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S.H.A.R.E and Care: A qualitative study exploring the needs of service users engaging with S.H.A.R.E older person day centre in Cork City

Miriam O'Donoghue

CARL Research Project
in collaboration with
S.H.A.R.E

CARL
COMMUNITY - ACADEMIC
RESEARCH LINKS
University College Cork, Ireland

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Community Academic Research Links (CARL) is a community engagement initiative provided by University College Cork to support the research needs of community and voluntary groups/ Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). These groups can be grass roots groups, single issue temporary groups, but also structured community organisations. Research for the CSO is carried out free of financial cost by student researchers.

CARL seeks to:

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- provide their services on an affordable basis;
- promote and support public access to and influence on science and technology;
- create equitable and supportive partnerships with civil society organisations;
- enhance understanding among policymakers and education and research institutions of the research and education needs of civil society, and
- enhance the transferrable skills and knowledge of students, community representatives and researchers (www.livingknowledge.org).

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We define CSOs as groups who are non-governmental, non-profit, not representing commercial interests, and/or pursuing a common purpose in the public interest. These groups include: trade unions, NGOs, professional associations, charities, grass-roots organisations, organisations that involve citizens in local and municipal life, churches and religious committees, and so on.

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Declaration of Originality

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled '**S.H.A.R.E and Care: A qualitative study exploring the needs of service users engaging with S.H.A.R.E older person day centre in Cork City'** submitted to the School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of 'Masters of Social Work', is my own work.

Where the work of others has been utilised within this research, it has been cited and referenced accordingly using recognised academic conventions. This dissertation has been submitted through TurnItIn and any changes necessitated by the originality report generated, have been addressed.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Abstract

As Ireland's ageing population grows, there is an increasing demand for services in the community to meet the needs of older people. One such service is the older person day centre in Cork city provided by the charity S.H.A.R.E. This dissertation seeks to explore the holistic needs of the service users that attend this day centre and to examine the role of the day centre in meeting these needs. As part of this qualitative study, semi structured interviews were undertaken with nine service users in S.H.A.R.E. The research found that the day centre meets five key needs as expressed by the service users themselves ranging from practical needs such as the provision of meals and assistance with personal care to psychosocial needs such as the need for social connection, the need to feel valued and the need for enjoyment. A review of the literature found that policy on day centres appear to place more emphasis on meeting the practical needs of older people rather than meeting more psychological needs such as the desire for enjoyment and fun. Underpinning this research is the theory of person-centred care which views service users as individuals in their own right with varying needs, wishes and preferences. The research concludes by offering a number of recommendations, based on the finding of the study, which may assist S.H.A.R.E in building upon an already inclusive and caring service and which may assist the social work profession in ensuring that person centred care is always at the heart of its practice.

This dissertation is dedicated to my late uncle Donie who always encouraged me to "stick to the books"!

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to say a very warm thank you to the following people:

The staff and service users of S.H.A.R.E, especially Noreen Dorgan who was always willing and able to help. It was a privilege to work with such a caring organisation.

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Chapter One: Introduction

"Social work practice and in particular, interventions, can have a profound impact on a service user's life. Inevitably more informed practice through good research may lead to more positive outcomes for vulnerable social groups who come into contact with social workers."

(Carey, 2009, p.6)

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce the reader to the research topic, provide a background to the subject matter and present the rationale for undertaking this area of research. A brief introduction to the charity S.H.A.R.E, on whom this research is conducted, will be provided. An outline of the aims and objectives of the research will also be given. This will be followed by the research questions that informed the research. The reflex positioning of the researcher will then be presented to the reader. To conclude, this chapter will provide an overview of the content of each chapter in this study.

1.2 Research Title

S.H.A.R.E and Care. A qualitative study exploring the needs of service users engaging with S.H.A.R.E older person day centre in Cork city.

1.3 Background to the Research

Ireland has an ageing population. The 2016 census found that the over 65 category saw the largest increase in population since 2011, rising by 102,174 to 637,567, which is an increase of 19.1%. According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO), this figure will increase to 999,639 people in 2031 (www.cso.ie). In Cork city, where S.H.A.R.E. day centre is located, there are currently 17,950 persons aged 65 and over residing, an increase of 6.5 % on 2006 figures. This is deemed as a comparatively high old age dependency ratio at 21.4% as the national dependency ratio is 17. 4% (Kelly & Hayes, 2014). Given this growth, the demand for services for older people in the community such as S.H.A.R.E day centre will increase.

1.4 Introduction to S.H.A.R.E

"Students Harness Aid For The Relief Of The Elderly" (S.H.A.R.E.) is a registered charity that provides housing and a day centre for the older population of Cork city. It was founded in 1970 by students from the Presentation Brothers College in Cork city. The philosophy/goals as stated by S.H.A.R.E are as follows:

(a) Harnessing the giftedness of the young and the old.

(b) The importance of values and attitudes.

(c) The dignity of the human being/social awareness.

(d) Caring service leading to friendship and solidarity.

(e) Development of self-confidence and self-belief.

http://sharecork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Story-of-SHARE.pdf

The focus of this dissertation will be specifically on the day centre service provided by S.H.A.R.E. The Brother Jerome Kelly day centre on Sheare's Street in Cork city can cater for up to 125 older people. Established in 2001 and offering a range of specialised care services to the senior citizens of Cork city, the day care centre is open from Monday to Friday, 10.30am in the morning to 3.45pm in the afternoon.

Day care centre attendees are free to take part in a wide range of activities such as exercise, dance, arts and crafts, bingo, singing, card games, quizzes, baking and day outings. Other services available include daily Holy Communion, physiotherapy, assisted bathing, hairdressing and a taxi service to and from their homes. The centre also provides a range of medical services with a nurse on duty every day. There is no age criteria for attending the day centre (S.H.A.R.E, 2017).

1.5 Rationale

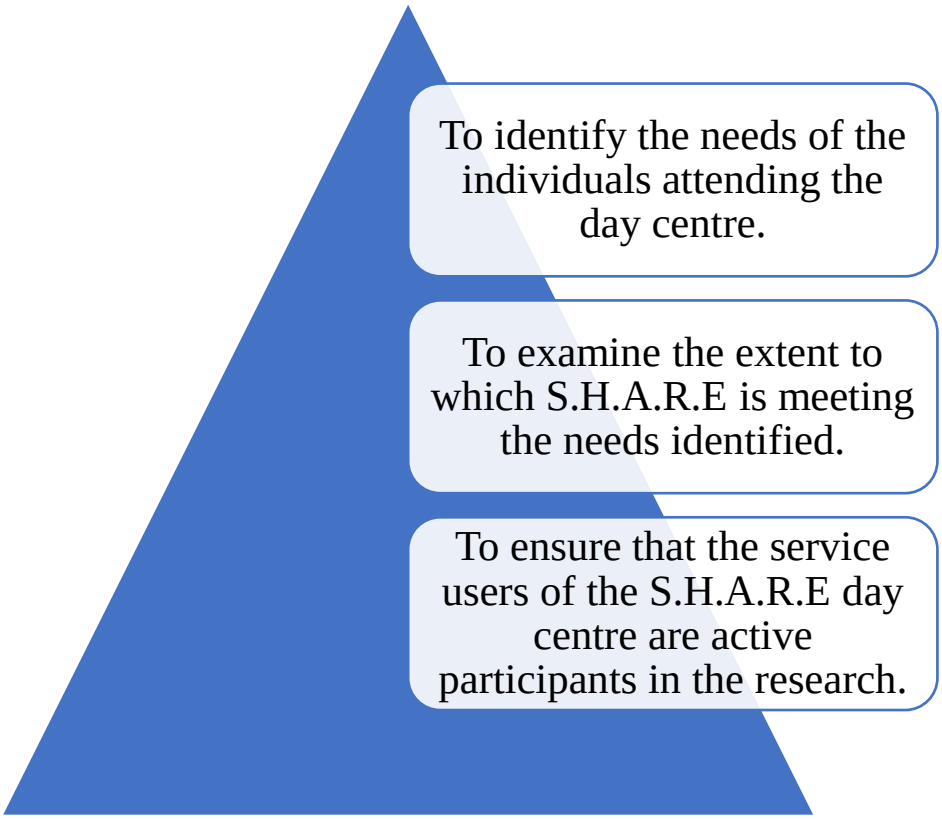
Working with older people in different settings in the past has always been a very enjoyable experience for the researcher. Therefore, when the researcher was presented with the opportunity by U.C.C to work with S.H.A.R.E and its service users through the Community Academic Research Links (CARL) Initiative, it was accepted with much enthusiasm and gratitude. The CARL project presented the researcher with an opportunity to work in partnership with a community organisation for the good of its service users. Working in partnership with people, listening to people and hearing the voices of service users is for the researcher, as a student social worker, the essence of social work practice. Therefore, the researcher was honoured to have the opportunity to engage in primary research that would hear the voices of people involved in the services that are developed for them.

