

SUMMARY REPORT

How do we make research useful for practice? Co-designing new knowledge products for allied health professionals (AHPs)

A project funded by the Scottish Universities Insight Institute



Jenna P Breckenridge, Lisi Gordon, Kay Cooper, Gillian Crighton, Therese Lebedis, Chris Lim, Jacqui Morris, and Ellen Stewart. 2020.



University
of Dundee



ROBERT GORDON
UNIVERSITY•ABERDEEN



University of
St Andrews



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH



Cite this report as: Breckenridge JP, Gordon L, Cooper K, Crighton G, Lebedis T, Lim C, Morris J, Stewart S. 2020. How do we make research useful for practice? Co-designing new knowledge products for allied health professionals. Summary Report for the Scottish Universities Insight Institute. Accessed at:

<https://www.scottishinsight.ac.uk>

The appendix material contained within this report was developed by Dr Jenna P Breckenridge and is included as a set of useful resources for others hosting similar workshops and projects in future. If using or adapting these materials, please make sure to acknowledge the source appropriately by citing this report.

If you would like any further information about the project, please contact

j.breckenrige@dundee.ac.uk

PROGRAMME CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) make up one third of the healthcare workforce, comprising 12 distinct health professions¹. They provide diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation for people of all ages, with a range of health conditions across multiple sectors (NHS, social care, private and voluntary). AHPs are at the forefront of delivering key policy ambitions to help people to live longer, healthier lives in their communities².

Crucial to achieving these policy ambitions is evidence-informed practice, which leads to better quality services, patient experience and outcomes³. However, research is significantly underused within AHP fields⁴. This can happen because the knowledge produced by researchers is not compatible with the needs of practitioners⁵. For example, although traditional research outputs such as journal articles are valued by universities and researchers, they are not accessible or useful for AHP practitioners.

The aim of our programme was therefore to form partnerships between AHP practitioners, researchers, and experts from creative fields to design and prototype new knowledge products that make research more useful for practice. We sought to:

1. Understand AHPs' knowledge needs and collaboratively identify the core characteristics of a 'useful' knowledge product from the perspective of practitioners
2. Generate ideas for radically different knowledge products that present research findings in a useful format for AHP practice
3. Prototype new types of knowledge products and develop a plan for how these are taken forward in future collaborative research and knowledge mobilisation partnerships
4. Foster sustainable and productive relationships between AHP practitioners, researchers and creative experts who do not typically work together and establish an ongoing agenda for promoting new types of knowledge products to make research more useful for practice.

¹ Arts Therapists, Diagnostic Radiographers, Dietitians, Occupational Therapists, Orthoptists, Orthotists, Paramedics, Physiotherapists, Podiatrists, Prosthetists, Speech and Language Therapists, Therapeutic Radiographers.

² Scot Govt. 2017. Active and independent living programme 2016-2020: Framework for health professionals to work in partnership with people in Scotland to help them live healthy, active and independent lives

³ Woolf SH. 2008. The meaning of translational research and why it matters. *J Am Med Assoc.* 299:211

⁴ Dijkers et al. 2012. Evidence-based practice for rehabilitation professionals: concepts and controversies. *Arch Phys Med Rehab* 93:8

⁵ Ward. 2012. Exploring knowledge exchange: a useful framework for practice and policy. *Soc Sci Med* 74:3

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

We held four workshops over a four-week period in June 2019. The same group of around 40 participants attended all four workshops, comprising AHPs, health and social science researchers, and creative experts from art, design, technology, comics, poetry and creative writing. We followed the Design Council's double diamond process⁶, with each workshop focusing on a different design stage: 1. *discover* the problem; 2. *define* what to focus on; 3. *develop* potential solutions; 4. *deliver* solutions.

Workshop 1 sought to understand AHPs' knowledge needs. Participants worked in mixed groups to complete an empathy mapping activity (appendix A). This helped the researchers and creative experts to understand how AHPs think about, talk about and use knowledge in practice. Participants were asked to develop their own definitions of 'useful' knowledge and then compare these with the ways in which research knowledge is currently packaged and shared e.g. in journal articles, reports, guidelines.

Workshop 2 involved generating ideas for new knowledge products. Participants engaged in a 'creativity café' by moving to tables hosted by different creative experts. Knowledge product ideas were written on post-it notes at each table and, at the end of the creativity café, participants grouped the post-it notes into key themes before voting on which ideas should be taken forward. Participants then self-selected into project working groups and completed a prototype planning proforma (appendix B).

Workshop 3 involved developing and showcasing the knowledge product prototypes. Participants spent time working together to create a prototype (a physical model) of their knowledge product ideas. Each team had a budget of £100, plus additional craft materials provided on the day. The workshop culminated in a prototype showcase where groups delivered a 'pitch' and demonstrated their new knowledge products.



Workshop 4 focused on consolidating relationships and planning for delivering our knowledge products. Participants created a 'Constellation of Connections' to represent the connections they had made (pictured). Project teams also completed prototype planning contracts; an informal agreement about progressing their ideas in future (appendix C).

