Chapter 6:
Taking a proposal seriously: Orientations to agenda and agency in support workers' responses to client proposals

Abstract
While joint decision-making is regularly launched by a proposal, it is the recipients' responses that crucially influence the proposal outcome. This chapter examines how support workers respond to the proposals made by clients during rehabilitation group meetings at the Clubhouse. Drawing on a collection of 180 client-initiated proposal sequences, the paper describes two dilemmas that the support workers face when seeking to take client proposals "seriously." The first concerns the meeting's *agenda* and consists of a tension between providing recognition for the individual client and encouraging collective participation. The second dilemma has to do with *agency* and consists of a tension between focusing on the client as the originator of the proposal and avoiding treating him or her alone accountable for it. The analysis of these dilemmas contributes to a deeper understanding of group decision-making, in general, while these findings have specific relevance in mental health rehabilitation.

Keywords: agenda management, distribution of agency, participation, proposals, joint decision-making, mental health rehabilitation, conversation analysis, personal pronouns
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Joint decision-making is regularly launched by a proposal. Inasmuch as these proposals are made by mental health professionals, the genuine jointness of the decision-making outcome is dependent on the degree to which clients can be encouraged to respond to these proposals in their own terms. Thus, from the perspective of equal participation, those situations in which the clients make proposals may come across as optimal. What will be demonstrated below, however, is the complexity of these sequences. This chapter provides an account of the dilemmas that support workers at the Clubhouse mental health rehabilitation community face when seeking to take client's proposals "seriously".

Agenda, agency, and client encouragement

Joint decision-making as an activity is deeply intertwined with control over the agenda of interaction. Besides suggesting a specific idea, every proposal involves an implicit suggestion about what should be done right now – that is, to engage in a discussion about the idea (Stevanovic, 2013; 2015). In this sense, the mere act of making a proposal entails an attempt to exercise control over the agenda of the ongoing interaction. Indeed, proposals constitute effective attempts to counteract what Lukes (1974) referred to as "non-decisions," which result from all those social pressures that discourage the making of proposals about specific issues and lead to their suppression from becoming "decisionable" in the first place.

Control over the interactional agenda is typically associated with institutionalized positions of power and deontic authority (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012), which characterize news interviews (Greatbatch, 1988) and encounters in the classroom (Mehan, 1979) and court (Atkinson & Drew, 1979). In her classical study on family health-promotion encounters, Kendall (1993) found that "the health visitors set the agenda for the visit, controlled 'turn taking' by asking many questions, gave unsolicited advice and managed closure of a conversation" (p. 105). In organizational meetings, there is often an appointed chairperson exerting control over what will be talked about and when (Boden, 1994; Angouri & Marra, 2011), while in informally organized meetings the interactional agenda may be negotiable from moment to moment (Stevanovic 2013).

Control over the interactional agenda is inherently bound to agency. According to Enfield (2011), the notion of agency denotes "the type and degree of control and responsibility a person may have with respect to their design of communicative actions and other kinds of signs" (p. 304). Drawing on the deconstruction of *speakerhood* by Goffman (1981), Enfield (2011) has argued that the turn-by-turn unfolding of interaction entails a fundamental asymmetry between initiative and responsive actions. This asymmetry consists of the speaker of the initiative action exercising control over the content of the responsive action. Consequently, first speakers may also be held *accountable* for two aspects of their actions: (1) that they are committed to the content of what is being said and (2) that they are committed to the "appropriateness of saying it here and now" (Enfield, 2011, p. 308). From this perspective, a proposal, as any other utterance that is spoken as first within a sequence of utterances, is a risky endeavor. It entails claims of sincerity and relevance, the validity of which will be determined intersubjectively in and through the utterances to come.

In this chapter, we examine how support workers respond to clients' proposals during mental health rehabilitation group meetings at one Finnish Clubhouse community. According to Clubhouse standards, membership in a Clubhouse community entails the right and obligation to participate in consensus-based decision-making about all the matters that affect the life of the community (see Chapter 12). Accordingly, support workers exhibit a

strong explicit orientation to encouraging clients to participate in joint decision-making. While this orientation is visible in the support workers' attempts to encourage clients to respond to their proposals (see Chapter 2), the same ideal may also be assumed to inform their ways of responding to the clients' proposals. The support workers may want to take the clients' proposals "seriously," not only for the sake of local interactional needs, but also in order to encourage further similar participation through positive reinforcement (e.g., Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). However, as we will show in the analysis in this chapter, providing an adequate response to a client's proposal is a complex endeavor – one that is intertwined with dilemmas concerning agenda, on one hand, and agency, on the other.

