Experiences of Consumer Participation

The Peer Education Support Program

Council to Homeless Persons

By Phoebe Peterson

Table of Contents

Glossary/Acronyms

CHP – Council to Homeless Persons

PESP – Peer Education Support Program

HAS – Homelessness Advocacy Service

SHSS – Specialist Homelessness Service Sector

CP – Consumer Participation

Executive Summary

This report sets out to explore experiences of consumer participation within the Council to Homeless Persons' (CHP) Peer Education Support Program (PESP). In doing so a small qualitative study into PESP has been conducted. Data was gathered in the form of five semi-structured, in-depth interviews with consumers, a service provider and a homelessness networker. The interviews were guided by the overall research question: "How is consumer participation experienced by consumers *within* the Peer Education Support Program and by service providers that have used the program?" The questions asked in the interviews sought to reveal perceptions and experiences from within the program, including what were seen to be its strengths, barriers, and overall utility.

Analysis of the interview transcriptions revealed interesting themes in the data. The 'lay expertise' of PESP consumers was perceived as bestowing credibility to consumer voices and filling gaps in service provider knowledge. In addition to this, both consumers and service providers described experiences with PESP as fostering

more honest consumer participation interactions. This was largely due to the peer dynamic in facilitation exercises, and was seen by service providers as a refreshing and valuable aspect of the PESP consumer participation experience. The results also indicated a partnership between service providers and consumers, wherein both were perceived to have benefitted and grown from their consumer participation experiences. Within this partnership power imbalances manifested in language and educational barriers and the role of feedback emerged as a necessary tool for ensuring mutual respect and understanding. Moreover, consumers described high levels of personal development in their experiences of consumer participation within PESP.

This report concludes that experiences of consumer participation within PESP are considered valuable and positive. The results imply a need for enhanced service provider reflexivity on the issues of power and 'tokenism'. Given the considerably positive responses to PESP elicited in this study, further promotion and application of the program is recommended.

Introduction

Consumer participation in the Specialist Homelessness Service Sector (SHSS) is a process whereby consumers[1] are actively involved in decision making, "service planning, policy development and priority setting"[2]. This report explores the experiences of consumer participation in the SHSS. More specifically, it seeks to explore the experiences of consumers and service providers that have engaged with the Council to Homeless Persons' (CHP) Peer Education and Support Program (PESP), the research question being "How is consumer participation experienced by consumers *within*[3] the Peer Education Support Program and by service providers[4] that have used the program?" Sub-questions include: What are the strengths of the program, what are the major challenges (or barriers), and what do experiences of the program indicate about 'consumer participation' more generally? However, it should be made clear at the outset that a full evaluation of the program goes well beyond the scope of this report and is not what is intended here. This report should be viewed as a precursor to such an evaluation, and as a means of identifying themes in the experiences of the program.

Understanding programs and strategies of consumer participation is an important endeavour in terms of improving their efficacy and application. It is hoped that the

---

[1] This study will work with the Council to Homeless Persons definition of the 'consumer' as: "someone who uses, has used or is eligible to use housing, homelessness and support services, including those refused services and those who have refused services" (*Consumer Rights through Participation*, PowerPoint presentation, Council to Homeless Persons, Melbourne, 12th November 2010).

[2] *LOMA Consumer Participation Conference*, PowerPoint Presentation, Council to Homeless Persons, Melbourne, 31th March 2011

[3] The 'consumers' here, refers specifically to those consumers involved as *members* and *graduates* of the Peer Education Support Program.

[4] This refers to those who have engaged with PESP in any number of ways: through employing PESP to conduct peer surveys, focus groups, public speaking engagements, invited PESP members to forums, consultations, etc

knowledge and insights gained in this study will facilitate such improvement as well as applaud the strengths and achievements of PESP thus far.

Given the specific case study of a Victorian homelessness peer support group (i.e., PESP) this report is specifically targeted at the Specialist Homelessness Service Sector in Victoria, including: consumers, service providers, policy makers, and the Victorian Department of Human Services. However, with regard to the broader insights into consumer participation, this report may also be of interest and use to other allied and community sectors (such as mental health, the justice system, drug and alcohol sector, etc).

This report begins by providing some background information on the PESP itself and the historical and theoretical context of its emergence. The literature on consumer participation internationally will then be reviewed, highlighting the professed benefits and conceptual debates. This is followed by a thematic description, interpretation and discussion of the results of this particular study, and their implications.

Background

Peer Education Support Program (PESP)

Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) is the peak homelessness body in Victoria, with the ultimate aim of ending homelessness in Victoria through advocacy, policy work and sector development. PESP is a program of the CHPs Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS). HAS provides state-wide advocacy aimed at protecting the rights of

service users and improving the delivery of Specialist Homelessness Sector Services in Victoria. In doing so, HAS provides individual advocacy to people wishing to raise complaints with government funded homelessness services and state wide training on effective complaint management and consumer participation[5]. The HAS and the PESP initiatives reflect a broader departmental shift towards a consumer focused and rights-based approach to homelessness service delivery, epitomized in the 'Homelessness Assistance Service Standards'[6]. In 2006 The Victorian Department of Human Service released a new Consumer Charter that explained the basic rights and responsibilities of service providers to consumers (including what they can expect of a service provider); as well outlining what consumers can do to enable service providers to give the right assistance[7]. One right relates specifically to consumer participation: "If you are seeking or receiving homelessness assistance or housing services, you have the right to… participate in the decision making process of organizations providing assistance to you"[8].

