



Stroke Group Network Conference

Monday 10 – Tuesday 11 October 2022

Rebuilding lives after stroke

Stroke
Association

Housekeeping



The importance of peer support and how support groups help rebuild lives after stroke

Mark Tarrant, Raff Calitri, Dawn Travill

Who we are – researchers!

- **Mark Tarrant**

- Psychologist; behavioural science
- Lead for Singing for People with Aphasia project and Support Group Project (COGS)



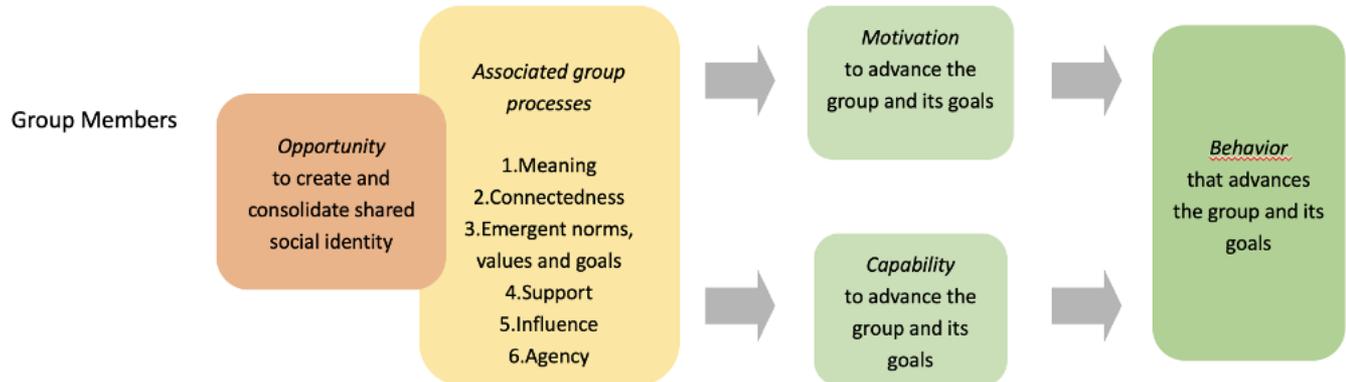
- **Raff Calitri**

- Psychologist; trial methodologist
- Researcher ReTRain, Singing for People with Aphasia Project and Support Group Project (COGS)

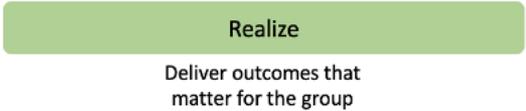
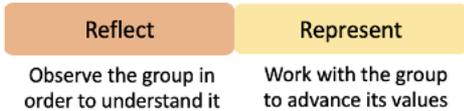


Groups can be good for health

- **Groups** are routinely used to deliver healthcare
- They can be **effective**
- But not always
- Feeling **connected** seems to be **important**
- This means having a **sense** of **social identity** that is **shared** with **other** group **members**



Group Facilitators (leaders)



Preparing for change

Delivering change

Community groups for post-stroke support

The COGS study

- Research question:

How and **why** might peer support **groups benefit** stroke survivors?

In terms of levels of **loneliness** and **wellbeing**?

Community groups for post-stroke support

The COGS study

Research methods:

- **Survey**
- **Interviews** with group volunteers and members before and during the Covid-19 pandemic

Findings: pre-pandemic

- **579** participants from **84 groups** UK wide
- **47%** reported often **feeling lonely**, and this is **higher** than **general population** levels of loneliness
- Wellbeing levels matched those of the general population
- **Shared social identity** was associated with **better health**

Findings: Pandemic

- **260** participants from **118 groups**
- Loneliness and wellbeing comparable to pre-pandemic
- **Resilience** and **adaptiveness** - most groups maintained contact with members
- Interviews showed the **value** of **group membership**

What seems important

- **Frequent contact**
- **Regular attendance**
- **Meeting the same people**

Can these factors be 'controlled' when planning groups?

