Exploring the role and experiences of Approved Mental Health Professionals

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• Background To Research
• Aim
• Methodology
• Method
• Analysis
• Emerging Finding With Illustrations
The approved mental health professional is a relatively newly reorganised legal role which encapsulates two major policy changes;
The reform of mental health legislation in England and Wales
The distribution of professional roles in mental health services
In England and Wales the role of those eligible to undertake compulsory mental health assessments no longer exclusive to social work

Introduces other professions (nursing, chartered psychology and occupational therapy) and renames the role as approved mental health practitioners

Or Amhps
Aim

This research aims to explore the role and experience of approved mental health professionals. To examine any emotional aspects in undertaking the approved mental health professional role from each research participant’s perspective.
Requirement of AMHPs

The ability to manage difficult situations of anxiety, risk and conflict, reflecting on how this affects themselves and others’

Be able to manage anxiety, risk and conflict and understand its impact on approved mental health professional practice.
**Methodology IPA (Smith et al., 2009)**

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<tr>
<th>Phenomenology</th>
<th>Hermeneutics</th>
<th>Idiography</th>
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| • or, the focus on the lived experience  
• this research aims to explore the experience of the Approved Mental Health Professional | • or, the meaning and significance for the person and how this is interpreted  
• this research aims to explore what it means from their perspective | • or, the concern with the particular  
• this research will focus on the particular designation of the Approved Mental Health Professional and analyses data in detail |
Method

Purposive and snowball sample
- 5 Social workers
- 5 Nurse
- 2 Occupational Therapists

Ethical Approval
- University
- Association of Directors of Adult Social Services
- National Research Ethics

Access
- Local Authorities
- National Health Service Trusts
Method

• Semi-structured interviews including the drawing and description of a rich picture

• Specifically, the rich picture depicts their experience of undertaking the AMHP role
What is a rich picture?

Developed in the early 1980s as part of a Soft Systems Methodology for gathering information.

A rich picture is the first step in a diagramming method to portray organisational structures and to enable communication about their complexity.

Two purposes:
- *Evoke* a no hols barred representation
- *Record* this representation
but specifically...

The cognitive process required to draw leads to a more succinct presentation of the key elements of participants’ experiences (Kearney and Hyle 2004:376)

Use of both visual and word based research methods offers a way of exploring both the multiplicity and complexity that is the base of much social research interested in human experience (Guillemin 2004:273)
Analysis

• Audio taped and transcribed interviews
• Taken photographs of the produced rich pictures
• Imported transcripts and photographs into a computer aided software package
• Analysed through coding of transcripts, but also through a memo for each script and in turn a memo for each script memo; the double hermeneutic
Emotions and the AMHP

Emotion work

Emotion work, is a sociological concept denoting the outward display of a feeling by an individual and the effort required by them for the display of it. Underlying this concept is the belief that individuals present to others an emotion suitable for the particular social situation in which they are in such as, for example, happiness at a wedding and sadness at a funeral. The common understanding by the individual and others about what emotion is expected in a given social situation is here said to be understood implicitly and is referred to as a feeling rule.

After Goffman 1957 and Hochschild 1983
Emotions and the AMHP

Emotional labour

Emotion work is also applied to the display of feeling by an individual in the workplace. Here, individuals form or subjugate feeling according to what, in effect, is the feeling rule of the workplace. So, the airline hostess forms and displays emotions such as being calm but subjugates others, such as anger, because the feeling rule of the workplace requires them to do so in order to produce satisfaction for the customer. This product of satisfaction, is, for Hochschild, emotional labour and equates to other workplace products such as those created by physical labour.

After Hochschild, 1983
Emerging findings

Amhps and the feeling rule

• Research to date suggests that the feeling rule for this type of work is that it is emotion work, emotional labour and negative

• Mental health social work and Amhp work is emotionally exhausting, stressful, increases risk of burnout and that this will be the same for any professional undertaking this work

• (Evans et al. 2005, Evans et al., 2006, Huxley et al. 2005 and Hudson and Webber 2012)
Negative emotions; being left alone
Being time pressured
Being pulled in all directions
But, also positive emotions - satisfaction
Pride

The senior practitioner who was backup that day she said she really enjoyed it you know the environment she was in she said it was you know it was very busy and it was hectic and there was a lot of stuff going on and we were throwing a lot of things around it was a really nice atmosphere to work in.
Both; anxiety and its positive effect

I mean there is anxiety around assessments there always will be but you need that ‘cause the minute you’ve not got that then you get complacent
Anxiety- being in control

I think it’s healthy to have that anxiety but it makes you, well it makes sure that you are checking, double checking that things are in place and you are covering for all eventualities and the minute you get, yeah I know him I know he could possibly be aggressive, he could possibly be violent but he knows me I know him you know i’m sure I can manage this situation
Positive effect of pressure

Yeah and like I say you know sometimes pressure’s good it gets you thinking
Emerging thesis; emotion reconciliation

The display, required effort and treatment of emotion involves another emotional dimension; emotion reconciliation, both of the expected and unexpected feeling rule.
I think it was the bit about yeah actually being pulled in every direction is hard but actually sometimes not being pulled in any direction you can’t you can’t escape you kind of you have to let yourself be pulled in a way which is why I put the hole in it because you kind of you can’t run away from it
Emerging question

The workplace feeling rule or the expected emotion is not a rule internal to the AMHP workplace but is perhaps a consequence of an external source, in this instance a legal statute?

People ask me erm whether I enjoy my AMHP role erm and I do, I really enjoy it and I always say it’s because you are working within a legal framework which I think gives you a sense of security.
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QUESTIONS
COMMENTS?