Exploring the potential of a needs-based well-being framework designed for a small community choir:

can collaborating with choir members and choir leaders aid the refinement of the framework guidance intended to enhance the general well-being of a small choir?

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The Context

Leader of Community Choirs for 5 years.
A focus on well-being

The Needs-Based Well-Being Framework (NBWF)
was created with a hospital based choir in mind:
14 staff and retired staff form the hospital choir



THE NEEDS BASED WELL-BEING FRAMEWORK: WHAT IS IT?

WELL-BEING : WHAT IS IT?

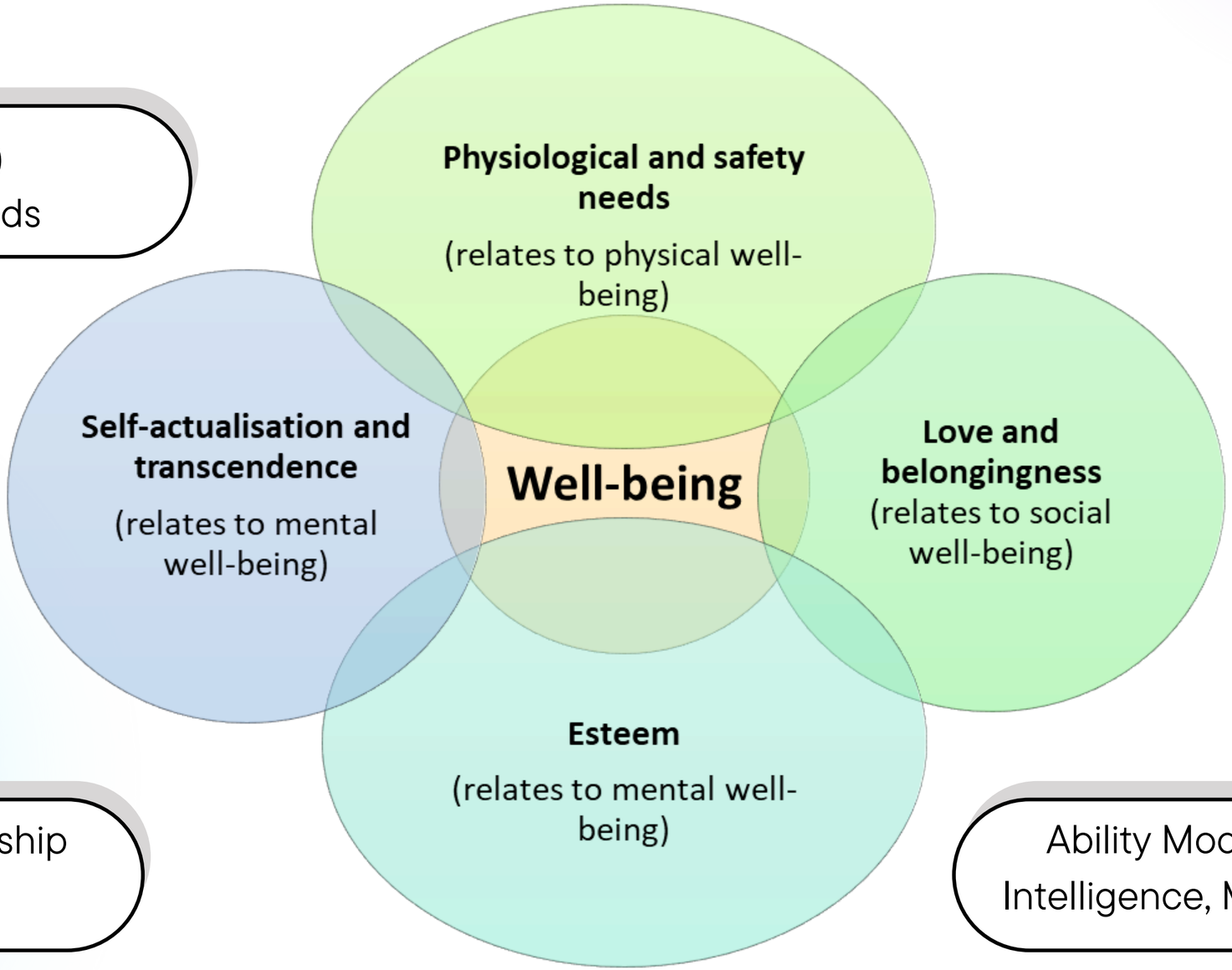
A ‘SMALL’ COMMUNITY CHOIR - WHAT IS IT?

