A Qualitative Investigation into the Challenges of Working Within a Single Point of Assessment Process in a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

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Background

- CAMHS are faced with increases in demand in relation to the capabilities of service provision, which can result in lengthy waiting lists making it difficult for young people to gain access and receive an assessment.

- CAMH services in the UK have never had the resources needed to address the needs of young people and their families. (Ford, Hamilton, Meltzer & Goodman, 2008)
Background

• The Choice and Partnership Approach (CAPA) model was developed by York and Kingsbury (2009) and was informed by ‘demand and capacity’ theory and ‘lean thinking’, both ideas adapted from the manufacturing industry.

• CAPA has been shown to reduce waiting lists and improve the ‘flow’ of patients through services.

• However, could also lead to the formation of bottlenecks between Choice and Partnership appointments.
Attachment Theory in Adult Mental Health

- if care professionals are not securely attached to their place of work then they cannot transmit that security and stability to the service users... care givers can lose their empathic stance through fatigue, burnout, negative countertransference, stress, overload, poor managerial support, limited supervision and bureaucracy. an organisational culture can foster empathy in its staff or impair it.

Seager, 2014
Method

- NHS Trust in North West
- Working within a single point of assessment process – CAMHS Assessment and Response Team (CART) assess all of the referrals for the whole Trust
- 3x 1:1 semi structured interviews with staff
- Thematic Analysis
- Currently in the process of analysing the interviews
Preliminary Results

Unrefined themes include:

- **Level of support and sharing**

  “..being able to support colleagues as well is a massive part of what we do, being able to help each other out and roll our sleeves up at any point, yeah so that teamwork is massive,”

  “..we meet very interesting people and sometimes its nice to share a bit of knowledge”

- **A functioning team**

  “..the amount of work, yes its really hard, but the team relationships were just so important because it gets you through sometimes”

- **Personal Characteristics**

  “..being able to connect with someone almost instantly to get the info that you need”
Results continued

• The need to be responsive and available

“..I never been able to sit in my office and not have the door open”

“..perhaps it’s a cultural thing, the team rarely stands still, there’s constant change, we never stand still,”

• Keeping the wolf from the door

“..psychologically coz it’s a separate team its like, they have done it to us”

“..there is a cohort of people who don’t like CART and they’ve never liked it”
Plans for discussion

- How staff feel the need to ‘protect’ themselves from ‘outsiders’
- How people respond to ‘threat’ situations
- The need to constantly evolve, develop and respond to demands – what is the long term impact? Overcompensate?
- Less emphasis on demands of the job, more emphasis on how you feel in that job
- How it fits with attachment
Service Recommendations

- Stability – how possible is this?
- Improve communication between teams
- Acknowledge the good work
Any Questions?