Psychological Research & Homelessness

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Aims

- To explore the role of research in growing a psychologically Informed workforce
- To give examples of how this has happened
- To think about next steps together

My perspective: autism



MY DOCTORAL RESEARCH THESIS



SIMILAR GAPS EXIST ELSEWHERE?

Autism & Homelessness
(Churchard et al., 2019)

1.1% OF GENERAL POPULATION ARE AUTISTIC

PUBLISHED PAPER: 12% OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS SHOWED STRONG SIGNS OF AUTISM

Autism & Homelessness Toolkit

- A practical guide for staff and organisations who work with people experiencing homelessness.
- Includes what autism is, how to recognize it, and how to work effectively with autistic people experiencing homelessness.
- Currently being updated.

Supported by:

homeless link

resources for autism

City of Westminster

St Mungo's
Ending homelessness
Rebuilding lives

National Autistic Society

HEE Homelessness Workforce Development Project

- KPI around doctoral research projects
- A good opportunity to link up development of more psychological posts with research

Homelessness research seminar

- Held in February 2023
- Aimed to initiate more practically meaningful and robust research
- Topics covered: autism, psychological research methods in homelessness, hoarding, addictions
- Attendees: experts by experience, commissioners, service leads and representatives from Homeless Link, Pathway, Crisis, Centre for Homeless Impact, DLUHC, NHS England (among others)
- Good feedback, but only a first step

The role of experts by experience



On steering group



Involved in presentation development & attended on the day

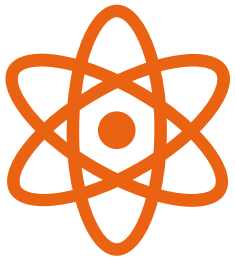


An ongoing relationship

What role can psychological research play?

- Develop the evidence base
- Provide robust evidence in a complex research context
- Amplify the voices of people living with homelessness
- Encourage psychologically-informed approaches
- Make a difference to how support is provided
- Build up networks of researchers, EbEs and practitioners
- What else?

Types of research



‘Purer’ research projects



Service improvement



Systematic reviews of academic literature

Challenges

- What research designs to use?
- Reaching research participants
- Doing something meaningful: disseminating findings and influencing practice
- Tension between stating the obvious vs creating robust and hard-to-ignore evidence
- Avoiding an individualising and pathologizing approach: keeping systemic factors in mind
- Timescales required, ethics and governance processes

What other areas of homelessness should there be more psychological research in?

Plans to build on seminar

- Homelessness research seminar: on-line workshop later this year
- Consensus statement
- Future guidance document / academic paper?
- Networking

References

- Churchard, A., Ryder, M., Greenhill, A., & Mandy, W. (2019). The prevalence of autistic traits in a homeless population. Autism, 23(3), 665-676.