



Being a social worker: exploring and teaching about professional identities

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Outline

1. Introduction
2. Our research on the different meanings of social work professional identity
3. Using pictures to generate research data
4. Group work – what does social work professional identity mean for you?
5. Discussion: what are your ideas for teaching students to develop their professional identity?

Different meanings of professional identity



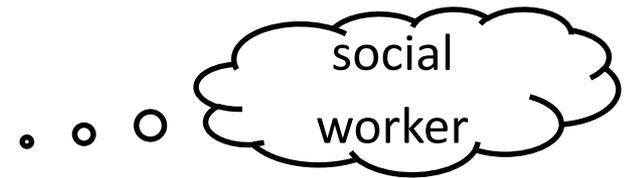
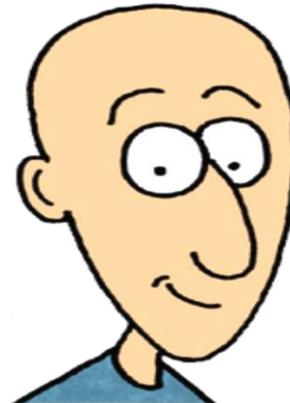
Professional traits



Collective identity

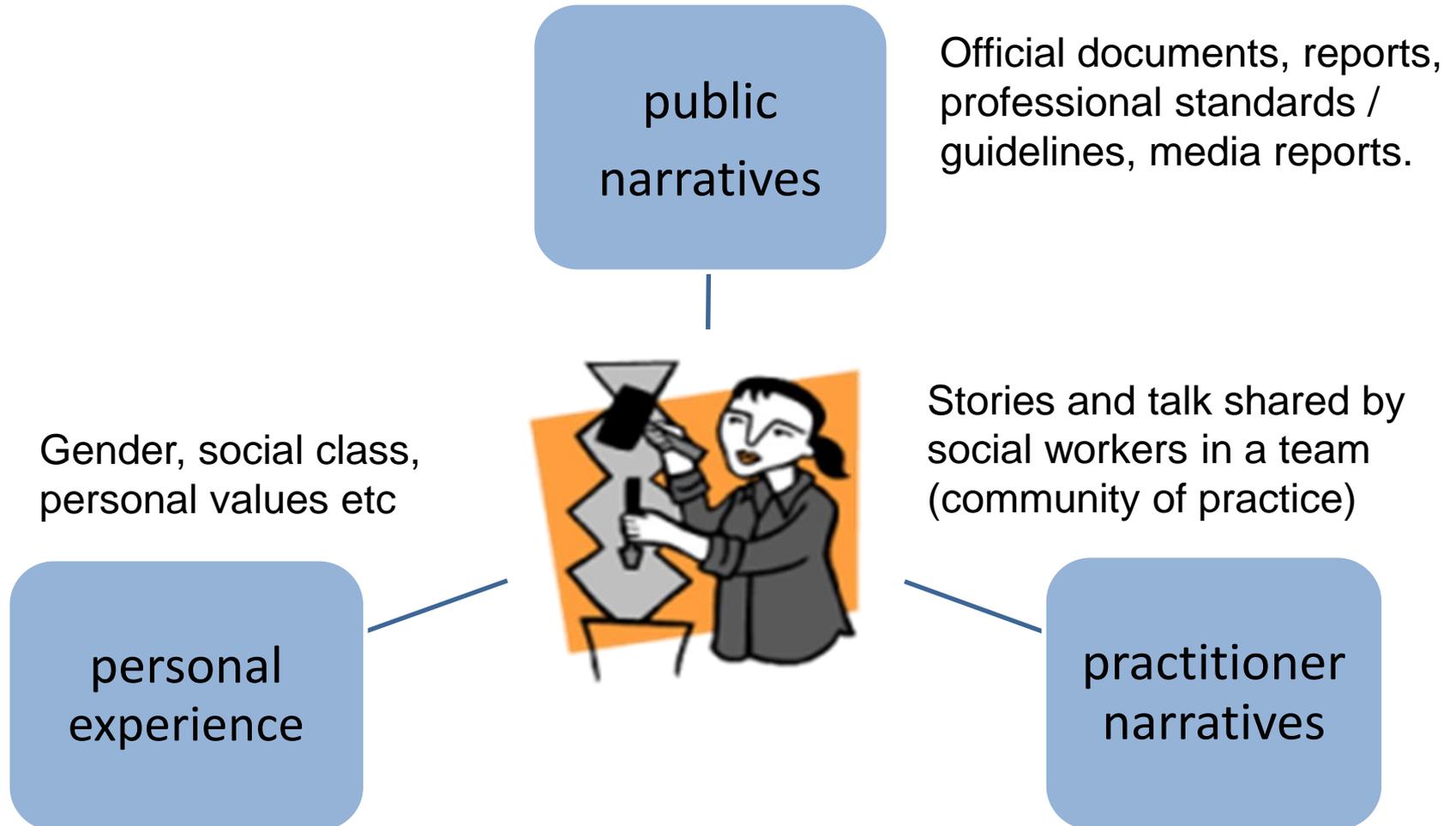


National context



Sense of being a social worker

Sense of oneself as a social worker: resources for identity work



My research

- Explored the role and experiences of the Approved Mental Health Professional a newly organised role that was formerly and exclusively a social work one, but is now open to other professionals
- **Aim** To explore what impact, if any, professional background has on the role of Approved Mental Health Professionals, and how it is experienced.