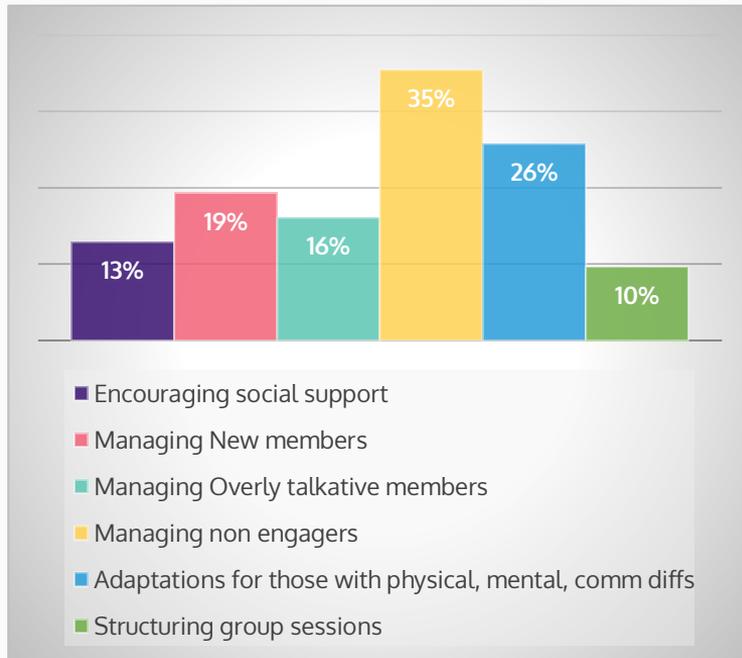
Unanswered questions

Need more active facilitation around

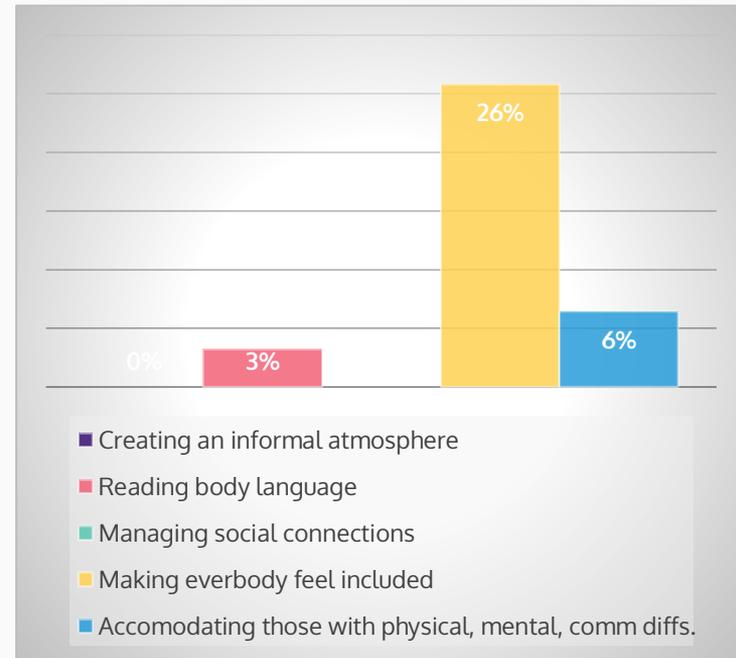
- **Integrating new members**
- **Managing disruptive members**

Group Facilitation Training Needs

Face-to-Face



Online



'Group' effects should not be ignored



Brewins Stroke Group



Why do we all provide our groups?



Why do stroke survivors come to our groups?

- **Learn from one another**
- Find **practical solutions** to the difficulties they face
- **Peer support** and **share their own experience**
- **Feel valued** within their community
- **Build their self-esteem**
- Encourage **independence**

Why do stroke survivors come to our groups?

- Feel **less isolated**
- Opportunities to **meet others** and **be social**
- Finding a **new sense of belonging**
- Finding a **renewed sense of purpose**
- See **hope** for the **future**

What can we provide in our groups?

- **Arts & crafts**
- **Outings**
- **Physical activity**
- **Gardening and conservation**
- **Games**
- **Themed activities** – Easter, Diwali, Christmas, Halloween

What can we provide in our groups?

- **Guest speakers**
- **Signposting to other services**
- **Sharing** experience and tips
- **Access** to range of **health** and wellbeing **professionals**
- **Online** and **telephone connection**

How do we make sure what we are delivering is what our groups want?

- **Ask** them
- Be **open** to **suggestions** and **ideas**
- Share your **own ideas**
- Accept **feedback**
- **Collaborate**.....with many!
- Get **involved locally**

How do we make sure our groups remain relevant and inclusive?

- Be **creative** - bring the outside in and take inside outside
- **Work** with what your **group can do** rather than focusing on what they can't do
- **Encourage sharing** of **ideas** from **everyone** involved with your group

How do we make sure our groups remain relevant and inclusive?

- Draw on **external resources** – other groups and organisations
- Consider **communication styles** and how we engage with our people
- **Be open** to suggestions and remain flexible

Questions



Rebuilding lives
after stroke