

*Equally Connected** Report 2

Participatory Appraisal training

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**Equally Connected* is an action research project using community development approaches, including the creative arts, to learn from Black and minority ethnic (BME) communities about:

- attitudes to, and experiences of, mental health
- what helps maintain well-being
- effective ways of challenging stigma and discrimination

This evidence will be used to improve understanding and help ensure that services and systems of care (such as the Integrated Care Pathway (ICP) for people with depression) are designed to meet the needs of the diverse BME communities within Edinburgh and the Lothians.

Equally Connected is funded and supported by NHS Lothian and NHS Health Scotland and based at Health in Mind in Edinburgh

Participatory Appraisal Training Evaluation

1. Aim of the training

Equally Connected held a Participatory Appraisal (PA) training day on Thursday 18th February 2010, with the following aims:

- Improve knowledge of the range of PA tools
- Provide opportunities to practise using these tools in group work settings
- Build trust with potential partner agencies
- Assist Equally Connected team to plan future work with specific groups

2. Who Attended?

We received thirty-three requests for the training event, and a total of seventeen places were offered to those we were currently working with, or hoped to be working with in the future. In the end sixteen participants attended:

- Four from Equally Connected
- Four from Men in Mind (MiM)
- Two from Saheliya
- One from Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health
- One from Scottish Association for Mental Health
- One from Consultation & Advocacy Promotion Service
- One from the Africa Centre
- One from SEHLI (South Edinburgh Health Living Initiative)
- One BME individual

3. Case Studies

In order to achieve our fourth aim, a 'real research situation' was prepared in advance as a Case Study. These Case Studies related to four groups we were working with, or wished to work with in the future. In each case, participants were asked to consider which PA tools could be used to implement work with each group

Case study 1:

Who: Arabic-speaking women

Where: scattered across Edinburgh

Why: very isolated, during EC mapping were raised as a group who we know little about, no support group, concerns about depression, unmet needs, find out more about their understanding of mental health and wellbeing, experiences of mental health services

How: could we look at these issues using PA tools?

Case study 2:

Who: BME men

Where: Edinburgh

Why: interest in photography/video, know MiM service users, isolation, mixed ethnicities/languages, opportunity for partnership work, find out more about their understanding of mental health and wellbeing, experiences of mental health services

How: could we engage with this group using PA tools?

Case study 3:

Who: international students (male and female)

Where: Edinburgh and Lothians

Why: concerns raised by universities and colleges, opportunity to work in partnership, students presenting at crisis stage, limited knowledge about experiences of, services for, depression, anxiety, rarely linked into local BME services

How: could we engage with this group using PA tools?

Case study 4:

Who: older Polish and Ukrainian women

Where: Edinburgh and Lothians

Why: families often working and older people left at home and very isolated, perhaps feeling they have lost their 'usefulness'. Scattered across the Lothians

How: could we engage with this group using PA tools?

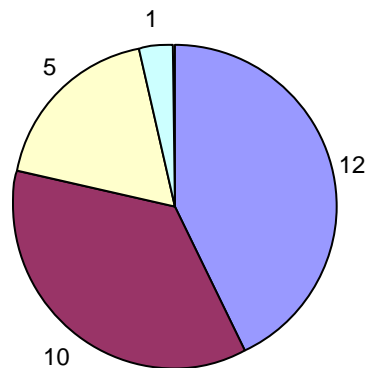
4. Evaluation

Sixteen evaluation responses were received. Participants were asked to list:

- 2 things which they learned
- 2 things which surprised them
- 2 things they would change
- How confident are you in using PA tools, giving reasons

Findings are summarised below along with quotes from participants:

2 Things That You Learned?



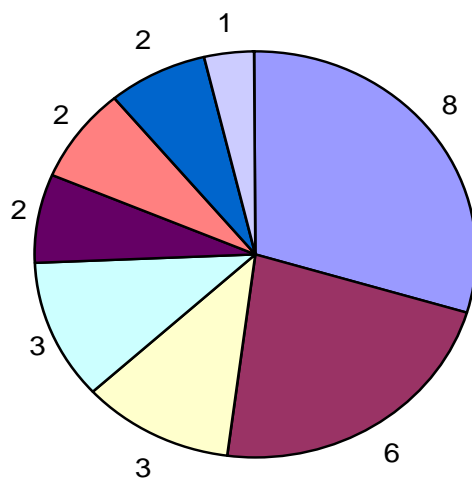
- Learnt new ways to adopt using PA tools in their or others workplace
- Learnt new PA tools
- Enjoyed the method of the trainer/enjoyed the training overall
- Didn't particularly learn anything new

"I learnt that it doesn't have to be overly complicated."