Treatment of proposals in joint decision-making interaction
Responding to a proposal can have quite distinct dynamics depending on whether the proposal has been made in a dyadic vs. group conversation. Next, we will first discuss the treatment of proposals in dyads. These considerations will then provide a background against which the specific dilemmas of responding to proposals in a group conversation can be highlighted.

Responding to proposals during dyadic interaction
Joint decision-making in a dyad can sometimes be fast. After one participant has made a proposal, a joint decision emerges when the co-participant accepts the proposal – even if the recipients' accepting responses as such involve multiple facets (Stevanovic, 2012; see Chapter 2). What is essential for a genuinely joint decision to emerge is that it is the recipient bears the main responsibility for transforming the proposal into a decision. If the proposer takes a too dominant role in this respect, the jointness of decision-making outcome is compromised (see Chapter 2).

Orientation to the primary responsibility of the recipient to push the proposal sequence forward toward a joint decision has important advantages. First, it gives the proposal recipient the opportunity to reject the proposal *de facto* simply by refraining from bringing the sequence toward a decision. Second, the possibility of such implicit rejections allows the proposers to "cancel" their proposals by simply refraining from pursuing them anymore in the face of a lack of recipient responsiveness (Stevanovic, 2012). Third, and most relevantly from the perspective of the present considerations, the opportunity to treat proposals in multiple ways allows for subtle negotiations of the participants' joint decision-making agenda. Not everything can or should be decided together but only those matters that belong to the participants' sphere of joint decision-making (Stevanovic, 2013; 2015). Inasmuch as proposal recipients actively respond to their co-participants' proposals "as proposals," they embrace their content into the participants' joint decision-making sphere. In so doing, they also validate the relevance of the proposal in the here and now.

Responding to proposals during group interaction
There are significant differences between how proposals may be treated in a dyad vs. in a group. Specifically, the existence of multiple proposal recipients in a group creates a challenge to construct the outcome of the proposal as a *joint* decision – one to which all the participants would be committed. Thus, instead of moving the sequence actively toward a decision, which would be expected in a dyad, a participant who first responds to a proposal may contrariwise seek to *slow down* the pace of the unfolding activity. In this way, it can be assured that the decision will not get established before everyone in the group has had the opportunity to contribute to it.

The slowing down of the process by which a proposal is turned into a joint decision is in tension with attempts to provide individual proposal speakers recognition for their interactional contributions. While such recognition may be needed in all decision-making, such a need is likely to be particularly prevalent in a group setting, where the mere act of making a proposal involves a claim of the right to exercise control over the group's interactional agenda. Such claims may then be best validated by the other participants becoming actively and enthusiastically engaged with the content of the proposal. This means that in contexts such as ours, the facilitators of interaction must respond to proposals in positive and approving ways.

From the perspective of group dynamics, however, strongly approving responses to proposals may be problematic in that they may be heard to implicate a final decision (Stevanovic, 2012). In turn, this may discourage other participants from further participation and exclude them from the decision-making process. The other participants would either need to "second" the first recipient's approval of the proposal, or to seek to slow down the process by making the first recipient's "premature" approval of the proposal a target of explicit meta-level reflection, which would require a lot of interactional skills. Therefore, instead of providing abundant praise, the facilitators of group interaction may seek to find other ways to provide individual proposal speakers with recognition of their interactional contributions.

Research question
In this chapter, we consider client-initiated joint decision-making sequences during mental health rehabilitation group meetings at the Clubhouse community. Our analysis is guided by two leading questions:
  (1) How do the support workers respond to the clients' proposals?
  (2) To what extent do the support workers' different ways of responding open or close opportunities for the other clients to participate in the ongoing decision-making?

Data and method
The data used in this study consist of 29 video-recorded 30–60-minute-long meetings of a mental health rehabilitation group in a Finnish Clubhouse

community. The meetings took place weekly between September 2016 and August 2017. Each meeting was attended to by 2–10 members and 1–3 support workers trained in social work. The data collection was based on the participants' informed consent. Research ethics approval was obtained from the Southern Finland Clubhouse Association (date of the decision: 19.09.2016) and research permission was given by the board of support workers at the Clubhouses in the relevant area.

The meetings involved the participants discussing the clients' competencies from the perspective of their future employment plans. Simultaneously, the meetings also provided a site for the clients to practice their joint decision-making skills, as a typical meeting involved the participants making choices about the kinds of activities that they would carry out in the group. During such relatively low-stakes decision-making processes, the clients were usually given multiple opportunities to make proposals and respond to those of the support workers or other clients.

