Reflective Participatory Crime Prevention Education and Solution Finding through World Café and Forum Theatre with Young People and Young Adults

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<td>SC-08-2022-0034.R2</td>
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<td>Manuscript Type:</td>
<td>Practice Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keywords:</td>
<td>world café, forum theatre, domestic abuse, loan sharks, racism, NPS drugs, participatory research, crime prevention education</td>
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MANUSCRIPT DETAILS

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This article aims to provide reflective practice insights on the use of the participatory approaches of World Café© and Forum Theatre as crime prevention education and research tools with young people and young adults, through a social learning theory lens.

Four independent case-studies showcase World Café© and Forum Theatre methodology. World Café© events investigated 1) New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) awareness with young hostel users and college pupils (N = 22), and 2) race hate crime with school and college pupils (N = 57). Forum Theatre events explored 1) loan shark crime with college and university students (N = 46), and 2) domestic abuse crime with young hostel users and college and university students (N = 28). Anonymous survey data produced qualitative and descriptive statistical data.

Learning impacts from participatory crime prevention education and research events were evidenced. Participatory approaches were perceived positively, although, large group discussion-based methodologies may not suit all young people or all criminological topics.

CUST_RESEARCH_LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS_(LIMIT_100_WORDS) : No data available.

CUST_PRACTICAL_IMPLICATIONS_(LIMIT_100_WORDS) : No data available.

CUST_SOCIAL_IMPLICATIONS_(LIMIT_100_WORDS) : No data available.

Participatory approaches of World Café© and Forum Theatre are vehicles for 1) social learning and crime prevention with young people and young adults, 2) eliciting crime victimisation data and 3) generating personal solutions, alongside wider policy and practice improvement suggestions. Whilst World Café© elicited greater lived experience accounts providing peer-level social learning, Forum Theatre provided crucial visual role modelling for communicating safeguarding messages.
Safer Communities: Special Edition Theory and practice of co-production and co-creation in Youth Justice

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Originality: Participatory approaches of World Café and Forum Theatre are vehicles for 1) social learning and crime prevention with young people and young adults, 2) eliciting crime victimisation data and 3) generating personal solutions, alongside wider policy and practice improvement suggestions. Whilst World Café elicited greater lived experience accounts providing peer-level social learning, Forum Theatre provided crucial visual role modelling for communicating safeguarding messages.

KEYWORDS: participatory research, participatory education, youth crime prevention, world café, forum theatre, drugs, racism, loan sharks, domestic abuse.

Introduction:

Recent youth justice policy development in England and Wales includes working with young people in participatory ways to prevent and reduce youth offending (Smithson and Jones, 2021; Day, 2022). Participatory practice is about listening to and working with young people to bring about change (Aldridge, 2016). The emphasis becomes about creating, doing interventions, and finding solutions with young people, rather than to them (Haines and Case, 2015), which can be applied to youth justice related research (Smithson and Jones, 2021). This paper outlines how participatory practice
regarding world café and forum theatre can be utilised in crime prevention education sessions, resulting in solution finding for individual young people and for wider policy and practice. Four independent case-study examples are reflected upon using Gibb’s (1988) model. An applied social learning lens provides further exploration for the propensity for world café and forum theatre to generate crime prevention learning and research data collection.

**Crime Prevention, Education and Social Learning:**

British young people are more likely to engage in offending behaviour and become crime victims compared to adults (Muncie, 2009) due to multiple reasons (e.g., mental health, homelessness, and family circumstances) as outlined by the Youth Justice Board England and Wales (2021;6). Young people tend to have limited knowledge and understanding on relevant legislation and criminal justice processes, so the police and Home Office advocate for more awareness raising (Bevan, 2016; 6). Engagement in learning activities provides some protection from crime involvement (Machin et al, 2011). Schoolteachers are social control agents, influencing the values and behaviours of children (Reay, 2017). The Department for Education (2022) promote teacher’s communicating behaviour curriculum through reinforcement of positive behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour. Other professionals, including police crime prevention leads (Hobson et al, 2018) and mentors (Newburn et al, 2005) positively influence behaviour. Extra curriculum participation in youth movements have longstanding pro-social modelling significance (Muncie, 2009), as has sport engagement (Girginov, 2009), the arts (Howard, 2022) and other activities. Activities can be delivered in participatory ways where participants can shape the programme (refer to Page et al, 2022; Smithson and Jones, 2021).