1.6 Aim of the Research

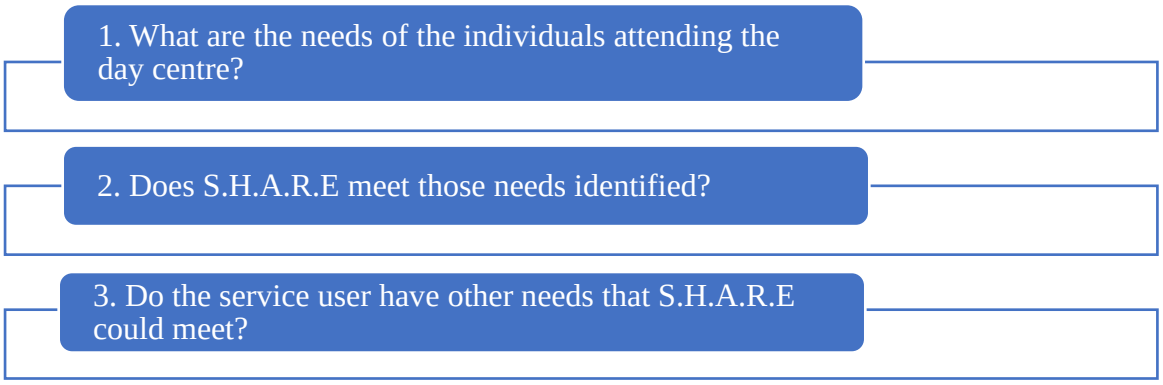
The aim of this dissertation is to explore the holistic needs of the service users that attend the day centre provided by the charity S.H.A.R.E in Cork city and to examine the role of the day centre in meeting these needs.

1.7 Objectives of the Research

The core objectives of this research are as follows:



1.8 Research Questions



1.9 Reflexive Positioning

"*Reflexivity means sensitivity to the ways in which the researcher and the research process have shaped the collected data, including the role of prior assumptions and experience, which can influence even the most avowedly inductive inquiries"* (Mays & Pope, 2000, p. 81). As the researcher has no previous connection with the community organisation involved in this research, the goal of this dissertation was to undertake the research free from all biases and assumptions. The ethical and social work principles of non-maleficence (do no harm), beneficence (do positive good), justice and autonomy have been applied to this research with the users of S.H.A.R.E day service at all stages of the research (Gilhooly, 2002).

1.10 Definitions

- **S.H.A.R.E**

"*Students Harness Aid For The Relief Of The Elderly*" is a registered charity that provides housing and other supports for the older population of Cork city.
(S.H.A.R.E, 2017, p.1)

- **Older Person**

There is no agreed definition of older person in policy or legislation. For the purposes of this study, the World Health Organisation's (WHO) definition of older person as a person aged 60 and over will be used for the purposes of this study as all service users interviewed were aged 60 and over (https://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/ageing/en/). It is also important to note that while S.H.A.R.E do not apply any age criteria to the admission of their services, all service users availing of the day centre are currently aged 60 and over.

- **Older Person Day Centre**

The HSE offers the following definition of day centres for older people: "*the HSE also directly provides and funds voluntary organisations to provide day care and meals on wheels services. The type of day service provided varies with some providing a more social element which may offer personal care such as showering, chiropody; while other services are nurse led and provide a nursing service as well as social activities."* www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/3/carerssupport/caringforolderpeople.html

- **CORU**

Irish statutory regulatory body of Health and Social Care Professionals (www.coru.ie).

1.10 Overview of Chapters

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter one introduces the reader to the community organisation S.H.A.R.E and outlines the background to the research. The aims and objectives of the study are outlined while the research questions and rationale for the study are also presented in this chapter. The chapter concludes by examining the reflexive position of the researcher

as well as providing definitions of the key terms used throughout the research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter two is a review of the literature pertaining to older person day centres in the community and introduces the theory of person-centred care which aims to ensure that the person is at the centre of all services that affect them. This theory is central to social work practice as it places the individual at the core of all social work interventions. The research undertaken in this study was collected and analysed from the perspective of person-centred care.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter three identifies the research design used in this study, the theoretical framework underpinning the study and introduces the method used to undertake the gathering and collection of the data. The limitations of the study and the challenges encountered during the study will also be discussed.

Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

Chapter four presents the reader with the findings from the data. These findings will be presented in the form of five key themes. This chapter will then discuss these themes in relation to the literature review in chapter two with the goal of answering the research questions posed in chapter one.

Chapter Five: Recommendations and Conclusion

The final chapter of this study presents the reader with a number of recommendations based on the findings of the research both for the community organisation and for social work practice with older people. The chapter will conclude with a reflection by the researcher on their experience of the research process.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

"A literature review is defined as a critical evaluation and appraisal of work including research, theory and argument in a given subject field on a particular topic, usually undertaken for a graduate or postgraduate dissertation or thesis to show understanding of the field, the ability to criticise appropriately and often the need for further research."

(Hart, 1998, p. 189)

2.1 Introduction

A review of existing literature on older person day centres is necessary as it allows the reader to place the findings of this study in the context of existing literature on day services for older people. This chapter will focus on current policy, legislation, research and practice in the area of day services for older people. The first section of the chapter will examine the need for community care services due to an ageing population. The next section will introduce the reader to the function served by older person day centres. The third section of this chapter will locate day centres within current Irish policy and legislation while the final section will examine older person services from the perspective of the theory of person-centred care.

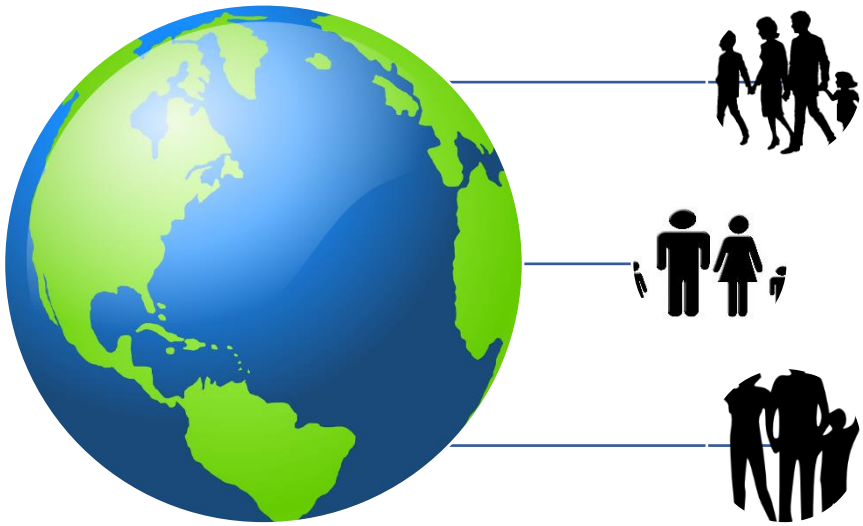
2.2 Ageing Population

As previously outlined in chapter one, according to the most recent census carried out in Ireland in 2016, the over 65 aged category saw the largest increase in population since 2011, rising by 102,174 to 637,567 which is a rise of 19.1%. According to Central Statistics Office (CSO) projections, this figure will increase to 999,639 people in 2031. The CSO also note that over 577,171 in this age group live in private households.

https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2017pressreleases/pressstatementcensus2016resultsprofile3-anageprofileofireland/

According to 2014 figures, there are 17,950 persons aged 65 years and older living in Cork city which is an increase of 6.5 % since 2006. This is deemed as a comparatively high old age dependency ratio at 21.4%, as the national dependency ratio is 17.4%. Almost a third of people in this age category in Cork city live alone (Kelly & Hayes, 2014).

