

Initial Programme Theories 3 and 4

3	C1 - If a safe environment is provided especially in circumstances where participants feel isolated or misunderstood	Mres1 - Participants can express themselves, share their thoughts, feelings and experiences without fear of judgement or criticism	Mreact1 - This can create a sense of emotional support and validation	O1 - Trust is fostered and group members are encouraged to share personal and sensitive information, which can facilitate the process of healing and personal growth
4	C1 - If activities involve sharing of personal experiences and challenges within the group	Mres1 - This can be therapeutic for group members and allows them to offer each other emotional support and to validate one another's experiences and feelings. Group members are also able to learn from each other, gain new insights and perspectives, and reflect on their own experiences and learn from them	Mreact1 - It can create a sense of connection and understanding among group members	O1 - A sense of community and support is fostered.

Became refined programme theory A – (Psychological) Safety

Context	Mechanism – Resources	Mechanism - Reaction	Outcome
If people are living in circumstances where they feel isolated, misunderstood, marginalised, othered, lack trust in mainstream services or simply feel that there is something missing in their lives (e.g. an opportunity to express themselves and be heard) and the programme/group offers a potentially safe environment	The programme offers an opportunity to share personal experiences and challenges, without judgement or criticism and the opportunity to learn from other people and get emotional support and validation	MReaction a -Participants feel safe to be vulnerable, to talk about traumatic experiences or other challenges in their lives. They feel heard and understood and a new sense of connection and community. This feels therapeutic and reduces the experience of stress. OR MReaction b - Participants may still not feel able to talk openly, or they have such complex issues that feeling and staying connected is not possible NB – this experience can be within a single individual as well as between individuals	Outcome a - Participants develop new knowledge and understanding. They experience personal growth and healing which helps to build resilience and maintain or improve mental wellbeing. OR Outcome b - High turnover for some participants; some come but don't stay. Those with complex mental health problems may disturb the functioning of the group (and may need to be directed to other support that meets their needs better).

Summary of theory

Context: For those feeling marginalised or isolated or any sense of need **Mechanism (Resource):** the BMC provides an opportunity to share experiences without judgement, and an opportunity to learn from others. **Mechanism (Reaction):** This makes men feel safe, heard and understood, a new sense of connection reduces the experience of stress. **Outcome:** Members experience personal growth and healing which builds resilience and supports wellbeing.

Alternative Reaction and Outcome: However, not everyone feels safe to share and connect. There is turnover of participants. Those with more severe mental health problems may feel least safe and are likely to need alternative or additional support.

Initial Programme Theories 5 and 6

5	C1 - If participants share similar characteristics and interests, including life histories, culture and background	Mres1 - This can expedite a bond between participants, increasing the propensity for bonding and attachment	Mreact1 - The common bond facilitates intimacy and mutual trust	O1 - The similarities support the development of empathy and understanding and increases the likelihood of an emotional connection to be established between the parties. Meaningful and reciprocal relationships are facilitated beyond the superficial level.
6	C1 - If individuals who feel isolated or misunderstood are given the chance to share their experiences of racism within a group setting	Mres1 - Group members are given the opportunity to provide emotional support and validation	Mreact1 - A sense of solidarity is developed	O1 - Change is advocated for on a personal and collective level

Became refined programme theory B - Solidarity

Context If a particular population group, such as Black Men, are not appropriately represented in or by mental health services, but are known to have needs around their mental health and there is a growing understanding of some of the explicit and structural racism (or other prejudiced treatment) that influences their lives. However, no population group is homogenous and Black men will have differing experiences of cultural background and racism	MRes1a – The programme is able to reach local Black Men and provides an opportunity to share experiences of racism with people with similar life histories, culture and backgrounds AND/OR MRes1b – There is a risk that Black Men are stereotyped and that nuanced issues such as intersectionality with other identities are missed; some concern expressed about reach being wide enough into the most deprived groups; set times as a barrier if not convenient for some; and gang turf could be a barrier for younger Black Men who cannot enter certain locations safely – see recent Gang map	MReact1a – the commonality of background enhances bonding within the group and supports the development of intimacy, trust and a sense of solidarity; less likely to internalise racism and supported to plan for and take action against it Mreact1b – some may feel excluded if their experiences are very different or they have additional prejudices playing out in their lives that are not often discussed. Disagreements occur sometimes where difference exists; but learning to deal with these as a group can lead to growth. The weight of collective trauma can feel heavy.	Outcome1a – new friendships and support networks are established; learning how to deal with conflict more constructively can occur; and together wider societal change is advocated for Outcome1b – some of these reactions may be lead to lack of engagement and turnover of participants (though such outcomes will be influenced by wider factors too)
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Summary of theory

