Adapting & operationalising SNAP (the Support Needs Approach for Patients) in mental health settings (Project 2)

Project 2 summary and key findings

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Short title: SNAP in Mental Health (Project 2)

The Support Needs Approach for Patients (SNAP) is a health care intervention developed to facilitate person-centred care for patients with chronic or progressive conditions (https://thesnap.org.uk/), by enabling identification and addressing of patients' support needs.

SNAP comprises two key components: (1) a person-centred process, including a needs-led conversation with a clinician about the patient's unmet support needs, which is underpinned by (2) a patient-completed SNAP Tool. The SNAP Tool is a concise set of 15 evidence-based validated questions to help patients identify and express areas of support need, provided to patients as the "*How are you?* Booklet". The tool was developed and validated from an evidence-base of chronic progressive physical conditions.

In March 2022 we were approached by Dawn Stewart, Deputy Ward Manager at Fulbourn Hospital (Cambridge & Peterborough Foundation Trust: CPFT), who wanted to use SNAP in mental health settings to enable holistic assessments. SNAP is established across primarily physical health disciplines but has not yet been implemented in acute mental health. Initial clinician exploration of the SNAP Tool suggested that some questions may require adaptation or adding for mental health. Optimal operationalisation of SNAP's person-centred process in the mental health setting also needed to be explored. To do this we conducted a six-month three-stage project with service users and clinicians (Project 1), funded by the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) East of England (within the Palliative & End of Life Care theme: PEoLC) and supported by senior management and the R&D Department at Cambridge & Peterborough Foundation Trust. Project 1 worked with mental health service users to adapt the questions on the SNAP Tool.

In Project 2 (this project) we worked again with service users (through PPI work and through a survey) but this time to help us check whether these adapted questions would work for other mental health service users. Project 2 explored the tool's face validity (i.e., *How does it look? Does it look like it does what it is designed for?*) so that we could demonstrate its acceptability to service users. As the SNAP-MH Tool was also designed to be holistic, Project 2 also sought to demonstrate content validity (i.e., *Does it cover all the relevant support needs?*) as this would confirm breadth of

coverage and suitability for purpose. Further, confirmation of face and content validity would enhance clinician confidence in the tool with service users within mental health care.

Public & Patient Involvement (PPI)

The project benefitted from the advice and guidance of service users bringing the experience of using mental health services. They advised on service user recruitment and data collection materials, provided further insights into and sense-checked study findings. They also supported production of a brief feedback report for participants. Due to the short duration of the project, our service users were consulted individually – both by email and online. One also joined the Project Advisory Group (PAG).

Project Advisory Group (PAG)

The project also had the advice and guidance of a dedicated Project Advisory Group (PAG). The group comprised the study team (Farquhar & Gardener), Dawn Stewart (mental health clinician at CPFT), Dr Gail Ewing (the third member of the SNAP team, alongside Farquhar and Gardener), Dr Shero Oduola (Lecturer in Nursing Sciences - Mental Health; bringing a national perspective) and one of our PPI service users. Due to the short duration of the project, the PAG met once as a group (via MSTeams). Members of the PAG were also consulted individually as required.

What we did in Project 2

In all this was a five-stage piece of work but split over two projects – Project 1 and Project 2. This report relates to Stages 4-5 (Project 2) – a separate report is available for Stages 1-3 (Project 1)

- Stage 1 (Project 1) had worked with service users to initially review the SNAP Tool and SNAP for mental health settings
- Stage 2 (Project 1) had worked with service users to adapt the SNAP Tool and begin to operationalise SNAP for mental health settings
- Stage 3 (Project 1) had worked with clinicians to optimise operationalisation of SNAP for mental health settings

Building on Project 1, we conducted two further stages in this applied project: Stages 4 and 5.

- Stage 4 (Project 2) involved a short survey of service users in which they completed the adapted SNAP Tool for mental health (SNAP-MH Tool) to help us find out whether it covered all the relevant support needs of service users
- Stage 5 (Project 2) worked with an NHS Media Studio to produce a user-friendly version of the validated SNAP-MH Tool

Ethical approval and project registration

Ethical approval was secured for Project 2 from the NHS Yorkshire & The Humber - South Yorkshire Research Ethics Committee (REC reference 23/YH/0206 and IRAS project ID 330500 for research protocol v2.0 11/09/2023). Local governance approvals were in place including letters of access for the study team.

Project 2 was registered on the Open Science Framework: https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/FGJT2.

Stage 4: Service user survey

We asked service users to take part in a short survey (by post or online) that included the SNAP-NMH Tool (i.e., the adapted set of seventeen questions) and some brief background questions. We needed to get between 40 and 60 replies to the survey to feel confident in the findings and we achieved this – we received over 40 replies.

Box 1 reports the key findings.

Box 1: Stage 4 – key findings:

The questions asked service users about areas of support need:
- The most common area of support need identified through the questions was *'dealing with your feelings and worries'*, followed by *'looking after any physical health problems'*, then *'understanding your illness'*
- All seventeen areas of support need were relevant for service users, with at least five people ticking the least common area – *'personal care'*

These findings suggest that this new adapted version of the questions is relevant for mental health service users and could be used in clinical practice.

Stage 5: Producing a user-friendly version of the validated SNAP-MH Tool

We used the project findings to work our PPI advisors, Project Advisory Group (PAG) and an NHS Media Studio to produce a short booklet that contains the new version of the questions for mental health service users – it is called the "How are you?" booklet.

Further, working with other service users we have developed ways that health care staff can share the booklet with service users to help them identify and discuss their concerns with staff.

The final version of the SNAP Tool for Mental Health is now available and ready for use in clinical practice.

How are you?

A set of questions to help mental health service users discuss their concerns

Name:
Date:
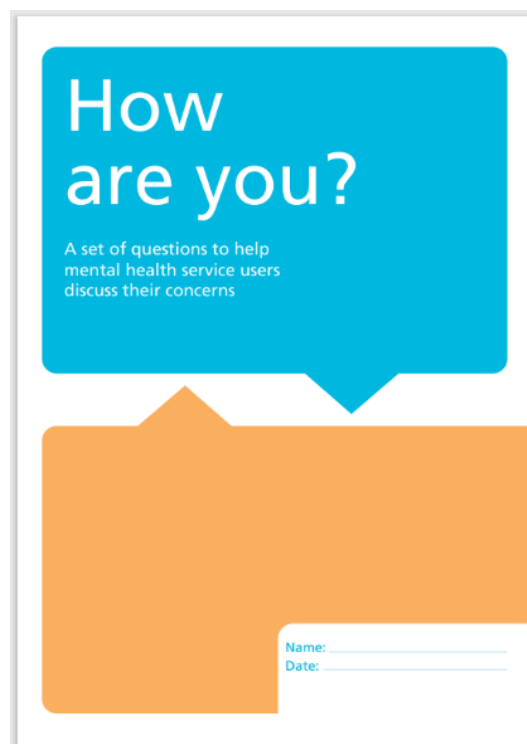
Dissemination

We have shared a brief report of these findings with those study participants who requested this.

We are now:
- making the SNAP-MH Tool available (under licence) via the SNAP website (free of charge to not-for-profit organisations)
- making any guidance on delivery of SNAP within acute mental health settings available on the website
- preparing an NIHR ARC East of England webinar for clinicians and interested researchers
- preparing an academic paper for publication (we aim to co-produce this with service users).

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