Arising from these cultural shifts, the Peer Education Support Program began as a pilot program in 2005, and is now a volunteer program consisting of six to eight team members who undergo an eight week intensive induction and training[9]. After that period, members of PESP are involved in various advocacy activities in the homelessness sector, including: consultations, peer interviews and focus group

---

[5] Council to Homeless Persons, *Homeless Advocacy Service*, retrieved 21st September 2011, <http://www.chp.org.au/has.shtml>
[6] Department of Human Services, *Homelessness Assistance Services Standards*, retrieved 22nd September 2011, <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/programs/housing-and-community-building/homelessness-assistance-service-standards>
[7] Department of Human Services, *Consumer Charter for Homelessness Assistance Guidelines,* retrieved 27th September 2011, <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/consumer-charter-for-homelessness-assistance> p.3.
[8] Department of Human Services, *Consumer Charter*, p.4
[9] Cassandra Bawden (CHP), personal communication, 26th September, 2011.

facilitation, media work, involvement in forums, seminars and conferences.[10] In 2009/10 over fifty PESP activities were carried out.[11] This involvement lasts formally for two years, after which members become 'graduates', and a new team is selected and trained. CHP has more recently introduced the PESP Graduate Program that allows graduates to remain involved in PESP activities, advocacy and mentoring the current PESP team members.[12]

The logic that underpins PESP however is not limited to a rights and consumer based cultural shift. It is further rationalized by the professed dual benefits (for consumers and service providers) of involving consumers. That is, the proponents of the PESP model assert that by involving consumers in service delivery decisions, a 'higher quality' service may emerge, 'more responsive' and 'tailored to consumer needs' while simultaneously facilitating the empowerment of service users.[13] It is in this regard that eminent consumer participation theorists in the UK, Peter Beresford and Suzy Croft, assert the involvement of service users is both a 'political and personal process'[14]. By exploring some of the experiences of consumer participation, this study hopes to shed greater light on these dual benefit claims, and the emergent conceptual debates that arise at the intersection of the personal and political.

---

[10] Council to Homeless Persons, *Homelessness Advocacy Service, Peer Education Support Program,* retrieved 28th September 2011*, <http://www.chp.org.au/has_pesp.shtml>*
[11] Council to Homeless Persons, *Annual Report 2009/2010 Consumers at the Forefront*, Council to Homeless Persons, 2010, Melbourne, p.9, retrieved 10th October 2011, <http://www.chp.org.au/public_library/items/2011/01/00287-upload-00001.pdf>
[12] Council to Homeless Persons, *Annual Report 2011 (draft)*, Council to Homeless Persons, Melbourne, 2011.
[13] *Consumer Rights through Participation*, PowerPoint presentation, Council to Homeless Persons, Melbourne, 12th November 2010.
[14] Peter Beresford & Suzy Croft, 'User-Involvement, Citizenship and Social Policy', *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 9, no. 5, 1989, p.17

Consumer Participation in Social Care Services

Within the largely Western literature dealt with here, the UK proves the most active centre of research on consumer participation in social care and welfare. Research into consumer participation in the homelessness sector specifically has been largely neglected both in Australia and abroad. Considering this, the following discussion will explore the literature on consumer participation more generally. The distinction between a democratic model and consumer/ commodified framework to be explored below, provides a useful base for critiquing and evaluating the efficacy of specific consumer participation strategies. Research indicates that the potential for consumer participation to empower consumers must be balanced with a consideration of the barriers to such empowerment and a problematising of the concept itself. The literature on consumer groups demonstrates a context whereby the consumer's voice is exercised in an inclusive and effective manner. There are areas in the literature that could benefit from further exploration that will be articulated at the end of this section.

This shift towards a rights based approach, while relatively new in the Victorian Homelessness Service Sector, is part of a broader shift towards more inclusive service provision in social welfare internationally. In the mental health sector, consumer participation has become an expected and necessary element of service provision[15]. User involvement in social services emerged after the 1970s in a period in which the power of professionals was being challenged, and a 'disjuncture' between

---

[15] Bennetts, W. et al 'Understanding Consumer Participation in Mental Health: Issues of Power and Change', *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing,* vol.20, 2011, p. 155

professionals and non-professionals: citizens, clients, activists, etc. was acknowledged[16].

Democratization or Commodification?

Much of the literature on consumer participation regularly marks a distinction between two types of models: the 'consumerist approach' and the 'democratic approach'.[17] This division of participation frameworks helps distinguish between different philosophies and justifications of strategies and programs. The democratic model sees participation as a means of "decentralising"[18] and "democratising"[19] service provision and the structures through which services are delivered. Such a model highlights the importance of 'having a say' as an integral part of a democratic structure (an ethos that could be considered all the more important in the homelessness service sector, as it caters for a part of society already marginalised and excluded). Braye has described the democratic model as one that aims at *collectively* changing the experiences of service users, affording them greater 'influence and control'[20] in service delivery. It is further characterised by a 'wider agenda' that

---

[16] Stephen Cowden, S. & Gurnam Singh, 'The User: Friend, Foe, or Fetish? A Critical Exploration of User Involvement in Health and Social Care', *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 27, no. 5, 2007, p.8

[17] Peter Beresford & Suzy Croft, 'Listening to the Voice of the Consumer: A new Model for Social Services Research, *Convergence*, Vol. 23, no.4, 1990, pp. 62-70; Suzy Braye, 'Participation and Involvement in Social Care: An Overview', in Kemshall, H, & Littlechild, R, (eds), *User Involvement and Participation in Social Care: Research Informing Practice,* Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London, 2000, p.18; Robert Adams, *Empowerment, Participation and Social Work*, 4th Edn, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2008, p.35

[18] Janet McIntyre-Mills, 'Participatory Design for Democracy and Wellbeing: Narrowing the Gap between Service Outcomes and Perceived Needs, *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, vol. 23, 2010, p. 25; Jorgen Anker, 'Organising Homeless People: Exploring the Emergence of a user organisation in Denmark', *Critical Social Policy,* vol.28, no. 27, 2008, p.36

[19] Martin Whiteford, 'Square Pegs, Round Holes: Rough Sleeping and Service User Involvement?', *Practice,* vol.23, no.1, 2011, p. 47

[20] Suzy Braye, "Participation and Involvement", p.18

encompasses improvements in service delivery and a change in social experience. [21]

In this sense it could be seen as a more *holistic* model.