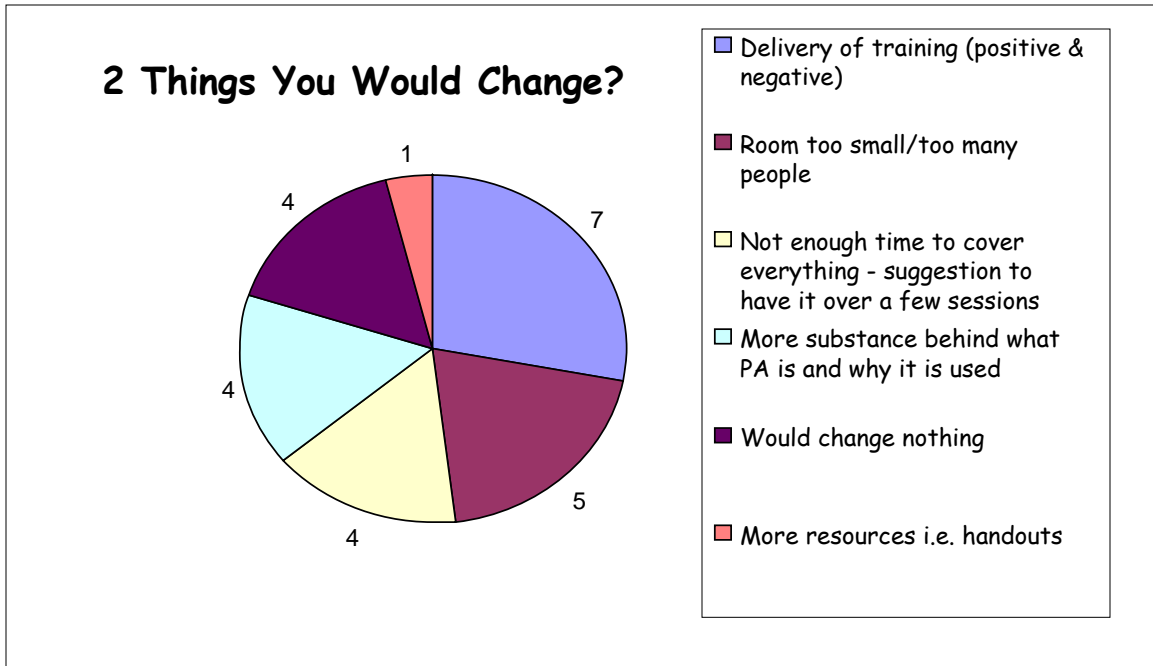
"Not only did I leave the training with a wider knowledge of tools - anyone can use them."

"Not much new learning, perhaps a reminder of the need of using visual tools when working with groups."

2 Things That Surprised You?



- The success of the training/trainers approach
- How adaptable PA tools are
- Nothing surprised me/never learnt anything new
- Other
- Had already been using PA but didn't know
- Would like to use PA tools more
- Disadvantages of the training
- How easy they are to use



"The whole concept is an eye-opener."

"No, I knew much already."

"How different people's perspectives from other organisations can be"

"I really liked the focus on the application of tools i.e. the split off sessions. I'd like to see more of that. I thought a real life scenario prompted healthy debate surrounding PA and bridged the gap between theory and practice."