Methodologically, the study builds on the line of interactionist sociology introduced by Harold Garfinkel (1967) and Erving Goffman (1959; 1967; 1981) and developed by scholars in the tradition of conversation analysis (Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell & Stivers, 2013). While conversation analysis is used to ask how language and other communicative resources are used to accomplish sequences of initiative and responsive actions, our analysis focuses on one form of such a sequence – the proposal-response sequence initiated by a mental health client. In our data, we identified 180 instances of such sequences, which we then examined on a case-by-case manner in our joint data sessions (see Stevanovic & Weiste, 2017). Below, we account for the reoccurring patterns identified in the entire data collection, demonstrating the range of different support worker orientations in response to clients' proposals. Thereby, we also shed light on two dilemmas involved in the support workers' attempts to take client proposals "seriously."

Agenda and agency in support workers' responses to client proposals

We start our analysis of support workers' responses to client proposals by describing these responses with reference to a dilemma having to do with the management of the participants' interactional *agenda*. Thereafter, we analyze the support workers' responses in relation to another dilemma, which deals with the distribution of *agency* between the clients and the support workers.

A dilemma of agenda: Balancing between individual recognition and collective participation

As pointed out above, when designing their responses to client proposals, support workers need to balance between (1) providing individual clients with recognition for their interactional contributions and (2) encouraging

collective participation. To increase understanding of this phenomenon, we analyze one example at each of the two extremes.

Extract 1 represents an instance of a support worker's immediate acceptance of a client proposal. Previously at the meeting, the participants – eight clients and two support workers – have discussed whether it would be possible that, in their following meetings, they would engage in some form of self-evaluation. At the beginning of the extract, one of the support workers (SW1) points to specific material that could be used as a resource during the evaluation activity (lines 1–3).

```
Extract 1
01 SW1:  voiko olla sit yks semmonen mitä me
         can it then be one such thing that we

02       voitas hyödyntää tässä arvioinnissa (.)
         could make use of in this evaluation (.)

03       oman toiminnan arvioinnissa?
         in the evaluation of one's own action

04       (1.5)

05 Mio:  se vois  liittyä       siihen  parina, (0.7)
         it could be.part.of-INF in.that pair-ESS
         it could be part of that pair (0.7)

06       tekemiseen että toinen kyselee vähän.
         do-INF-ILL PRT  other  ask     a.bit
         work so that the partner asks a bit

07 SW1:  ↑niin (.) sen   vois  tehä   sillai.
         PRT       it-GEN could do-INF in.that.way
         ↑yeah (.) it could be done like that.

08 Mio:  siinä vahvistettas vähän,
         there we would strengthen a bit

09       (3.0)

10 Eki:  eli parityöskentelyä.
         so pair work
```

SW1's suggestion (lines 1–3) is first followed by silence (line 4). Thereafter, Mio makes a proposal on how to use the material introduced by the support worker (lines 5–6). He refers to the idea of "pair work" that has been mentioned earlier at the meeting, now applying it to the realization of the self-evaluation activities. SW1 responds by immediately accepting Mio's proposal (line 7), which is followed by Mio giving a justification for it (line 8). After the ensuing silence (line 9) Eki, who acts as secretary for the meeting, states aloud the decision to be written on the meeting minutes (line

10). In this way, the decision is treated as established (cf. Chapter 8), after which the participants start to discuss another topic.

Thus, Mio is certainly given recognition for his proposal by the support worker, who immediately accepts it. Simultaneously, however, the support worker's treatment of Mio's proposal allows it to have only limited influence on the participants' interactional agenda. There is little room for the other participants to express their views on Mio's idea. Therefore, Mio's implicit claim that his turn introduces a relevant topic to discuss in the group is left unconfirmed.

Extract 2 represents a reverse example of support workers' treatment of client proposals. During the previous week, all group members have been able to suggest a name for the group by writing it on a board. The purpose of the meeting is then to decide between the suggested name alternatives – an activity that is explicitly launched by one of the support workers (SW1) in line 1.