Conversely, a number of theorists have critiqued what they call the 'consumer model'[22] of participation, as one that takes a 'neo-liberal market based'[23] approach to participation. In this model, Beresford and Croft assert that the issues are reframed in terms of consumer 'choices' and 'opportunities'[24]. Consumer terminology appears to have emerged out of what Clarke et al have referred to as New Labours (UK) 'charge of elitism'[25]. That is, a belief that consumer choice should not be limited to the elite and that "by extending choice to active consumers of public services, equity would be enlarged."[26] This position reflects New Labours replacement of a concern with 'social exclusion' to a concern with 'poverty' more generally[27]. It is in this regard that others have referred to the consumer model as representing the 'commodification'[28] of welfare and basic needs. Indeed it is easy to see the danger in such market-based framing of participation as reinforcing social inclusion merely in terms of integration into the labour market[29]. But the question must be asked: how much consumer choice do the users of welfare services *really* exercise? The notion that the user a of public service (such as a homeless shelter) has a number of *choices* up their sleeve that they exercise in a consumer driven fashion is a troubling one in my view. It tends to eclipse

---

[21] Suzy Braye, "Participation and Involvement", p.18
[22] Peter Beresford and Suzy Croft, 'Listening to the Voice of the Consumer', p. 62; Suzy Braye, "Participation and Involvement", p.18; Adams, R. *Empowerment,* p.35; Cowden, S & Singh, G. "The User", p.19; Anker, J. "Organising Homeless People", p.37; John Clarke et al, *Creating Citizen-Consumers: Changing Publics and Changing Public Services*, Sage Publications, London, 2007: 27-47
[23] Cowden, S & G Singh, "The User", p.11
[24] Beresford, P. & Croft, S. "Listening to the Voice of the Consumer", p.62
[25] Clarke et al, *Creating Citizen-Consumers*, p.38
[26] Clarke et al, *Creating Citizen-Consumers* p.39
[27] Clarke et al, *Creating Citizen-Consumers* p.38
[28] Whiteford, M. "Rough Sleeping", p.48; Cowden, S. & Singh, G, p.7
[29] Peter Beresford and Suzy Croft 'Service Users and Practitioners Reunited: The Key Component for Social Work Reform', *British Journal of Social Work*, vol. 34, 2004, p. 59

the structural power involved in welfare delivery. This is an issue that Cruikshank[30] articulates well, and one that will be explored in more depth in the following section.

While the demarcation of these two models allows us to reflect on the differing agendas of consumer participation, there is little research into how to recognise identify such models, and how the consumer experience might differ in them qualitatively. Nevertheless they remain useful analytic tools.

Power and Empowerment

Consumer participation has been lauded as a framework with tremendous potential to 'empower' consumers by a number of theorists[31]. But Adams insists that participation itself does not 'automatically' empower consumers.[32] Bettering services, and facilitating empowerment all sounds very well, but the question here is *how* does consumer participation empower consumers and what are the barriers to empowerment?

Unequal power relations between consumers and service providers are frequently cited as a significant barrier to empowerment through consumer participation[33]. Anker supports Adams assertion that empowerment is not automatic, adding that these new

---

[30] Barbara Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London, 1999, p.38

[31] Marcia B. Cohen, 'Overcoming Obstacles to forming Empowerment Groups: A consumer Advisory Board for Homeless Clients', *Social Work*, Vo. 39, No.6, 1994, pp. 742-749; Beresford, P. & Croft, S, 'Service Users Knowledge and the Social constructions of Social Work', *Journal of Social Work*, vol. 1, no. 3, 2001, p.308; Suzy Braye, "Participation and Involvement", p.20; Adams, R, *Empowerment, Participation and Social Work*, p.6.

[32] Adams, R. *Empowerment, Participation and Social Work*, p.39

[33] Adams, R. *Empowerment, Participation and Social Work*, p.42; Wanda Bennetts et al 'Understanding Consumer Participation", p.155; Carr, S, 'Has Service user-participation made a difference to social care services? Position Paper No. 3, Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2004, p.vii, retrieved 19th October 2011, <http://search01.funnelback.co.uk/search/search.cgi?collection=scie&query=%E2%80%98Has+Service+userparticipation+made+a+difference+to+social+care+services%3F+Position+Paper+No.+3>

participatory technologies, rather than simply *removing* power imbalances, "open new paths of action for until recently dispersed, silent and excluded groups"[34]. It has been noted that the use of jargon and technical language by service providers can make it difficult for the service user to be involved[35]. Robson et al suggest that as a result service users must work to modify or adjust their language to accommodate for this imbalance[36]. Aside from maintaining overall control of the process, more specific barriers to effective and influential consumer participation include: exclusionary structures, institutional and organisational practices, and attitudinal barriers[37].

Cowden and Singh problematise consumer participation by drawing attention to the crucial issue of power, arguing that the voice of service users risks becoming a 'fetish', held up as 'a representative of authenticity'[38], but with no real power to change the system. Because service providers maintain power in terms of which consumers call upon, and which advice they act upon, Cowden and Singh warn that consumer participation is therefore 'highly political'.[39] Cruikshanks, who writes more generally on empowerment and participatory democracy, asserts that to measure democracy in terms of participation (as the democratisation model seems to), is to "mistake power for what it excludes rather than what it produces"[40]. In this vein, she supports Cowden and Singh's suggestions that we question the role of politics and power involved in constituting consumers and their participation. Power in this

---

[34] Anker, J. "Organising Homeless People", p.36.
[35] Carr, S. 'Has Service User-participation made a Difference', p.16
[36] Robson et al 'Seldom Heard: Developing Inclusion Participation in Social Care', Adult Services Position Paper No. 10, Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2008, p.12, retrieved 12th October 2011, <http://search01.funnelback.co.uk/search/search.cgi?collection=scie&query=Seldom+Heard%3A+Developing+Inclusion+Participation+in+Social+Care%E2%80%99>
[37] Robson et al, 'Seldom Heard', p.13; Adams, R, *Empowerment, Participation and Social Work*, p.43; Cohen, MB. "Overcoming Obstacles", p.74; Carr, 'Has Service User-participation made a Difference', p.vii
[38] Cowden, S & G Singh, "The User", p.15
[39] Cowden, S & G Singh, "The User", p.16
[40] Cruikshanks, B. *The Will to Empower,* p.6

regard, is more than just a barrier to be overcome, and instead should be analysed as a phenomenon that pervades the institutional structure and psychology of citizens. For Cruikshanks, the 'political significance of welfare' is that it is both 'voluntary and coercive'[41]. Given this assessment of power, the consumer participation model is seen as having both 'empancipatory' and 'regulatory' functions by Cowden and Singh[42].

