LIVING MUSIC

WORKSHOP ONE

HOW can we WORK TOGETHER to DEVELOP a CREATIVE APPROACH to UNDERSTANDING IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH & PERSONALISED CARE?

How to use this report

The contents of this report was produced collectively by all those who attended the symposium. Therefore, as we agreed at the start of the day, everyone is free to use the content of this report in anyway they want.

The format of the workshop was designed to help us be in the best frame of mind to answer one of three Living Music Focus Questions. These may not be your focus question but the knowledge and insights captured in the report might still be useful to you. Do remix the content to suit your needs but be mindful that the current format was reached by consensus and please reference these reports and the Living Music project.

It is hoped that this was a starting step in connecting people, thinking differently and sparking ideas for future collaborations, experiments and creative endeavours with connecting music, physical and mental health, across the Liverpool City Region.

Thank you for all your attention, kindness, energy and insights, this report would be nothing without it.

Contents

Living Music Workshop One centred around answering the following Focus Question

'How can we work together to develop a creative approach to understanding, improving mental health recovery and personalised care?'

To achieve this we introduced ourselves (px) and thought about what creativity is, and what it can do (px), before conducting a consensus workshop to collect and order our ideas (px). Finally we reviewed the current situation for our strengths, weakness and potential dangers.

Background

This work is funding by HSS Faculty Research Development Fund (HSS RDF), with the intention is to support research activities/collaborations that can be scaled up and will lead to more ambitious projects **or** to enhance/ build on existing projects/collaborations, to add further value and mark a step change in the research already undertaken.

Since 2021 Lucy Geddes (formerly of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic) and Dr Jacqueline Waldock (University of Liverpool have been developing a programme of potential research with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. The *Living Music Network* will build on that work, drawing on blossoming researcher-partner relationships to develop external grant applications.

The Living Music Network will bring together key academics from the University of Liverpool/ clinicians and musicians through three workshops to focus on the 3 strands of UoL Royal Liverpool Philharmonic partnerships research priorities, using the question below as starting points for discussion and collaboration.

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

ROYAL LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC

Who we were

To start the session and introduce ourselves we wrote out name and three things that represent ourselves and our practice.

All decisions depend on who was in the room. This represents a snapshot of who we are and where we speak from.
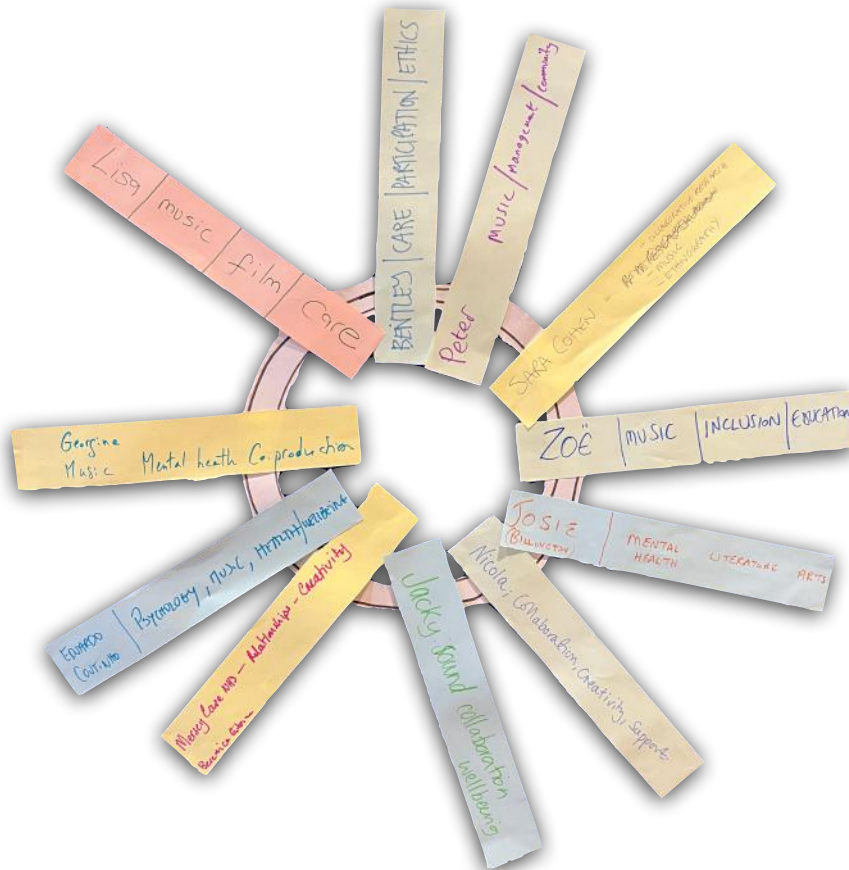
Peter Garden- Music | Management | Community
Sara Cohen - Collaborative Research | Music | Ethnography
Zoë Armfield - Music | Inclusion | Education
Josie Billington - Mental Health | Literature | Arts
Nicola Hopson - Collaboration | Community | Support
Jacky Waldock- Sound | Collaboration | Wellbeing
Berenice Gibson - Mersey Care NHS | Relationships | Creativity
Eduard Coutinho - Psychology | Music | Health/wellbeing
Georgina Aasgaard- Music | Mental Health | Co-production
Lisa Shaw - Music | Film | Care

