A Narrative Exploration of In-patient Mental Health Recovery

Presented by: Jaylyn Leighton and Shelagh Keesmaat

Committee members: Dr. Kimberly Lopez & Dr. Corey Johnson

University of Waterloo
Homewood Health Centre
Agenda:

– The story behind the research project and the outdoor experiential psychotherapy workshop
– A conceptual framework for exploring the literature review
– Findings
  – The stories of the experience of the workshop
  – An overview of the narrative threads
– Discussion: So What...?
– **Implications for practice and research**
– Non-conclusion
The story behind the research project...

- Addiction Medicine Services (AMS)- Addiction-trauma recovery stream, Homewood Health Centre, Guelph ON
Conceptual Framework

Marginalization and Stigma of a mental health diagnosis
Brown & Strega, 2005; Cleary et al., 2004; Kreek, 2011

Mental Health

PTSD

SUD

PTSD-SUD comorbid diagnosis

DSM-5, 2013

The Field of Recreation and Leisure
Austin et al., 2015; McCarville & MacKay, 2007

Treatment and Healing of a PTSD-SUD diagnosis
Kofoed et al., 1993; Stewart and Conrod, 2003

Therapeutic Recreation
Austin et al., 2015; Shank & Coyle, 2002

Group Interventions
Shank & Coyle, 2002

Healing
Griffin, 2005; Scott & Ross, 2006

Outdoor Experiential Therapy
Ewert et al., 2001

The role of the outdoors
Berger & McLoed, 2006; Jordan, 2015

Relational and Sensorimotor
Jordan, 2015; Ogden & Fisher, 2015

Psychotherapy
Buzzell and Chalquist, 2009

THE GAP...
Guiding research question:

– 1. How does the use of outdoor experiential psychotherapy within an in-patient care setting, influence individuals experiences of early recovery?
Methodology

- Narrative Inquiry
  - “the body has lived, felt, and been hurt, and therefore it houses memories of its own” (deMedeiros, 2014, p. 480)

- Experience-focused narrative inquiry
  - Chase, 2005; Jackson & Mazzei, 2005; Johnson & Parry, 2015; Berbary & Boles, 2014; Squire, 2008)
The research context....

- **Program Context:** The Outdoor Experiential Psychotherapy Workshop (Friday February 16, 2018)
- **Targeted population:** PTSD-SUD co-morbid diagnosis
- **The site:** Homewood Health Centre (Addiction-PTSD Recovery Stream, Addiction Medicine Services (AMS) unit)
- **The participants:** 6 participants (3 identified as male, 3 identified as female)
Data collection and analysis procedures:

- **Phase One**: The Outdoor Experiential Psychotherapy Workshop

- **Phase Two**: Group Debrief (Audio-recorded)

- **Phase Three**: Semi-structured Narrative Life-Experience Interviews
  - Life history blended to life-experience narrative

- **Phase Four**: Analysis and Interpretation
  - Collection and analysis of: audio-recorded focus group and transcripts of narrative life-story and experience interviews
  - Use of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2013)

- **Phase Five**: Representation
Narratives

– The Story of Odin
The Perfect Storm: The good, the bad and the Ugly

The Good:
- Clear, blue skies
- The sun peaking through

The Bad:
- The Dark Clouds

The Ugly:
- The Heavy Rains

Weathering the Storm: Taking Shelter

Figure 4.

Working through Past Behaviours

Connecting with others through stories

The Role of the Outdoors

The Perfect Storm

Figure 5.

The Good: Clear, blue skies

The Bad: The Dark Clouds

The Ugly: The Heavy Rains

Connecting with others through stories

The Perfect Storm

Working through Past Behaviours

The Role of the Outdoors
The good: Clear, blue skies

- “it felt good to get away from the building, [it felt like] I was away from my alcoholism and I was away from not talking about it so much and it just gave me a peace of mind” (Joseph)

- “[it was] nice to be out in nature its more tranquil, you automatically feel a breath of fresh air, you feel at peace, you feel like you are removed from schedule, routine, and structure” (Liam)
The Bad: The dark clouds

– “I have been suffering inside and no one knows on the outside that I am suffering.” (Odin)

– “I never had much of a childhood...it brought out the kid” (Joseph)
The Ugly: The heavy rains

– “it threw me off for the day... I felt emotionally exhausted and emotionally drained.” (Brianna)
Weathering the Storm: Taking shelter

- “the debriefing was nice because then I got to unload any feelings I had in between and not build up any resentments or frustrations.” (Brianna)

- “I find that when people are talking about their experiences the first thing I try to do is relate to their experience, kind of like walking in their shoes... like how had my life been affected in similar ways.” (Odin)
The Good: The sun peaking through

— “yeah it was fun and goofy, I don’t remember doing something fun and goofy like that sober.” (Ava)
Transferring the Storm into Recovery:

– “sometimes the answer lies just outside your comfort zone... I am glad I came today... I got to work at it slowly and get back to being around other people and having fun without drinking.” (Odin)
The Perfect Storm: The good, the bad, and the ugly

- “each one of us is born different... but behind everyone is our stories.” (Joseph)

- “If I can help someone down the road... change things for the better there is always progress to be made.” (Odin)
Discussion - So What?

- The Role of Outdoor Experiential Psychotherapy within an In-patient Setting
  - Medical versus Social Approaches to Care
  - The Cycle of a PTSD-SUD Diagnosis in Care
  - The Understanding and Role of TR in Care
  - The Role of the Outdoors in Care
  - The Role of Fun in Care
Discussion

• Providing a Platform for the voice in the cracks to be hear
  - The role of group interventions and processing techniques
  - The ‘Voice in the Cracks’
• Implication for Research and Practice
  • Bridging the Gap between Research and Practice
Non conclusion: What’s next?

– “each one of us is born different... but behind everyone is our stories.” (Joseph)
Thank you!

A special thank you to Shelagh Keesmaat, and Homewood Health Centre for helping support this research project