Intervention Theory Building.
Can theoretically informed realist approaches be successfully employed to synthesize multiple data sets and develop and evaluate a complex intervention?

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engager
healthy minds, healthy choices

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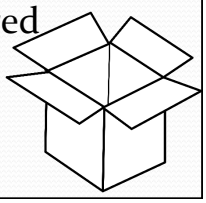
The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NHS, the NIHR or the Department of Health.

"Which hold that causality cannot be observed and that the best we can do is demonstrate regularity between a particular intervention and a particular outcome".

Marchal B, Westhorp G, Wong G, Van Belle S, Greenhalgh T, Pawson R. 'Realist RCTs of complex interventions – An oxymoron'. Social Science and Medicine. 2013. 94. 124-8.

Input → BLACK BOX → Output

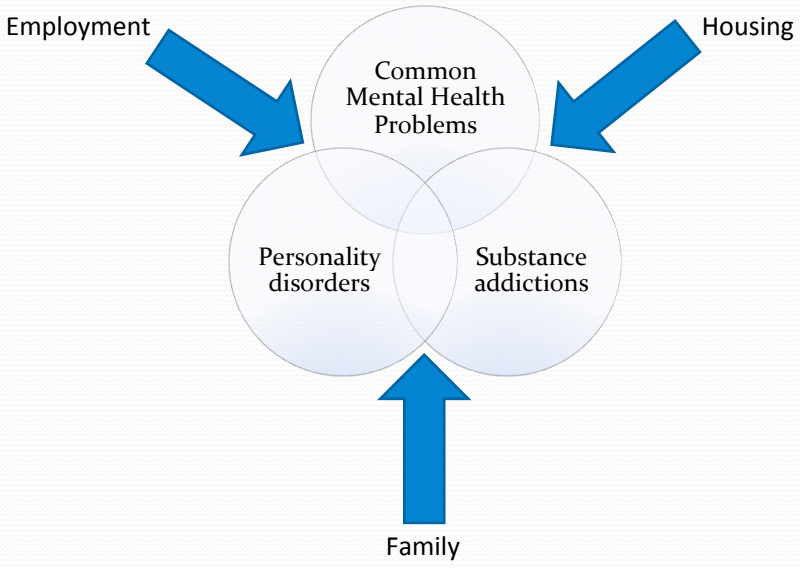
- Developing a theoretically based intervention
- Adaptive to context
- Specifying the core mechanisms which produce the outcomes we intend
- Assessing if the core mechanisms have produced the desired outcomes