Bentley Crudgington (Facilitator) - Care | Participation | Ethics

Difficult ways to publish poetry

Anne Boyer, observed that an over abundance had made poems feel worthless, and thought perhaps poetry's value could be restored if poems, like luxury goods, were scarce, precious, rare, and expensive to produce. In A Handbook of Disappointed Fate she outlines twenty difficult ways to publish poetry. We used these as a prompt to write our own difficult methods to share our own practice.

How can creativity deepen the impact of sustainability research? What is creativity doing here? Is it an approach, a pause, a methodology or a thought exercise? What cannot be achieved without it?

Creativity is hard to define but it may be best to think of it as an invitation to knowledge production, and like any tool it can be misused and misplaced and overcomplicate things. Creativity does not need to be complicated - be clear on what you want it to do.

Consensus Workshop

We used a consensus workshop format to direct answer our focused question.

We began by looking at the focused question and discussing which words resonated the most:

Together | Mental Health | Understanding | Creative approach

We then explored what we each understood by the question:

- Equality between the carer and cared for
- Music is enjoyed by **human beings** – patients are human, practitioners are human too – removing the hierarchy and separation between these groups, enabling them to connect
- Co-production exits your own perspective, and listens to others
- Creating an environment of no hierarchy and no judgement allows creativity to happen
- Having the confidence to be flexible – navigating the difference between academic environments which are more structured, and creative environments which are more flexible
- Having the safety and freedom to experiment
- Not being attached to outcomes

Consensus Workshop

We used a consensus workshop format to direct answer our focused question. In small groups we brainstormed ideas, we then collectively reviewed these ideas together and clustered them into emerging themes. We then named each cluster with an action.

We can work together to develop a creative approach to understanding, improving mental health recovery and personalised care by

- Involving everyone that matters

- Establish the basics

- Influencing behaviour via advocacy

- Establishing an informed purpose before beginning

- Defining and creating value

- The Creative Approach

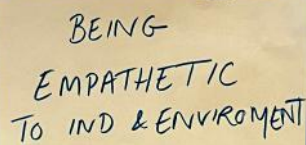- Agreeing ingredients for magic and meaning

Involving everyone that matters

Involving everyone that matters is about inclusivity; knowing that 'everyone is welcome' is different from 'we built this with you in mind, specifically'.

It is about looking in and looking out of our spaces and thinking about how power structures are both visible and invisible and thinking critically and openly about dismantling hierarchies to allow everyone to contribute on their own terms.
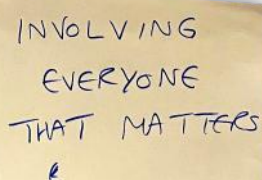

Involving everyone that matters

- Being empathetic to individual and environment
- Create non-hierarchal environment
- Shifting power
- Involving everyone that matters

Establishing an informed purpose before beginning

This cluster sits in the pre-project phase. At this stage you can have a conversation and walk away from it. It is not about agenda setting but about culture setting, how do you want to be together and how you will achieve your goals. It is about developing a shared language so that everyone can contribute, adapting rather than agreeing, establishing the purpose before beginning, establishing intent, agreeing long term goals, and micro and macro factors.

