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Photovoice as a methodology with people suffering the consequences of alcohol-related harm (something snappy?)

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CARDS

Community Alcohol Related Damage Service

You decide, twist or stick

Knowledge Exchange Research Project

- The University of Edinburgh
- National Portrait Gallery Scotland
- Lothian Charity Rowan Alba – Community Alcohol Related Damage Service (CARDS)
- NHS Lothian
- Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems (SHAAP)
- Artist
- Writer

Aim

- To present an account of a knowledge exchange project where the use of Photovoice as a methodology with people suffering the consequences of alcohol-related harm is explored.

Overview

- Photovoice and associated considerations
- Study outline
- Data
- Challenges
- Photovoice as a methodology?
- Reflections and the future

Photovoice

- "to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns;
- to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important community issues through large and small group discussion of photographs;
- to reach policymakers"

(Wang & Burris 1997)

Considerations

- Intrusion into private space

- Disclosure of embarrassing facts

- Being placed in a false light by images

(Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001)

Developing the partnership

- Relationship building fundamental
- Several pre-meetings with National Portrait Gallery and with CARDS staff
- Several months in preparation
- CARDS manager key figure
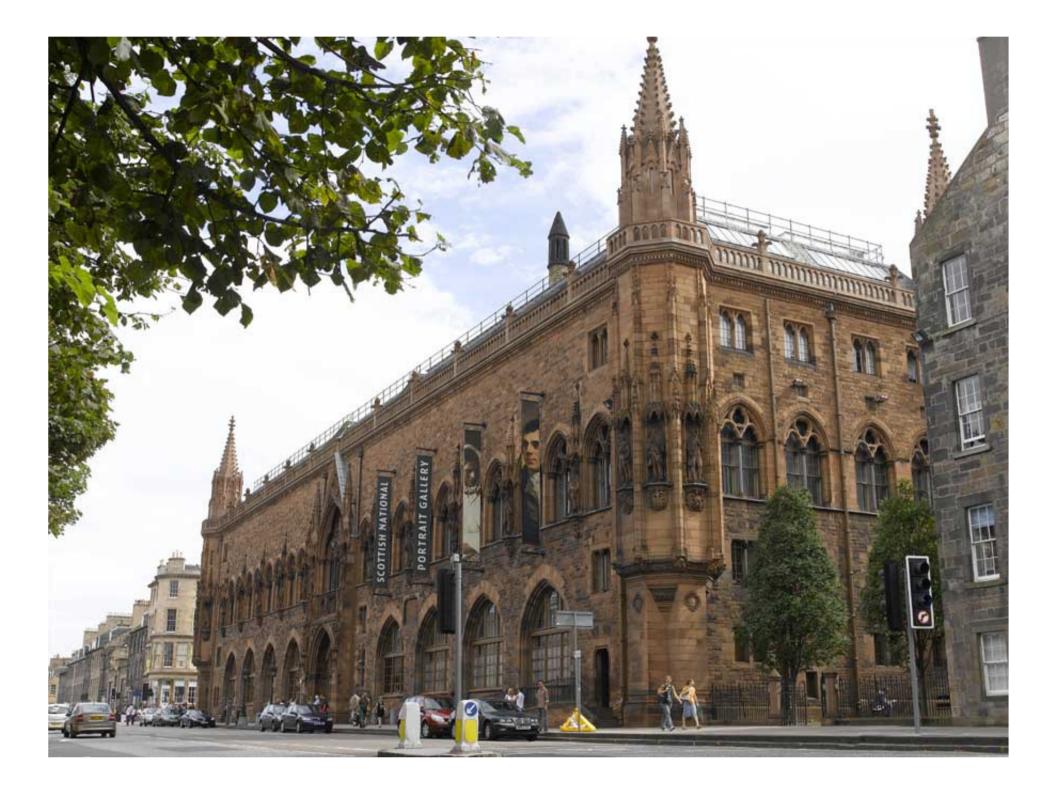- Flexibility
- Ethics and Consent

Participants

- Males who accessed CARDS (n=8)
- Age range 38-70
- Living independently (n=8)
- Employed (n=1)
- Not currently in employment (n=7)
- Living alone (n=8)
- Various stages of 'recovery'(n=8)
- Official diagnosis of ARBD (n=1)
- Cognitive impairment evident (n=7)