Community Choir:

‘a place not only to share a love of music, but also to form friendships, share life’s ups and downs and perhaps escape to a place of perfect positivity every so often’ (ChoirCommunity, no date).

The Needs Based Well-Being Framework

Maslow's (1943)
Hierarchy of Needs



Transformational Leadership
Burns (1978)

Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence, Mayer et al., (2016)

The research aims are to find out:

1) if a needs based well-being framework is effective in a small choir that I lead.

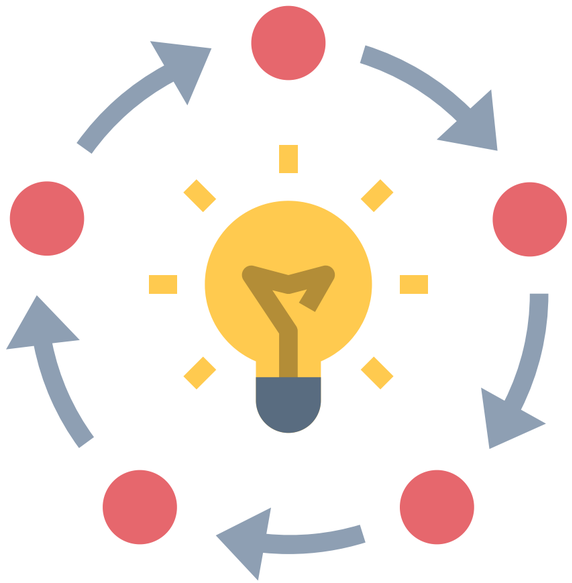
2) if it can be refined by gaining perspectives on elements of the framework from choir leaders of other small community choirs.

In collecting these perspectives from the choir members and the choir leaders, can I refine the framework to make sure that really works?