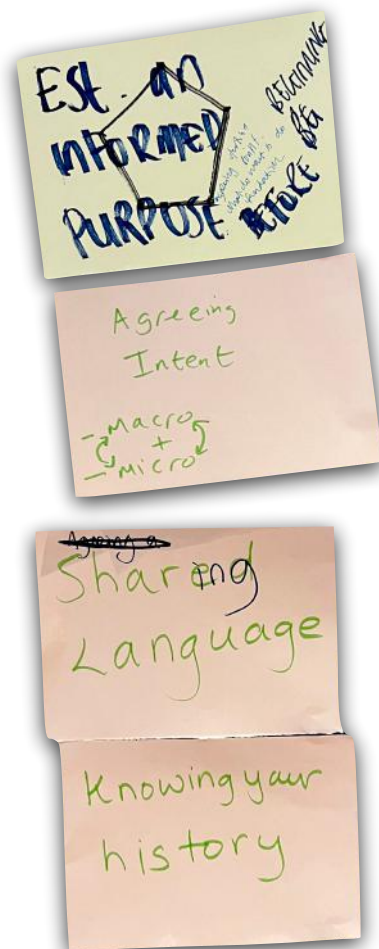Establishing an informed purpose before beginning

- Agreeing intent (macro - micro)
- Sharing language
- Knowing your history

Questions to consider

Are you learning each others languages or making a new one?
Who agrees to a shared language?
How is language/terminologies linked to power and hierarchies, inclusion/exclusion?

Influencing behaviour via advocacy

This cluster held discussions around the directions that our communications can and should take. We discussed that outward communication requires us to look more inward if we wish to extend the reach of what can be collectively achieved. Here, advocacy was holistic - or the project, method, people, or group(s), making it possible to influencing behaviour at different scales and distances.

Influencing behaviour via advocacy

- How music impact competes with other methods (medical, economics, health, social outcomes + value)
- Shouting louder / be heard by right people
- Addressing communication
- Enlightening funders (reviewers) via creative outputs
- Respecting existing constraints

Establish the basics

This cluster deals with the interpersonal cultures of working together to achieve the informed purpose. These can act as both markers for success and check in points along the path to achieving the project goals.
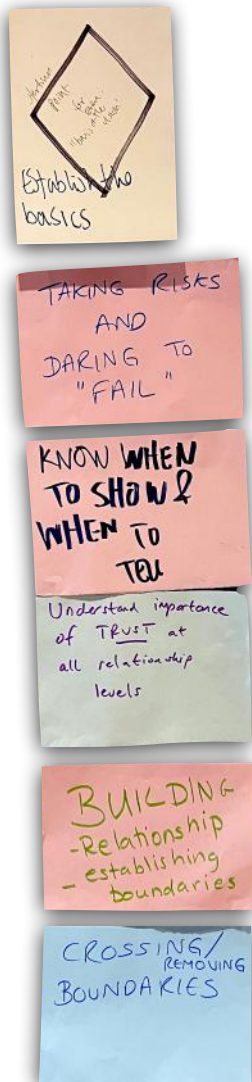
Establish the basics

- Taking risks and daring to "fail"
- Know when to show and when to tell
- Understand the importance of trust at all relationship levels
- Building relationships and establishing boundaries
- Crossing/removing boundaries

Questions to consider

Often power dynamics are structural and we are not able to fully redistribute power throughout them. How can we work within these structures and still foster and support long lasting trust?

Is failure experienced equally?

Defining and creating value

How do we create and define value; who decides what matters? This cluster brought together ideas and strategies for co-designing what matters for those involved, through the full life cycle of the project. It is about understanding that the methods we use not only capture, measure, analysis and quantify data but shape what is seen as valuable. This cluster thought about not just about how value is created and defined but how it is establishing, recognised and maintained.

Defining and creating value

- Micro/macro outcomes
- Innovating outcomes
- Being smart about outcomes
- Co-designing outcomes
- Learning "how" impact is created; structures, processes, people, content, outcomes
- Measuring benefit/impact at scale

Questions to consider
Projects, especially interdisciplinary projects with long term goals need to be responsive and flexible - how do we prevent certain labour and goals, linked to specific outcomes, becoming devalued as projects shift priorities?

The Creative Approach

This cluster resisted a clear identity before being named "The Creative approach". We discussed how creativity can allow different perspectives to collectively translate what matters, and the importance of flexibility and serendipity. The Creative Approach is a collection of micro-processes and that is is vital to establish roles and structure that can adapt to these.

