioners using evidence about what works?

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Why evidence is important example 1

Scared straight

Why evidence is important: example 2

- Harden A, Rees R, Shepherd J, Brunton G, Oliver S, Oakley A (2001) *Young people and mental health: a systematic review of research on barriers and facilitators*. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

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What the review found

- Mixed evidence on effectiveness.
- Interventions to promote self-esteem were more likely to be effective if this was the main focus of the intervention
- Skill development was more effective than information alone.
- **Some evidence that interventions to prevent suicide may be harmful.**
- Evaluated interventions tended to neglect physical and material factors identified as important by young people for their mental health (e.g. money, unemployment).

Why evidence is important: example 3

- Children who are looked after and stay looked after have better outcomes than those who return home after short period in care

  ➢ Being in care not as negative as is perceived.

- Forrester, D. et al. (2009) What is the impact of public care on children's welfare? A review of research findings from England and Wales and their policy implications. *Journal of Social Policy*, 38: 439-456.

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Engaging with research

1. Evaluating your own practice

2. Evaluating your service

3. Critically engaging with others' research

4. Collaborating with researchers such as in universities to coproduce research

5. Through CPEL

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Evaluating your own practice

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Wide range of potential methods

- Peer **observations**, videoed interactions
- Reflective **conversations** or formal evaluations with service users
- **Single case evaluations**: goals, baseline measures, intervention, continued measures.
  - ➤ Goals and intervention can be individually tailored
  - ➤ Singles case results can be amalgamated for broader evaluations

Evaluating your service

- Limited use of **service user evaluations** through questionnaires
  - Use focus groups/individual qualitative interviews/participative designs instead
- Importance of **baseline data**
- **Comparison group** – is there a waiting list? Or is service to be implemented gradually?

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Critically engaging with others' research

- **Hierarchy of evidence** – see 1. Newman et al (2005) *Evidence-based Social Work: A guide for the perplexed*, Russell House and 2. Martin Webber (2012) *Evidence-based Policy and Practice in Mental Health Social Work,* Learning Matters.

- Is there a **comparison** with people who have not received the intervention?

- Are these two groups randomly allocated?

- **Systematic reviews** – increasingly these consider qualitative evidence as well.

Where do I look?

- http://www.scie-socialcareonline.org.uk/ for all kinds of evidence that is relevant to social care
- http://www.scie.org.uk/index.asp for SCIE's own reviews of evidence on some topics
- The Cochrane collaboration:
  http://www.cochrane.org/
  This is mainly health care-related but does include topics relevant to social work
- The Campbell collaboration:
  http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/
  This is specific to social interventions
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Co-producing research

From mission statement:

- "Engaging a range of collaborators in research including children and young people, parents and carers, practitioners, policy-makers and social care providers from the public, private and third sectors."

Examples

1. **Children of care leavers:**
   - o Original idea from Voices from Care
   - o Refined through discussions with leaving care teams and third sector providers

2. **The TLC project:**
   - o Idea developed with local authority service managers
   - o Methods and ethical procedures shaped by consultation with young people

Structures for co-production

1. CASCADE Voices

2. Policy and Practice board

3. Asking practitioners directly about their evidence needs

Practice-informed research

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- What areas of your practice require better evidence?

- How would you like to learn about research evidence?

- (How) would you like to get involved in generating evidence?

Questions and comments

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