Context: If mainstream services are not meeting a particular groups' needs (in this case, working age Black Men) an opportunity that is just for that group in a community setting looking at the issue of mental health may appeal.

Mechanism (Resource): The programme offers the opportunity to share experiences of prejudice with people who may have had similar experiences which can **Mechanism (Reaction):** enhance bonding and a sense of solidarity.

Outcome: Racism is less likely to be internalised and constructive ways to contribute to change are built together.

Alternative Mechanism and Outcome: However, the focus on racism needs to account for different experiences (and avoid stereotyping) and other types of prejudice (e.g. homophobia) and reach to younger Black men is limited. Disagreements can sometimes occur, and the difficult subject matters may lead to disengagement for some.

Initial programme theories 2 and 7

2	C1 - If community members are given control over the activities they participate in	Mres1 - Opportunity to tailor the group experience to their individual needs and preferences	Mreact1 - Community members may feel more ownership in the activities	O1 - Increased motivation and commitment to the project, leading to engagement in the project activities. Moreover, a sense of agency and empowered will be fostered
7	C1 - If individuals are given the opportunity to express themselves through performing arts	Mres1 - This provides the opportunity for them to explore and process emotions, memories, and events in a safe and creative way. Individuals are able to communicate their stories and perspectives in an accessible way, conveying complex ideas and feelings through nonverbal communication which can be difficult to express through words alone	Mreact1 - Individuals may be able to gain a deeper understanding of themselves, their lives and the world around them	O1 - Personal experiences and emotions are channelled into a performance. A space is provided for different perspectives and traditions to come together, promoting a greater sense of understanding and connection

Became evolved programme theory C - Control and Empowerment

Context	Mechanism (Resource)	Mechanism (Reaction)	Outcome
If Black Men (or other intended target group) find out about the opportunity to be involved in a group that is <i>for them</i> and focuses on mental health and creative and performing arts and that feels of interest to possible participants	The programme/group offers the opportunity to have control over the extent to which you get involved/participate; the ability to tailor or choose artistic processes that are drawn on; and the opportunity to explore and process emotions, memories, trauma in a safe and creative way – alternatives to expressing through conversation or talking therapy is provided. The goal of a performance (or other output) provides a purpose and structure. NB: Someone else can tell your story if you don't feel able to BUT Limits to range of artistic approaches and performing arts/drama-based improvisation approaches have dominated. Time for check-ins and talking tends to be unlimited meaning there is less time for the arts or drama activity at times The goal of a performance adds pressure	Participants feel able to engage at their own pace when they feel comfortable to, which contributes to a sense of safety, trust and engagement. Participants play an active part in processing difficulties and trauma and learn collectively, and they can invest in running and planning the group, which gives them a greater sense of agency and empowerment. OR Some may never really engage and some may not like a particular artistic approach or may grow bored of that approach over time Some may feel frustrated at the lack of structure and at other people not engaging consistently when the pressure to deliver a performance (or other output) is mounting	Where you get to depends on where you start; personal growth is promoted, people overcome personal hurdles and barriers which strengthens their sense of wellbeing and resilience. They produce artistic outputs that they feel proud of and which connect with audiences they want to reach, including other Black Men and 'Change Makers' such as GPs, local councillors, people in the local Mental health trust etc. Raise awareness in their community and with those in the audience including on topics that are difficult to talk about (e.g., suicide as a consequence of coming out as gay) AND Their sense of agency and empowerment leads them to identify additional opportunities to provide support for one another (e.g. WhatsApp group; men's walk and talk; men's weight management group) OR Those that it doesn't appeal to or who grow bored may drop away; this may only be temporary with some coming and going overtime and still gaining benefit. Frustration is normal in life so this may not interfere with overall benefit for most