Design: 3 Workshops at National Portrait Gallery

Workshop 1
– Introduction of the project and the digital cameras
– Gaining confidence taking photographs (test shots)
Workshop 2
– Viewing photographs with artist (Selecting)
– Exploring meaning with writer (Contextualising)
– Personal tour of the National Portrait Gallery
Workshop 3
– Photographs and narratives (Codifying)
– Selection of photographs for conference, exhibition and individual photobook

Workshop 1

Results

- Participated in 3 workshops (n=5)
- Participated outside of workshops (n=2)
- Non attender (n=1)
- Participant M = 470 photographs
- Participant G = 75 photographs
- Participant D = 53 photographs
- Participant S = 32 photographs
- Participant P = 21 photographs
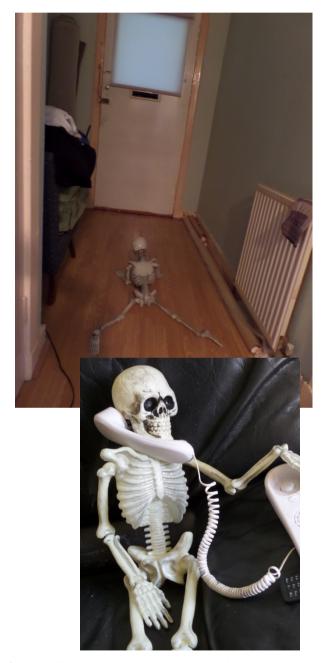
Data to date

- Participants surprised us by coming to the workshops with clear ideas about what they might choose to photograph.

- They approached the project in different ways and with different purposes;

    - Reformed, crusading, campaigning approach

    - Charting a personal journey

    - Developing confidence

    - Taking highly significant shots of life highlights

Participant 'G'

- Came to the workshop with clear views of what he wanted to photograph.
- Reformed, campaigning anti alcohol approach, firmly in recovery mindset.
- Wants to help people by telling his story.
- His photovoice story tells the tale that he wants to tell.
- As researchers we have been allowed limited insight into the man behind the prepared story.

Landmark life event

Dehydration

'I dialled 999 and crawled to the door ...'

'I wanted to take photos of all the cans but I didn't want her over the road thinking that I was back on the drink.'

'I had to admit to myself that I had a problem. The next stage was telling other people.'

Participant 'M'

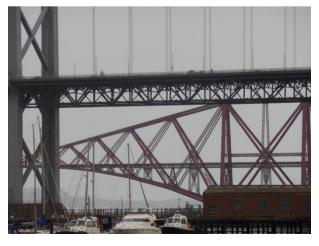- 'Taking photos of myself was a major breakthrough'
- This man came to the project with a long history of body image issues, alcohol abuse and family breakdown.
- He took the project very seriously, travelling to different towns and landmarks to take significant shots.
- At the last workshop he told us that he had been alcohol free for the preceding 2 weeks and had put a deposit down on a second hand camera.

'I took the camera to X, Y and Z, revisiting my past. … It was quite hard to go back to Y. I lived there in my forties and my kids were born there. We lived there as a family unit but I was bad with the drink. Those aren't good memories.'

'I only have letter contact with my kids. This is the first time I'll be able to send them a photo of myself.'

'Wearing the costume and sunglasses made me feel more confident.'

M's last photos included some with no props or costumes. 'Having the camera gave me the confidence to venture out of my comfort zone, to venture into the unknown

Practical challenges to using Photovoice

- Logistics

- Group workshops

- Dynamics of participants

- Individual recovery journeys

- Physical Well-being

- Cognitive Function

To enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns

- Photographic art had enabled a record of reflection
- Individual's strengths and concerns
- Participants had developed their own community
- 'Community' v's 'Individual'

Promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important community issues through large and small group discussion of photographs

- Critical dialogue and knowledge promoted
- Important individual issues
- Individual discussion of photographs
- Lack of group discussion

To reach policy makers

- Photographic art to be on permanent display at new ARBD unit

- Exhibition of photographic art to be displayed at Scottish Parliament as an MSP's exhibition Spring 2015

"There have been a lot of comments from the guys that I wanted to pass on to you and I did think that we maybe missed a trick in not offering them a space for feedback but here is a few quotes I took down on my wee jotter to remember"   (Rowan Alba Manager)

- " I thought that it was going to go on for 6 months or something, I really really liked that place, you know, the folk, all of them, they were all really nice. I wish we could go back, you know, together, they were all so relaxed. It relaxed me"   *Participant S*

"I enjoyed it. If I can make one person look at my pictures and think twice about drinking then that's a good thing. Its made me think about how I can help others, like maybe mentoring or something" Participant G