School education approaches have implications for learning engagement and pupil behaviour improvement (Ross et al, 2010). The expert passing on knowledge to passive recipients is perceived less effective (Biggs and Tang, 2011). Views towards experts can diminish as children move into secondary education, as with police officers delivering drugs education (O’Connor, 2010). Increasing learner engagement facilitates deeper learning (Biggs and Tang, 2011) to enable change (Kolb, 1984). A learning ‘with’ approach is more effective (Friere, 1970), allowing a ‘community of practice’ to form (Wenger, 1999). Pedagogical considerations include devolving power for shared learning to be achieved (Friere, 1970), by offering interaction and decision-making opportunity to children, alongside engagement confidence and competence building (Kirby et al, 2003). Such participatory approaches help facilitate active learning, as well as research (Page et al, 2021). Kapoor and Jordan (2009; 1) further highlight the synergy between “research, knowledge, education and social action”.

Late 18th Century criminology and psychology ‘learning theories’ validate behaviour being learnt based on environmental stimuli and reinforcement (Hollins, 2017;42). Social learning theories of crime built on this research (ibid; 44), with emphasis on social relationships and associated impacts on learning and change from the 1920’s onwards (Jenson, 2017; 115). Sutherland (1947) articulated a learning process from
significant others, including family, friends, and educators, swaying individuals that law breaking is favourable. Akers (1973) concurred and acknowledged punishment impacts learning towards crime, but views can change over the life-course (In Jenson, 2017; 116-117). Matza (1976) provided evidence that young people drift into crime through a process of learning values towards deviance and learning the skillset to commit crime and then stop offending. Social learning from role models can occur early in childhood and copying behaviour embellishes on what is role modelled (Bandura, 1977). Becker’s (1963) labelling theory also has elements of learning regarding how significant role models can be instrumental in achieving labelling impacts perpetuating deviance. However, such theories are critiqued for a lack of empirical evidence concerning identification and testing of learning and reinforcement mechanisms that purportedly leads to crime (Proctor and Niemeyer, 2020).

Despite scientific testability criticisms, learning, social learning, and labelling theories have significantly shaped British policy and practice, for example, the emphasis on crime prevention education with young people deemed at risk (Case, 2006). Today’s youth justice approach emphasises the importance of ‘child first’ to ‘de-stigmatising’ young offenders and prevent crime through education and support (Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, 2021), which is reflective of these key crime theories. Furthermore, British criminal justice desistance approaches typically include ‘cognitive behavioural interventions’ (Davey et al, 2015; 4-5) aiming to alter thinking towards prosocial behaviour. Day (2022) asserts that under the new youth justice ‘child first’ approach in England and Wales, there is a move to a strengths model with co-production of tailored interventions, rather than risk and behaviour management. Within participatory and co-produced approaches, the emphasis is on shared learning informing action and change (Smithson and Jones, 2021), rather than a top-down approach.

**Participatory Contextualisation:**

Participation involves everyone contributing for developmental purposes (Boyden and Ennew, 1997; Morrow, 1999). As such, participatory research with children prioritises the voice of the child and provides a child-orientated approach to improve policy and practice (Collins et al, 2016). Children having voice is validated by international children’s rights legislation (Muncie, 2009; Brown, 2020; Creaney and Case, 2021). Children’s ages (Smith, 2002) and ability (Aldridge, 2016) have implications for participation levels but have been found to be more accessible for learning and physically disabled children (Aldridge, 2016). Learning disability is more prevalent in incarcerated populations and participatory practice can benefit this cohort (Page et al, 2022). Participatory research is a democratic process, facilitating knowledge and vision production that helps engage the marginalised (Kapoor and Jordan, 2009), as well as with professional and community stakeholders (Bovaird, 2007; Boyle and Harris, 2009; Page et al, 2021). Despite efforts to engage all, participatory practice does not always result in equal contributions (Harman, Cappellini and Campos, 2020).