Extract 2
```
01 SW1:  mitä  me nä[istä  val-
         which of th[ese do we cho-

02 Pia:            [mä  sanon työvalmennusryhmä
                    SG1 say-1 work.couching.group
                   [I say work couching group

03       (.) vois  olla  ninku semmone, (3.0) vähä
             could be-INF PRT   sort.of         a.bit
         (.) (it) could be like sort of (3.0) a bit

04       help- helppo ninku ymmärtää ja käsitellä.
               easy   PRT
               easy erm to understand and deal with

05       (5.0)

((lines 06–16 removed))

17       (2.5)

18 Esa:  mitäs niin olikaan.
         what were they

19       (0.7)

20 SW1:  siirto ↑seitsemäntoista ryhmä (.) valmennusryhmä
         move seventeen group (.) coaching group

21       (.) rukkisryhmä (.) ja työvalmennusryhmä.
         (.) mitten group (.) and work couching group

22       (0.4)
```

```
23 Pia:  no  mä  oon  edelleen sitä   mieltä   et se
         PRT SG1 be-1 still    it-PAR mind-PAR PRT it
         well I am still of the opinion that that

24       työvalmennusryhmä   ois       ehkä      semmonen,
         work.couching.group be-COND   perhaps   sort.of
         work couching group would perhaps be the sort of

25       (0.4) selkeesti tosta.
               clear-ADV that-ELA
         (0.4) clearly from there

26       (3.7)

27 Pia:  mitä muiden °mielipiteet on°.
         what are others' °opinions°

28       (0.8)

29 SW2:  kertokaa    vähän (.) ajatuksia.
         tell-IMP-PL a.bit    thought-PL-PAR
         tell us a bit (.) (your) thoughts

30       (0.8)

31 SW2:  mikä tuntuu
         which one feels like

32 Pia:  mikäs Ainosta kuulostaa hyvältä.
         which one feels good for Aino
```

Pia is active in taking a stance toward one of the suggested alternatives. Overlapping with SW1's turn (line 1), Pia makes a proposal for the name *työvalmennusryhmä* "work coaching group" (line 2), justifying her choice in the rest of her turn (lines 3–4). What, however, ensues is a long silence (line 5), followed by SW1 asking the group about the background for one name suggestion (lines 6–16, not shown in the transcript). After the side sequence, Esa launches a return to the decision-making activity by requesting epistemic access to what is now to be decided on (line 18). In response to Esa, SW1 lists the four suggested name alternatives (lines 20–21), after which Pia repeats her original proposal (lines 23–25). Pia's proposal is again met with silence (line 26). This time, however, she reacts to the silence by asking explicitly about the opinions of other participants, first generically (line 27) and then by addressing one participant by name (line 32). Pia's questioning is accompanied by SW2's turns with analogous orientation – a concern for encouraging a higher level of group participation (lines 29 and 31).

Thus, in Extract 2, the support workers, and finally also the proposal speaker, share an orientation to a need of the clients other than Pia to express their opinions about the choice to be made. However, this way of maintaining

participation opportunities for the other clients occurred at Pia's cost, because she received no support worker recognition for her proposal.

In a dyad, a proposal recipient can take the decision-making sequence quickly to a close without jeopardizing the jointness of the decision-making outcome (Stevanovic, 2012). However, the situation is different in a group. As demonstrated in the analysis of Extracts 1–2, a sufficiently slow progression of decision-making is a prerequisite for being able to involve several participants in the discussion and thus to establish anything that resembles a joint decision. Therefore, the mere act of making a proposal in a group involves a claim of the right to determine the participants' interactional agenda for *longer* than would most likely be the case in a dyad. A need to offer recognition to proposal speakers for their interactional contributions may thus be even more acute than in a dyad. Paradoxically, however, in a group, the provision of such recognition may go against the dynamics of collective participation.

A dilemma of agency: The paradox of other- and self-orientation in responses to proposals

Taking a stance toward a proposal requires that the participants have "epistemic access" to it – that is, enough knowledge to understand what it is about. Such access can be established in different ways, exhibiting different distributions of agency between the proposal speakers and the recipients. In responses that may be described as *other-oriented*, the recipient makes the proposal speaker the focus of attention, asking about his or her views, interests, wants, and needs (Svennevig, 2014, p. 316). In contrast, with responses that may be labeled as *self-oriented*, the recipient states his or her own thoughts about the proposal, thus implicitly claiming epistemic access to it. Between these two extremes, there is a continuum of different mixtures of self- and other orientation. In this section, we will consider the paradoxical consequences that different distributions of agency exhibited in the support workers' responses to client proposals have for the participation dynamics of the group.

Extract 3 represents an instance of *other-orientation*. It is from a meeting at which the participants plan the program for the entire autumn season. In lines 1–3, Ere makes a proposal.