User Groups and the Politics of Voice

For Whiteford, pernicious "popular narratives and media representations" of homeless people can reinforce social exclusion[43]. It is in this context that the issue of '*voice*' is often articulated in consumer participation literature. For Fopp, the voice of homeless people has often been 'filtered' through 'experts' in policy areas[44], and this effects the perspective put forward. He further argues that there is not necessarily 'one essential voice' of homeless people[45]. Consumer participation is largely seen as giving a 'formal voice'[46] to those previously excluded from social care services. But Mallett problematizes this notion of the consumer voice, and contends that 'giving voice', should include 'creating conditions for dialogue'[47] rather than speaking for and about others. Again, as has already been discussed in relation to empowerment, the issue here becomes about how to create such conditions – that is, how to create that space where the consumer can exercise a voice. Baulderstone agrees with Mallet's assertion,

---

[41] Cruikshanks, B. *The Will to Empower,* p.38
[42] Cowden, S & Singh, G, "The User", p.5
[43] Whiteford, M. "Rough Sleeping", p.54
[44] Rodney Fopp, 'The Voice of People Who are Homeless: Some Considerations', *Parity,* vol.17, no. 9, 2004, p.7
[45] Fopp, R. "The Voice of People Who are Homeless", p.7
[46] Whiteford, M. "Rough Sleeping", p.50
[47] Shelley Mallett, 'Giving Voice or Hearing Voices? A Personal Reflection in the Politics of Speaking and Listening in the Homelessness Sector', *Parity,* vol.17, no. 9, 2004, p.5

and adds that to ensure voices are heard the barriers to exercising voice must be addressed.[48]

In the context of homelessness, the effect of service user groups on participation has been researched both in the UK and in Denmark. Whiteford, giving a UK perspective, claims that the Brent Homeless User Group made possible the meaningful engagement of service users, and became the "crucial vessel in supporting and affirming the experiences and perceptions of users".[49] Similarly, Anker describes the way the Danish consumer group: 'SAND' has emerged as a means of painting a far "broader and more positive image of the homeless as people with lives, and dreams, capacities and resources".[50] Both authors agree that the 'lay experience' that user groups profess, is a form of expertise that gives them a legitimacy and authenticity.[51]

But overall, little research has explored the purpose of group work in bringing about a more democratic form of participation in welfare. Ward is one of the few to acknowledge that "group work has a place at the centre of democracy if involvement, participation and empowerment are to be totems rather than tokens."[52] Such an assertion is worthy of further investigation, and the proceeding exploration of the PESP experiences of *group* consumer participation will hopeful shed further light on this claim.

---

[48] Joe Baulderstone, 'Ensuring all Voices are Heard', *Parity,* vol.17, no. 9, 2004, p.6
[49] Whiteford, M. "Rough Sleeping", p.52
[50] Anker, J. "Organising Homeless People", p.33
[51] Whiteford, M. "Rough Sleeping", p.47; Anker, J. "Organising Homeless People", p.34
[52] Dave Ward, ' Totem not token: Group Work as a vehicle for User Participation', in Kemshall, H, & Littlechild, R, (eds), *User Involvement and Participation in Social Care: Research Informing Practice,* Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London, 2000, p.60

This brief review of the literature has highlighted the main conceptual debates on consumer participation, the perceived challenges, and its overall potential utility to social welfare practices. This study hopes to add to the wealth of existing literature internationally, and to make up for the lack of Australian perspectives on the topic. Using the case study of PESP, this study also hopes to provide insight into the individual qualitative experiences of consumer participation in the homelessness service sector. This acts as a valuable means of discussing the conceptual issues and challenges facing consumer participation more generally.

Methods

In order to answer the research question, this study utilised qualitative research methods, in the form of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with individuals. This included interviews with:

1. the Team Leader of PESP;

2. a current member of PESP;

3. a graduate of PESP;

4. the general manager of client services with a homelessness service provider; and

5. A Homelessness Networker[53].

---

[53] A Homelessness Networker's role is to 'resource the sector'. They are funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services and are located, and accountable to a particular service provider who dictates and directs the work they do. Their work involves: service coordination, the sourcing and delivering of training to service providers, providing advice and assistance, facilitation, and networking. (*Collaboration and Coordination: the Essence of Effective Networking in the Homelessness Sector,* PowerPoint Presentation, Di Manno, J & Armstrong, J, 19th October, 2011)

As a method of data collection, the in-depth interview is most appropriate where it is necessary to capture the 'subjective meanings and understandings'[54] people ascribe to their experiences and interactions in the social world. Given that this research question deals specifically with *experiences*, this method of data collection was deemed the most appropriate. The semi-structured form of interviews left room for emerging themes to be explored in more depth, and for the interview to evolve in a natural, and often conversational manner[55]. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed. 'Content analysis'[56] methods were used to draw major themes out and analyze them in terms of the experiences of consumer participation.

In selecting interviewees for the study, the members of the staff at CHP were consulted in terms of which consumers and agencies might have both an interest in study and relevant things to say in terms of the research question. Consumers and agencies were contacted on the basis of this advice. This form of 'purposive', combined with 'convenience' sampling methods[57] was chosen because it fits the qualitative and exploratory nature of the study. These sampling methods mean the interviewees views and experiences are not necessarily representative of the whole population of PESP members, and the agencies they have engaged with. This is less problematic than it first appears. Given the aim of the research to garner insights into the subjective experiences of consumer participation a representative sample is neither possible nor necessary.

---

[54] Travers, M. "Qualitative Interviewing Methods", in Walter, M (ed), *Social Research Methods,* 2nd Edn, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2010, p.290
[55] M Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd Edn, Sage Publications, London, 2002, p.342.
[56] Sproule, W. "Chapter 11: Content Analysis" in Walter, M (ed), *Social Research Methods,* 2nd Edn, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2010, p.324
[57] Tanter, B. "Chapter 2: Sampling", in Walter, M (ed), *Social Research Methods,* 2nd Edn, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2010, p.139

Ethics

The procedure of interviewing, recording and transcribing has been underpinned by the notion of 'informed consent'.[58] Interviewees were given a plain language statement prior to the interview that explained the study, its purpose, to whom it would be made available, and what would be asked of them should they decide to be involved. They also signed a consent form, asking if they consented to being recorded (all participants did). Even though consent was given for names to be used in the report, the decision was made to withhold names as a means of protecting participant's anonymity in the study.

---

[58] Habibis, D. "Chapter 4: Ethics and Social Research", in Walter, M (ed), *Social Research Methods,* 2nd Edn, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2010, p.96.

