

Experience Based Co-Design in Speech & Language Therapy Services

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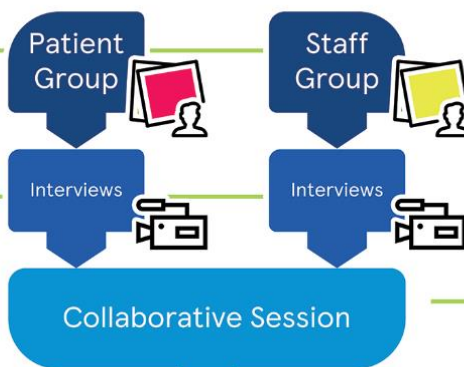
Head and Neck Cancer has significant potential to cause long-term changes to communication, swallowing and overall quality of life. This often results in a life-long relationship between patients and Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) Services. As individuals may experience limited or no spoken communication, email is therefore an appealing channel for patient communication.

However, concerns over data privacy make this incredibly difficult. In our exploration of this, we recognised an opportunity for a people-centred approach to service evaluation and improvement - and we are part-way through this process.

An Experience Based Co-Design (EBCD) model was adopted as a method to engage and involve patients throughout the service evaluation and improvement process.

Patient-spouse and staff workshops were conducted to establish key points along the patient journey.

Key point findings were used as a basis for video interviews to create an emotional touchpoints film for the collaborative patient-staff session



The follow-on collaborative session established the top three priority areas for change:

1. Communication - meeting the needs of individuals with limited speech
2. Multi-disciplinary clinic
3. Psychological support - life after treatment.

Dates have been scheduled for co-design working groups, where patients and staff will work together on the improvements they have identified.

All participants will be invited to meet and review improvements, discuss experiences and celebrate our collaborative working.

Our experience so far...

This has been a thoroughly enriching experience for all staff involved and has engaged and empowered patients to take an active role within service development. Insight into the patient experience of our service has been hugely powerful and essential to establishing effective and meaningful change.

"It was good to bring my experiences and feelings to this group. These will help Speech and Language Therapy design an improved service for all, that takes into account the patient perspective"

- Domenic Risi, Patient

Yes - it can be a challenge for both patients and staff to maintain momentum alongside other commitments; however it is most definitely worthwhile. We are already considering use of this method across other aspects of our service.

Acknowledgements. Special thanks to all patients, carers and staff who have engaged and given so much of themselves to this process.

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