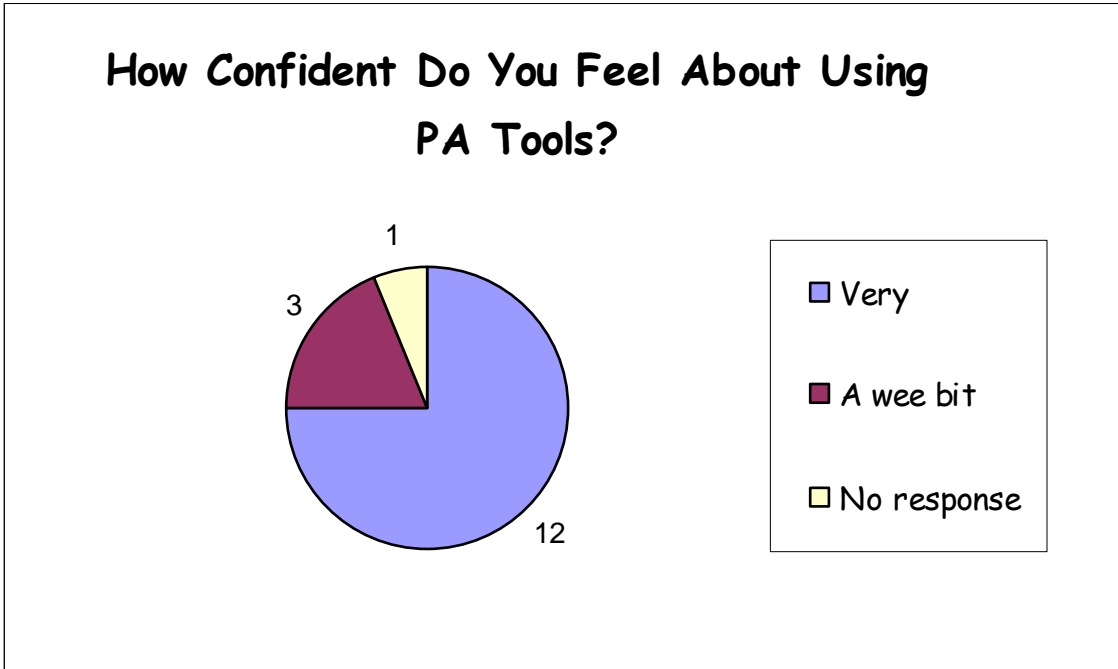
"Too little reference was made on limitations and implications when using these tools."

"That at times I use little bits of PA tools without realising it."

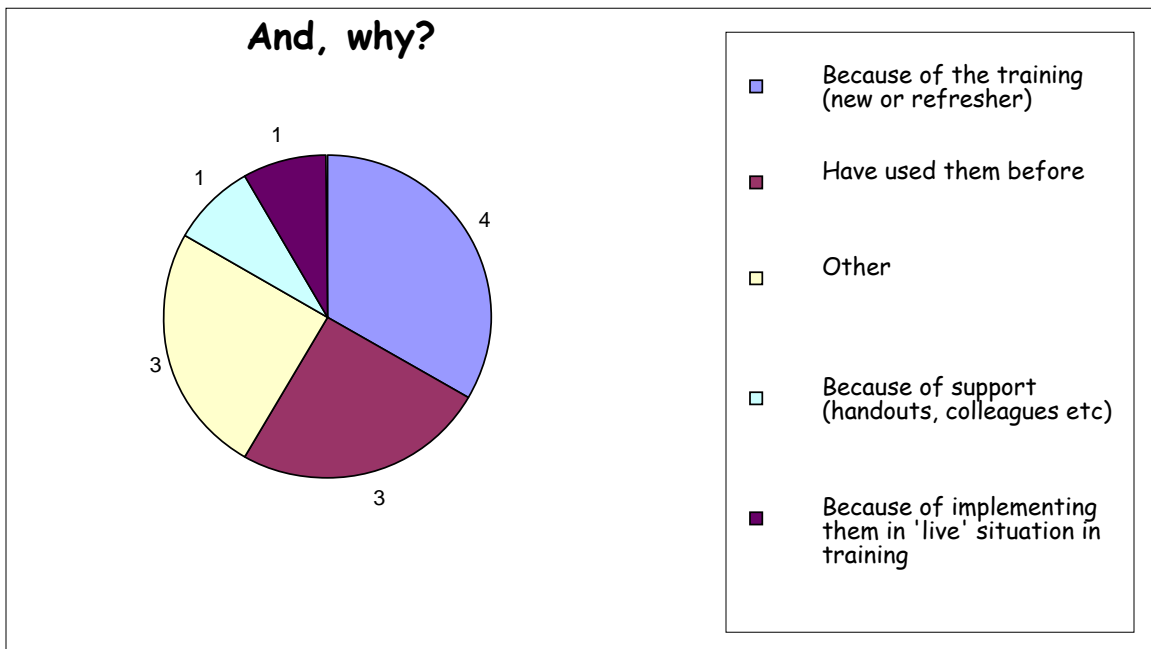
"If feasible I'd make it a 2 day course. There wasn't a lot of time allocated to looking at each tool in enough detail due to the limited time."

"Room was a bit awkward."

Participants were then asked to evaluate how confident they felt using PA tools:



Of those who felt 'very' confident - Why?