Extract 3
```
01 Ere:  pareina      vois  olla   hyvä lähtee hakemaan
         pair-PL-ESS could be-INF good go-INF search-INF-ILL
         it would be to go as pairs to seek

02       työvoimatoimistosta   ninku uutta (-)
         employment.agency-ELA PRT   new-PAR
         from the employment agency like new (-)

03       (2.0) opetusta    °siitä°,
```

```
            teaching-PAR about.it
            (2.0) teaching °about it°

04          (1.5)

05 SW1:  tarkotiksä     et vois tuoda     tähän   ryhmään
         mean-PST-2+SG2 PRT could bring-INF to.this group-ILL
         did you mean that one could bring to this group

06          siis jotain, (1.0) tiettyjä       aiheita
            PRT  something    specific-PL-PAR topic-PL-PAR
            like some, (1.0) specific topics

07          sieltä,
            from.there
            from there

08 Ere:  pareina     tai ryhmässä (1.5) vois hakee (.)
         pair-PL-ESS or  group-INE      could search-INF
         as pairs or in a group (1.5) (we) could search (.)

09          nettisivuilta, (1.4) minkälaista (-) esimerkiks
            website-PL-ABL      what.kind.of    for.example
            from websites, (1.4) how for example

10          on työt   jossain   muual ku,
            be work-PL somewhere else  PRT
            work is like somewhere else than

11          (3.0)

12 SW2:  kuulenks mä Eppua    oikein et sä   toivoisit
         hear-1-Q SG1 Name-PAR right  PRT SG2 wish-COND-2
         do I hear Eppu correctly that you would wish for

13          sellasta    tietoa          et mitä se työ (.)
            sort-of-PAR information-PAR PRT what it work
            the sort of information about what the work is (.)

14          konkreettisesti jossain   on minkälaista se on,
            concrete-ADV    somewhere be how         it be
            concretely somewhere how it is

15 Ere:  nii että vähän opiskeluaki (.) siinä (.) sivussa
         yea so a bit studying (.) there (.) on the side

16 SW2:  nii,
         yea

17 SW1:  °mm°

18          (1.0)
```

Ere suggests that the participants make a visit to the employment office (lines 1–3). Yet, given that the proposal is produced in the context of planning the autumn season's program, the meaning of the proposal may not be entirely transparent to the other participants. And, indeed, after a silence (line 4), a support worker (SW1) asks for a clarification of the proposal, while offering one possible interpretation of its content (lines 5–7). Ere does not verify SW1's interpretation but nonetheless provides some clarification of his previous turn (lines 8–10). A relatively long silence ensues (line 11), after which the other support worker (SW2) provides an interpretation of what Ere has possibly been up to (lines 12–14), depicting his line of action as an expression of a "wish" (line 12). This is followed by Ere accounting for his action with reference to a possibility of "studying" (line 15). The responses by the two support workers are minimal (lines 16–17), although later in the episode they nevertheless end up writing Ere's idea down (not shown in the transcript).

In Extract 3, the two support workers clearly display interest in Ere's proposal. The use of the singular personal pronoun *sä* 'you' in the support worker responses (line 5 and 12) highlights their willingness to understand what Ere is specifically after. Simultaneously, however, the support workers' responses refrain from validating Ere's right to invite the whole group in decision-making about his idea. There are two aspects to this. First, the support workers' questions and candidate interpretations convey that Ere alone is accountable for clarifying his idea (see Helmer and Zinken 2019), which leaves little room for others to contribute to the unfolding of interaction. Second, by framing Ere's action as an expression of individual wish, its status as a proposal that calls for joint deliberation of the group is undermined. Hence, the idea is not of the kind that should be given much space in the participants' interactional agenda.

Extract 4 represents a case in which the support workers' orientation may be placed somewhere *between other-orientation and self-orientation*. Here, the participants are planning the program for the spring season. At the beginning of the extract, a support worker (SW1) suggests a schedule for certain topics to be discussed in the group (lines 1–3), while her colleague (SW2) receives these ideas with tentative agreement (line 4). Thereafter, a client, Tua, produces a nominal utterance *työn mielekkyys* "sensibleness of work" (line 5), whose status as action is not very clear. In the context of the ongoing activity, however, her utterance can be understood as a proposal for a specific group discussion topic. However, the support workers do not react to Tua's utterance but instead continue their previous discussion (lines 6–8). Thereafter, Tua produces another, extended turn, in which the status of her action as a proposal becomes clearer than before (lines 10–11).