**Levels of Engagement:**
Brown’s (2021;3) participatory research continuum depicts consultative involvement through to full collaboration, reflecting Hart’s (1992) involvement ladder for children and young people. Some traditional research practices incorporate elements of consultation, such as pilot study feedback shaping practice, or power sharing through unstructured interviewing (Page, 2023). However, Hart (1992) advocates that practice moves beyond tokenistic measures. Participatory research is clearly identifiable when participants are “working as ‘co-researchers’ alongside academic or other ‘professional researchers’… entailing diverse groups of people creating knowledge together.” (Banks et al, 2019; 23), which can be achieved with young people (Aldridge, 2016). Co-creation reduces academic privilege through power sharing (Goldstraw et al, 2021).

Factors limit fully collaborative practice (Page, 2023). For example, funding and short timeframes can increase participants feeling ‘done to’, rather than ‘with’(Kara, 2018; 59). Research budgets may not cover payment to co-researchers (Page, 2023) and with participatory practice being time consuming for the academic researcher (Banks et al, 2019;4) and for co-researchers, renumeration is important (Page, 2023). Commissioner expectations may include the academic researcher leading due to perceived greater influence (Aldridge, 2016; Page et al, 2021). Furthermore, collaborative risks need managing to safeguard young people (Aldridge, 2016). For example, gatekeepers might block participant access or ethic approval (Page, 2023), so including them in research design could increase buy in and reach (Ahern, 2014; Kara, 2018;105), but may create barriers for young people expressing their experiences (Page, 2023). All these factors have implications for the levels of engagement that can be achieved in research.

**Activism and Change Goals:**

Participatory research intentionally includes a change agenda (Aldridge, 2016) co-led with lived and learned experience experts. Co-created knowledge informs activism, requiring a diverse findings dissemination plan to build change traction (Durose et al, 2011). Collaborative discussions with young people on how best to present and disseminate findings is advocated (Aldridge, 2016; Smithson and Jones, 2021). The best interests of the child need to be considered in dissemination practices (Page, 2023), particularly if co-researchers are young perpetrators of victims of crime and are named co-researchers on publications. There needs to be some mindfulness of ‘need for anonymity to protect children from life-long stigma and labelling’ under international rights of the child (Muncie, 2009;360).

**Topic Suitability for Participatory Practice:**

Projects reducing crime and improving health and well-being are suitable for participatory research (Stalker et al, 2020), but topics can be too sensitive (Page, 2023). Ethics regarding sensitive questions, managing disclosure and reducing harm to participants needs consideration (ibid). Another ethical factor is working within the co-researcher competency parameters (ibid). Academic researchers present for in-situ research coaching support and research team debriefs can assist with this (Page,
2020; Page et al, 2022), as well as suitable referral pathways in place for participants (Page and Temple-Malt, 2018; Page, 2020). There are also sensitivity considerations in the data collection methodology, for example, participants sharing personal experiences with each another in large groups can hinder disclosure, or emotionally impact those present, including co-researchers (Page, 2023).

**Methodology:**

This paper draws on four independent case-studies from World Café and Forum Theatre crime prevention education and research events. World Café events investigated 1) New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) awareness with young hostel users and college pupils (N = 22), and 2) race hate crime with school and college pupils (N = 57). Forum Theatre events explored 1) loan shark crime with college and university students (N = 46), and 2) domestic abuse crime with young hostel users and college and university students (N = 28). Anonymous survey data at all events produced qualitative and descriptive statistical data. The research studies highlighted in the case-studies were granted Staffordshire University ethical approval and the British Society of Criminology (2015) ethical guidance of voluntary participation, informed consent, right to not answer a question, sensitive questioning and debrief were employed. The propensity for World Café and Forum Theatre being used as crime prevention education and research tools with young people and young adults was analysed using a social learning theory lens and Gibb’s (1988) reflective model.