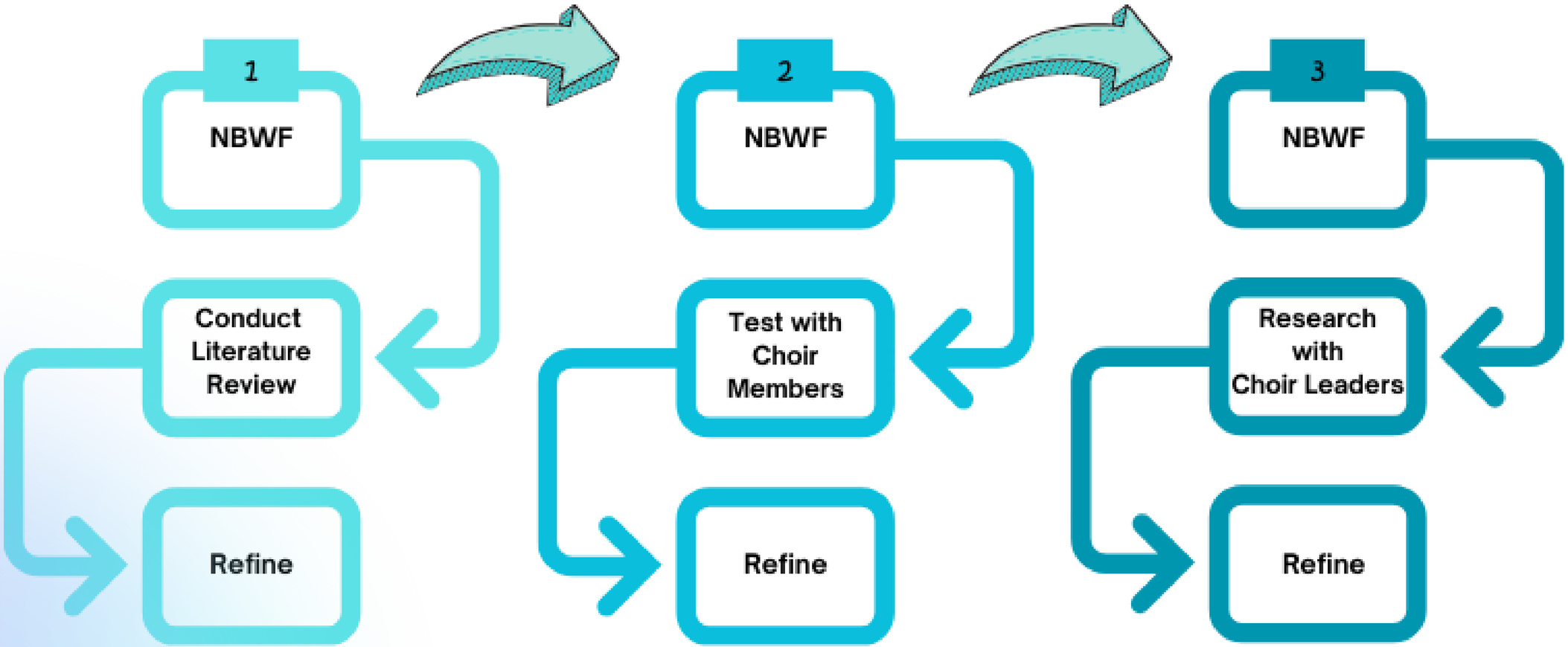
METHODS

INTERPRETIVE ONTOLOGY: **REHMAN AND ALHARTI, 2016**

QUALITATIVE METHODS: **HAMMARBERG ET AL., 2016**



Iterative process with three stages:



CHOIR PARTICIPANT DATA COLLECTION

- The NBWF was tested over a four-week period: 15.2.24-7.3.24

- Online Questionnaires to find out:
  if participants noticed any differences in rehearsals, what their opinion was on the differences and if they would like to give any more details about the rehearsals.

- Answers were taken to review and refine the framework.

- It was expected that all 14 would answer, but only 7 participants attended all 4 rehearsals



FOCUS GROUP DATA

- Seven choir leaders of choirs with a focus on well-being were asked about:
- Mutually agreed group goals
- Collaborative learning
- Self-expression
- Choir leader well-being



ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

INSIDER RESEARCHER

CONFIRMATION BIAS: HALLIAN AND SHU (2013)

SOCIAL DESIRABILITY BIAS: BERGEN AND LABONTE (2020)

POTENTIAL RISKS

PHYSIOLOGICAL AND SAFETY NEEDS

‘feeling safe and secure’ (Kasser, 2009, p175)
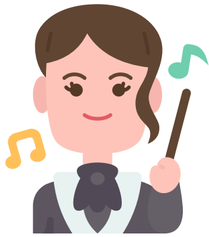
Ensure suitability of repertoire, including vocal range

Kirsh et al., (2013)



Choir Leader to emphasise relaxation through positive language and gesture.

(Durrant, 2017)



Choir leader to model good vocal hygiene by ensuring health of own voice.

(Webb, 2007; Baker and Cohen, 2017)



LOVE AND BELONGINGNESS

‘connection with other people’ (p 175)

Use communal movement in rehearsals
Carlton and Kilpatrick (2020); Harry et al., (2023)

This could include clapping/tapping the beat or walking to the rhythm of the notes Peterson (2000),



ESTEEM

‘to feel competent and efficacious’ (p 175)

‘Weaker’ singers should be supported by placing them next to ‘stronger’ singers.

