

COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY IN ACTION

PRACTITIONER-RESEARCHER PARTNERSHIP IN FAMILY- CENTERED GROUPWORK, *OUR KELUARGA*



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**THYE HUA KWAN
MORAL CHARITIES**

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A SHARING OF REALITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES



ATTEMPTING RESEARCH | APPLYING FOR LEE CHOON GUAN PRACTICE RESEARCH GRANT

WHAT IS OUR KELUARGA PROGRAMME ABOUT?



SELF



FAMILY



COMMUNITY

ATTEMPTING RESEARCH | APPLYING FOR LEE CHOON GUAN PRACTICE RESEARCH GRANT

- Ongoing Program For 9 Cycles With Consistent Revisions
- Evaluation: Simple Pre/Post-test

2023

2024

- Wanted To Improve Program Structure And Evaluation Methods
- Approached NUS Social Service Research For Consultation
- Constructed Theory Of Change And Observational Rubrics Under Their Guidance

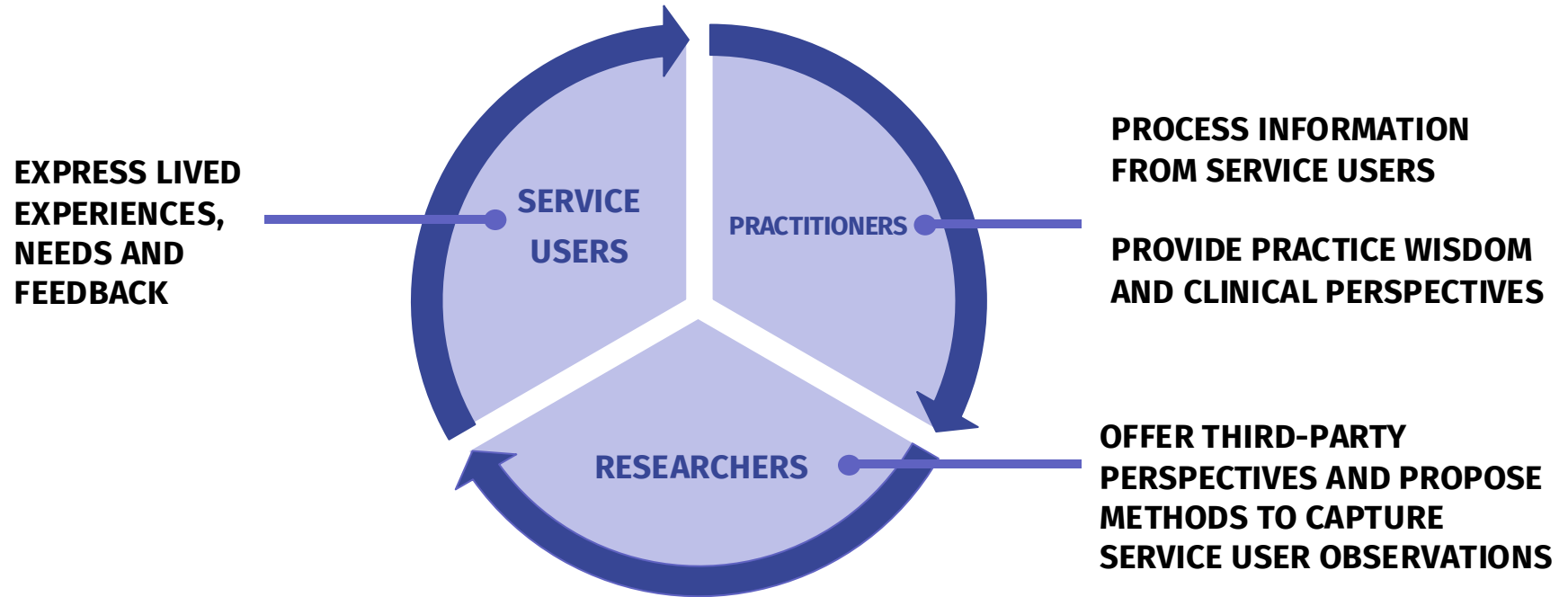
- Interested To Find Out More About The Program's Impact On Clients
- Concerns With Program Continuity And Sustainability
- Applied For LCG Grant

2025

- Received The LCG Grant
- Start Preparations For Practice Research
- Apply For Ethics Review
- Develop Training Manual For Facilitators
- Create A Playbook Documenting Our Experience Working With Families Navigating Substance Recovery

2026 onwards

GATHERING PERSPECTIVE AND NEEDS | THE COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY MODEL



NAVIGATING PRACTITIONER-RESEARCHER PARTNERSHIP | TUCKMAN'S STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

FORMING



Identifying practice curiosities through observation

NORMING



Integration of complementary skillsets

ADJOURNING



Disbanding and reflecting on the process

STORMING



Overcoming differences in communication and work

PERFORMING



Research becomes part of therapeutic process

NAVIGATING PRACTITIONER-RESEARCHER PARTNERSHIP |

PHASE 1 - FORMING

FORMING



Identifying practice curiosities through observation

How could this process start?