On an international scale, the World Health Organisation (WHO) predicts that globally, the total number of people over 60 is set to double by 2050, rising from 1 billion to 2 billion (WHO, 2018).



2.3 Impact of an Ageing Population

The *National Positive Aging Strategy* published by the Department of Health in 2013 notes that the greatest impact of an ageing population in Ireland is likely to be seen in terms of the growing demand for a range of community-based health and social services (Dept of Health, 2013). The need for better community services such as day centres to allow people to continue to remain living at home was highlighted recently by the charity ALONE in its report *Housing Choices for Older People in Ireland.* This report states that the emphasis on care needs to shift from long term care in nursing home to long term supports in community-based settings. The charity believes that this would not only allow people to be happier in their own home but would also result in significant savings to the State (ALONE, 2018). Donnelly et al (2016) found that, in areas where community services are available, day care centres and meals on wheels were two key services that were highlighted as being particularly useful to older people.

2.4 Function of Older Person Day Centres

The first Irish policy document that made reference to older person day centres was in 1968 when the '*Care of the Aged Report'* was published. It states that day centres may be provided directly by the HSE, managed in partnership with voluntary agencies or may be managed solely by voluntary organisations. The report notes that day centres provide "*services such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, diversional therapy, chiropody and a mid-day meal. In addition to facilitating the provision of these services, the day centre improves social contacts and prevents the loneliness which some patients would otherwise suffer. It also relieves relatives, particularly those who have to go out to work, of the responsibility of looking after elderly persons during the day"* (1968, p. 68).

The National Council for Ageing and Older People (NCAOP), a body established by the Minister for Health also lists the following functions of day centres in Ireland for older people.

- To stop older people from going into long-term care
- To encourage independent living among older people
- To offer assistance with personal care and health care
- To provide social interaction
- To offer support and respite for carers
- To provide a forum for health promotion

(NCAOP, 2004, p. 23)

2.5 National and International Policy and Legislation

Despite the large numbers of older people still residing at home, there is still no official government policy underpinning community care service provision for older people in Ireland. Despite a commitment from the Irish state through various policies since the 1960's, community care services for older people have witnessed little development over the past sixty years (Timonen et al., 2012). As noted above, the first significant policy document produced by the State that referenced the care needs of older people was the '*Care of the Aged'* report in 1968. In its recommendations, the report notes that "*it is better, and probably much*

cheaper, to help the aged to live in the community rather than provide for them in hospitals or other institutions' (Govt of Ireland, 1968, p. 22). Twenty years later in 1988, the State produced a follow up policy document entitled '*The Years Ahead: A Policy for the Elderly*.' This document emphasised the role of the family and the voluntary sector in enabling older persons to remain living in their own home and emphasised the values of dignity and independence in the care of older persons (Dept of Health, 1988). The United Nations Principles for Older Person was adopted by Ireland in 1991 which noted that "*older persons should benefit from family and community care"* while also emphasising the core principles of participation and independence of older people (UN, 1991).

Two Department of Health strategies, in 1994 and 2001, followed which referred to community care. '*Shaping a Healthier Future; A Strategy for Effective Healthcare in the 1990's'* (1994) highlighted the fragmented nature of care in the community while in 2001 '*Quality and Fairness – A Health System for you'* identified the need for a national standard framework in the delivery of community care as care in a community setting was again viewed as the best model of care delivery (Dept of Health, 2001). However, Timonen et al (2012) notes that shortly after the publication of the 2001 Strategy, the State's attention turned towards addressing various crises in the Department of Health, thus leaving the issue of community care in the background. Dukelow and Considine (2017) assert that, overall, the role of the state in the delivery of home care and community care supports has developed in an "*ad hoc and discretionary way".* Dukelow and Considine (2017) acknowledge that while the care needs of older people have received greater attention in recent years, the lack of an official statutory entitlement to address their care requirements is a serious deficit. Donnelly et al highlight the need for a legislative basis to community care entitlements in order to allow for a *"fair and equitable way of allocating care and support services underpinned by legislation*" (2016, p. 7). Browne (2016) notes that a comprehensive legal framework in the area of community care for older people should be informed by values such as equity, self -determination and social solidarity. The Health Service Executive (HSE) through its current National Service Plan 2018 sets out a general commitment to community care supports by noting that it will continue to provide day care and other community supports either directly or in partnership with other providers.

2.6 Theory of Person-Centred Care

The importance of providing more than just a one size fits all day service to older people reflects the theory of person-centred care. The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) define the practice of person-centred care as one that *"places service users at the centre of all that the service does. It does this by advocating for the needs of service users, protecting their rights, respecting their values, preferences and diversity and actively involving them in the provision of care. Person-centred care and support promotes kindness, consideration and respect for service users' dignity, privacy and autonomy"* (2012, p.19).

The key principles of this theory include the following:

- Seeing the person as an individual in their own right.
- Respecting the individual's values, preferences, and needs.
- Recognizing people as biopsychosocial human beings.
- Fostering the growth of trusting caregiving relationships.
- Acknowledging freedom of choice.
- Promoting physical and emotional comfort.
- Appropriately involving the person's family, friends, and social network.

(Talerico et al, 2003, p. 11)

2.7 Practice of Person-Centred Care

Clarke et al (2003) argues that in practice, person centred care is more than just attending to someone's physical and mental needs in a healthcare setting. It involves learning about an older person's everyday experiences, their aspirations, their concerns and the relationships that are important to them. Clarke et al state that person centred care is about "*valuing the personhood of the older person*" by "*seeing behind the mask of ageing*" (2003, p. 698). This is achieved through a therapeutic relationship between service users and staff in settings such as day centres. Doherty and Thompson (2014) acknowledge that skills such as listening, questioning,

provision of information, support giving and ensuring care is patient centred rather than task centred are all essential components of a therapeutic relationship. Trevithick (2012) refers to the above skills as core social work skills used in the practice of social work. Thompson (2009) highlights the traditional social work values of client self-determination, individualisation, empowerment and partnership as underpinning a client centred approach. Current HSE policy reflects a commitment to the theory of person-centred care. '*Making a Start in Integrated Care for Older Persons. A practical guide to the local implementation of Integrated Care Programmes for Older Persons'* is described by the HSE as a ten-step integrated care framework for older persons. It notes that underpinning care planning in the healthcare sector should be a framework that is "*person centred, longer term and coordinated to include user and carer input"* (2017, p. 30). The current Department of Health's Statement of Strategy 2016 – 2019 acknowledges that the development of a model of care which is more integrated and person-centred is a challenge for the HSE going forward (Dept of Health, 2016). A recent consultation report issued by the Institute of Public Health on Home Care Services in Ireland suggests that person centred care in the community is not the reality at the current time. The report found that a significant number of respondents felt that a person-centred model of care if implemented would put the user at the heart of service planning in Ireland which the respondents felt is not the case presently. The report notes that a theme running through the consultation responses were that people need to be at the heart of the design, delivery and evaluation of services. Some respondents highlighted the need to move away from a medicalised model of service delivery to a person-centred approach which incorporates practical elements such as individualised care plans, personalised budgets and client directed payments. This would allow the service user to determine the best mix of community services that suit their own needs. The research found that this would also assist service users in having more choice and autonomy in their lives (Institute of Public Health, 2018).