**World Café Participatory Methodology:**

Brown and Issacs (2005) developed the participatory qualitative research methodology of world café. It can be facilitated with smaller participant numbers of 8 to 12 people (Page and Temple-Malt, 2018; Page et al, 2022), through to class size cohorts (Page, 2020) in a café-style environment. World café’s typically start with informed consent (including parental/guardian consent if applicable) and outlining participant rights (Page, 2023). A short presentation focused on crime prevention and awareness raising (Page and Temple-Malt, 2018) or event or provisional research findings reflections (Page, 2021; Page et al, 2022) stimulates conversations. Several research questions are posed one-at-a-time (Page et al, 2022) and simultaneous group conversations acquire insights, identify issues and related solutions (Page and Temple-Malt, 2018). The room can be set up with paper-tablecloths on tables for data capture (ibid), or flip chart paper and post-it notes (Page, 2023). Refreshments are typically available on tables (Page and Temple-Malt, 2018), although dedicated refreshment breaks work (Page et al, 2022), along with participants bringing their own refreshments to online events (Page, 2021). World Café sessions can take several hours, so participant hydration is important (Page, 2023). At set points, participants are asked to move (rotate) to different discussion groups to listen and add contributions (Brown and Issacs, 2005). A delegated, or self-selecting person, welcomes newcomers to the group, recaps the conversation and encourages newcomer contributions (Page, 2023). After discussions reach saturation, or time expires, someone shares the main themes from their group to the wider cohort, which
initiates the beginnings of participatory themed analysis (ibid). At the end of the session there is a summary and debrief (Page, 2020).

**World Café Adoptions:**

Originally, world café delegates self-select group discussion facilitators (Brown and Issacs, 2005) to enable democracy and power sharing. However, adapting the model with pre-selected table-hosts to enable adequate training still facilitates a participatory ethos and can benefit data capture quality (Page, 2023). Peer researchers may need support during, or immediately after a world café (ibid). A further consideration is how to collect demographic data at a world café (ibid). This could be achieved through an end of event survey that also captures anything participants did not want to say in a group context (Page and Temple-Malt, 2018) or demographic details could be gathered at the event booking, or arrival stage (Page, 2023).

**World Café Case-Study: New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) Drug Awareness World Café**

*Description:* All researchers were adults in or delivering education. Some had historically relevant lived and learned experience. The team held regular meetings with the local authority Public Health drug service commissioner for research co-design. This case study focuses on one world café at a youth provision homeless hostel (N = 8) and one with college pupils on a university campus (N = 14). Participants were purposively targeted because NPS drug use is more prevalent with these groups (Blackman and Bradley, 2017). An NPS drug crime prevention and awareness raising presentation stimulated discussions. NPS drugs were being made illegal through a blanket ban which young people did not know about (Page and Temple-Malt, 2018), alongside limited health impact knowledge. Young hostel users held mostly negative views about NPS drugs based on observed detrimental impacts upon friends. Whereas college pupils shared little direct experiences and were somewhat judgemental towards NPS drug users by referring to them as “chavs”. Few participants knew about support services available and young hostel users wanted a drug support service onsite. Relevant support service information was contained in the debrief.

*Feelings:* The principal investigator provided world café team training and overarching event facilitation because others had less knowledge about this approach. For team members with no direct lived and learned experience of homeless hostel settings, culture shock was apparent and ongoing insight sharing across the team helped to reduce discomfort for those affected. Young hostel users were more vulnerable and empathetic in what they shared at the event due to social relations with NPS users.