Crucially we discussed how this approach can fall apart if move towards creating and defining value before establishing the purpose, intent, etc. The latter stages of a project are where relationships break down if you failed to mutually establish the basics. Thinking from scratch and being open to mutual learning are therefore essential to tackle the complexity of "translating adventure"

The Creative Approach

- Being open to learning new skills from others
- Thinking from scratch
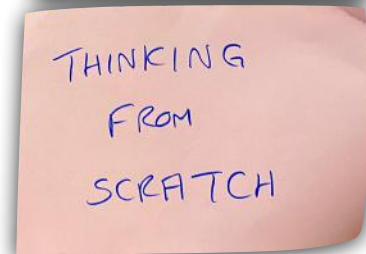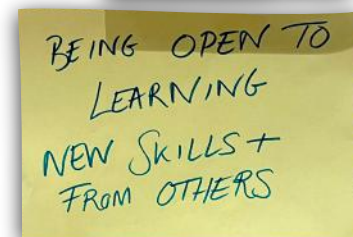
Questions to consider

Creativity is often presented as imprecise and undefinable- it requires freedom, serendipity and the unpredicted. However, creativity is a strategy and a tool. As such it can, when required, be robust, rigorous and reproducible. How do we ensure creative approaches are taken seriously and the methods used to assess them are enriching and not reductive?

Agreeing ingredients for magic and meaning

This cluster is the sibling of The Creative Approach. It is the other cluster around which we had the most varied and complex discussions. The discussions focuses a lot on the magic of the moment and questioning how and if it is defined and quantified. In particular how do you translate "magic" in ways that people respect. We discussed that the ingredients also included things before and after the intervention.

This cluster is essentially about what understanding works but the "what" and "works" both struggled to be defined within this consensus.


Agreeing ingredients for magic and meaning

- Remembering adventure in structure

Questions to consider

The current situation

Finally we acknowledged the current reality surrounding the situation; the strengths that will lead to accomplishing the tasks and creating change, and the weaknesses that threaten those, and the dangers of failing and succeeding. The benefits were taken as previously identified in the consensus workshop.
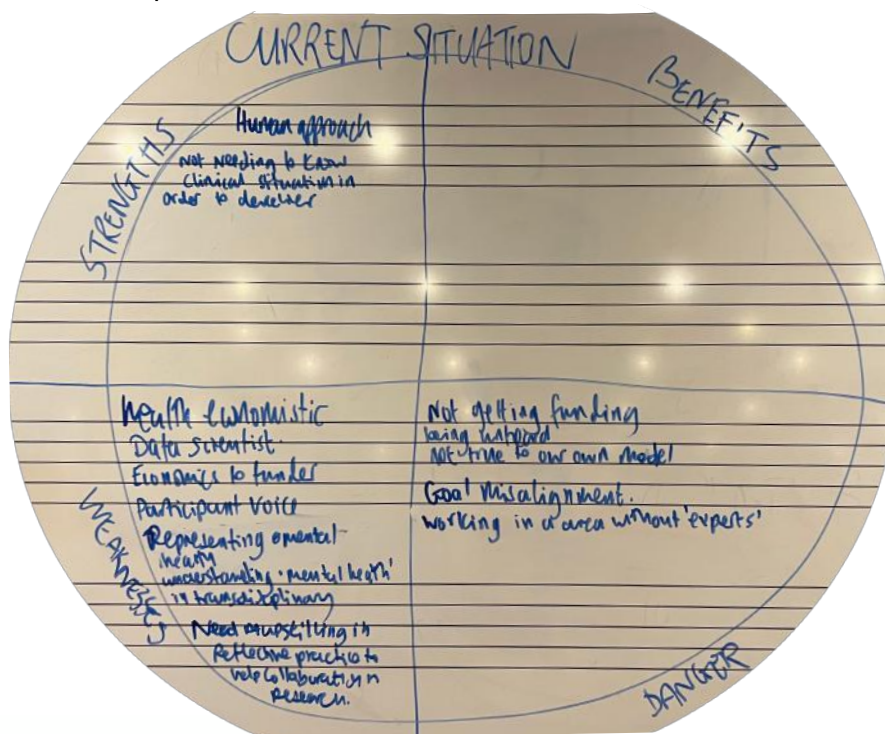
Strengths
- Human approach
- Not needing to know clinical situation in order to deliver

Weaknesses
- Heath economist
- Data Scientist
- Economics to funder
- Representing mental health
- Understanding "mental health"
- Interdisciplinary
- Need up-skilling in reflective practice
- Help collaboration in research

Dangers
- Not getting funding
- Being unheard
- Not true to our own model
- Goal misalignment
- Working in an area without 'experts'

In conclusion

These clusters are not exhaustive but represent a map of the collective knowledge, concerns and ambitions of the workshop participants. Although arranged in discreet clusters they are interlinked, evolving and contingent of many external factors. However, the do provide a roadmap with which to bring learning and success from one area to another and advanced the collective aims to work together to develop a creative approach to understanding, improving mental health recovery and personalised care.

Contact and permissions

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