Extract 4
```
01 SW1:  olisko sit sen jälkeisel viikolla aiheena
         would we then next week have as a topic
```

```
02      sit toi että (.) palkkaus ja etuudet
        then that (.) wages and benefits

03      siirtymätyön  palkkaus   ja [etuudet, ]
        transitional work wages and [benefits,]

04 SW2:                            [mm        ] vaikka.
                                   [mm        ] possibly.

05 Tua: työn mielekkyys.
        work-GEN sensibleness
        sensibleness of work

06 SW1: vai kerkeeks sen tohon samaan ton mitä on
        or can we make it in that same (slot) what is

07      siirtymätyö      (.) ei völt[tämättä,] ((writing))
        transitional work (.) not nec[essarily]

08 SW2:                            [ei vältt]is,
                                   [not nece]ssarily,

09      (0.4)

10 Tua: (työ) (.) työn     mielekkyys  olis    kans
        work     wokr-GEN sensibleness be-COND also
        (work) (.) the sensibleness of work would also be

11      semmonen (---) tykkää tehä (--) ja  ehkä   mä (--)
        sort.of        like  do-INF    and perhaps SG1
        a sort of (---) like to do (--) and perhaps I (--)

12 SW2: mitä siitä  vois
        what it-PAR could
        what could be (made) of it

13 Eki: (---) viittaa työn mielekkyyteen myös
        (---) refers to the sensibleness of work also the

14      työn määrä (---) (samanlainen) (---)
        amount of work (---) (similar) (---)

15 SW2: millä,
        what-ADE
        in what

16 Eki: (---)

17 SW2: millä    tavalla   me  sitä, (1.2) käytäis
        what-ADE manner-ADE PL1 it-PAR     go-PASS-COND
        how would we, (1.2) go
```

```
18       läpi, (1.0) me  tehtiin      <po:rtaita> niit
         through     PL1 do-PST-PASS stair-PL-PAR they-PAR
         through it, (1.0) we did <strai:rs> those

19       itsearviointi- (0.7) °juttuja (0.2) sillon
         self.evaluation-      thing-PL-PAR    then
         self evaluation (0.7) °things° (0.2) then

20       viime (.) vuonna° (1.5) °oisko     joku
         last      year-ESS      be-COND-Q some
         last (.) year° (1.5) would there be some

21       [muu° (.) muunlainen    tapa   toimia]
          other    other.kind.of manner act-INF
         [other° (.) way to do it               ]

22 Eki:  [(---)                                ] mä
         [(---)                                ] I

23       löysin tämmösen (---) ((shows a paper))
         found this kind of (---)

24 Mio:  (--) työn määrä (-) tosi kaukaisia asioita mulle
         (--) the amount of work (-) very remote things to me
```

The second version of Tua's proposal (lines 10–11) receives attention from the support workers. SW2 responds by asking "what could be [made] of it" (line 12). In response to SW2, a client, Eki, points out that the sensibleness of work is also related to the "amount of work" (lines 13–14). Thereafter, maintaining her previous line of action, SW2 repeats her question in a more elaborate form (lines 15, 17–21), referring to the ways in which such topics were discussed last year and asking whether this time there would be "some other way to do it" (lines 20–21). Thereafter, Eki takes up a paper that he shows to the other participants (lines 22–23) and Mio comments on the topic (line 24).

As in Extract 3, the support worker reacts to the client's proposal by asking questions, thus displaying *other-orientation*. However, unlike in Extract 3, here the support worker's questions are not only targeted at the client, but at the whole group. Instead of using the second-person singular pronoun "you", the support worker uses the first-person plural pronoun "we" (lines 17–18), which encompasses the whole group, including the support worker herself, and thus conveys an element of *self-orientation*, too. Thus, instead of treating the proposal speaker as accountable for being able to justify and clarify her proposal, the outcome of the proposal – including judgments about its feasibility and reasonability – is placed in the hands of the whole group. As can be seen in several clients later contributing to the conversation, this move indeed served as an effective way to encourage client participation.

Finally, Extract 5 represents an instance of *self-orientation* in the support workers' responses to client proposals. Here, the group has been discussing transitional work – a Clubhouse-created program offering employment opportunities for mental health clients (Valkeapää, Tanaka, Lindholm, Weiste, & Stevanovic, 2019). Line 1 shows the end of an explanation turn by one of the support workers (SW1), who has described the generic nature of the transitional work tasks: after the working period of one client, another client should be able to continue with the same job description. Thereafter, a client, Tia, suggests that those interested in the transitional work could visit the relevant workplaces to familiarize themselves with the workplace requirements (lines 2–5).