*Evaluation:* The participatory model felt more consultation based (Hart, 1992) because researcher lived and learned experience was less recent. Younger hostel users needed breaks away from group discussions. This contrasted to college pupils who remained seated unless rotating to other discussion groups. Shared insights were more apparent with young hostel users, irrespective of ad-hoc breaks away from the room. Whereas top-down knowledge dissemination was more apparent for college pupils.
**Analysis:** Shared power through informed joint decision-making within the research team increased as researchers gained relevant experiential knowledge. As such, power sharing levels may increase to a more collaborative approach during the research life cycle, meaning the position of a research project on the continuum of participatory practice described by Brown (2021) and Hart (1992) is not static. Team training, insight sharing and debrief can assist in sharing power and expertise. Whilst initial power was situated in the academic title of the principal investigator being more senior and their enhanced knowledge of the methodology, experiential knowledge of a fellow researcher with homeless people helped to distribute this power with the drawing of the strength of team members, rather than one individual. In analysis of the world café events, the differences in self-disclosure may be 1) reflective of the local drug market 2) due to hostel and education provider staff being present and 3) there being ‘no drugs’ policies within these organisations. Younger hostel users had empathic responses to NPS using friends and related emotions may explain the need for breaks in the session. College pupils may not have felt comfortable sharing personal experiences having heard judgemental responses from peers. Becker’s (1963) labelling theory demonstrated that drug users did not disclose as much with non-users.

**Conclusion:** Learning occurred at events from the presentation and shared dialogue. Participants having lived and learned experience led to viable solutions taken forward by stakeholders regarding a drugs worker becoming stationed onsite at hostels. Final findings and recommendations were disseminated through written report and a presentation at the British Society of Criminology conference with an associated publication (Page and Temple-Malt, 2018). A media article and YouTube clip were produced for a public audience. These world café sessions demonstrated propensity for legislative awareness raising and harm reduction information dissemination. Gatekeeper presence may restrict self-disclosure at events in relation to illegal activity reinforced by organisational policy. As such, social relation and control agents views towards crime could be influential (Sutherland, 1947; Becker, 1963; Matza, 1979) on the methodology success.

**Action Plan:** This project created realisation of the importance of team training and shared learning to redistribute power among researchers throughout the life cycle of the project. Directly including young people with lived NPS drugs and homelessness in steering group meetings to co-design and deliver the project would have strengthened the participatory approach and reduced culture shock for researchers. Allowing for breaks away from discussions could be planned into future events, particularly when working with vulnerable groups where emotional connection to the data might be heightened. A further consideration is about not including gatekeepers at world cafés when researching on topics relating to illegal activity. Whilst staff provided an additional child protection safeguard, they may have created a barrier to honest sharing of personal NPS drugs usage.

**World Café Case-Study on Race Hate Crime:**
Description: Local authority requested research aimed to address a prevalence knowledge gap to inform action plans, but with no associated budget (Page, 2023). This opportunity coincided with second year undergraduate criminology students completing an assessed community research project. The unpaid co-researchers included those with recent college education experience, lived experience of racism, lived experience of parenting young people, and lived experience of working with young people in community and youth justice settings. The ethical application was coproduced, with additional methodology shaping following a pilot event led by the co-researchers. Wider stakeholder partnership meetings provided insights and a vehicle for findings dissemination, but co-researchers could not attend due to lecture clashes (Page, 2023).

World cafés were conducted on educational premises (schools and a university campus) with 57 high school and college pupils (Page, 2020), when race-hate violence had increased following the referendum (Burnett, 2017) and pupils were raising associated concerns with teachers (Tomlinson, 2019). Upon written consent, a short presentation clarified what constitutes race hate crime and related extremism (refer to Croall, 2011; 214, 219 and HM Gov, 2015; 9) and local examples provided by an agency stimulated ice-breaker discussions. Research questions were responded to via group discussions facilitated by co-researchers and data was captured on table-clothes. Participants highlighted need for better education in schools on what constitutes racism and irrespective of race, reported lived and observational experiences of racial abuse at a personal and interschool level, providing new insights for the field (Page, 2020). Findings were disseminated through academic publication, an online media article, a YouTube clip and radio interviews. In collaboration with Mosaic Films, an educational film resource for BBC Teach on racism experiences were developed to support national teaching and learning on race hate crime (Page, 2023).