2.8 Changing perceptions of Ageing

Donnelly & O'Loughlin (2015) note that a recent shift is evident in how older people are being viewed as ageing is beginning to be constructed and discussed from a more positive discourse. This changing narrative can be seen in the use of terms throughout literature such as healthy ageing, positive ageing and successful ageing. The WHO's Active Ageing – A Policy

Framework (2002) and Ireland's National Positive Ageing Strategy (2013) reflect this shift both from an international and national lens. The Healthy and Positive Ageing Initiative (HAPAI) launched in 2014 by the Department of Health sets its objective as making Ireland a great place in which to grow old (www.hapai.ie). '*Ageing-in-place'* is another term that has gained prominence in current policy and which is aimed at changing the concept of care for older people. It is defined as '*remaining living in the community, with some level of independence, rather than in residential care'* (Davey et al., 2004: p. 133). Therefore, the importance of organisations such as S.H.A.R.E can be seen in terms of offering choice to people regarding availing of care in a community setting, thus promoting the values of person-centred care.

2.9 Conclusion

This study aims to explore the holistic needs of the users of S.H.A.R.E older person day centre in Cork city. In order to be able to place those needs within a contextual framework in chapter four, a review of existing literature in this area was required. This literature review commenced by detailing the need for services such as S.H.A.R.E day centre as a result of an ageing population not just in Ireland but worldwide. The location of community care provision in Ireland within a policy and legislative framework was then examined. Person-centred care in healthcare in Ireland was subsequently introduced from a theoretical and practical viewpoint. The chapter concluded by examining the changing discourse around ageing. The next chapter will address the research process undertaken in this study by focusing on the theoretical perspective, epistemology, methodology and research method used in the study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

"If older people, then, are not included within those aspects of research that impinge upon them, it is difficult to see how older people generally can become part of that wider participatory paradigm. This may be analogous to wider structural oppression where other disadvantaged groups may be denied the power that governs services that impact on them."

Lynch, 2014, p. 166

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the theoretical foundations underpinning this study and to discuss the research process and methods that were used to undertake the research. The chapter will begin by introducing the reader to the theoretical perspective and epistemological stance that informed the research. The methodology and methods that were selected for the collection and analysis of the data will then be introduced. This will be followed by a discussion around the researcher's involvement in community-based research via the UCC CARL initiative. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of the ethical considerations and challenges that arose during the course of the study.

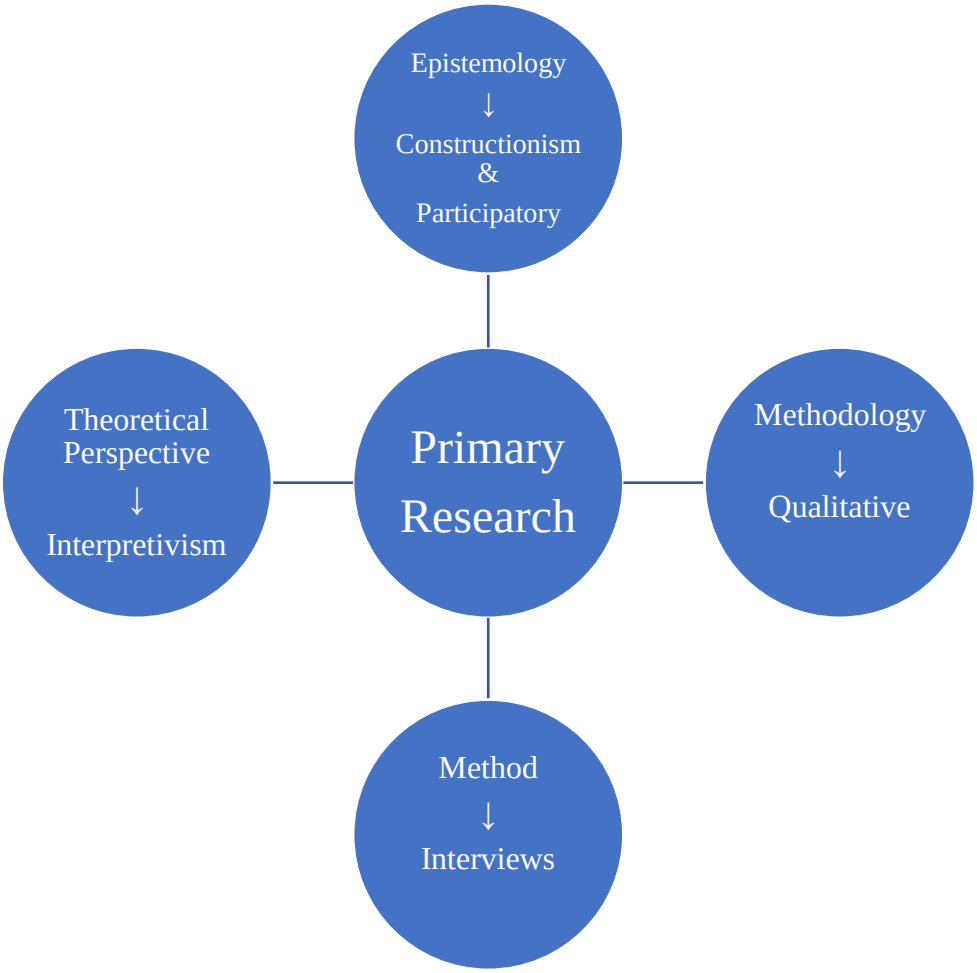


Figure 3.1: Theory and Methodology underpinning the research.

3.2 Theoretical Perspective

Bryman (2016) highlights the importance of theory in research by stating that "*it provides a backcloth and justification for the research that is being conducted. It also provides a framework within which social phenomena can be understood and the research findings can be interpreted"* (p.18). This research was undertaken from the theoretical framework of interpretivism. Carey (2009) notes that interpretivism tries to make meaning of people's experiences in the social world as "*the researcher endeavors to understand the opinions, emotional responses and attitudes articulated by participants and then link these to people's behaviors and actions and, finally contextualize the views and conduct of participants"* (p. 53). Applying this framework to the research reflects the primary aim of the study which is to explore the needs of the users of S.H.A.R.E day centre as experienced and expressed by the service users themselves. An interpretivist framework allows the researcher to make meaning of each service users individual experience of the day service in S.H.A.R.E.

3.3 Epistemology

The epistemological position of this research is from a constructionist stance. Crotty (2009) refers to epistemology as a "*way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know*" (p. 3). Constructionism, Crotty (2009) asserts, is where different people construct different meaning even in relation to the same phenomenon. The researcher applied a constructionist paradigm to this study as it was important to capture the individual experiences of the service users interviewed. The purpose of this study is to explore the needs of the users of a day centre, thereby, applying a constructionist stance allowed each service user to apply their own subjective reality to their engagement with the service.

3.4 Community Based Participatory Research

A participatory research framework was also employed in this piece of research. This approach reflects the ethos of the CARL project as the community organization and its service users form the core of this research. Such an approach offers "*a bottom up"* approach to research (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995, p.1667). A participatory approach allowed the researcher to work

with the service users in order to capture the individual experiences of the people who are at the core of S.H.A.R.E day centre. Barnes and Walker (1996) refer to participatory research as empowering research as service user involvement leads to a form of empowerment. As noted in chapter one, one of the core objectives in carrying out this CARL project was to ensure that the service users of S.H.A.R.E were active participants in the study and thereby empowered to have their voices heard. Empowerment of people is a key social work value and thus, employing such a value in a study as part of a social work masters is essential (Thompson, 2009).

