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NATIONAL STANDARDS
for PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
Official Test Bed Site 2018-19

12 months of the RCSLT

Learning Disabilities Research Priorities

Bronagh McAuley



Relevant to learning disabilities
research priorities (2) and (8)

Bronagh ran a project entitled: *"Service users' perspectives of their communication and literacy skills, in a community forensic and mental health learning disability service."*

The analysis of the interviews revealed four overarching themes: 1) Negative feelings including self-esteem and anger 2) Perceived capability of communication and literacy skills 3) Challenges and difficulties with communication and literacy 4) Adaptive strategies to overcome difficulties.

The findings of the research support the benefits of involving people with a learning disability in qualitative research, to explore their communication and literacy abilities.



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Emma Pagnamenta



Relevant to learning disabilities
research priorities (4), (5) and (9)

Emma will be conducting a research project evaluating an early social communication intervention for young children with DS. This NIHR-funded Research for Patient Benefit project aims to test the feasibility of a future randomised controlled trial of a parent-delivered joint attention intervention for young children with DS as delivered by NHS Speech and Language Therapy services. The study will hopefully be a first step in providing much-needed evidence for early intervention to improve language skills and school readiness for children with DS.



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Michaela Steer and Sophie Howells



Relevant to learning disabilities
research priorities (10)

Michaela and Sophie will be creating a resource pack to support people with LDs to:

- understand the process of ageing, dying, and making choices about their own end of life care
- understand and cope with bereavement process involving loved ones and what this means

Their resources will be suitable for people with a range of levels of understanding, and suitable for those who are also pre/non-verbal. They will also be delivering staff training to determine staff confidence before and after having the resources, in regards to supporting individuals through bereavement and end of life choices. By completing this research, they hope that this will become best practice for all organisations supporting people with LDs.



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Anna Westaway and Sally Twigg



Relevant to learning disabilities
research priorities (2)

Anna and Sally have been taking a lead in promoting use of Makaton signing as part of our work to encourage a Trust wide approach to an inclusive communication environment. Examples of this have included:

- Working with Communications Team to include a link to the weekly Makaton sign of the week via their website
- Running a Makaton taster session during a staff 'Show and Tell' session, which was attended by nurses, physios, play workers, volunteers and members of the executive board
- Advising on use of Makaton signing during the production of accessible videos to provide procedure specific information

The project will hopefully demonstrate the need for SLTs to be involved with and commissioned to work through strategic planning to influence organisational policy, raise awareness, offer training and environmental input and guidance to improve accessibility and promote inclusive communication environments for children with learning disabilities.



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Anna Westaway and Sally Twigg



Relevant to learning disabilities
research priorities (2)

Anna and Sally are working to to implement the NHS Accessible Information Standard and the NHS Learning Disability Improvement Standards. This involves:

- Working alongside a wide range of clinical and non-clinical teams, including Communications, Patient Records, IT, Learning Disability Nurses, Consultants, Health Visitors and members of the Trust Executive Board
- Contributing to development of Trust-wide plans for implementation
- Identifying training needs and advising how to meet these
- Contributing to raising staff awareness, e.g. through workshops, sharing Makaton signs via staff email, information stalls and trust-wide events
- Discussing the patient journey and identifying barriers to communication and to accessibility



Find out more: www.rcslt.org

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Kunden Patel



Relevant to learning disabilities
research priorities (3) and (7)

Kunden ran an annual dysphagia review aimed to meet this need by refreshing staff skills and updating guidelines as necessary. The review aimed to indicate how many service user's dysphagia needs required a reassessment and may not have received one, if Speech and Language Therapy had not initiated a triage. An annual telephone triage (ATT) was completed primarily by Therapy Assistants and students with supervision from qualified and dysphagia competent SLT's.

The implications of the findings for clinical practice were to update a dysphagia database of people with learning disabilities known to have dysphagia and to provide direct assessment as determined by the telephone dysphagia triage.



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Alix Lewer



Relevant to learning disabilities
research priorities (2),(4),(5) and (9)

Following research into the long-term barriers of maintaining inclusive communication environments following indirect intervention (Bulletin 2009 / Lewer & Harding 2013/ Patel et al 2019), Alix and her team established the Include Choir. This is an inclusive communication choir for people with cognitive communication difficulties, support staff, family members and other local community members. As well as inclusive social & musical activity for people with learning disabilities, The Include Choir provides:

- An environment modelling a range of inclusive communication techniques (e.g. Makaton signing/ visual supports / visual timetables)
- Opportunities for care staff to practice & gain confidence in inclusive communication
- Promotion of inclusive communication & its use within the Mental Capacity Act to audiences within and beyond health and social care (through writing & performing songs)



Find out more: www.rcslt.org
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Laura Douglas



Relevant to learning disabilities
research priority (5)

Blossom House Pimlico is a new provision for pupils with severe language difficulties and moderate learning difficulties where a functional curriculum is delivered through real-life experiences.

Laura and her team are using the MAPP assessment of lateral progress tool <https://equals.co.uk/mapp2-mapping-and-assessing-personal-progress/to> to assess the progress of pupils following this new curriculum.

They are also baselining pupils and recording pupil progress as a MDT (SLT, OT and teaching staff) and the targets are then carried out across the day by all the therapy and teaching staff. The targets covers all areas e.g. shopping, toileting, communicating within the community, use of public transport and cooking skills.



Find out more: www.rcslt.org