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Ripple Effects Mapping

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Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) is a collaborative activity that helps identify both expected and unexpected effects of a project or programme. REM allows for a deeper understanding of how changes are interconnected can influence future actions. This presentation aims to share insights on an adapted Ripple Effects Mapping method that effectively captures person centred, non linear outcomes.

Blackpool's Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) aims to build capacity in Blackpool Council and local partners to use research and evidence in decision making.

To support this aim, HDRC Blackpool co-produced the Health Inequalities Research Capacity and Capabilities (HIRC) programme. The programme brings together cross-sectoral staff to work on a research proposal to tackle local health inequalities.

Method

Our interactive workshop encouraged 9 previous graduates and facilitators involved in the HIRC programme to reflect on and visually map impacts. To align with person-centred practice, we used an adapted Ripple Effects Mapping method, "web-mapping" (Chazon et al. 2017), placing the individual at the centre of the map.

We captured the individual's outcomes first, followed by ripples out to the organisation and more widely into the community.

There were three stages to the workshop:

1. Appreciative Inquiry - Participants worked in groups of three to share positive experiences, stories, and successes related to research.
2. Whole group mapping - Everyone came together to create one shared map of their experiences, ideas, and impacts.
3. Exploration of barriers and solutions - Graduates and facilitators split into two groups to discuss challenges they faced and potential ways to overcome them.

Participant and evaluator reflections highlighted both strengths and challenges of the workshop using the adapted 'web-mapping' method.

Strengths

- Facilitation: Attendees enjoyed the session, describing the workshop as "informative, fun, engaging, visual" with a "nice, relaxed feeling."
- Flexible approach: The team was able to adapt the method in real time, responding to participant needs and the quantity of feedback.
- Simple and accessible: The rippling-out approach was easy to follow, even for first time mappers: "it isn't overcomplicated."
- High engagement: Participants stayed engaged throughout and valued the chance to reflect together on programme impacts: "wonderful to have the opportunity to take stock" and "in depth, thought provoking, helicopter view of the HIRC programme."
- Inclusive mix of attendees: Bringing HIRC graduates and facilitators together encouraged collaboration and sparked richer discussion: "seemed to spark comments that might otherwise have been lost."

Challenges

- Time constraints: Some participants felt they needed more time during the appreciative inquiry activity and the final discussion. More time would also have allowed deeper analysis during the whole group mapping.
- High volume of data: Participatory methods generate lots of information, so they require strong facilitation and structured

analysis to manage it effectively.

Conclusion

Using Ripple Effect Mapping, we were able to collect data in an accessible, engaging way to understand longer-term and wider impacts that may not be captured using traditional end of programme surveys.

The adapted 'person-centred' method allowed for meaningful participation, particularly with a mixed group of professionals, including voluntary sector, academics and council officers.

Our experience suggests that the adapted web-mapping structure is well-suited to local authorities and mixed cohort contexts

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