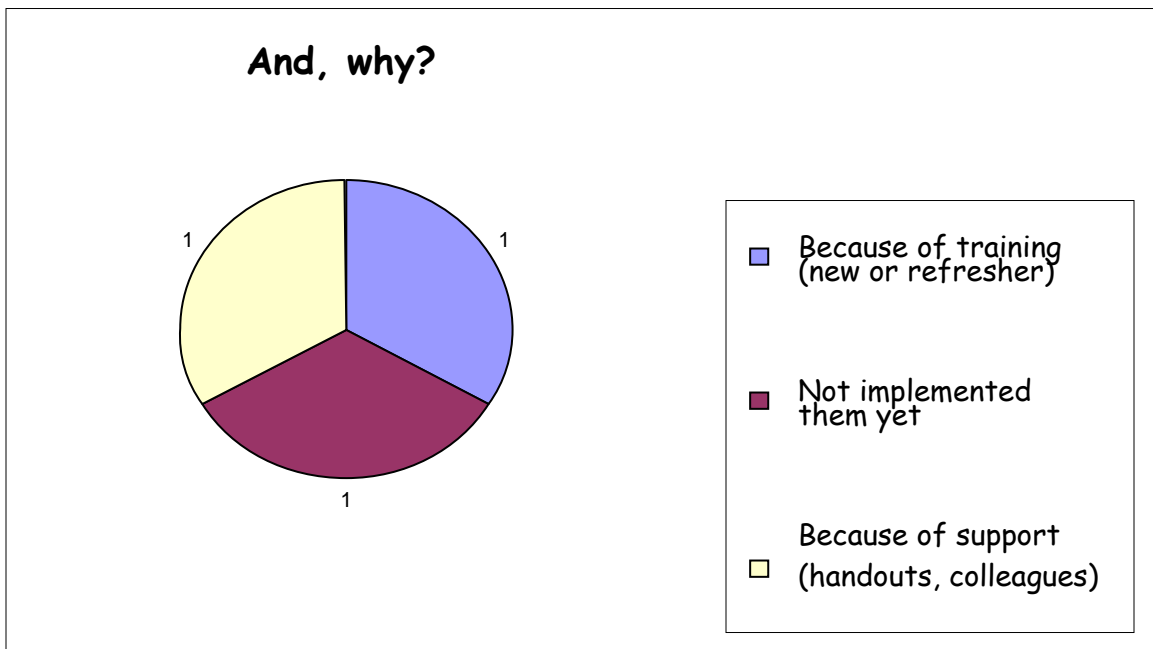


"I am more confident using some of the tools than others but generally these are the sort of tools I am already using in research. Some tools need more forward thought to use them effectively."

"The tools were explained, demonstrated and presented very clearly on the day, supported with a detailed hand-out to refer to for future reference and I have my colleagues to support me when using PA tools."

"Just felt good to practise rather than just be talked at. Well-organised session and 'happy hosts'."

Of those who felt 'A Wee Bit' confident, Why?



"I'd feel quite confident in using PA tools - primarily because of the training, the resources I've read and I've had the chance to apply PA to a 'live' situation."

One participant did not respond to how confident they felt - but added that they liked using *'new ideas and getting feedback from the clients, we both learn together.'*

No participants said that they didn't feel comfortable at all using PA tools.

Finally, participants were invited to add any additional comments:

"I have a background in Community Education and therefore am familiar with, and have experience of using PA. However, it was very useful to be reminded of this way of working in ways that required thinking about situations faced by other projects. It's always good to have some safe space to look at ones own practice in a critical way. I enjoyed working with people I didn't know and particularly liked the problem solving exercises."

"The style of the trainer was very pleasant."

"To be honest I am not sure how I felt about the training. The exercises were all useful and I will be able to use them in my work but there was something lacking for me - although I am not sure what. The trainer and the facilities were both lovely and I felt very comfortable. Thank you for looking after us so well."

The last exercise: "Margolis Wheel" not a healthy way to do in a compact room. Thoroughly infectious, in view of swine flu and other infectious diseases performing is not advisable. Unfortunately in a hurry I have left the documents - the training materials given on that day." (Sent on later by ML)

5. Conclusion

Overall, this PA training event seems to have been beneficial to the majority of participants - due to the broad, interesting materials used, as well as the informal but very effective approach used by the trainer. Aside from learning new tools, this event was also very useful to the Equally Connected team - networks that were already present were strengthened and new connections were also made.

For EC we will use what we learned today about PA tools in our action research with BME communities. As one participant commented:

"It was a good day for team Equally Connected!!"