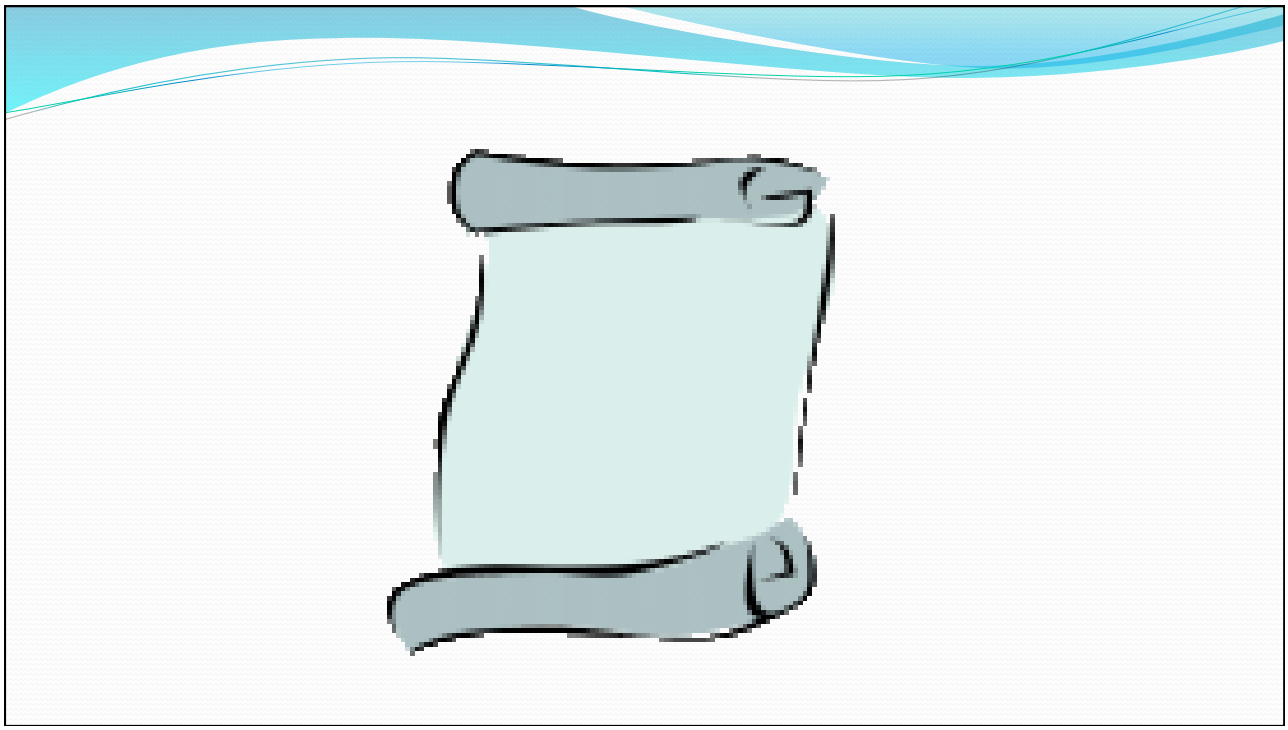


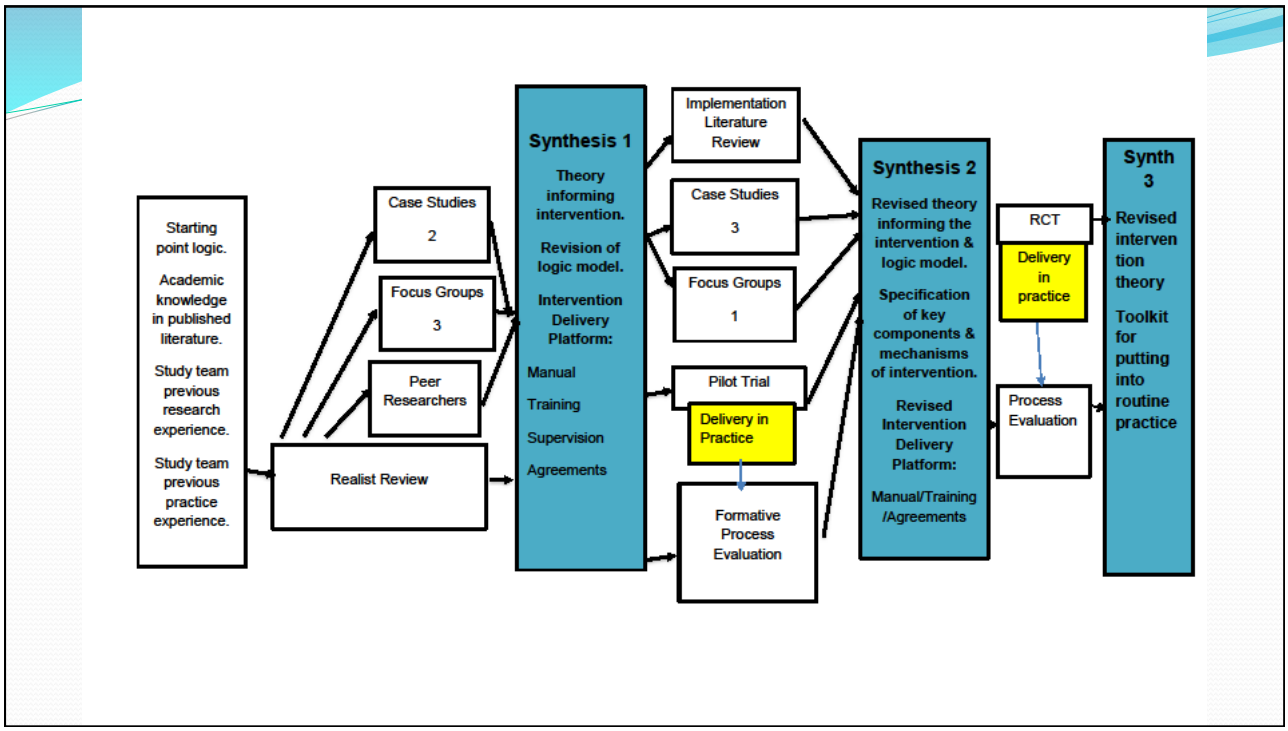
COCOA

Care for Offenders: Continuity of Access

Byng R, Quinn C, Sheaff R, Samele C, Duggan S, Harrison D, Owens C, Smithson P, Wright C, Annison J, Brown C, Taylor R, Henley W, Qureshi A, Shenton D, Porter I, Warrington C & Campbell J (2012) COCOA: Care for Offenders, Continuity of Access. Final Report.

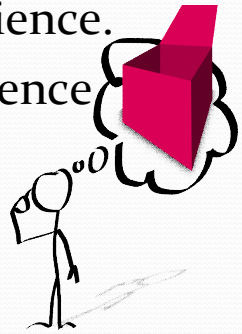





Starting point logic.
Academic knowledge in published literature.
Study team previous research experience.
Study team previous practice experience.
Case Studies 2
Focus Groups 3
Peer Researchers
Realist Review
Synthesis 1
Theory informing intervention.
Revision of logic model.
Intervention Delivery Platform:
Manual
Training
Supervision
Agreements
Implementation Literature Review
Case Studies 3
Focus Groups 1
Pilot Trial
Delivery in Practice
Formative Process Evaluation
Synthesis 2
Revised theory informing the intervention & logic model.
Specification of key components & mechanisms of intervention.
Revised Intervention Delivery Platform:
Manual/Training /Agreements
RCT
Delivery in practice
Process Evaluation
Synth 3
Revised intervention theory
Toolkit for putting into routine practice