3.5 Research Methodology

In undertaking this study, I employed a combination of primary and secondary research. Primary research is undertaken when the researcher who carries out the research is responsible for gathering the data and conducting the analysis while secondary research involves the analysis of data by researchers who are not involved in the collection of the data (Bryman, 2001). The methodological approach employed in this dissertation was from a qualitative perspective. Qualitative research attempts to explore the nature of social relations and thus, provide a description of the facts as experienced and felt by the respondents (Sarantakos, 1994). Therefore, qualitative research was identified as the most appropriate method as this study aims to explore the needs of the service users attending S.H.A.R.E day centre as expressed by the service users themselves.

3.6 Research Methods

The research method that was employed in gathering data for this study was semi structured interviews. Semi structured interviews were carried out with nine users of the day service. Each interview lasted approximately forty-five minutes. The interviewees were selected by the charity and consisted of six male service users and three female service users. Four of these service users live in sheltered housing provided by S.H.A.R.E, four service users live

independently in the community and one service user resides in a nursing home for older people. It was envisaged that the needs of individuals living in various settings may vary and thus, the importance of capturing a variety of needs was vital to the aim of the research.

3.6.1 Sampling

A combination of purposive and quota sampling was used in this study. Purposive sampling was utilized as part of the selection criteria. This approach involves the researcher selecting specific subgroups of the population that are of interest to the study and subsequently, selecting cases from each sub group by deliberate means (Bryman, 2016). The participants required for this study needed to be current service users of S.H.A.R.E day centre in Cork city. The service users were selected jointly by the nurse and activities coordinator as they possessed knowledge on both the service users living arrangements as well as knowledge regarding the service user's level of cognitive capacity and thus, their ability to participate in research. Within this method of sampling, quota sampling was then used to select service users who resided in various settings including S.H.A.R.E housing, independently in the community and in long term nursing care (Dodd & Epstein, 2012).

3.6.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The results of the data were analyzed using an approach known as thematic analysis. This means that the data collected from the interviews in S.H.A.R.E were analyzed to extract core themes. Hart (2009) notes that themes in research are identified by "*bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which are often meaningless when voiced alone (p. 166)".* While a number of themes emerged from the data, the researcher selected five core themes for the purpose of analysis.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The ethical principles that inform this study reflect both CORU's Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Workers while also recognizing ethical principles that underpin any

research process. Ethical approval was sought and given by the UCC MSW Research Ethics Committee for this study as it involved a number of ethical considerations. Firstly, as the interviewees are current service users of S.H.A.R.E day centre, it was extremely important that the anonymity of the interviewees was guaranteed and preserved at all times. This was explained to all service users verbally and in writing. It was also important to ensure that no distress was caused to the service users at any stage throughout the research process. To minimize any distress, service users were informed verbally and in writing that they were free to leave the research process at any stage. A nurse employed by S.H.A.R.E was also available to the interviewees should they experience any upset during the interview. Any individuals with cognitive impairments were not be asked to participate in order to avoid any consent and capacity issues. In this regard, the nurse and activities co-ordinator selected the interviewees due to their prior knowledge of the service users. As noted in chapter one, the ethical and social work principles of non-maleficence (do no harm), beneficence (do positive good), justice and autonomy have underpinned all stages of this research (Gilhooly, 2002).

3.8 Challenges and Limitations of the Study

It was envisaged at the beginning of this process that a focus group consisting of the service users within S.H.A.R.E would be used to generate the interview questions as one of the aims and values underpinning this research is inclusion and participation. However, due to time constraints and word limitation, unfortunately and with regret, this method was not possible. However, as a result, the researcher was able to allow more time with the service users during the interview process. This was important as it allowed the interviewer to build up a rapport with the service user while also allowing the researcher more time to gently probe answers further during the interview process. Dodd & Epstein (2012) argue that semi structured interviews reflect the process used by social workers during an intake assessment. They note that while key content needs to be covered in both situations, semi structured interviews allow topics to be pursued in different order to allow for flow and ease of conversation. Finally, it is important to note that the data collected and analysed in this research reflects the views and opinions of the specific sample interviewed and not the views of all service users within the S.H.A.R.E day centre.

3.9 Conclusion

To conclude, I will provide a brief summary of this chapter. The researcher began by introducing constructionism and interpretivism respectively as the epistemological and theoretical framework that informed the research. The methodology and methods used were then identified as the reader was informed that a qualitative stance using semi structured interviews were used for the collection and analysis of the data. This was followed by a discussion around the researcher's involvement in community-based research via the UCC CARL initiative and the importance of including service users in such research. The chapter concluded with an analysis of the ethical considerations and challenges that arose during the course of the study. The next chapter will set out the findings of this study and discuss these findings within the context of the literature review in the previous chapter.

Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

"Research plays a vital role in policy development and service planning for an ageing population. It will improve the lives of older people, by providing the evidence and knowledge required to address the many challenges of an ageing population".

HSE, 2015, p.7

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the key themes that emerged from the research process will be analysed and discussed. The themes will be presented to the reader separate from the discussion as this will facilitate the participants voice to be heard first and foremost in the research without interpretation. The main findings from the literature in chapter two will then be incorporated into the discussion section and will be discussed in the context of the findings from this research. For confidentiality purposes all identifying information will be omitted and the nine interviewees will be referred to as "SU" followed by a number which reflects the numerical order of their interview. The five main themes that emerged from analysis of the data are listed below. Each theme will be presented individually.

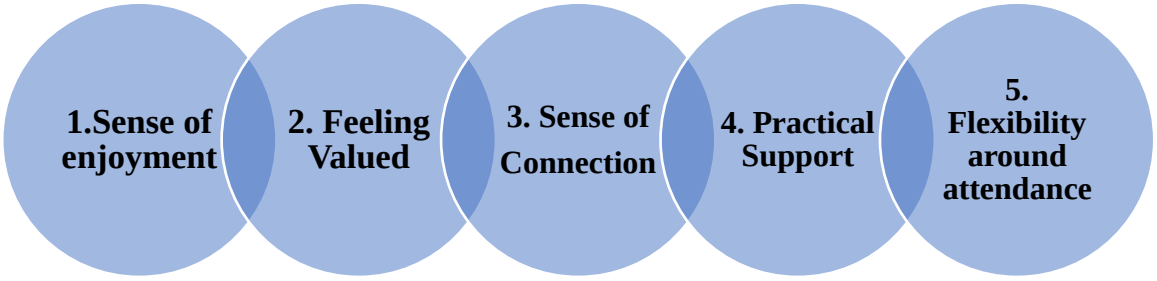


Figure 4.1 Five themes that emerged from the research.

4.2 Theme One: Enjoyment

Enjoyment emerged as a significant theme in this research. All nine service users that were interviewed referred to the enjoyment they experience from attending the centre. This sense of enjoyment stemmed from both engaging in the various activities offered by the centre and also through the interaction with other service users and staff.

4.2.1 Enjoyment through activities

Activities carried out within the centre include dancing, snooker, art, bingo, quizzes and listening to live music. SU 3 noted her love of snooker and the enjoyment she gets from playing it in the centre by saying "*I love to come in to play the snooker. I'd love to get a pool team together so we could play other day centres*". SU 3 also noted that she would like "*more music and more dancing. Dancing is good, you get good exercise from it. And I'd like more quizzes and more outings in the summer".* Activities such as art and bingo were also listed by service users as a source of fun. SU 5 noted that *"I enjoy the music and I enjoy the activities and I love the bingo"* while SU 7 stated that *"I like the bingo and the pool…I come in Tuesday to play the pool. I used to be a snooker player".*

4.2.2 Enjoyment through people

SU 4 referred to the enjoyment he gets from meeting the other service users and staff in the centre by stating that *"you can have a great bit of sport with people in here…you can have a laugh and a joke here*" while SU 5 stated that "*you'd look forward to meeting the other ladies*".

4.3 Theme Two: Feeling valued

The service users attending the day centre were asked why they first came to the day centre and why they continue to use the day service. The feeling of being valued by the organisation arose in a number of the interviews as a reason for continuing to attend the centre on a regular

basis. This sense of being valued emerged in two ways.