Feelings: Pupils welcomed open discussion but were seemingly uneasy when pupils rotated and joined peers outside of immediate friendship circles, leading to pupils speaking less. There was evidence of individual cognition changes occurring from pupils being exposed to both the presentation content and peers sharing experiences, which stimulated both compassion and discomfort. For example, one pupil commented on not knowing that calling someone a ‘gypsy’ was racist prior to the world café (Page, 2020) and felt perturbed due to previous use of this term. The co-researchers discussed their own emotional reactions to the data after sessions.

Evaluation: Feeling safe with peers and staff seemed necessary to facilitate disclosure and shared learning. A particular teacher perceived as racially prejudice being present in one session led to pupils whispering about their experiences (ibid). Pupils liked world café and felt it could be used for wider awareness raising and school education (ibid). Having open dialogue about sensitive issues generated compassion and greater understanding and self-awareness for those involved.

Analysis: Social learning occurs more when young people feel safe with the peers or adults present.
**Conclusion:** World Café with school and college pupils worked as a data collection and pedagogy tool. Shared learning through data collection was rich; however, social relations (Garner and Sercomb, 2009) created a communication barrier. Media related findings dissemination resulted a tool developed for change that reflected the pupils’ aspirations.

**Action Plan:** In future, a less directive approach to rotations where young people determine moves to different tables could reduce social relation barriers to discussion engagement in world cafe. As such, training school and college pupils with lived and learned experience as co-researchers could have enhanced participatory practice (Page, 2023). This would be viable with adequate emotional support for young researchers due to topic sensitivities and trauma that young people have evidently been through. If resources transpired, a follow-up study with discussions relating to the films, using world café methodology, would be interesting to ascertain further change recommendations.

**Forum Theatre Participatory Research Methodology:**

Drama based participatory practices are established in prison settings with positive well-being impacts for those involved (Page et al, 2022). Hughes and Ruding (2009) highlight applied theatre usage in the community with young people at risk of offending and young offenders in prison to help develop personal, cognitive and social skills. Forum Theatre is an applied theatre and participatory method for exploring real life scenarios through dramatic presentation and audience interactions that assist in changing scenario outcomes for the better. It was developed by Boal in 1985 to allow for a facilitated discussion informed production, whereby audience members interject and reshape scenes after an initial performance (Boal, 2008). As such, Boal (1992) articulated allowing the audience to explore their own social and political oppression and rehearse ‘social change’ (In Connolly and Prendergast, 2009:69). Audience dialogue provides opportunity for research data to be collected on knowledge, understanding, and lived experience levels. This could be achieved through consensual audio recording or note taking of the discussions between the audience and facilitator(s) for analysis purposes. Boal and others have written reflective and observational notes from his practice (ibid). Kelly et al (2015) highlight challenges to capturing drama-based crime prevention evaluative data with young people and advocate for longer-term change capture and participatory evaluation solutions.

**Forum Theatre Case Studies:**

The following forum theatre case-studies were based on performances to smaller through to larger cohort sizes (approx. 15 to 100 delegates), that lasted approximately one and half hours, with half of the time devoted to performance and the other half to discussion. The discussion time included reworked scenes, a short concluding performance with signposting of support services and the dissemination of a non-compulsory and anonymous short evaluation survey. Dramatic and creative performances can be co-developed and delivered with those with lived and learned experience (Page et al, 2022), however, the case-studies were delivered by
professional's associated to New Vic Theatre Borderlines. Performance content was based on research findings at local and national level, along with stakeholder contributions from meetings, reports, and email exchanges. Discussion facilitation was provided by Borderlines theatre staff. The performance and discussions allowed for Fleming's model of visual, auditory, reading/writing and kinaesthetic learning to be accommodated (refer to Fleming and Baume, 2006).

