



Practice Research Newsletter

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From the Editor

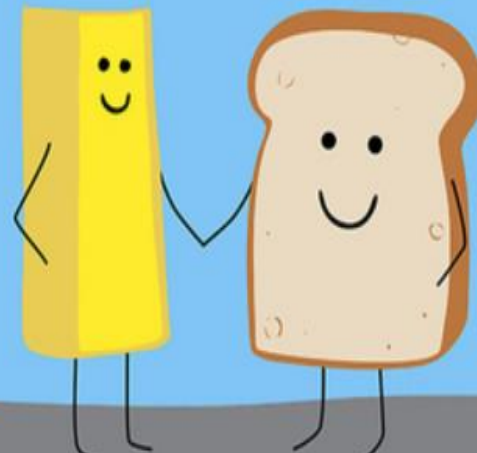
This is the last issue of our Practice Research Newsletter! Since the first issue we have been sharing basic concepts of Practice Research and its contribution to better practice. This issue we will explore common barriers for practitioners to step out.

The research showcased in this issue was conducted by an unusual partnership of two workers from two FSCs, who eventually presented their study together at the SWSD 2018 Conference at Dublin. A neat demonstration of the reality of Practice Research.

Don't forget to check out details of our RESEARCH MATCHMAKING on 17th Aug 2017 of interested practitioners and research mentors!

MATCHED

With a Research Mentor!



17.8.2018 2-5pm @ NCSS

See P.3 for details!

Studying Financial Habits of Low Income Families

ALICE KOO (ROTARY FSC)

JOCELYN QUEK (TRANS FSC (BEDOK))

How did you two, from two different FSCs, join effort and come up with this research idea?

JQ: It was a coincidence that we got paired up during the Social Service Research (SSR) Mentoring Programme 2017. Our research questions married perfectly: Alice was looking for data on client's level of financial knowledge to better inform their financial literacy group, while I wanted to understand the financial practices and attitudes of low-income families from our FSCs. My team at TRANS FSC (Bedok) decided it was important to slow down and relook at client's behaviour and attitude.

AK: Rotary is developing a board game named FundHEROES! for low income families. We wanted to study our client's financial attitude and behaviour as our needs assessment, as well as to test out ideas on how to evaluate our programme

What were the difficulties you encountered?

AK: Our workload and time was the major difficulty. Yet we were blessed to have the guidance from SSR, which made the process both harder (because we were

Aim of study:

To understand financial knowledge, behavior and attitude of low income families using FSC service

Methodology:

Mixed method of survey and in-depth interviews

Target:

Service users of the two FSCs who are eligible for financial assistance and have school-going children. A total of 57 respondents participated in the survey, and 10 participated in the in-depth interviews.

Findings:

The families are always in survival mode. Their idea of planning involved mainly stretching their dollars to last a month. Strong sense of helplessness and unpredictability was observed.

challenged to the core) and easier (as we are in good hands)! Lots of negotiation of my original ideas to fit into a research project. The support from our respective FSCs was super important too.

JQ: Another difficulty was to get bigger samples. Both our colleagues and our clients are very busy people! Asking them for a favour to conduct an interview might be too much for some as research may not be of the highest priority.

How does the result inform your practice?

JQ: At TRANS FSC (Bedok), the results triggered reflection on our social work practices with poverty and financial management. We re-learned about our clients' perspectives and that was extremely important.

AK: For Rotary, the questionnaire was adopted to be part of our evaluation of FundHEROES!, which we are piloting now. It was a great learning experience for me and my team that was working on FundHEROES!.

Note: This study was presented at the SWSD 2018 Conference at Dublin, Ireland. For more information, please feel free to contact Alice at alice@rotaryfsc.org or Jocelyn at jocelyn@trans.org.sg.



Alice (left) and Jocelyn (right) at SWSD 2018



But I am too BUSY!!!!

And other barriers for Practitioners to try research

Practice Research commonly falls into two types: those entirely led by a practitioner, or those of a collaboration between practitioner and academics (Shaw & Lunt 2018). These two types of Practice Research may face different challenges.

Practitioner-led research are usually small-scale, short-term, self-contained and a lone activity conducted by the practitioner, with academics either absent or taking a supportive role (Shaw & Lunt 2018). Obviously it is limited by practical concerns such as workload, support from agency, and access to resources. It is commonly seen as 'extra work' that practitioners take on, often at their own time (Shaw & Lunt, 2011). Other procedural barriers such as publication and ethics approval may also be a concern.

In the case of research-practitioner collaboration, the main challenge is the contradiction and dilemma between stakeholders (Uggerhøj, 2011). There are potentially five stakeholders in practice research - practitioners, researchers, service users, administrators and political stakeholders (e.g. the relevant ministry), who have different views and agenda. Practitioners often feel

powerless to negotiate in front of researchers, who are seen to possess the knowledge on research (Shaw & Lunt, 2011). Sometimes the process of negotiation results in practitioners feeling disappointed, such as needing to tone down or give up some of their original ideas.

Despite of these difficulties, practitioners who are involved in research often found it an inspiring learning process that give them a new perspective in their work that they will otherwise not able to see. Our two practitioner-researchers interviewed before demonstrated just how reflective the research process can be.

So....are you intimidated or tempted to try?

Reference:

- Shaw, I. and Lunt, N, (2018). Forms of Practitioner Research. *British Journal of Social Work*. 48 (1): 141-157
- Shaw, L. and Lunt, N. (2011). Navigating Practitioner Research. *British Journal of Social Work*, 41: 1548-1565
- Uggerhøj, L. (2011). What is Practice Research in Social Work – Definitions, Barriers and Possibilities. *Social Work & Society*. 9 (1): 45-59

PRACTICE RESEARCH MATCHMAKER

New to Practice Research? Our Mentor-Practitioner Matchmaker is still on... And it's FREE!

Please email your research ideas to judith.chew.fh@kkh.com.sg

And come to our MATCHMAKING DAY on **17 Aug 2018, 2-5pm** at NCSS for a 10-min presentation!

Details of participation criteria can be found in the 2nd issue of our newsletter:

<https://create.piktochart.com/output/29983389-lines>

If you have no research idea but you want to participate in our MATCHMAKING DAY, please register [HERE](#), use our QR code or email us at:

SWPracticeResearch@gmail.com

See you on 17 Aug!