4.3.1 Morning Telephone Call

Staff at S.H.A.R.E ring each service user on the mornings that the service user is due to attend to check that they are still coming and to encourage them to attend the centre that day if they are feeling ambivalent about attending. This gives service users the feeling of being wanted as noted by SU 1 who stated that *"they ring me up every whole Tuesday, are you coming, are you coming, I felt maybe I'm doing something good by coming…it's a compliment to be asked, a compliment to be pestered. They want me to come here so I feel like maybe I've a contribution myself to it through my presence. I reckon I play my part too as best I can, I give to them too"*. The sense of being valued by the centre was also recognized by SU 4 who noted that *"it's nice to get the call in the morning. You feel like they want you to come in. That's a nice feeling."*

4.3.2 Relationship with staff

The sense of being valued by the staff themselves was evident from the relationship the service users have with the staff. SU 4 stated that *"the staff are very nice here like, I can ask them to do anything and they'd do it. They did a lot for me since I came in here like and that's what I like about the situation, they're very very nice people, every one of them*" while SU 6 who resides in long term care stated that *"the staff help me a lot. They ask me how I'm getting on in the nursing home".* Another service user – SU 7 summed up his relationship with the staff by noting that *"they are his family".*

4.4 Theme Three: Sense of Connection

The importance of leaving one's home to meet other people in the centre was highlighted by a number of service users in the interviews. This sense of connection was felt through meeting other service users which in turn helped some service users address their feelings of loneliness.

4.4.1 Meeting people

SU 1 noted that "*people know me, and they use my name in a kind way. There's a social connection there…it's a meeting point, a connection there and that's good*" while SU 7 stated that "*I live alone in the S.H.A.R.E. house and I've no friend's, so I come in here to have friends".* SU 9 acknowledged that meeting other people means *"you don't have time to think about yourself as you're listening to other people's problems".*

4.4.2 Helps with feelings of loneliness and boredom.

The day centre also assists people who may be lonely at home. SU 8 noted that *"it takes away the loneliness of living alone. When I go home in the evening, I feel better after meeting people. It fills in the day*". This sentiment was also acknowledged by SU 4 who noted that "*I love coming in here now. It's like a job to me. It gets me out of the house. I'd be inside going from one window to another."* SU 9 stated that *"I was at home like and my mother had just died and you're just around the house all day and family said you'd get your dinner there".*

4.4.3 Meeting volunteers

The importance of meeting people other than staff and service users was also an important part of the social connection mentioned by service users. SU 9 acknowledged the impact of meeting the local school children who volunteer with S.H.A.R.E as she noted that "*bringing in the schoolchildren is good for us. They asked us questions and told us about themselves*" while SU 6 stated that "*it's great to meet people to talk to. I just talked to a lad there in a wheelchair in on work experience. Nice bloke, about twenty-one".*

4.5 Theme Four: Practical Assistance

The provision of meals and assistance with personal care/health care emerged as another key theme within this study as it was viewed as a very important element for the service users within the day service.

4.5.1. Importance of Meals

The provision of food by the day centre was very important to a number of service users as it offered an alternative to cooking at home. SU 5 noted "*that you have your dinner here and then you don't have to worry about it when you go back in the evening*" while SU 8 acknowledged the importance of the meal by stating "*that's why I come here for the dinner. I like the dinner*".

4.5.2 Personal care/healthcare

A number of service users mentioned the option of having a bath or shower in the day centre as being very beneficial to them. SU 2 noted that "*yesterday now, I had a ferocious bath. Fantastic bath I had. And a shower in one, two experienced ladies. And you can get your hair cut and your nails cut."* Another service user – SU 6 highlighted the importance of having a nurse on site by stating that "*the nurse here sent me out to the Regional for a pet scan and they found cancer".*

4.6 Theme Five: Choice regarding attendance

Whilst the day service is open to individuals on a five-day basis, the service users expressed varying preferences regarding the number of days they attend.

4.6.1 Part-Time

SU 1 noted that "*I know people come here five, four, two, three days but one day is more than enough for me. I get enough out of it. It is like visiting a friend, if you go every night to them, it becomes a chore, like a bit mechanical. If you came in everyday, you'd kill the thing."* Another service user acknowledged that "*Monday and Wednesday is enough for me. It breaks down the day".*

4.6.2 Full-Time

Other service users choose to attend on a full-time basis. SU 8 noted that he attends everyday

as "*it fills in my time…. its close by, it's on my doorstep, it's very handy*". SU 4 stated that he attends everyday as "*I love coming in here now, it's like a job to me, best of it all, when I get up in the morning, I've somewhere to go……it's a grand spot. I can't stick being at home. Even on a Saturday there when I'm off, I jump into the car and go somewhere*".

4.7 Discussion

Some of the themes that emerged from this research in relation to the holistic needs of the service users availing of S.H.A.R.E day centre reflect the function of day centres for older people as outlined in chapter two. The National Council for Aging and Older People (NCAOP) lists the following functions of day centres in Ireland for older people:

- *To stop older people from going into long-term care*
- *To encourage independent living among older people*
- *To offer assistance with personal care and health care*
- *To provide social interaction*
- *To offer support and respite for carers*
- *To provide a forum for health promotion*

(NCAOP, 2004, p. 23)

The first theme that emerged from the data was the **enjoyment** that the service users experience from attending the centre. This enjoyment is experienced both from engaging in the activities in the centre and through the interactions with other service users and staff. It is interesting to note that meeting the enjoyment needs of older persons is not listed above by NCAOP as a function of day centres nor does HSE policy on day centres for older persons refer to the provision of enjoyment as a function of older person day centres. When the researcher was undertaking a review of the literature on terms such as "*enjoyment", "fun"* and "*leisure*" in connection with older people, much of the literature referred to these concepts in terms of their role as an aid to a decline in mental and physical well-being and not a concept in its own right. This leads the researcher to pose the following questions. Are we assuming that older

people only engage in "*enjoyment*" and "*fun*" as a means to limiting deterioration and not as a means in itself? Is it only "young people" who want fun in their lives? Does policy on older persons put more focus on an older person's practical needs rather than their psychosocial needs? If so, are we an ageist society in how we view fun amongst older persons? Lynch (2014) defines ageism as "*the multifaceted aspect of how older people may be disadvantaged through negative stereotyping and language, policy and practice that excludes older people and a broader sense of stigmatising older people purely because an accumulation of years"* (p.29). Based on this definition of ageism, this research asks the reader to consider if society needs to question its assumptions around an older person's desire for fun and enjoyment? Glasser's choice theory argues that every human being is driven by five psychological needs embedded in our genes, one of which is the need to have fun (Glasser, 1998). Therefore, does age really matter when it comes to wanting fun?

These findings, which demonstrate a desire by the service users to engage in activities within the centre, also question the usefulness of social disengagement theory in 2019. Social disengagement theory, which emerged in the 1960's, states that "*aging is an inevitable, mutual withdrawal or disengagement, resulting in decreased interaction between the ageing person and others in the social system he belongs to"* (Cumming & Henry, 1961, p.14). The desire of the service users within S.H.A.R.E to actively participate in music, pool, art and other activities demonstrates a desire to continue to pursue fun, stimulation and enjoyment. Therefore, is there still a place for social disengagement theory in 2019? Lynch (2014) also notes a word of caution for the social work profession regarding this theory as older people may become excluded within practice if the assumption held by the social work profession is that withdrawal is an accepted and inevitable part of the ageing process. It is also important to note here that service users have the choice not to participate in activities should they choose not to engage. This reflects the theory of person-centred care within S.H.A.R.E as set out in chapter two, which acknowledges the importance of values such autonomy, self-determination and choice for people in the day centre (HIQA, 2012).