Results

The Credibility of 'Lay Expertise'

Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed a perception that consumers contribute a much needed 'lay expertise' through the PESP. This was frequently articulated as a valuable aspect of consumer participation within PESP. One consumer articulated the importance of such knowledge in terms of enhancing service delivery:

> They don't take into account, they don't understand for instance some of the guilt, some of the shame… some of that oppressive type of spiritual stuff that goes on in conjunction with being homeless. A lot of people who are studying homelessness from an academic level don't understand that and what that actually means in terms of procedures, in terms of policies, in terms of how that's going to impede the homeless person in being included and accepting the help that they're giving. (PESP member)

'Lay expertise' was also regarded by both consumers and service providers as bestowing a valuable kind of authenticity and credibility to consumer perspectives:

> That's the most important thing about PESP for me; it's introduced me to the rest of the world. And all the views of the world, and having the credentials of being a PESP member and being attached to the CHP gives you an authenticity, and they will quote you on television, they will quote you in the newspaper. You will become an authority. (PESP Graduate)

Credibility. Yeah I mean yeah there's nothing really replicates having been in that predicament yourself and face that and it's not possible I don't think to really imagine (Client Services Manager)

The Peer Dynamic and Honesty

When exploring the effect of PESP peer to peer interview and survey facilitation, many interviewees described a level of honesty achieved in the feedback:

> It actually allows them to speak freely, openly, about a service without feeling intimidated in any way, or that they might get punished by the agency for saying what they want. So complaining about, criticising, or whatever. So I find, and or our region finds, the PESP invaluable in assisting in having that dialogue and conversation. (Homelessness Networker)

The process of employing PESP members and graduates to facilitate service providers' surveys and interviews was regarded as a means of gathering honest feedback because of the ease with which PESP are able to establish strong rapport with other consumers. Further to this, one client services manager expressed an appreciation for the honesty that PESP members themselves contributed, through their involvement in consultation and roundtable discussions:

> I really appreciate the sort of honesty and courage actually… because I've been in the sector since 1989 and to me it seems like a lot of sector spokespeople have gotten much more cautious and, I don't know, less passionate and to our detriment... but if you want engagement and serious, you know, plain speaking… PESP will always give you that. You know, their people are very… they're great, you know if you're at a table they *give*… they're not just sort of sitting there. (Client Services Manager)

'Real' versus 'Tokenistic' Consumer Participation

When interviewees were asked more generally about consumer participation experiences, a distinction between 'real' and 'tokenistic' consumer participation was consistently drawn. All interviewees saw consumer participation as involving the consumer specifically in a capacity that affords some sort of 'decision making' or 'governance' role. When asked to identify what kind of participation PESP consumers felt was most effective and what they valued most they more often cited the consultations, forums, and roundtable involvement. It was the access to higher levels of the policy ladder afforded in these forms of participation that were seen as a more valuable. While involvement in focus groups was more often seen as a tokenistic type of participation:

> I question the value of them to a degree, because what happens I think, is that the organisations chooses the people or nominates the people that are gonna be a part of the focus group, and I've found that most of them have had a very positive experience with the organisations. Whereas if you get the street talk… the majority of people get a bad experience, and the sense is, 'there is no help, go and help yourself'. (PESP Graduate)

Power and Partnerships

The interviews revealed a kind of partnership between PESP and service providers whereby both parties gained greater insight into the experiences of the other. PESP members articulated an enhanced understanding of policy and procedures in homelessness services provision, while services providers learnt more about the needs, emotions, and embodied experiences of consumer in terms of being homeless and encountering homeless services.

But within this partnership, power imbalances emerged as a theme. This was not a surprising theme given its extensive explication in the consumer participation literature. Power was articulated in terms of differences in education levels, and the related language barrier. One PESP member commented:

> I realise as well that there's this kind of… there's a certain amount of policy and research that needs to be done in order for things to happen, and I know that I can be a part of that, but sometimes I don't fully understand what they're crappin' on about (laughs). So yeah, like it's a different world what they're talking about. Sometimes when they're speaking about policy and I see how that's gonna translate on a practical level, then I can talk about it, and I can address it, but if they're just talking about some policy, and money and structure, then I don't understand all that. I kinda switch of and I don't get involved in that. (PESP Member)

Service providers also regarded the use of language (particularly jargon) as a reflection of power differentials, and a barrier to effective communication. Service providers expressed the belief that power will always be there, and that a certain amount of reflexivity and ownership is required on their part to ameliorate the effects of this power differential:

> Well, I think you just have to realize it's always there. Even if as an agency worker you don't particularly feel it you in fact might feel intimidated by a particular person who is raging in your waiting room or something, but yeah, the fact remains that you know, do I have a bed to go home to, or not, you know, we get to determine who's seen first who's seen second you know all sorts of elemental decisions so, so kind of being pretty constant with workers and the organization it does exist and owning that and not imagining we're just the same you know peer to peer, we're not, um so I think that's important that we own that… (Client Services Manager)

In this context, there is a sense in which *the mere act of asking* a consumer for their input becomes a crucial means of shifting the balance of power (even if ever so slightly, and momentarily) given that the *asking* is usually the done by the consumer in the 'consumption' of services:

>…just to see the services go 'wow I hadn't thought of that', the consumers sit up straighter and goes, 'well thank you very much….' (PESP Team Leader)

Feedback

Within the theme of partnership, the importance of feedback (following consumer participation activities) was forwarded by a number of interviewees for different reasons. Giving feedback to consumers was regarded by the Homelessness Networker, as a means of ensuring that the interaction between PESP members and service providers is one based on mutual respect and understanding:

>…the workers I think, felt very strongly criticised, even though they were very new. So I think that the PESP worker misunderstood the audience, and the workers I think were quite defensive about the criticism that was being angled at the service system, because… you know, they had decided to work in it, so um… it was important to feed that back to PESP. About, we need to make sure, the conversation is one based on a knowledge of where people are at, at this point in time, who it is you are speaking to… and that was really welcomed, that was welcomed by the team leader, that was going to be fed back to the PESP worker (Homelessness Networker)

>… it's important that when the PESP workers… volunteers… are coming out, that *they* are also respectful, because I find that workers are so respectful, and so grateful about the PESP

people coming out and talking to them about their experience, they're happy to share their stories, and I feel that on that occasion it wasn't a two way street. (Homelessness Networker)

