

Involving service users and carers in health, social care and educational research

Comensus

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What is Comensus?

- University initiative
- Community involvement team
- Campus-based
- Strategic planning
- Teaching
- Events
- Research



Comensus – the context

- Participatory Action research study 2004
- Making changes-social movement
- Making sense of how change happens
- Planning, reviewing, developing
- Quality circles
- Action planning



Background- *Health researchers' attitudes to public involvement in research (INVOLVE)*

- Variation on the meaning of involvement
 - as co-researchers
 - as recipients of information
 - as research participants
- Reasons for involving the public
 - moral obligation
 - Attracting public funding by citing user involvement
 - compliance with requirements of forms



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Value for an organisation/institution

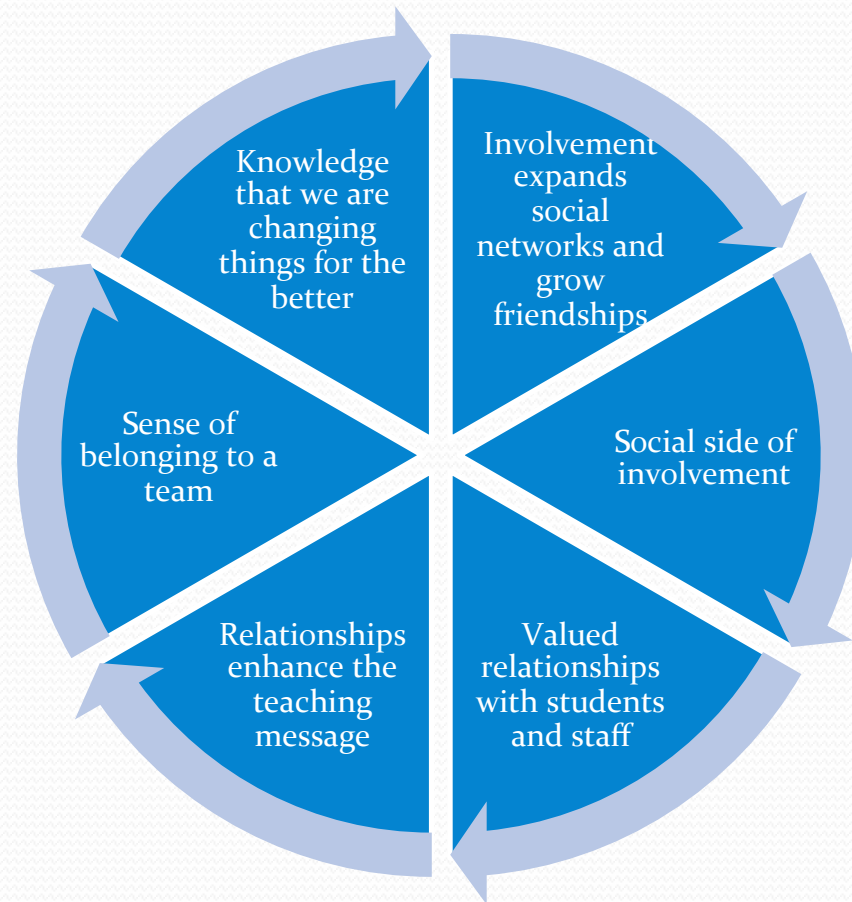
- Meaningful involvement at all levels
- Impact on student experience & learning
- Enhanced reputation-raising international profile
- Improved community image and relationships
- Scholarly outputs
- Recognised good practice
- Impact on quality reviews
- Economic impact – innovation & commissioning
- Research grant acquisition

Value for individual participants

- Improved sense of self-worth – co-researchers
- Contrast with previously negatively framed identity for some
- Improvements in well-being
- Colonisation of university space
- Personal development and autonomy, confidence
- Getting voice heard
- Challenging stigma
- Tolerance of difference



