Experiences of parents and carers whose children are accessing a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service: implications for psychological support needs

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Aims of the presentation

✓ Rationale for the research
✓ Aims of the research
✓ Research design
✓ Preliminary findings
✓ Reflections and top tips
Rationale for the research

CAMHS identified as playing an important role in the provision of support to children and young people who experience mental health difficulties, and their families (Bjorngaard, Andersson, Ose & Hanssen-Baur, 2008).

Experiences of parents whose children are accessing a CAMH service identified as being a key consideration and major goal for any treatment intervention (Rey, Plapp & Simpson, 1999). Parents have become increasingly recognised as being important participants in the delivery of care to their child (Gerkensmeyer & Austin, 2005).

Lambert and Barley (2001) found that 40% of client outcome was attributed to ‘extra-therapeutic’ change or factors outside of the therapy, e.g. social support, family life, etc whilst 15% of client outcome was found to be a result of the therapeutic technique and/or model used.
Relatively few studies have focused on exploring user experiences of accessing CAMHS, despite there being an increasing acceptance of the importance of service user views (Moran, Kelesidi, Guglani, Davidson & Ford, 2012).

A recent report produced by the Great Involvement, Future Thinking (GIFT) Partnership team in April 2014 summarises the information collected from parents and carers regarding their experiences of accessing CAMHS, specifically those involved in a Children and Young People’s Improving Access to Psychological Services (CYP-IAPT) programme.
Rationale for the research continued...

- The findings indicated that parents and carers expressed a desire to be more involved in their child’s treatment, specifically in terms of having their experiences listened to and their expertises in caring for their child valued.

- Parents and carers also demonstrated an interest in participating in the development and improvement of CAMH services.

- From the findings, the GIFT Partnership team (2014) concluded that CAMH services appear to be at a less advanced stage in terms of parent and carer involvement as compared to children and young people involvement.
Aims of the research

- Identified lack of resources available for parents and carers within the service. **Primary aim:** to inform the service regarding the psychological support needs of parents and carers of children accessing CAMHS.

- To build on the recent findings outlined in the GIFT report (2014) and address what has been a largely overlooked area in the literature base.

- To explore the individual experiences of parents and carers of children accessing CAMHS
  - experiences of accessing CAMHS
  - role in supporting the child/young person accessing CAMHS
  - experiences of any support received, within and outside of CAMHS
Research design

- Qualitative approach using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009)

- Participants: parents/carers of children aged between 11 and 18 years of age currently accessing CAMHS

- Information packs given to parents/carers of children currently accessing CAMHS, with the opportunity of opting-in via advertisement material

- 6 participants recruited from 2 CAMHS sites within one North-West NHS trust, 2 fathers and 4 mothers

- Semi-structured, one to one interviews

- Currently in the process of transcribing and analysing the interviews
Preliminary findings – from Fred

➢ Kicking hard to get through the barriers
“You’ve almost got to kick hard to get the help and support you need”

➢ The importance of seeing the right person
“I think at that point we got to see the right person which I often think is such, what it’s all about when you get to see the right person at the right time”

“It certainly felt like it took too long to address the slide in the those initial months and I do think there’s a direct link to the person, or persons we were given at that point”
Preliminary findings – from Fred

Wanting answers and a plan of action

“I think we felt in a way that we come to the place where we were gonna get some answers if not all and probably my thinking, I’m not certain they’re certain they know a great deal more in terms of helping us than we do ourselves”

“Those initial meetings weren’t very good in terms of making us feel reassured or making us feel like, okay we’ve got a long road ahead of us but it’s going to look like this, this is going to be the map, this is gonna be the journey, there was none of that it was just, err, I don’t know, it was not the approach we expected”
Reflections and top tips

- Start as soon as you can and keep chipping away
- Prepare for things to take longer than anticipated
- Keep in regular contact with your research supervisor and field supervisor
- Take the opportunity to attend team meetings to promote the research
- Try not to lose sight of why you’re doing the research
References


Thank you for listening

Any questions?