PESP members also acknowledged the importance of feedback in terms of reflecting on their performances in consumer participation consultation, facilitation and public speaking exercises. However, there is a sense in which feedback falls short for some. A member of PESP expressed a sense of frustration for some of the feedback received that is not always sincere or critical enough to be valuable in terms of improving PESP:

> Sometimes we get feedback and it feels a bit tokenistic. Ya know… I've got a certificate of appreciation and my name was spelt wrong. Totally wrong. My last name was totally wrong… And so I think uh… (*Sighs*) Ya know? … But all in all I think we've had a lot of good feedback. It is important cos … we want to work to address the issues that need addressing… not just to flap our jaws or gums for nothing... Uh… yeah, sometimes I get the sense that people don't say exactly what they think, or feel, ya know? (PESP Member)

Personal Development

PESP members articulated the importance of feedback in terms of building an evidence base (to further promote the program), as well as a necessary step in the personal development of PESP members"

> It's just amazing what it gives someone. Sally[59] did her first project after training, and was so nervous and then she said to me 'after my first meeting they all came to me and were saying they were so glad I was there, and I had really good things to contribute', and she said 'I can't believe they're saying this to me, they actually wanna hear what I have to say'!. So it makes a really big difference. (PESP Team Leader)

---

[59] Name has been changed to protect the privacy of the individual involved

The interviews revealed that the PESP team operate in a highly supportive environment. The PESP team leader and the graduate PESP members act as mentors to the current members. PESP consumers were encouraged and supported in pursuing other goals in their life, such as further formal education. Being part of a supportive group was significantly related to an increase in self confidence, self esteem, and worth:

> I've gained a lot more self-esteem, and a sense of belonging to not just this community, but to the whole community overall. I feel I have an ongoing purpose in life, whereas it was all a bit fragmented before in a sense… as my doctor said today 'Oh, you're an upright member of society' (PESP Graduate)

There were a number of occasions when interviewees expressed a kind of risk that this self esteem can go too far, and PESP members need to negotiate this fine line to ensure that personalities and egos do not go unchecked:

> …So getting that level to what I am going to be saying which doesn't disempower me but at the same time, cos there's a flip side to that, which is getting quite proud and cocky, and seeing everyone as beneath you… cos I've seen that in people who've given these speeches. Everyone claps and everyone's happy. But there's this… so getting a balance there finding a balance within the public speaking that's been kind of a real learning curve for me… (PESP Member)

Voice

When interviewees were asked about the significance of consumer participation in the homelessness sector specifically, most cited the marginalization of homeless people in society as a reason that the framework is critical. The PESP model, in this sense, was seen as a means of enhancing social inclusivity. The interviews revealed

that for the service providers, *voice* was understood largely in terms of the act of PESP members 'telling their stories'. For PESP members this was certainly a part of the concept of voice, but perhaps more importantly, they expressed a sense in which voice goes beyond the mere telling, and members feel they in fact represent homeless people more generally, and that they exercise voice with more of an eye to structural change. The homelessness networker expressed a similar view of PESPs role:

> I think it's absolutely critical to enable them to have an anonymous voice in terms of the service sector, but a big voice in terms of their capacity and ability to get their view across. And, they can do that through the, I spose, mouthpiece, or the vehicle of PESP. (Homelessness Networker)

Discussion

The emergent themes of lay expertise, credibility and personal development indicate some of the strengths of the PESP model of consumer participation. The finding that the lay expertise of consumers serve to fill a gap in service provider's knowledge is consistent with the extant literature on consumer participation in other areas of social care. In particular, the finding that involvement in PESP, as a consumer group attached to the CHP, afforded consumer voices with an authenticity and credibility is consistent with the research on similar groups from the UK[60] and Denmark[61].

The theme of personal growth that emerged in the data demonstrates the extent to which the PESP model provides an example of how consumer participation can not

---

[60] Whiteford, M. "Rough Sleeping", p. 47
[61] Anker, J. "Organising Homeless People", p. 34

only give insight into service delivery, but also empower consumers and enhance social inclusivity. The comments made by PESP consumers indicated a serious increase in sense of self-worth, enhanced support, a sense of belonging, and an increase in the motivation to study. This finding is supported by research into a Danish consumer group (SAND) that found the groups impact was not limited to service insights and that consumers also experienced a "greater sense of personal worth, solidarity and belonging…"[62] The peer group setting thus seems to play a large role in creating the supportive environment necessary for this growth to begin.

While these findings might be validly used to promote the worth of group work as a consumer participation strategy with multiple strengths, some questions remain unanswered and are worthy of further exploration (and perhaps further studies). Most of the PESP members are consumers who have already reached a fairly high level of personal development before coming to the program; their group dynamic seems to hang on the proviso that they are all relatively stable and well-adjusted individuals. The question remains, how can those consumers who've not yet reached such a level also be included in service delivery decisions, and what is the effect of their continued exclusion from consumer participation group work?

This study found that those who engaged with PESP saw honesty as one of its major strengths. That is, the honest feedback that is achieved through PESP focus group and survey facilitation *and* the plain speaking approach PESP consumers inject into the sector when they sit at a roundtable with service providers and policy makers. This notion of honesty is not explored in the literature and its revelation in this study

---

[62] Anker, J. "Organising Homeless People", p.45

is an important indication of the strength of the PESP model of consumer participation, as a peer group exercise.

This study has also produced insight into the challenges that service providers and consumers face in their experiences of participation. The results suggest that as predicted by the literature, power imbalances remain in the partnering of service providers and consumers. The results were consistent with the assertions in the literature that empowerment by participation is not automatic[63], and that jargon and discrepancies in educational attainment represent real barriers for consumers. The results also suggest that service providers are aware of these barriers and believe that the best approach is to remain mindful of them when involving consumers. The importance of remaining aware of power relations in the context of consumer participation is supported by Carr[64].

But awareness and mindfulness is just one step in addressing power imbalances. The results suggest a need for service providers to reflect critically on the involvement of consumers and their own assumptions. For example, the homelessness networker articulated the assumption agencies sometimes make that asking consumers for advice or for some kind of feedback on the service they have provided is 'another imposition'. By critically assessing this assumption, it becomes evident that the mere act of *asking* for consumer input represents a shift in the balance of power. This finding works to deepen our understanding of the power imbalances that plague consumer participation, and the reflexive process involved in addressing them.