Extract 5
```
01 SW1:  siihen aina uusi ihminen sitten saada.
         to get always a new person to that (job)

02 Tia:  ja   sehän   tota niin niin ni  sehän vois    olla
         and  it-CLI  PRT  PRT  PRT  PRT it-CLI could be-INF
         and it is certainly so erm it could certainly be

03       niinki  sit että se työ- ois      tiedossa se paikka
         PRT-CLI PRT PRT  it work be-COND known    it place
         like that too that (when) that workplace is known

04       nii (.) ninku kävis   vähän ite  tutustumassa
         PRT     PRT   go-COND a.bit self familiarize-INF-INE
         so (.) like one would go oneself to get to

05       siihe   vaikka esimerkiks,
         into.it PRT    for.example
         know it a bit say for example

06 SW1:  nääkin    ois kivoja.
         these-CLI be-COND nice-PL-PRT
         these would also be nice

07 SW2:  ja  tosta    tulee mulla   Sani heti nyt mieleen
         and that-ELA come  SG1-ADE Name just now mind-ILL
         and from that Sani I now became immediately

08       et  niinki villi ajatus  et  me voitas     ehkä
         PRT PRT    wild  thought PRT PL1 could-PASS perhaps
         such a wild idea that we could perhaps

09       vähän puhua     että ku  kaupungissaki on
         a.bit speak-INF PRT  PRT city-INE-CLI  be
         a bit discuss since in the city there are also

10       monenlaisia    paikkoja     ja muita        niin
         various-PL-PAR place-PL-PAR and other-PL-PAR PRT
         various places and else so (one could)
```

```
11        kysästä et  oisko     siellä joku semmonen mihin
          ask-INF PRT be-COND-Q there  some sort.if  in.where
          ask if there would be something where

12        me  päästäs      vaik kattoon    tai tutustuu
          PL1 get-PASS-COND PRT  see-INF-ILL or  get.to.know
          we could get say to see or get to know

13        mitä se työ  ninku kon- oikeesti on siellä.
          what it work PRT      real-ADV be there
          what that work like concr- really is there

14 SW1:   niin kyllä.
          yeah yes.

15 Tia:   joo,
          yea,

16 SW2:   en uskalla luvata että päästään mihinkään
          I don't dare to promise that we get anywhere

17        mutta voidaanhan me tosiaan (---)
          but certainly we could (---)

18 Ava:   se ois ihan hyvä.
          it would be pretty good

19 Tia:   niin se tutustuminen olis
          yeah that getting to know (the place) would be

20        minusta kyllä aika tärkeetä
          in my opinion surely quite important
```

Tia's proposal (lines 2–5) is followed by SW1's positive evaluation turn, whose referent is however somewhat unclear (note the plural forms in line 6). Thereafter, her colleague (SW2) produces a lengthy proposal turn (lines 7–13). While the idea is presented as being based on Tia's previous proposal (see lines 7–8), the idea is nonetheless framed as an individual proposal by SW2 herself – and, furthermore, as an unconventional one (note the word *villi* 'wild,' line 8). SW1 and Tia receive SW2's proposal with agreement tokens (lines 14–15), after which SW2 expresses reservations about whether her idea could indeed be realized (lines 16–17). In response to that, Ava offers a positive evaluation of SW2's idea (line 18). Finally, Tia produces a turn in which she not only agrees with the idea but also displays independence toward it (lines 19–20). The turn-initial particle *niin* "yeah" (line 19) invokes the speaker's prior epistemic access to the content of the proposal (Sorjonen, 2001), while the phrase "in my opinion" (line 20) avoids treating the idea as anything but the speaker's own creation. In so doing, Tia reclaims ownership of the idea, in the face of the support worker's proposal being almost identical to hers.

Thus, instead of focusing on trying to understand the details of, and the reasoning behind, the client's proposal, the support worker only acknowledges it as an inspiration for a proposal of her own. In so doing, similar to Extract 4, she indirectly validates the relevance of the client's proposal by *de facto* giving it space in the participants' interactional agenda. However, unlike in Extract 4, where the support worker asked questions to invite the whole group to engage in joint deliberation about the content of the proposal, here, the support worker herself demonstrates such deliberation (note the first-person singular pronoun "I" in line 7). As we can see in the subsequent unfolding of the sequence, paradoxically, this support worker's move served as an effective way to encourage further client participation.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we asked how support workers in rehabilitation group meetings at the Clubhouse respond to client proposals, thus opening and closing opportunities for the other clients to participate in the ongoing decision-making. To increase understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon at hand, we have described two dilemmas that the support workers face when seeking to take the clients' proposals "seriously."