Objective

Objectives

One

To explore current Approved Mental Health Professionals' perceptions of the influence of their professional identity on how they practice.

Two

To determine and understand professional identities as internalised and applied by current Approved Mental Health Professionals, including in relation to attributes such as skills and values.

Three

To examine any emotional and psychological aspects involved in undertaking the current Approved Mental Health Professional role from each research participant's perspective, including practitioners' self-esteem and aspirations.

Method

- To ask each participant to produce a rich picture of a complex compulsory mental health assessment
- To ask each participant to describe this picture as part of a semi-structured interview

Rich pictures

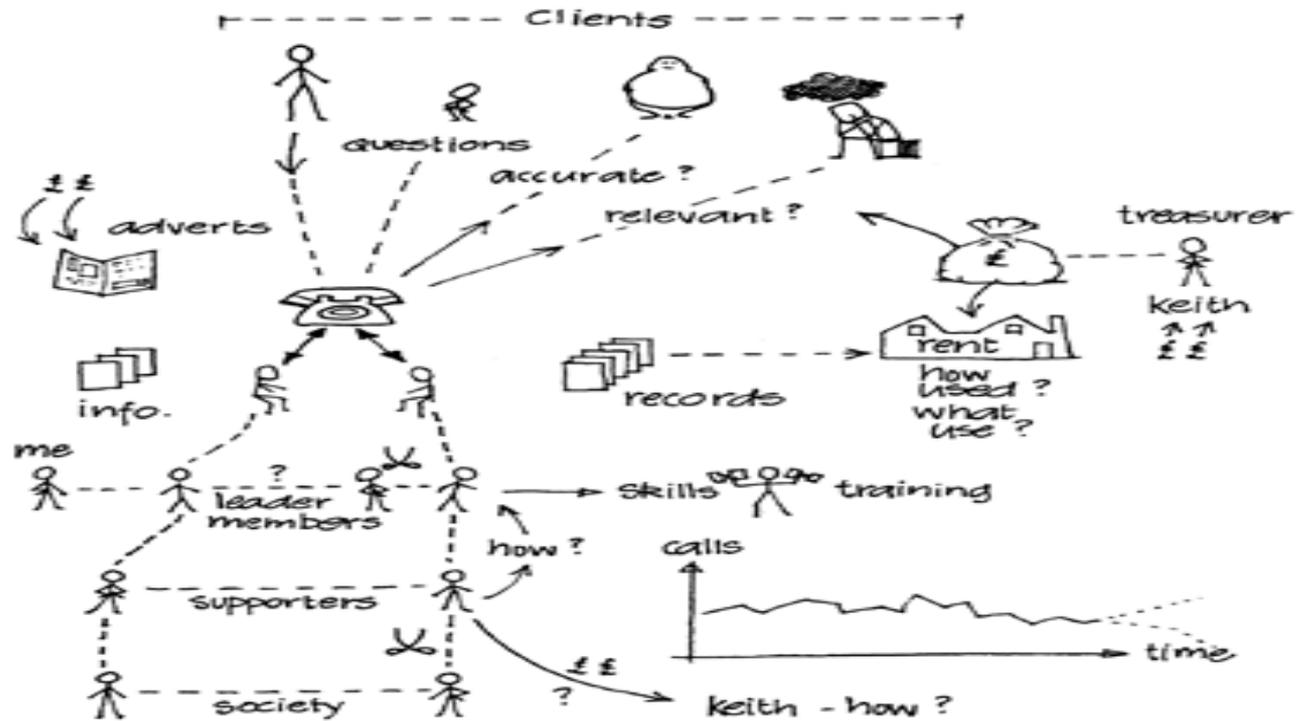
Peter Checkland



Description

- Developed in the early 1980s as part of a Soft Systems Methodology for gathering information
- The first step in a diagramming method to portray organisational structures and to enable communication about their complexity

What can a rich picture look like?



What does it do?

- Two purposes
- Evoke a no holds barred representation
- Record this representation

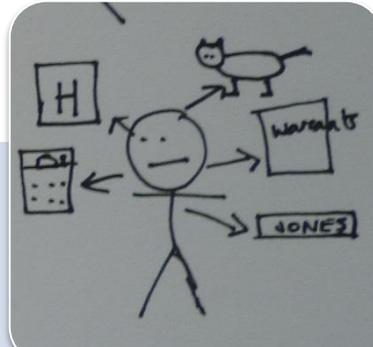
Some data examples



Objective one

a pictorial understanding and evidence of the perception of their professional role is being provided

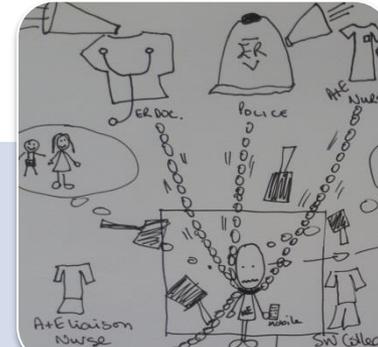
here, ***caught between the police and the ambulance service***



Objective two

professional identities as internalised and applied by current Approved Mental Health Professionals, including in relation to attributes such as skills are being drawn

here, ***coordination of tasks and services***



Objective three

emotional and psychological aspects involved in undertaking the current Approved Mental Health Professional designation are clearly depicted

here, ***being pulled in many directions***

Rich picture activity

What does social work professional identity mean for you, and what has influenced this?

Discussion

What are your ideas for teaching students to develop their professional identity?

References

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