As noted from the findings of this study, a second theme that emerged related to **social connection.** The service users within S.H.A.R.E identified the need for social interaction and

social connection as being an important need provided by the day service on Sheare's Street. This reflects one of the key functions of day centres as noted above by the NCAOP. The sense of connection expressed by the service users assists in creating a sense of community and belonging for the service users within the S.H.A.R.E day centre. Bruggencate et al. (2018) states that the feeling of connectedness to others and to a community or neighbourhood contributes to a person's wellbeing as well as encouraging a feeling of independence. Doherty (2012) states that "*community can be understood as a body of people with an ongoing relationship stemming from shared interests or something in common* (p.10)"

A number of service users also noted that this sense of connection acts as a means of addressing the loneliness they feel in the home. Gibson (2001) acknowledges the connection between social interaction and loneliness in old age as he notes that loneliness is often used as a measure of social engagement because it is a factor that is seen as being central to quality of life in later years. Whilst Iecovich & Biderman (2012) found in their research that day care centres may have a positive effect on the level of loneliness among users of this service, Tester (1989) argues that it is not always a given that day centres act as a means of social inclusion. Traditional models tend to make the assumption that providing meals, social contacts and activities relieve social isolation. Tester (1989) warns that traditional models are not always based on the principles of inclusion and empowerment – principles which take account of an individual's life, wishes, needs and choices. These principles reflect the theory of person-centred care as discussed in chapter two which HIQA (2012) identify as a framework that *"places service users at the centre of all that the service does. It does this by advocating for the needs of service users, protecting their rights, respecting their values, preferences and diversity and actively involving them in the provision of care. Person-centred care and support promotes kindness, consideration and respect for service users' dignity, privacy and autonomy"* (p. 19). Therefore, it is important to note, as highlighted by Tester, that whilst day centres may meet certain functions, they may not always foster a person-centred approach. The acknowledgement of this from a social work context is extremely important as it should never be assumed by the social work profession that all supports and interventions available to older people and thus possibly recommended by social workers employ the core social work values of person-centred practice, partnership and empowerment (Thompson, 2009).

The provision of **practical support** as a function of day centres as noted above by the NCAOP was also evident in the findings of this research. A number of service users acknowledged that getting their dinner in the centre was a significant attraction in attending the centre. The NCAOP note the importance of providing a dinner in a day centre environment as it states that "*providing a nutritious, well-cooked and well-presented meal is hugely beneficial, nutritionally and socially"* (2003, p.25). The importance of being able to avail of personal care and having a nurse in the centre were also acknowledged by service users as being another contributing factor to their attendance.

In relation to **attendance** at the Centre, which also emerged a key theme, the research identified that the service users have different preferences regarding how often they attend. When probed by the interviewer as to what would encourage them to attend more often, a number of service users noted that they have commitments the other days. Further research is required to establish if these commitments commenced after or before their attendance at the centre. Donnelly et al (2016) note in their research, that the main impediments for individuals not attending day centres included lack of transport, waiting times and day centres not meeting the individual needs of the service user. The importance of engaging in activity is the premise of Activity Theory proposed by Havighurst in 1961 as it notes that the more active people are, the more likely they are to be satisfied with their lives (Estes, 2001).

The importance of **feeling valued** by the organisation and by the staff of S.H.A.R.E was another central theme that emerged from the research. The importance of getting the morning telephone call signalled to a number of service users that they were wanted by the organisation. Bowling & Gabriel (2007) found that "*social roles and activities, were also important for enabling social contact and conversation, for keeping fit/alert, for pleasure and enjoyment, having a role, feeling valued, keeping busy and preventing loneliness* (p. 83)" The importance of older people feeling valued and "*being valued*" is addressed in the current *National Positive Ageing Strategy* (2013, p.69). From an international perspective, the United Nations Principles for Older People also refers to the importance of ensuring that older persons are "*valued*

independently of their economic contribution." The concept of feeling valued is promoted through the employment of core social work values such as dignity and respect (Thompson, 2009). The HSE's safeguarding policy, as referred to in chapter two notes, that "*it is the responsibility of all service providers both statutory and non-statutory to ensure that service users are treated with respect and dignity"* (2014, p.6).

It is important to note in relation to the above findings, that all nine service users answered no to the research question "Do you think the day centre could help meet any other daily needs that you may have?".

4.8 Conclusion

The key themes that emerged from a thematic analysis of the interview data were introduced in the first part of this chapter. These themes include a desire for fun, a sense of connection with people, feeling valued by the centre, the importance of practical assistance and individual preferences regarding attendance. The second section of this chapter examined these themes within the context of the literature review in chapter two. It was found that while HSE policy on the function of day centres places a lot of significance on meeting the practical needs of older people, certain psychosocial needs such as the desire for fun do not appear to be mentioned. This led the researcher to pose the question – is an older person's desire for fun being ignored in policy? The final chapter of this study will now contain a number of recommendations based on the findings of the research as outlined in this chapter.

Chapter Five: Findings and Analysis

"A task now facing the social work profession is to move away from the current prevailing discourse where older people with complex needs are viewed in a negative manner and old age as a period of decline and to help create conditions whereby a more positive narrative and lived experience of the ageing process exist".

Donnelly & O'Loughlin, 2005, p. 224

5.1 Introduction

The final chapter in this study will provide the reader with an overall conclusion to the research based on the aims and findings as set out throughout the research. A number of recommendations will then be provided based on the above. The chapter will conclude by identifying areas of further research followed by a reflective piece on the researchers own experience of engaging in a joint CARL initiative with U.C.C and S.H.A.R.E.

5.2 Concluding Comments

The goal of this research was to explore the holistic needs of the service users that avail of S.H.A.R.E older person day service in Cork city as experienced and expressed by the service users themselves. The study found that the service users identified five key needs that were provided by the centre. These include the following: a need for enjoyment, a sense of connection with other people, feeling valued by the centre, the importance of practical assistance and having choice around attendance at the centre. When these needs were analysed by comparing them to the purpose of older person day centres as set out in policy, it was found that while some needs such as the need for social connection and practical assistance were recognised in policy, other psychosocial needs such as the need for enjoyment and fun were not mentioned in the literature reviewed by the researcher. This led the researcher to ask the following questions – do we view older people differently when it comes to engaging in fun and enjoyment? Are we ageist in how we view older people in terms of their needs? Do we assume that older people have only functional needs? Whilst this research cannot answer those questions, it has however identified a need to look at how services for older people are viewed from the outside and organised from the inside. The theory underpinning this research is the theory of person-centred care which highlights the importance of seeing older people as individuals with different needs, wishes and preferences and not viewing them based on the number of years they have lived. The challenge facing all older person services both in Ireland and internationally is to ensure that the older person is at the centre of its service where their voice is the one guiding the service.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on both the findings of this study and a review of the literature in this area, a number of recommendations have been made by the researcher. These recommendations relate to S.H.A.R.E day centre itself but also apply to the wider context of policy in the area of old age. Recommendations for the social work profession have also been outlined for the reader.

5.3.1 S.H.A.R.E

In order to ensure that S.H.A.R.E, as an organisation maximises the potential of its service users and continues to implement a person-centred approach to its day service, the researcher recommends the following:

- The establishment of a committee within S.H.A.R.E comprised of staff and service users that meet regularly to review, discuss and plan activities and events. This committee could look at introducing new and varied activities for service users such as tai chi classes, acting classes, bringing in guest speakers, a poetry class or learning a new language. This committee could also help identify what skills are available amongst the service users themselves that they may be able to teach each other. In this regard, the committee may also consider the introduction of courses (either internally or externally) that train service users in how to lead and organise activities. '*Guidance for recruiting patient/service user representatives for groups and committees'* is a document issued by the HSE that may assist S.H.A.R.E in this regard (www.hse.ie).

- The establishment of a link with agencies such as St James Hospital in Dublin who run the Mercer's Institute for Successful Ageing (MISA). MISA operates what is known as a "*Creative Life Centre* (which) *promotes and highlights the creativity of older people, enabling them to express themselves through art, sculpture, poetry, literature, music and drama. It includes a volunteer network of all age groups, but primarily of older people themselves. The Centre interfaces closely with employee groups, retirement organizations, charities, local community centres, schools and colleges,*

locally and nationally" (www.misa.ie). This link may assist S.H.A.R.E in promoting the concepts on successful ageing and active ageing within the day service.