**Forum Theatre Case-Study on Loan Shark Crime:**

*Description:* Loan shark crime is captured by Shakespeare and other English Literature authors (Lisle, 1912). It is illegal and can involve organised crime groups using deception tactics and violence (Wang and Wang, 2021). Perpetrators include seemingly trustworthy professionals preying on the vulnerable (Dyer, 2017), including those who gamble (Soudijn and Zhang, 2013; Page, 2021). Loan shark crime impacts a range of people, including students (Wang and Wang, 2021). There have been calls for improvements to British legislation for better public protection from loan shark crime because of high interest loans (Aldohni, 2013; 2017). Violence experienced to victims has led to Birmingham accident and emergency service staff to be trained to spot loan sharking signs (Nursing Standard, 2012).

On 4th November 2021, 'I Just Need Cash' was presented via forum theatre to 181 college and university students over three events at Staffordshire University. It followed the stories of three characters (including a student using a loan shark to purchase a laptop resulting in violent threats – far left in figure 1). Two facilitators engaged participants in discussion and shared loan shark crime, legislation, and support service information. Support agencies and academics contributed facts and further information. Several scenes were re-configured from audience discussions. To close, the performers showed the endings of their stories, including positive outcomes from crime reporting and gaining support.

Figure 1: picture of the ‘I Just Need Cash’ perform

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1 Thank you to Thomas Wragg and Ashleigh Shone from Staffordshire University for your Forum Theatre administrative support and to academic colleagues (namely John Wheeler, Jayne Sawyers, Julie Tipping, Martin Coates, Paul Christie, Lauren Metcalfe, Anna Garland, Duncan Parker, Louis Martin and Martin Brown) for your forum theatre promotion/contributions.

2 I Just Need Cash was organised by Borderlines New Vic Theatre team members: Susan Moffat (director), Rachel Reddihough (Project Manager), Aida Haughton MBE (Communities and Partnership Engagement Manager), Brendan Davies (Community Practitioner) and Adhia Mahmood (Administrator). Professional actors included: Melanie Osborne, Perry Moore and Vaneeka Dadhria. Photography by Andrew Billington @BillingtonPhotos
A voluntary participation evaluation survey containing signposting to services was distributed, resulting in a 25% return rate. Findings indicated low prior knowledge about loan sharking, with 2 out of 46 participants having awareness from work experience and their studies and 6 participants having knowledge through media sources. Lived experience was reported by 3 participants, inclusive of having texts and emails from a loan shark and of a close family member falling victim.

**Feelings:** Surveyed young people and young adults indicated the learning event was ‘brilliant’ and the delivery was ‘engaging’ and ‘interesting’, depicting positive feelings about the event. A couple of people stated it was not their preferred learning style, which may have created discomfort.

**Evaluation:** The approach worked well for loan shark crime awareness dissemination. Key learning identified included 1) the basics of what a loan shark is and how they operate (22%), 2) the legal status (17%), 4) associated prison sentence lengths (13%) and 4) where to get help from (31%). As a result of attending participants felt they could:

- Identify loan sharking
- Stay safe
- Speak out
• Signpost others for support
• Use the forum theatre technique

Mostly, delegates felt it was “...a more interesting way to learn and get information” than traditional teaching delivery and they perceived positively its research methodology propensity.

Analysis. Social learning occurred through role modelling via re-shaped scenes and information dissemination evidenced by participants saying they could now 'stay safe' and 'speak out'. The lived experience captured via survey was not disclosed in group discussions and did not inform re-shaped scenes. Disclosure may have been hindered by audience size.

Conclusion. Crime prevention and awareness raising learning was evident. The delivery method was 'interactive' and 'allowed knowledge to be taken in...'. Whilst a couple of participants highlighted it was not their preferred learning method, others stated it was 'more engaging than a presentation' and 'made it more realistic'.

Action Plan. Facilitated small group discussion could provide more people opportunity to comfortably share reactions and experiences, which could better inform scene reconfiguration and shared learning.