The first dilemma concerned the meeting's *agenda*. With reference to Extracts 1–2 we pointed to a sufficiently slow progression of decision-making as being a prerequisite for collective participation in a group. This prerequisite, however, puts proposal speakers in a vulnerable position: to slow down decision-making and to encourage collective participation, support workers may need to refrain from providing substantial approval of the client's proposal. Drawing on Goffman (1959; 1967), it has been argued elsewhere that "one aspect by which one's self is particularly vulnerable to interaction is one's right to determine action" (Stevanovic, 2018, p. 6). While the mere act of making a proposal involves a claim of such a right in terms of future actions or events, what is particularly at stake in a group meeting is the proposal speaker's right to determine the meeting's interactional agenda. Considering the slow pace in which decisions may be made by a group, a single proposal may influence the meeting's agenda for a relatively long time period. It is thus during group decision-making in particular where offering proposal speakers recognition for their individual proposals would be needed.

The other dilemma had to do with the distribution of *agency*. Inspired by Enfield (2011), we considered two questions as central in this regard: (1) who is accountable for the feasibility and reasonability of the proposal and (2) who is accountable for its relevance to the whole group. Here, our analysis highlighted a tension between focusing on the client as the originator of the proposal and avoiding treating him or her alone as being accountable for it. From this perspective, we described the paradoxical consequences that the support workers' self vs. other orientation, as exhibited in their responses, had for the participation dynamics of the group. Extract 3 demonstrated how other-orientation, reflected in the use of the second-person singular pronoun

"you" in questions, was associated with holding the client alone accountable for clarifying the content of the proposal. Thereby, the proposed idea was also framed as an individual wish of the client, which does not make relevant group decision-making. Extract 4 exemplified an orientation that may be placed somewhere between other- vs. self-orientation. The support worker used the first-person plural pronoun "we," again in questions, calling for everybody to consider how the suggested idea could be realized. Such responses were seen to highlight the relevance of the proposal for the whole group and circumvent the proposal speaker's individual accountability for it.

Finally, Extract 5 represented an instance of self-orientation, which was reflected in the support worker's use of the first-person singular pronoun "I" in a proposal, which she produced as a response to a client proposal of almost identical content. Hence, the response highlighted the support worker's full agency in relation to the suggested idea. While such interactional moves may not fully respect the proposal speakers' ownership of their ideas, these support worker responses led to a relatively high level of participation in the group. . One possible explanation of this finding is that the support worker's own demonstration of deliberation affects the collective participation dynamics in a way parallel to what Tannen (2005) has referred to as "high-involvement" interaction style. In this style, the participants' primary concern is not "to make it comfortable and convenient for others to express their ideas, but rather to be free and spontaneous with reactions" (Tannen, 2005, p. 138). Based on the insights of Tannen, Svennevig (2014) examined conversations between strangers and argued that shifts to high-involvement style and self-oriented turns indicate and encourage emotional closeness and taken-for-grantedness of mutual concern. It is thus possible that the support workers in our data, through their self-oriented responses to client proposals, succeeded in establishing such a high-involvement interactional environment.

With this chapter, we sought to contribute to a deeper understanding of joint decision-making in a group. While the dilemmas of agenda and agency described here are presumably relevant to any group decision-making situation, in the context of mental health clients, additional sensitivity to these concerns may be needed. For example, when it comes to the management of the tension between individual recognition and group decision-making, support workers' heightened sensitivity to the tension may help them to calibrate their responsive behaviors to find the locally appropriate balance between individual and collective well-being (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In response to routine proposals, individual recognition for the proposal speaker could perhaps be compromised in favor of increasing the level of group participation. In contrast, in response to more unconventional or delicate proposals, where a lack of recognition could lead to embarrassment, group participation could be compromised in favor of individual recognition.

Against some mundane expectations of what constitutes polite behavior, our data analysis also highlighted the problematic nature of other-orientation.

The *other-oriented* support-worker responses to client proposals seem to invoke client accountability in ways that, besides possibly threatening the client's face (Goffman, 1967), may also exclude others from decision-making. Instead, and paradoxically, the support workers' *self-oriented* responses seem to open up a more relaxed way for client participation. Ultimately, it is a free and safe interactional atmosphere that everyone seeking to contribute to joint decision-making desires and, obviously, the creation of such an atmosphere may be even more important among participants with mental illness.

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