Bonshor (2020)
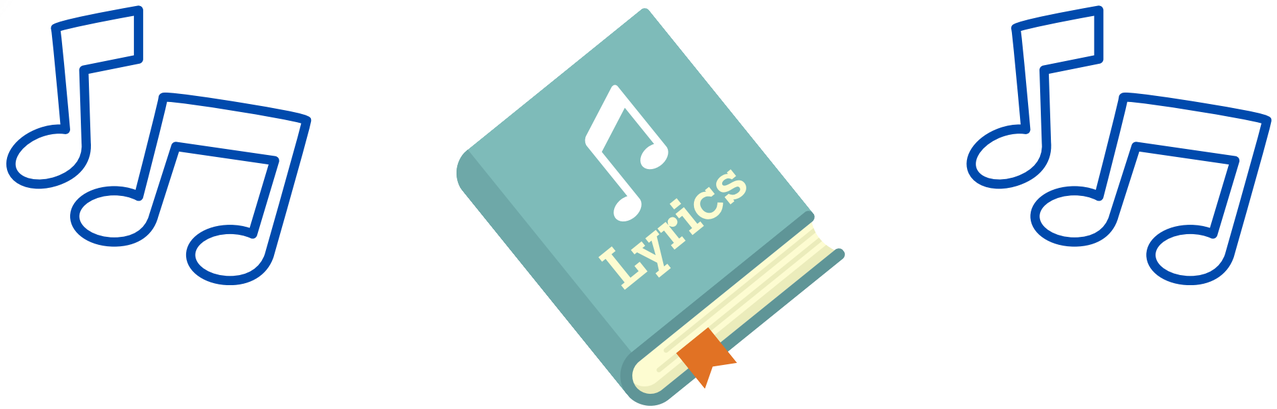


SELF-ACTUALISATION AND TRANSCENDENCE

‘to feel free and autonomous, choosing their own behaviour rather than feeling coerced or controlled by internal or external pressures’ (p 175)

Discuss the meanings of lyrics and context of songs to come to collective agreements which can be expressed as a group to enhance performances

Maas (2021)



Choir members - Physiological and safety needs

“I prefer to spend more time singing”
however…
“it did help me to understand the importance of looking after our voices”
and
“*the firework exercise made it easier to reach the high notes”* CM4

Refinement

Simple explanations to say why warm-ups and cool-downs are being completed.

Choir members - Love and belongingness

CM6 observed a
“noticeable difference in our singing”
after being reminded to
“listen to each other”.

Refinement

Vocal exercises could be used to encourage listening to others and working together - this could enhance performance of songs (positively impacting self-esteem).

Choir members - Esteem

CM2 commented that each choir rehearsal *“was more like a workshop”*

“my singing benefitted from the learning and new ideas” CM6

“has been beneficial to our singing” CM5

“the way they were planned helped us to focus on giving a good performance” CM3

“I enjoyed learning new techniques but felt we cut into singing time” CM5

Refinement

Set goals collaboratively, allowing participants control over their learning.
Creech and Hallam (2014).

Choir members - Self-actualisation and transcendence

“I think the time spent on reflecting on the different styles and the words we were singing really help and showed in the performance” CM6

“the group work on which which were the important words to emphasise really enhanced the performance of you’ll never walk alone” CM6

Validated

Discuss the meanings of lyrics and context of songs to come to collective agreements which can be expressed as a group to enhance performances
Maas (2021).

Focus group participants - physiological and safety

P5 discusses the importance of creating a familiar environment by *“being true to yourself”*, making the point that choir members *“come to you because that's the style of choir that they want and they feel safe with”*.

Refinement

Leading with authenticity will help to create a familiar environment for choir members.

Focus group participants - Love and Belongingness

P2 commented that they will join the singers, *“if I know that one part is going to be slightly light”* and that *“they love it when I do that”* *because the choir leader is seens as “part of the team” P2*

Refinement

The choir leader could balance the performance needs of the choir by singing alongside them if it is deemed appropriate.

Focus group participants - Esteem

“most of my ladies are not interested in performing – they’re there purely to have a relaxing time and it's, it's much more of a well-being choir” P2

“come for feelings rather than performance” P7

Refined

Allow adequate practice time for performances, consider informal performance opportunities to build confidence, and allow time for breathing and physical warm-ups before a performance takes place (Stothert, 2012).

Focus group participants - Self-actualisation and Transcendance

“foster an environment where they feel that they can” and that *“takes time” P6*

“some people need that structure of ‘this is what you sing, this is how you sing it“ P2.

songs of a repetitive nature can allow for some singers to *“share their improvisations over the top”*, whilst others are able to *“find their solace in that repetitive nature”* of the written notes P2

Refinement

Where an opportunity for improvisation is provided, a more structured option would allow for those not yet confident enough to express themselves in this way. This could be in the form of a short song or round that has opportunities to improvise.

CONCLUSION



LIMITATIONS



WHAT’S NEXT?

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