

What Do Adolescent Experiences Reveal About The Mental Health System in Perth, Western Australia?

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Background

- **Thesis Aim:** Investigate the factors influencing adolescent mental health service access and continued use in Perth.
- **Study aim:** Explore adolescents' experiences of using mental health services

Methods

- Qualitative semi-structured face-to-face interviews
- 22 adolescents aged 14-18 with lived experience of accessing a mental health service
- Recruited through youth mental health services and youth groups
- Sampled from the Perth metropolitan area
- Thematic analysis

Findings

- Adolescents identified key policy, systemic and service-based factors influencing their care

Theme 1

- **(1) Mental health service intake procedures**
 - Confusing and distressing
 - Restrictive intake criteria
 - Positive experiences of service collaboration

Theme 2

- **(2) Level of orientation towards person-centred care**
 - Valued feeling informed and active participant in treatment
 - Experiences of disorganised services with poor communication
 - Invalidating responses

Theme 3

- **(3) Provision of services**
 - Service location, operating hours, cost and number of sessions potential barriers
 - Not enough services in community
 - Desire for more choice
 - Experiences of long waiting times
 - Schools important platform to access mental health

Discussion and Conclusions

- Findings indicate significant gaps in service access and use for adolescents
- Gaps need to be addressed at higher policy and system level
- Themes align with previously identified areas requiring reform
- Need for implementation of meaningful plans for action based on real-life experiences of consumers

Thank you for listening!

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Patient-Led Creative Recovery

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Background

- The Elouera Ward is a 20bed rehabilitation Ward in the Forensic Hospital;
- It houses patients who are mentally ill and are receiving treatment following a crime committed while mentally ill;
- The Forensic Hospital works with a multidisciplinary model of care and includes medical and allied health staff including art therapy and social work;
- It is the goal of the team to work collaboratively with the patients on their recovery and work innovatively together

Action Stories

- Action Stories is a group run on the program which came out of a need from patients for a less structured and confronting format to explore their issues;
- Action Stories is a voluntary group which is run in the group lounge room;
- Patients are asked to select from two stories that they would like to hear or self-selected;
- Story selection is made by facilitators based on collective ward issues, general mental health themes such as addiction and the affects of violence

The Spider and the Fly

Will you walk into my parlour?" said the Spider to the Fly,

"'Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy;

The way into my parlour is up a winding stair,
And I have many curious things to shew when you are there."

"Oh no, no," said the little Fly, "to ask me is in vain,
For who goes up your winding stair can ne'er come down again."

"I'm sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring up so high;
Will you rest upon my little bed?" said the Spider to the Fly.

"There are pretty curtains drawn around; the sheets are fine and thin,
And if you like to rest awhile, I'll snugly tuck you in!"

"Oh no, no," said the little Fly, "for I've often heard it said,
They never, never wake again, who sleep upon your bed!"

Said the cunning Spider to the Fly, "Dear friend what can I do,

To prove the warm affection I've always felt for you?

I have within my pantry, good store of all that's nice;

I'm sure you're very welcome—will you please to take a slice?"

"Oh no, no," said the little Fly, "kind sir, that cannot be,
I've heard what's in your pantry, and I do not wish to see!"

"Sweet creature!" said the Spider, "you're witty and you're wise,
How handsome are your gauzy wings, how brilliant are your eyes!
I've a little looking-glass upon my parlour shelf,
If you'll step in one moment, dear, you shall behold yourself."

"I thank you, gentle sir," she said, "for what you're pleased to say,
And bidding you good morning now, I'll call another day."

"The Spider turned him round about, and went into his den,
For well he knew the silly Fly would soon come back again:

So he wove a subtle web, in a little corner sly,
And set his table ready, to dine upon the Fly.

Then he came out to his door again, and merrily did sing,
"Come hither, hither, pretty Fly, with the pearl and silver wing;
Your robes are green and purple—there's a crest upon your head;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine are dull as lead!"

Alas, alas! how very soon this silly little Fly,
Hearing his wily, flattering words, came slowly flitting by;
With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near and nearer drew,
Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green and purple hue—
Thinking only of her crested head—poor foolish thing! At last,
Up jumped the cunning Spider, and fiercely held her fast.
He dragged her up his winding stair, into his dismal den,
Within his little parlour—but she ne'er came out again!

And now dear little children, who may this story read,
To idle, silly flattering words, I pray you ne'er give heed:
Unto an evil counsellor, close heart and ear and eye,
And take a lesson from this tale, of the Spider and the Fly.

The Spider and the Fly

- Choose being the Spider or the Fly and create an action to perform?

Group themes and outcomes of Spider and the Fly

- Most participants identified with the spider except one participant who really wanted to be the fly;
- Blaming the fly – brought up gender and domestic violence themes;
- Wanting to be the spider and the victim;
- Generated enthusiasm, energy and action especially in the more lethargic patients;
- Generated unguarded comments for further exploration;
- Indirectly discussed the reasons for hospitalisation in a maximum security facility

Action Stories Group Format

- Warm up
- Story is told
- Question is asked
- Patient group discussion
- Art and/or role play
- Take away comments

Stories and the Themes

- The stories enable themes to be explored that are more difficult and more distressing to explore in other contexts;
- Themes include: death and dying; treachery and trust; addiction and bravery; expectations; greed; madness; values; paranoia; anger and sadness
- Stories presented which generated group themes and discussion include: Rumpelstiltskin; Jack and the Bean Stalk; the Minotaur; Narcissist; Pandora; Treasure Island; the Incredible Hulk, The Corps Bride; The Five Chinese Brothers.



Drawing and Drama

- Following the telling of the story, patients are asked to draw, write or reenact part of the story that was significant to them;
- The responses then hold the story alive in the room and continue the discussion around story themes and the connection to their recovery;
- The group participants assist each other to make connections to the story and their individual issues;
- Often common themes emerge for individual participants who identify that they are not alone in their recovery

The Group Matrix

- The Group Matrix summarises the main themes and issues raised;
- These themes are taken back to the patient, MDT and documented for further exploration. This also guides further conversations and story selections;
- The group chooses what to further explore in the group context in terms of aspects of story, characters, roles and problem solving, creative method of exploration

Challenges and Benefits

- Able to explore taboo subjects in a fun, engaging and non-clinical manner
- Those there want to be there
- Takes participants back to their childhood with limited effort
- Group doesn't feel personally exposed because of the focus on the story
- The group can be disrupted as it is conducted in an open environment where participants can leave and return at will
- General fear of organization of the unknown

Questions

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