- Practitioner identifies practice curiosities through observations and shares with Researcher
- Researcher asks more questions to gather more contextual knowledge. May also participate in some of the sessions to observe what happens.
- Practitioner and Researcher agree to come together with the common goal of answering practice curiosities.

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PHASE 2 - STORMING

STORMING



Overcoming
differences in
communication
and work

Reality

- Practitioners have a lot of practice wisdom and knowledge but may not be well-versed in practice research and/or have not actively pursued research in work (i.e. rusty in research).
- Researchers have strong research background but may not have adequate clinical and practice knowledge.
- Could lead to differences in how both parties communicate; the 'language' used and what it means.

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PHASE 2 - STORMING

STORMING



Overcoming
differences in
communication
and work

For example, when the Researcher asked the Practitioner:

“Could you share with me what are your intended outcomes of the intervention program?”

- Practitioners may describe what were the activities done and objectives of sessions/activities that they did with the clients.
- But, the Researcher actually wanted to know what behavioral outcomes the Practitioner had anticipated their interventions to have from a theory of change perspective.
- Both parties had different understanding of what “intended outcomes” means.
- It is important for both parties to ask each other for further clarifications and come to an alignment.

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PHASE 2 - STORMING

STORMING



Overcoming
differences in
communication
and work

The Researcher could follow up with such a question :

“After doing these activities, what are the behavioural changes that you anticipate or hope to observe in your clients?”

- Being able to effectively communicate with each other is vital in a Practitioner-Researcher Partnership as **Practitioners** hold the **key to client insights** and **practice wisdom**.
- If there is a communication breakdown, the Researchers may not be able to understand how the practices are impacting the clients and may propose unsuitable ways to study the identified practice curiosity. Practitioner may then feel that research is not helping their work with their clients.
- Therefore, it is important to overcome differences in how Practitioners and Researcher communicate and work

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PHASE 3 - NORMING

NORMING



Integration of
complementary
skillsets

- Requires integration of complementary skillsets (Practice wisdom and research skills)
- Listen intentionally
- Asked each other questions
- Clarifying what was said
- Learn from each other

How did we do this for OK?

- Many rounds of discussions to come up with the Programme theory of change and participant observation rubrics
- Brainstormed the LCG grant proposal research questions together – started with practitioners sharing their practice curiosities and researchers digging into the literature
- Created study measures together

NAVIGATING PRACTITIONER-RESEARCHER PARTNERSHIP |

PHASE 4 - PERFORMING

PERFORMING



Research becomes
part of therapeutic
process

When the Practitioner-Researcher Partnership results in

- Refined programme structure with clear logic model
- The team going beyond business as usual, integrating research as a part of therapeutic process
- The team is ready to try doing practice research

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PHASE 4 - AJOURNING

ADJOURNING



Disbanding and
reflecting on the
process

- Practitioners are able to incorporate practice research into programme independently, and know to reach out to Researchers to continue studying different aspects of the programme.
- Researchers can reach out to Practitioners to explore different areas for research.
- Both Practitioners and Researchers are aware of each others' roles and the importance both roles play in groupwork.

How are we going to do this for OK?

- Training manual for OK.
- Playbook for groupwork.
- Research paper with possible areas for future research.
- Improved evaluation for groupwork.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES OF COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY APPROACH

STRENGTHS

- Complementary expertise
- Enhanced reflexivity
- Mutual reinforcement between practice and research
- More tailored, effective interventions for families

CHALLENGES

- Aligning different objectives and priorities
- Language and background differences
- Differences in KPIs and objectives
- Workload pressures

SUCCESS FACTORS:

Patience, clear ideation processes, shared goals centred on client wellbeing

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM OUR EXPERIENCE

- Research can be successfully integrated into the therapeutic system
- Leading to sustainable change for families through deepened, reflexive practice between Practitioners and Researchers
- For Agencies considering a practitioner-researcher collaborative model:
 - Important that researchers are integrated into the agencies' services (e.g. have opportunities to observe during home visits, programme sessions).
 - Normal to have differing expectations. Prioritise communication and working together to improve interventions for service users.
 - Tap on complementary traits of practitioners and researchers to encourage collaborative models of meaningful translational research (rather than one that is in silos).

THANK YOU!