- The introduction of a partnership with various departments in U.C.C whereby both service users and students could interact. This partnership could take the form of older persons sharing their knowledge and experience with students via the option of guest lecturing in U.C.C or students of various disciplines providing services to S.H.A.R.E such as physiotherapy, accounting or legal advice. The researcher also believes that U.C.C and S.H.A.R.E would benefit from a stronger link between students of the Social Work Masters and the service users of S.H.A.R.E service. Again, this would serve a dual purpose of students gaining valuable knowledge from older people while some older persons may also benefit from various social work interventions such as life story work and grief work.

5.3.2 Social Work Practice

The researcher recommends, based on the personal learnings accrued in the research, that all social workers should ensure that their practice fully incorporates a person-centred approach when working with all service users and not just older people. The importance of such an approach in daily practice is summed up by Hall & Scragg (2012) who define this practice as *"a values-based perspective about what each of us would wish to experience with regard to choice, independence and dignified treatment if we were cast in the role of the service user. Person-centred planning is designed specifically to 'empower' people, to directly support their social inclusion, and to directly challenge their devaluation* (p.11/12)". The importance of ensuring that we, as future social work practitioners, also promote a person-centred approach when engaging with other services and disciplines should not be underestimated either. The researcher also recommends that the social work profession challenges all ageist views and assumptions that inhibit the actions and rights of older persons or that label or stereotype older people in a negative manner.

5.3.3 Policy/Legislation

The researcher recommends as a matter of urgency that the State introduce an up to date national policy document underpinning community care provision for older people in Ireland. This policy should, subsequently and without delay, lead to the much needed regulation of the area through legislation. A national policy on community care should be underpinned by the values of choice and individualization which would allow a person to decide on the type and level of care that they wish to avail of. The researcher also recommends the publication of an up to date *National Positive Ageing Strategy* that makes reference to the importance of meeting the psychosocial needs of older persons such as the need for fun and enjoyment.

5.4 Future Research

As the sample used in this study was small-scale, this provides an opportunity for further research. The researcher recommends that S.H.A.R.E continue its research into the area of day care by exploring the various preferences expressed by service users in relation to their attendance. As noted in the research, a number of service users stated that they attend part time as they have obligations on other days. Further research could be used to explore if these commitments began before or after their attendance at the centre and if any impediments exist in relation to attending the service more. Future research could also explore the role of family in a person's decision to first attend the centre and in their decision to continue attending the service.

Reflective Piece

From the moment I first heard of the CARL project in Year One of the Masters in Social Work, I was interested in pursuing this initiative. Social work is primarily about working with people and therefore, what better way to end a Master's in Social Work and begin my working life in social work than engaging in primary research with a community group. It was both a privilege and an education to work with S.H.A.R.E, its staff and service users.

This research has taught me two things. Firstly, I have realised the importance of being aware of the judgments and presumptions that I will bring to my practise. I did not realise until after I conducted my interviews with the service users that I was expecting to meet individuals who were both disengaged with services and with life. How wrong I was! What I found in S.H.A.R.E opened my eyes to the assumptions I had around older persons and their engagement with community services. In S.H.A.R.E, I found service users who enjoyed attending the service and who deliberately sought out enjoyment and fun. I have learnt from this piece of research that while some older persons may require extra support, older people are active participants in society that have much more to offer than what the media or indeed current research would have us think.

A second learning that I have taken from this research relates back to one of the goals of this study which is the importance of including service users in research. How can we improve the lives of people if we do not ask them about their lives? It was an honour to be able to sit with nine service users from S.H.A.R.E and ask them about their personal experience of the day centre. Social work practice is about sitting with people and hearing people so therefore, I was very grateful that the CARL initiate allowed me to do just that. This study has taught me that no matter age you are, you still have a voice and you should still be empowered to use that voice. Social work is about empowering people and I hope that I will always remember that throughout my social work career.

Overall, I found this research to be both enjoyable and informative. It was an honour to work with an organisation that clearly values its service users. It is with regret that I was not able to pursue the focus group option with the service users due to time and word constraints. However, my hope from this CARL project is that the process involved in undertaking the research allowed the service users to feel heard, valued and perhaps contributed a little to their philosophy of "*harnessing their giftedness".* I am very glad that I chose this option and I highly commend S.H.A.R.E in partaking in this research for the good of its service users.

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APPENDIX A – Confirmation of Research Approval by S.H.A.R.E



S.H.A.R.E.

Br. Jerome Kelly Day Care Centre
Clochán Barra
43 Sheares Street
Cork

Telephone: 021-4273977
Fax: 021-4251240

September 20th 2018

To whom it may concern,

I wish to confirm that Miriam O'Donoghue as part of her Masters in Social Work will be undertaking a research project in conjunction with UCC and SHARE. This will be a qualitative piece of research and has been approved by SHARE".

Kind regards,

Noreen Dorgan
Head of Services

APPENDIX C - Interview Questions

1. Why did you first attend the day centre provided by SHARE?

2. Why do you continue to attend the day centre?

3. What do you like most about coming here?

4. What do you like least about coming here?

5. Would you like to change anything about the day centre?

6. Do you think the day centre could help meet any other daily needs that you may have?

APPENDIX D - INFORMATION SHEET

Purpose of the Study.

As part of the requirements for the Master's in Social Work at UCC, I must carry out a research study. This study that I be undertaking with SHARE is concerned with examining the impact that the SHARE day centre has on its service users.

What will the study involve? The study will involve 8 current users of SHARE's day centre partaking in an interview about their experience of attending the day centre. This interview will comprise of 6 questions and will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour.

Why have you been asked to take part? You have been asked because you attend the day service regularly and therefore, are in a good position to provide feedback on your experience of the day centre.

Do you have to take part? No, participation is completely voluntary. You will be given a consent form to sign stating that you are willing to partake in the research. You can still withdraw from the research before it commences even if you have signed this consent form. You can also choose to withdraw for up to two weeks after the interview. You can request at this stage to have the data collected destroyed. You will get a copy of both the consent form and this information sheet to keep for your own records.

Will your participation in the study be kept confidential? Yes. I will ensure that no clues to your identity appear in the thesis. Any extracts from what you say that are quoted in the thesis will be entirely anonymous.

What will happen to the information which you give? The data will be kept confidential for the duration of the study, available only to me and my research supervisor. All hard information such as notes, and audio tapes will be securely stored in a locked cabinet. All electronic information will be stored on a laptop that is password protected. On completion of the project, this information will be retained for a further 10 years and then destroyed.

What will happen to the results? The results will be presented in the thesis. They will be seen by my supervisor, a second marker and the external examiner. The thesis may be read by future students on the course. The study may be published in a research journal. A copy of the thesis will also be provided to SHARE who may use the information to make improvements to the day centre.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part? I don't envisage any negative consequences for you in taking part.

What if there is a problem? At the end of the procedure, I will discuss with you how you found the experience and how you are feeling. If you subsequently feel distressed, you should contact the nurse in SHARE who will be briefed on the research or your G.P if you wish to speak to someone that is not connected to the organisation.

Who has reviewed this study? Approval has been given by the Social Research Ethics Committee of UCC and by SHARE themselves.

Any further queries? If you need any further information, you can contact me on the following details: x , email: 99432617@umail.ucc.ie or via Noreen Dorgan in SHARE.

If you agree to take part in the study, please sign the consent form overleaf.

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM

I……agree to participate in Miriam O'Donoghue's research study.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing.

I am participating voluntarily.

I give permission for my interview with x to be audio-recorded.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data within two weeks of the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications if I give permission below:

(Please tick one box) ☐

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview: ☐

I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview: ☐

Signed _____ Date _____