Summary of Programme Theory C – Control and Empowerment

Context: for Black men interested in creative arts and mental health, **Mechanism (Resource):** the programmes offers an opportunity to get involved in a way and at a pace that suits each man and an opportunity to process emotions and trauma in an alternative way to talking therapy. **Mechanism (Reaction):** The approach supports a sense of agency and empowerment, putting each man in control. This promotes personal growth and enhanced wellbeing **Outcome:** The outputs generate a sense of achievement and pride and may also contribute to wider societal change.

Alternative Reaction and Outcome: The artistic approach may not suit everyone, and some may grow bored or frustrated with balancing time to talk with time to prepare for performance, which may impact engagement and turnover.

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Initial programme theories 1 and 8

1	C1 - If facilitators have personally experienced the challenges that participants have faced/are facing	Mres1 - They can offer a level of understanding and empathy that may be difficult for those who have not gone through similar experiences to provide	Mreact1 - Increased sense of safety and support in participants	O1 - Trust and connection is facilitated between the facilitators and the community member. Participants are more likely to open up to facilitators
8	C1 - If the characteristics (e.g. personality, experience or charisma) of the facilitator is considered during the assessment	Mres1 - Facilitators have a friendly and approachable nature, and relevant life experiences or expertise. Facilitators are able to connect with community members in a dynamic and engaging way	Mreact1 - A rapport is developed between the facilitator and group member. A sense of excitement and interest in the project is fostered	O1 - The level of engagement is increased. Credibility and trust for the facilitator is established

Became refined theory D - Credibility and Commitment

Context	Mechanism (Resource)	Mechanism (Reactions)	Outcomes
In identifying an existing group and facilitator to support with available funding; or in recruiting a facilitator to start something new; the likely credibility, skills and shared experiences and connections with the target community are important to consider; their motivations for taking on the role are important; their location within a community	Facilitators demonstrate genuine curiosity around how people cope with adversity; willing to volunteer time when funding isn't there; willing to share responsibility and open to collaboration; genuinely skilled and well-connected in the field of creating performance pieces 'art as the main weapon'; uses fun/games to engage and draw people in; turns the group into a resource in itself; genuine ambition for the group GRADUALLY seeks support from others with additional and complimentary skills to share responsibility of leadership over time; willing to listen to others and evolve together over time AND Shared background can be a useful resource but it is not always necessary if credibility can be built in alternative ways (e.g. demonstrating skill) AND A regular community-based venue that is available at no cost	Participants are able to identify with the facilitator/recognise elements of shared experience which bypass the need for explaining some of their experiences. Participants feel supported (safe, respected and emotionally held) to grow in confidence and ability; they feel valued and that their contribution is important; a sense of community is fostered and joy in creating something together; rapport is built between the facilitator and group participants BUT Some frustrations and tensions inevitably build as people differ on priorities with facilitator AND But even without shared background the art can provide the vehicle for sharing an experience without words. The skill at facilitating the artistic work can generate the needed credibility AND Provides a home for the group that supports the sense of community	New skills and confidence and increased employability opportunities through new networks and skills Longevity and self-sustainability are generated through people's long-term investment and commitment AND Some feel their skills are not always used to their full potential Some opportunities to develop skills may not always be harnessed AND Supports the sustainability of the group even when funding is not available.

Summary of theory

Context: When aiming to develop such a programme the skills, credibility and motivation of the facilitator are important to consider as well as the location within a community as these translate into programme resources **Mechanism (Resource):** resources included willingness to volunteer time when funding is not available, although skills and resources can build over time as well. For example, willingness to share leadership responsibility and draw on others' skills helped to build sustainability (an outcome). Shared characteristics between facilitator and participants support bonding and credibility, but so does demonstration of skills and expertise. **Mechanism (Response):** Participants are able to grow in confidence and ability, rapport is built and there is joy in creating something to be proud of. **Outcomes:** This leads to new skills, confidence, networks, employability and sustainability of the programme.

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