---

[63] Adams, R. *Empowerment, Participation and Social Work*, p.39
[64] Carr, S. 'Has Service User-participation made a Difference', p. vii

The results suggest that there is some truth to the assertion by Cowden and Singh that participation can be 'highly political'[65]. For example, in PESP exercises such as focus groups and surveys, the selection of participants by agencies was seen by one PESP consumer as highly political, in that he felt participants were selected precisely because they'd had a positive experience with the service provider. What remains to be seen, is whether this is actually the case. If it is, service providers would do well to question how the selection process could be improved, perhaps made more transparent as a means of reducing or eliminating this politicization.

The theme of real versus tokenistic participation gives tremendous insight into the consumer participation experience, indicating that the inclusion of PESP consumers in higher levels of consultation and forums is what is most valued and empowering for consumers. It was during these types of participation that consumers noticed a direct effect and change in the sector itself and the surrounding policy. This demonstrates a way that the consumer voice can avoid becoming the 'fetish'[66] that Cowden and Singh warn of, as PESP consumer's spoke passionately about the direct effects they felt they'd had in the sector. These results support the assertion by Ward that group work is pivotal in terms of ensuring that 'involvement, participation and empowerment' are meaningful rather than tokenistic[67]. The utility of group work in this regard deserves more attention in future studies.

The results of this study serve to highlight some of the conceptual debates, and indicate how they are perceived in real consumer participation experiences. With

---

[65] Cowden, S & Singh, G. "The User", p.15
[66] Cowden, S & Singh, G. "The User", p.15-16
[67] Dave Ward, ' Totem not token: Group Work as a vehicle for User Participation', in Kemshall, H, & Littlechild, R, (eds), *User Involvement and Participation in Social Care: Research Informing Practice,* Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London, 2000, p.60

regard to the distinction between the consumer model and the democratic model debated in the literature, the PESP experience of consumer participation reveals that the demarcation of these models is not so clear cut. PESP employs *consumer* language (as does the rest of the Victorian Homelessness Sector). However, the findings relating to personal development and partnerships demonstrate the characteristic 'wider agenda'[68] (in terms of enhancing social inclusivity of consumers) of the democratic model. Moreover, the 'collective' rather than 'individual' approach to participation stipulated by Braye[69] as a condition of the democratic model has been demonstrated in the PESP experience through the theme of partnerships. The experience in PESP indicates how the democratic models collective approach leads to a relationship of exchange and dual benefit for consumers and service providers.

Limitations

The conclusions of this study relate only to consumer participation as experienced *within* the Peer Education and Support Program. This does not include, for example, consumers that participated in service provider surveys or focus groups when PESP were a facilitation team. The interviewees were selected for the insights they could provide into this particular program, and not with the intention of gaining any kind of representative sample of service providers or users/ consumers. Because of this lack of a representative sample, the findings of this study cannot be used to make generalizations about consumer participation in Victoria; they are intended only to give insight into how the program is being experienced by the selected individuals interviewed. However, as Gobo reminds us, social research can garner two kinds of

---

[68] Suzy Braye, "Participation and Involvement", p. 18
[69] Suzy Braye, "Participation and Involvement", p. 18

generalizations, one about the population or group, and two, generalization about the nature of a process[70]. In light of this, this study will provide insight into the *nature* of the consumer participation *process*, as a representative sample is not necessary for such insights.

Implications and Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that under the Peer Education Support Program, experiences of consumer participation are considered valuable and positive. In sum, the results imply that under the PESP model the personal development of consumers is facilitated in a way that enhances their social inclusivity. PESP thus demonstrates the utility of group work in facilitating this more democratic model of participation in homelessness service provision, and reveals a much needed honest and plain speaking approach to homelessness service delivery. Employing a diverse range of consumer voices, the PESP team are seen as a conduit or 'mouthpiece' (as the Homelessness Networker put it) for consumers of homelessness services (although one must be cautious not to assert the existence of 'one essential voice'[71] of homeless people).

But the experiences of consumer participation within PESP have not been without their challenges. The barriers that reside in differences in language and educational attainment (between consumers and service providers) reveal the need for a greater reflexivity on the effects of power and how it emerges structurally, and interpersonally. Such reflexivity is a crucial aspect of avoiding tokenism and

[70] Gobo Giampietro, 'Sampling Representativeness and Generalisability', in Seave, C, et al (eds) *Qualitative Research Practice*, Sage Publications, London, 2004, p.435.
[71] Fopp, R. "The Voice of People Who are Homeless", p.7

enhancing the experience of consumer participation for all involved. Moreover, feedback is an important process in this reflexivity, and one that can always be improved on.

Given the findings of this report, we can conclude that PESP is a model of consumer participation that deserves greater promotion and application in Victoria and beyond. There is reason to believe that the model of PESP could be adopted in other states homelessness service sectors to great effect. This raises the possibility of interstate meetings, collaborations, and shared learning.

Bibliography

Adams, R. *Empowerment, Participation and Social Work*, 4th Edn, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2008.

Anker, J. 'Organising Homeless People: Exploring the Emergence of a user organisation in Denmark', *Critical Social Policy,* vol.28, no. 27, 2008, pp. 26-50.

Baulderstone, J, 'Ensuring all Voices are Heard', *Parity,* vol.17, no. 9, 2004, p.6

Bennetts, W., Cross, W. & Bloomer, M 'Understanding Consumer Participation in Mental Health: Issues of Power and Change', *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing,* vol.20, 2011, pp. 155-164.

Beresford, P. & Croft, S. 'Service Users and Practitioners Reunited: The Key Component for Social Work Reform', *British Journal of Social Work*, vol. 34, 2004.

Beresford, P. & Croft, S. 'Service Users Knowledge and the Social constructions of Social Work', *Journal of Social Work,* vol. 1, no. 3, 2001, pp. 295-316.

Beresford, P. & Croft, S. 'User-Involvement, Citizenship and Social Policy', *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 9, no. 5, 1989, pp. 5-18

Beresford, P. & Croft, S. 'The Politics of Participation', *Critical Social Policy,* vol. 12, no. 20, 1992, pp. 20-44.