"Aye it was alright, I could have taken better photo's but I dinnae like having other people's stuff, like the expensive camera and that. I'm gonna get my own one now" Participant D

"I told my psychiatrist about the pictures I was taking of me in the sailors uniform, I told him I felt confident when I wore it. He said, I thought you said you had a problem with your body image ?, I kinda thought about that twice before I answered. Maybe its been good for me"
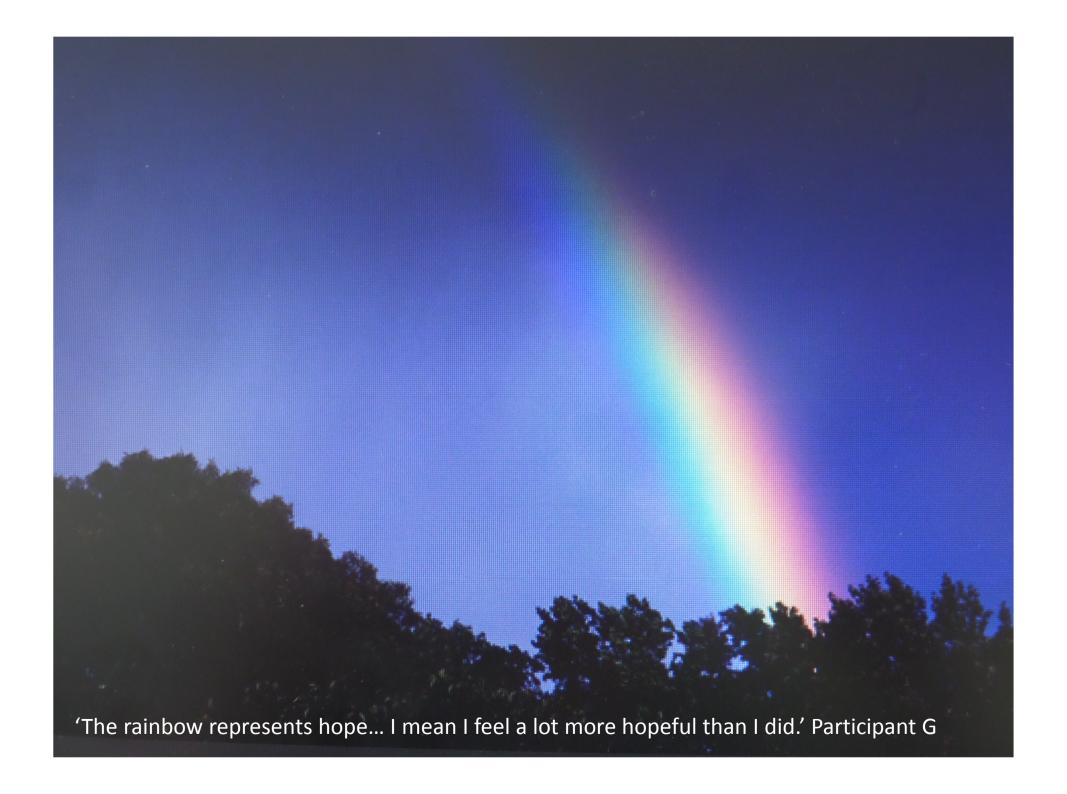
Participant M

"Yeah it was alright, I wasn't quite sure why I was there but getting the taxi made it easier, however once you have taken the four walls your limited to what comes next. But then that's because I don't get out and about as much as I would like, to gigs and that I mean. But I'll tell you what, it has made me think about asking that social worker about getting access to my money to buy a camera, I'm allowed the money for things like that. They keep it to stop me buying booze, but I'm sure they'd agree to this."

Participant P

Reflections and the future

- Therapeutic engagement
- Trust, respect, unspoken rules
- Mutual exchange and benefit
- 2 cameras donated to CARDS
- Photobooks donated to the 'guys'
- Starting up photographic art activities at CARDS
- Funding for photographic art engagement with those in supported housing with ARBD in collaboration with CARDS

'The rainbow represents hope... I mean I feel a lot more hopeful than I did.' Participant G

References

- Wang C & Redwood-Jones (2001) Photovoice ethics: perspectives from flint photovoice. Health Education and Behaviour, 28 (5), 560-572

- Wang C & Burris MA (1997) Photovoice: Concept, Methodology, and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment. Health Education & Behavior, Vol 24(3), 369-387