Exploring male prisoners’ experience of being involved in developing and using their psychological formulation within a personality disorder service.

Gemma Foat-Smith
Service context

- Set up in January 2014 (one of two currently in the UK).
- Joint venture between NHS and NOMS.
- Voluntary service for prisoners within North of England who have at least 2 years of sentence left can join service.
- Service for prisoners with ‘violent and sexual offending histories’.
- Based on Livesley’s approach to treatment of personality disorder.
Treatment of Personality Disorder

- 2003 Personality Disorder Strategy recommended that specialist multidisciplinary teams should be established within mental health & prison services. This approach aimed to consider biological, psychological & social factors (NIMHE, 2003).
- Suggested that psychologists should be key element of these teams to provide supervision, training and focus on developing a psychological understanding of the individual (Jarrett, 2006; Völlm 2014).
- 2011 Personality Disorder Strategy emphasised the formulation-led approach (Minoudis et al., 2013).
Integrated approach to treatment

- Livesley (2007) advocates the need for an integrated approach for personality disorder:
  - integrating therapeutic models and orientations
  - deliver treatments based on integrated approach
  - focus treatment on integrating personality functioning (Clarkin, Cain & Livesley, 2015)
- Two components: General Treatment Modules & Specific Treatment Modules.
- Formulation is one of the components of the General Treatment Modules.
Formulation

- Key competency for clinical psychologists (HCPC, 2012).
- There are many benefits to formulations highlighted by previous research (Butler, 1998; Johnstone & Dallos, 2006; Kuyken et al., 2009; Corrie & Lane, 2010, as cited in DCP, 2011).
- There is mixed research available relating to how effective formulations are (Chadwick, Williams & Mackenzie, 2003; Pain, Chadwick & Abba, 2008; Kahlon, Neal & Patterson, 2014; Redhead, Johnstone & Nightingale, 2015).
- There is scarce research relating to formulation in forensic services (Hart et al., 2011).
Current study

- **Aim:** To explore prisoners' experience of the formulation element of the service, and how this has been integrated within their treatment in the service.
- **Design:** 6 participants recruited using semi-structured interviews.
Results

- Data analysed using Thematic Analysis
- Three main themes:
  - process
  - relationships
  - staff
- 8 sub-themes
Process

- Formulations related to the individual
- Formulations reflective and practical
- Formulations developed collaboratively
- Formulations kept on the person

“shows your life, like a life map ... where you started going wrong, why you went wrong and it shows your ups and downs” (Alex)
Process 2

- One-to-one sessions critical for building relationships and developing formulation
- Sharing individual formulations in group setting was challenging but positive experience
- Therapeutic community environment enabled development of formulation

“It takes them worries off your chest, when you tell someone, you can throw it away” (Barry)
Relationships

- Relationships with staff positive
- Staff available, interested, approachable and trusting – key to development of formulation
- Trusting peers more challenging
- Sharing and learning from peers

"I've also got support as well to help me through the situation at the time" (David)
Self

- Formulation allowed an understanding of self
- Formulation enabled participants to think before acting
- Past important in understanding and changing self
- Discussing past challenging
- Change and growth of self through understanding
- Formulation enabled future planning

"I didn't think I'd change, I didn't think it'd work” (Frank)
Conclusions

- Experience of formulation highlighted as positive experience within this service.
- Emphasises the importance of interpersonal relationships in developing and using formulation.
- Highlights an absence of formulation in other services.
Implications

- Services to increase current psychological support available to prisoners.
- Important to consider environment – unique service.
- Therapeutic community approach best way to support prisoners with a diagnosis of personality disorder.
- Highlights the individual and difficult journey of growth and change that prisoners embark on in the process of change.
Reflections on the process

- Get lots of advice before starting.
- Start early – need approval from Governor, R&D approval, NHS ethics & NOMS approval.
- Helps if you know processes/ have links within establishment.
- Don't be put off by different process.
- Chose something of interest – makes a huge difference!
- Feel free to email me any questions 😊
References

References

Thank you very much for listening!