Starting point logic model

- Academic knowledge in published literature.
- Study Team previous research experience.
- Study Team previous practice experience



Established our know, knowns & identified our known unknowns

Phase One: Data Collection

- Realist Review
- Case studies (2)
- Focus Groups (3)
- Peer Researchers (18 meetings)

Data collection focused on answering our known, unknowns.

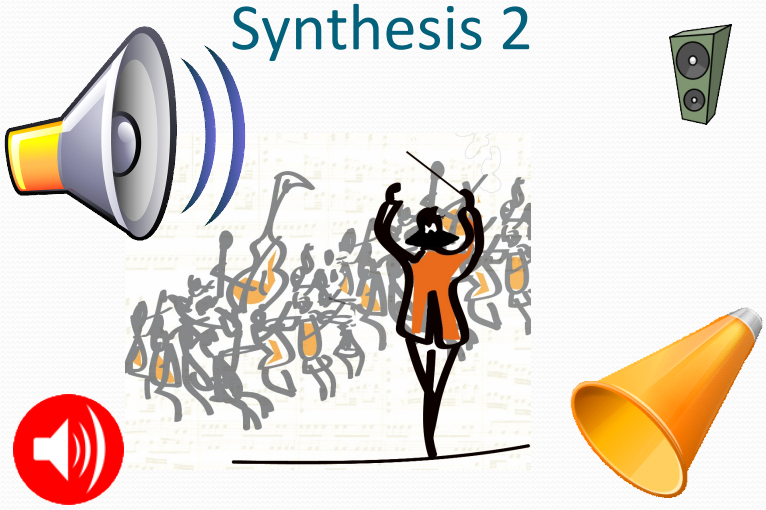
Synthesis 1

Phase Two: Data Collection

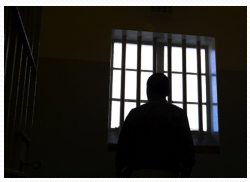
- Case Studies (3)
- Focus Groups (1)
- Implementation Literature Review
- Delivering the intervention in practice
- Outcomes data collected for both arms
- Formative Process Evaluation

Unknown, unknowns were surfaced in Synthesis 1 and became known, unknowns which were addressed in this phase of data collection.

Synthesis 2



Phase Three: Delivery in practice



Challenges, solutions & advantages

1) Working with data produced from a range of ontological positions.
2) Progressively reducing our expansive focus while actively working against linear and reductive thinking.
3) Employing an explicit and inclusive decision making processes.

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