⁶<https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/Design%20methods%20for%20developing%20services.pdf>

'USEFUL' KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS



The prototype showcase in week 3 featured seven new knowledge product ideas:

- [@ahp2mintalks](#), a twitter account for AHPs to share two-minute video summaries of research they have read or published.
- Two games: a board game to enable research-informed knowledge mobilisation in stroke care; and a persona-based team game to help researchers design more useful research through better stakeholder engagement.
- Two apps, both focused on storing, sharing and organising research evidence in ways that can be tailored to the needs and preferences of individual practitioners.
- Two websites: one for AHP teams to create personalised and interactive research repositories; and one with guidance on using story-telling to make research useful.

REFLECTIONS ON 'USEFUL' KNOWLEDGE

Each of these prototypes has a different purpose and format; however, they share interesting commonalities. All the knowledge product ideas are social, relational, interactive, dynamic, tailored to need and developed in collaboration with end users. This reflects the characteristics of 'useful' and 'un-useful' knowledge identified by participants in workshop 1 (see the table on page 10) and provides important insights into the nature of 'useful' knowledge for AHPs.



Ultimately, knowledge 'usefulness' is not simply about designing new packaging for existing research outputs; but about understanding and improving how research-based knowledge is developed, shared, used and transformed in practice. For research to be more 'useful', it must be more easily integrated with AHPs' other ways of knowing, such as professional reasoning and patient/service user experience which shape daily practice decisions. Going forward, workshop participants felt that more collaborative relationships were needed between AHPs and researchers to ensure that research is tailored to practice need. Moreover, the fresh perspectives and different methodological approaches of creative disciplines are essential to transcending the traditional approaches and hierarchies in health services research and delivery.

OUTPUTS AND IMPACT

Our project has produced a suite of new knowledge product ideas to help make research more useful for AHP practice. A website and game are now in development and [@ahp2mintalks](#) was launched during workshop 4. It has steadily grown over 800 followers and attracted video contributions from AHPs in the UK and internationally. It has established a community of research-interested colleagues and provides a conduit for promoting research impact, with the top videos to date receiving thousands of views. The team behind [@ahp2mintalks](#) have plans to evaluate its' impact in future.

One of the most important outputs from this project is the creation of a cross-disciplinary, clinical-academic community committed to 'useful' research. The consistency, pattern and team-based nature of the workshop programme was effective in building strong relationships between participants, which we hope will develop into future collaborative research and knowledge mobilisation projects. The workshops have enhanced AHP research capacity and capability by engaging AHPs directly with the academic community and breaking down barriers between research and practice. Similarly, researchers and creative academics have had the opportunity to learn more about AHP practice, with the aim of actively involving more AHPs in future research. By exposing researchers to the diversity and importance of AHP practice, our workshop series has raised awareness of this vital area of health and social care.

In the recognition that written reports may not always be the most 'useful' way of sharing knowledge, we have embraced the challenge of 'practising what we preach' by sharing the learning from our workshop programme in different ways. As such, this short report is an accompaniment to a documentary film which tracks all four workshops and provides the experiences and opinions of project participants. This gives interested people the best way to get a sense of our workshop series and see the design process in action. Find the documentary at <https://youtu.be/fv-SE8j4o7M>

An extended discussion with Dr Jenna Breckenridge and key participants from the workshop series can also be viewed at <https://youtu.be/4v17PTPTLi8>

We also invite you to read and enjoy our [poetry collection](#). During all four workshops, participants were encouraged to contribute anonymously to a POST box to capture their learning and experiences in poetry, sketching or other creative forms. The poetry collection compiles a selection of submitted poetry from workshop participants and communicates the journey of moving from multi-disciplinary concerns, to transdisciplinary collaboration.



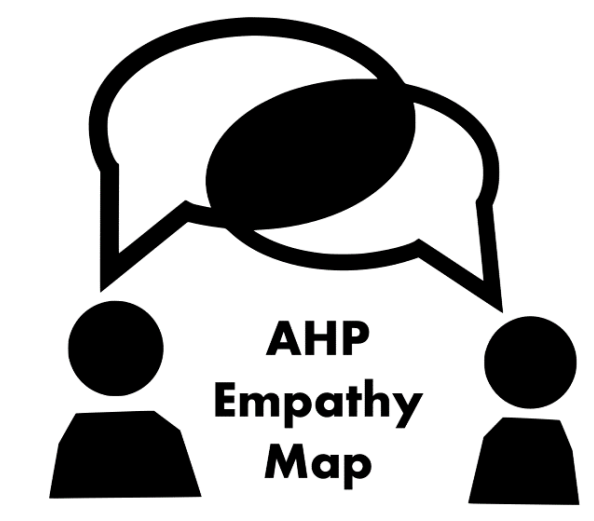
APPENDIX A

Who are the AHPs in the group? What shapes their identity?

