

MENTAL WELLBEING, CREATIVITY AND SOCIAL PRESCRIBING: A SCOPING REVIEW.

Siobhan C. McDonald



INTRODUCTION.

- This presentation will give an overview of a scoping review of literature that is available on the subject of how creativity can improve mental wellbeing, how it is applied as Social Prescribing, the potential outcomes, and the impact on health and social care.
- The presentation will give a clear rationale as to why the research is being conducted, both personal and academic.
- The key research policies and articles will be stated.
- It will include the method of Social Prescribing by General Practitioners in the United Kingdom as well as giving insight into why this has become a new method of treatment.
- Also included will be comment on the literature available on creative activities and their impact upon mental wellbeing.





THE RATIONALE

THE PERSONAL SIDE FIRST....

- I experienced the benefits of engaging in creative community based activities when I suffered mental health problems in my twenties and thirties. I finally reached out and was referred to local support agencies in Swansea. I was able to gradually gain confidence, trust, self esteem and a more positive outlook. I took part in singing classes with a group of people.
- Not only did I see a change in myself, but also in the people I was in these groups with. I had a sense of being part of, not apart from. Connecting with a community of like minded people with a shared experience was positive .
- There is a concept of the 'little c' whereby taking part in creative activities such as singing, drawing and sewing can induce feelings of reflection and distraction as stated in a study by (Fancourt et al,2019) This research paper goes on to talk about Emotional Regulatory Strategies, where the theory is explored as a measure of the efficacy of creativity on mental wellbeing.
- The people who worked with me were experienced in both the creative sector and the social care sector. A foot in each as it were.
- The benefits I experienced were a touchstone to recovery; I no longer felt isolated, and was able to stop using prescribed medication and self medicating.

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RATIONALE.

- Cuts have been made to Social Care in the United Kingdom. Since 2011/2012, 2.3% of funding has been cut from mental health services (mind.org)
- General Practitioners (G.P.s) have been using Social Prescribing as part of the NHS 'Long Term Plan' (NHS England, 2010) to treat some mental health issues.
- Sometimes referred to as the 'community centred approach' and 'personalised care', the Social Prescribing (S.P.) model works to help people with various social, emotional and practical needs. It concentrates on improving mental and physical health and wellbeing. (kingsfund.org)
- There is some robust qualitative evidence that patients who engage with S.P. have a positive experience and good outcomes, however as it is a varied and roomy model (in so far as the needs of patients range from emotional to socio-economic), it can be difficult to pinpoint solid evidence that it is effective (C. Drinkwater, 2019)
- The 'social cure' perspective has been researched and applied to S.P. and there is evidence that the phenomena of identification with others builds trust and reliance within a community of patients accessing S.P. (Wakefield, J. et al. 2020)
- This suggests that it is an ongoing, interesting and necessary topic for further research.



RATIONALE 2

Accessing creative activities could reduce the need for anti-depressant medication which in turn leads to a healthier population and reduced cost of prescription medicine.

Creativity can unlock new behaviours such as improved self esteem. To produce something, to experience the process and to have a peer recognise the value of the work is a potential boost to self confidence.

Creative activities are accessed within communities, which builds trust, autonomy and confidence.

Community means connection.





METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

- Information for this presentation came from purely online (Secondary Research) sources, as Primary Research can not be conducted in the current health crisis i.e. Covid 19 Pandemic. Therefore, qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups, participant observation and field studies have been excluded.
- Online sources used are:
 - UWTSD Library
 - Google Scholar
 - British Medical Journal (B.M.J.)
 - Mind Charity
 - Kings Fund
 - Sage Journals
 - Pro Quest
 - Welsh Government



METHODOLOGY 2

- Key words used in the literature search were:
- Social Prescribing
- Creativity
- Mental Health
- Wellbeing
- Community
- Art Therapy



METHODOLOGY₃

- Excluded are:
 - Journals published prior to 2010 as it is important to use recent data and findings in order to stay current and also progressive.
 - Journals containing research on creativity and mental health in terms of the mental health issues experienced by people who were studied because they were already deemed to be creative. Although a fascinating subject, this was not the area of interest and too contradictory. Part of the focus of this research is to unpack positive outcomes for creativity and connectivity.
 - Journal articles published outside of the United Kingdom as the research is based on motivation to contribute towards health and social care in the UK
 - Journal articles to which there was no open access, and an account or a membership charge was required





POTENTIAL IMPACT ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

IMPACT!

- Potential impact of Social Prescribing and in particular engagement in creative activities could be as wide ranging as the prescriptions themselves.
- As S.P. is delivered at local level, positive outcomes will improve communities. This could lead to an increase in resilience of both community and individuals. In terms of creative activities, events could be staged to showcase people's work, thus bringing the community together.
- At a national level, here in Wales the Government launched the 'Wellbeing of Future Generations Act' in 2015. Within the act nestles an initiative called the Wales Arts and Health Wellbeing Network, which has brought together skilled workers from both the Arts and Health and Social Care fields to deliver various projects and inform policy directly from communities.
- Clearly there is a real case going forward for the benefit of continued research and application of the partnership between wellbeing and creativity, and as a prescription for everyday health and wellbeing.