Social and relational benefits



Researchers attitudes

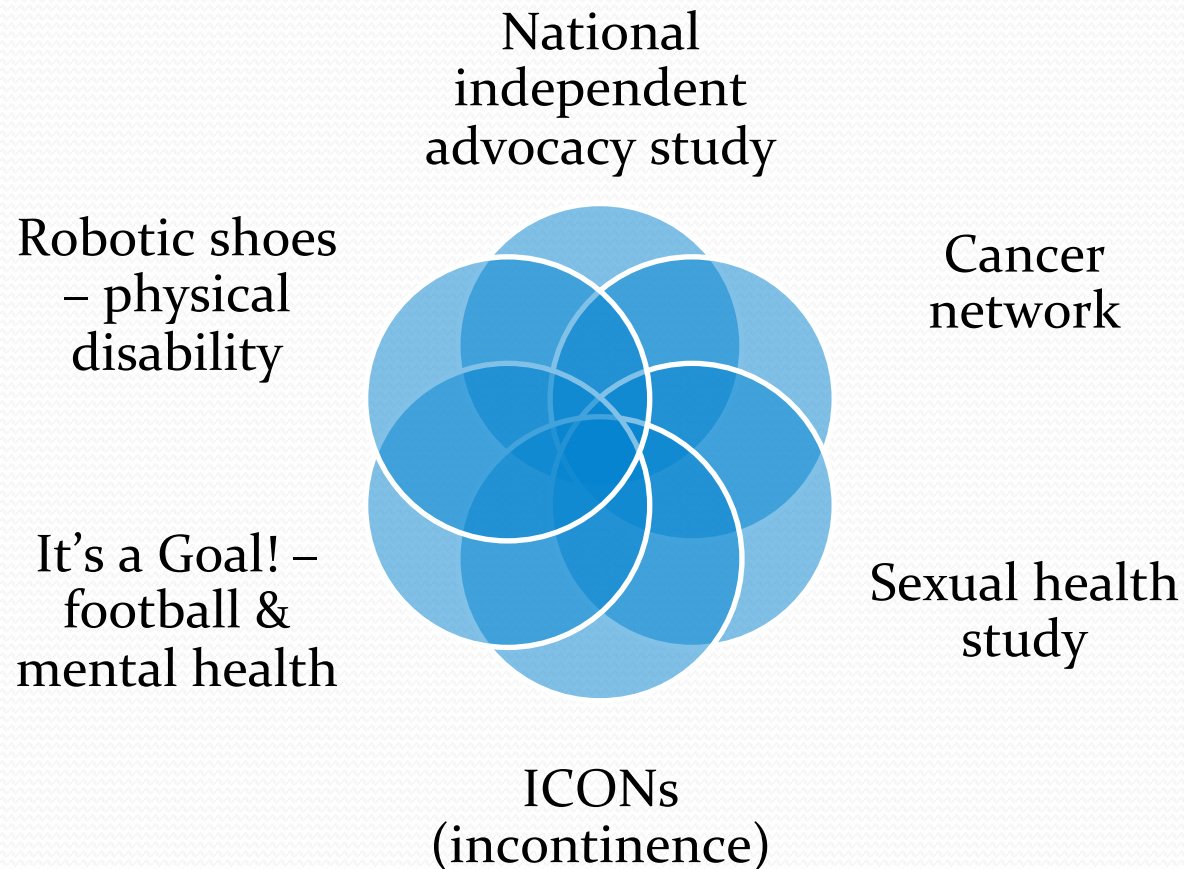
- Some evidence of apprehension or even fear of service user/carer involvement
- Fear of the unknown
- Unsure how to interact with service users and carers
- Threats to professional skills and knowledge
- If more encouraging of involvement-this will result in better research



Our projects

- Information technology for community groups (Sandbox)
- Bradton – elearning virtual environment
- Film Festival
- International conference
- Paid service user research post – mental health
 - Involvement practices in secure units
 - Ward based psychiatric care
 - Recovery in high secure care
- Appreciative inquiry – university involvement
- A range of pedagogical research studies

Contribution to others' projects



Looking forward

Strategic thinking focus groups

- Changes to university infrastructure
- Involvement practices as university overhead

International connections

- Canada – mad activism and the academy
- Melbourne

Responsible Research and Innovation case study (European Funding)

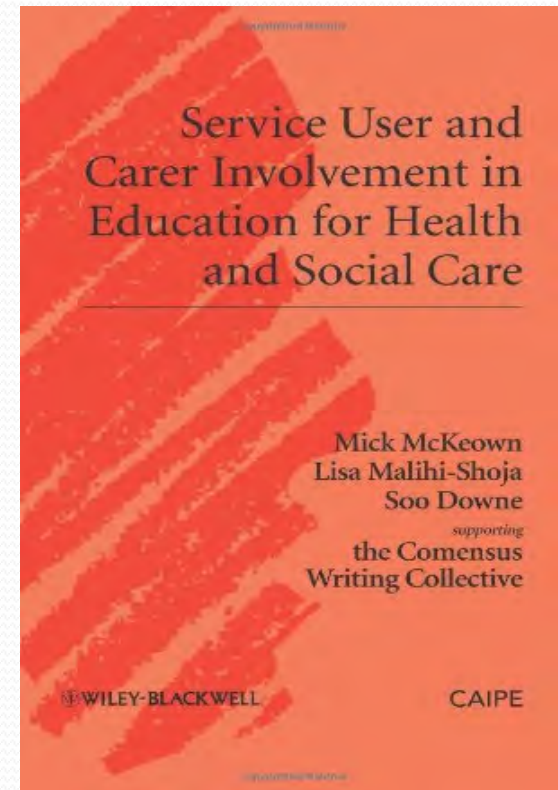
Reflections on involvement

- Comensus Film

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UrGbvPL5hxI&list=UUoP7oha9igtUTjfixf_Ipow

Writing for publication

- Collective authorship
- Text book
- Plans for new book
- Numerous other publications



References

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Authenticity to Action conference

- International conference
- 11-12th March 2015
- This year's theme – 'Involve and Evolve' – focus on innovations in service user involvement
- Abstracts welcome now
- Please visit comensus.com for further details or www.uclan.ac.uk/conferences

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