What do they do? What do their jobs involve? What does 'success' look like in their jobs?

What decisions do they need to make on a daily basis? What risks do they take?

What is their environment like? e.g. physical, social, political, financial etc. How does this impact on the decisions they make and the things they do?



What motivates them in their jobs? What do they want to achieve? What really matters to them? What are their dreams and aspirations?

What frustrates them? What obstacles do they encounter? What are their biggest concerns?

With all of this in mind, what constitutes 'useful' knowledge for AHPs? Develop some criteria or provide an operational definition for 'useful knowledge'.

PROTOTYPE PLANNING PROFORMA

What do we want you to do?

We would like you to prototype your idea for a new knowledge product to make research useful for AHP practice. You will present your product at the “Prototype Showcase” in workshop 3.

Prototyping involves turning ideas into tangible form. A prototype is a simple mock-up of a new product or service that can be tested and refined before it is finally implemented.

The prototype you develop will not be a finished article; prototyping is part of the process of improving your idea. Feedback from your colleagues at the showcase will help to validate, consolidate, challenge and refine your knowledge product. In the final workshop, we will make plans for taking these ideas forward. We will also reflect on your experiences of working together to develop new knowledge products with the aim of better understanding and improving the *process* for developing useful knowledge.

When will you do it?

You have the rest of this afternoon to start planning. Completing this proforma will help you do so.

You will then have 2.5 hours (including lunch) at the start of workshop 3 to develop your prototype. There will be no formal introduction at this workshop – just turn up for lunch at 12:00 and get to work in your groups. Jenna will be on hand to answer any questions you might have, but how you organise your time is entirely up to you.

You can also use the time between workshops to progress your idea. At bare minimum you should identify what preparatory work needs to be done before next week and who will do this e.g. sourcing materials.

The prototype showcase in workshop 3 will begin at 2:30pm. Be ready to give a 5 minute pitch/demonstration of your prototype. This will be followed by 5 minutes for questions and discussion.

You can present your prototype in any way you choose but remember this must be in some tangible form (not just describing the idea) e.g. a physical or virtual product, a storyboard or role play of the product in use etc.

How will you do it?

How you develop your prototype is entirely up to you. The most important thing for you to do before next week is to identify what materials you might need. Each team must source their own materials and claim back using the previously distributed expenses claims form. Please note, claims for materials should not exceed £100 per team.

“Defining the idea”

What is your knowledge product?

What is the aim of your knowledge product? What is its intended impact?

What key problem(s) does it seek to address? (It might help to refer to our characteristics of un-useful knowledge overleaf)

What are its key features? (It might help to refer to our characteristics of useful knowledge overleaf)

To which contexts is it most suited?

Who will use the knowledge product?

How will they use it?

“Making our idea reality”

What form will your knowledge product take?

How will you demonstrate your prototype at the showcase? E.g. storyboard, drawing, physical model, role play, virtual mock-up, other?

What materials do you need? Who will source these and how?

What preparation will the team do before the next workshop?

How will you communicate as a team? E.g. slack, what's app, email, skype?

What are each team member's specific responsibilities? Who will do what?

What else do we need to consider in making our idea reality?

My space for making additional notes:

Characteristics of <u>useful</u> research knowledge:	Characteristics of <u>un</u> -useful knowledge:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situated in clinical spaces • Quickly accessible in form and content • Not just written – visual and embodied (e.g. through doing, observation) • Can be internalised • Conversational • Story-based • Builds relationships • Can be shared, imparted, spread • Relevant to context • Relevant to patients/people/service users • Driven by what could be, not what is • Spans disciplines and boundaries • Extends and deepens learning • Focuses on ‘how’ not ‘what’ to do • Can be implemented and used quickly • Adaptable • Has impact and makes a difference • Protects and strengthens us • Is good enough • Epistemic trustworthiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lengthy journal articles • Solely written form • Takes a long time to digest • Quick and dirty answers • Blinkered by the status quo • Focuses on ‘what’ should be done, not how • Prescriptive, fixed, unadaptable • Single perspective • Polarised views with no middle ground • Not shared • Passed down rather than generated together

DEVELOPING & DELIVERING OUR KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

We would like you to consider how you will further develop your prototype knowledge products so they can be produced and used by AHPs.

You need to consider 2 stages of the design process:

Development – improving & refining the knowledge product

Delivery – finalising, producing and launching the knowledge product

You may also want to consider how you will evaluate the uptake and usefulness of your knowledge product.

The planning contract can be used for the group to commit to taking forward the knowledge product beyond the workshop series.

PLANNING CONTRACT

Name of knowledge product
Names of group members
What do we need to do next? Improve? Refine? Test?

What resources are required?

Where will these come from?

Who needs to be involved?

Names & responsibilities

Communication strategy

How will the group communicate after the workshop series ends?

What are the key deadlines & deliverables?

How will the knowledge product be launched?

Where? Who with? How? When?

How could uptake/usefulness of the knowledge product be evaluated?

What else do we need to consider?