Beresford, P. & Croft, S. 'Listening to the Voice of the Consumer: A new Model for Social Services Research, *Convergence*, Vol. 23, no.4, 1990, pp. 62-70.

Beresford, P. & Croft, S. 'Chapter 4: A Participatory Approach to Social Work' in *Practicing Social Work*, Taylor and Francis Ltd, Oxfordshire, 1993, pp.49-66.

Beresford, P. & Croft, S. *Citizen Involvement: A Practical Guide for Change*, Macmillan, London, 1993.

Braye, S, 'Participation and Involvement in Social Care: An Overview', in Kemshall, H, & Littlechild, R, (eds), *User Involvement and Participation in Social Care:Research Informing Practice,* Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London, 2000.

Carr, S. 'Has Service user-participation made a difference to social care services? Position Paper No. 3, Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2004, retrieved 19th October 2011, <http://search01.funnelback.co.uk/search/search.cgi?collection=scie&query=%E2% 80%98Has+Service+userparticipation+made+a+difference+to+social+care+services %3F+Position+Paper+No.+3>

Cohen, MB. 'Overcoming Obstacles to forming Empowerment Groups: A consumer Advisory Board for Homeless Clients', *Social Work*, Vo. 39, No.6, 1994, pp. 742-749

Cowden, S. & Singh, G. 'The User: Friend, Foe, or Fetish? A critical exploration of user involvement in health and social care', *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 27, no. 5, 2007, pp. 5-23

Collaboration and Coordination: the Essence of Effective Networking in the Homelessness Sector, PowerPoint Presentation, Di Manno, J &Armstrong, J, 19th October, 2011.

Council to Homeless Persons, *Homeless Advocacy Service,* retrieved 21st September 2011, <http://www.chp.org.au/has.shtml>

Council to Homeless Persons, *Homelessness Advocacy Service: Peer Education Support Program,* retrieved 28th September 2011, <http://www.chp.org.au/has_pesp.shtml>

Council to Homeless Persons, *Annual Report 2009/2010 Consumers at the Forefront*, Council to Homeless Persons, Melbourne, 2010, retrieved 10th October 2011 <http://www.chp.org.au/public_library/items/2011/01/00287-upload-00001.pdf>

Council to Homeless Persons, *Annual Report 2011 (draft)*, Council to Homeless Persons, Melbourne, 2011.

Consumer Rights through Participation, PowerPoint presentation, Council to Homeless Persons, Melbourne, 12th November 2010.

Chamberlin, J., Rogers E.S, & Ellison, M.L. 'Self-help programs: a description of their characteristics and their members', *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, vol. 19, no.3, 1996, pp. 33-42.

Clarke, J., Newman, J., Smith, N., Vidler, E. & Westmarland, L., *Creating Citizen-Consumers: Changing Publics and Changing Public Services*, Sage Publications, London, 2007.

Collaboration and Coordination: the Essence of Effective Networking in the Homelessness Sector, PowerPoint Presentation, Di Manno, J &Armstrong, J, 19th October, 2011

Cruikshank, B. *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London, 1999.

Department of Human Services, *Consumer Charter for Homelessness Assistance Guidelines,* pp. 1-20, retrieved 27th September 2011, <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/consumer-charter-for-homelessness-assistance>

Department of Human Services, *Homelessness Assistance Services Standards*, retrieved 22nd September 2011, <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/programs/housing-and-community-building/homelessness-assistance-service-standards>

Fopp, R, 'The Voice of People Who are Homeless: Some Considerations', *Parity,* vol.17, no. 9, 2004, p.7.

Fopp, R & Parker, S, 'Attempting to Hear the Excluded: The Voice of Homeless People and Policy Implications', *Parity,* vol.17, no. 9, 2004, p.13.

Giampietro, G, 'Sampling Representativeness and Generalisability', in Seave, C, et al (eds) *Qualitative Research Practice*, Sage Publications, London, 2004, pp.435-456.

Habibis, D. "Chapter 4: Ethics and Social Research", in Walter, M (ed), *Social Research Methods,* 2nd Edn, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2010, pp.89-116.

LOMA Consumer Participation Conference, PowerPoint Presentation, Council to Homeless Persons, Melbourne, 31th March 2011.

Mallett, S, 'Giving Voice or Hearing Voices? A Personal Reflection in the Politics of Speaking and Listening in the Homelessness Sector', *Parity,* vol.17, no. 9, 2004, pp.4-6.

McIntyre-Mills, J, 'Participatory Design for Democracy and Wellbeing: Narrowing the Gap between Service Outcomes and Perceived Needs, *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, vol. 23, 2010, pp. 21-45.

Plowright, S. 'Collectively Constructing Standards: Promoting Consumer Participation in the Development of Homelessness Assistance Service Standards', *Parity,* vol.17, no. 9, 2004, p.12.

Quinn Patton, M. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd Edn, Sage Publications, London, 2002

Robson, P, Sampson, A, Dime, N, Hernandez, L, & Litherland, R, 'Seldom Heard: Developing Inclusion Participation in Social Care', Adult Services Position Paper No. 10, Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2008, retrieved 12th October 2011, <http://search01.funnelback.co.uk/search/search.cgi?collection=scie&query=Seldom +Heard%3A+Developing+Inclusion+Participation+in+Social+Care%E2%80%99>

Sproule, W. "Chapter 11: Content Analysis" in Walter, M (ed), *Social Research Methods,* 2nd Edn, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2010, pp. 323-347.

Tanter, B. "Chapter 2: Sampling", in Walter, M (ed), *Social Research Methods,* 2nd Edn, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2010, pp. 123-146.

Travers, M. "Qualitative Interviewing Methods", in Walter, M (ed), *Social Research Methods,* 2nd Edn, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2010, pp.287-219.

Walsh, T & Klease, C. 'Down and Out? Homelessness and Citizenship', *Australian Journal of Human Rights 5,* vol. 10, no. 1, 2004.

Ward, D. 'Totem not token: Group Work as a vehicle for User Participation', in Kemshall, H, & Littlechild, R, (eds), *User Involvement and Participation in Social Care: Research Informing Practice,* Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London, 2000, p.45-64.

Whiteford, M. 'Square Pegs, Round Holes: Rough Sleeping and Service User Involvement?', *Practice,* vol.23, no.1, 2011, pp. 45-58.