Forum Theatre Case-Study on Domestic Abuse:

Description. The 'LOVE HURTS?' production (depicted in figure 2) was based on local research by Gadd and colleagues entitled 'From Boys to Men', which is surmised by Fox et al (2013). Extensive survey data with 13-and-14-year-olds school pupils highlighted that 45% were domestic abuse victims and 25% acknowledged perpetrating abuse (ibid). Crime prevention education sessions demonstrated reductions in acceptability of domestic abuse and increased understanding regarding reporting and support mechanism (Fox et al, 2014). In five schools, crime prevention education sessions co-occurred alongside pupils (aged 11-19 years) watching the ‘LOVE HURTS’ production in 2016, leading to increased cautiousness about entering romantic relationships (McElwee and Fox, 2020). The performance was regarded as an engaging tool for conveying messages relating to domestic abuse, however, a wider diversity of interpersonal relationships could have been depicted in the show (ibid).

On 23rd March 2022, ‘LOVE HURTS?’ was delivered three times as a stand-alone crime prevention forum theatre to 43 audience participants from a university and a local youth provision hostel provider. Whilst hostel staff and academics attended, there were no pre-arranged partner agencies sharing insights. The storyline followed a school-aged girl entering a romantic relationship which turned abusive. Several academics provided ad-hoc acting support. For example, a policing pracademic demonstrated police interviewing with the storyline abuser, giving insight into realistic

3 LOVE HURTS? was organised by Borderlines New Vic Theatre team members (see footnote 2) and Professional actors included: Shannon Whetnall, Harrison Aldridge and Levi Payne. Photography by Aida Haughton MBE.
policing enquiry. The event ended with signposting to support services and opportunity to voluntarily complete an evaluation survey.

Figure 2: pictures of LOVE HURTS performers in action:

Feelings: The performance elicited audience emotion, including surprise over how quickly abusive behaviours transpire in relationships. Discussions also elicited surprise regarding legalities.

Evaluation: There was a 65% evaluation audience survey return rate. Findings indicated some prior knowledge of relationship "red flags". Others were less aware of the 1) extent of domestic abuse in society 2) younger age groups impacted 3) speed of relationship progression to abusive and 4) coercive control signs and legislation. One participant stated learning about "REVENGE PORN" law – I didn't know about it" and another learnt "about rape" and how legislation regarded it as child abuse when the girl is under consensual age. Others identified learning where to go for support and how to help educate and support others. For some, the university syllabus had covered domestic violence, but the forum theatre advanced insights deemed useful for their assessments. Policing students identified potential benefits to future policing work, inclusive of "how I would interact with victims". All 28 responders viewed the event and performers positively. Participants stated forum theatre was "powerful" and "very effective" in gaining insights from others and "very informative". As such, forum theatre was regarded as "a good research method" that is "fun". The topic was a sensitive one, as such, "fun" could be interpreted as engaging. Personal victimisation stories were not disclosed in the discussions, or survey.

Analysis: Forum theatre was perceived 'a great conversation starter', however, younger hostel audience members mostly shared when directly asked a question, which may be reflective of vulnerability levels.
**Conclusion:** The approach was a good learning tool for eliciting discussion on legalities in relation to rape, consent, child abuse and coercive control. Replaying the scenes role modelled ways to address issues. Given that statistics underpinning the play indicate likelihood of victims and perpetrators being present at the event, forum theatre was less effective for people sharing personal experiences.

**Action Plan:** Having support services present to contribute to discussions and provide immediate support to anyone affected by domestic abuse would have benefited the session. Smaller discussion groups with immediate peers could have provided less vulnerability with shared learning.

**Discussion and Conclusion:**

Crime prevention education is needed for young people and young adults to better understand crimes, associated harms, legislation and support available. The case-study examples evidenced mostly low legislative awareness on topics directly affecting young people as per findings from Bevan (2016; 6). Some knowledge is seemingly gained through the media, higher education, employment, and direct lived experience. Crime and legislation impacting young people were not sufficiently covered in school curriculum and associated media reporting is not reaching widescale groups of young people and young adults. When crime prevention education is delivered in participatory ways learning can assist young people and young adults in spotting ‘red flags’ to avoid victimisation and supporting others to do likewise, as well as knowing how to report incidents and get support.

Participatory methods demonstrated effectiveness in personal learning and change. Wider recommendations for policy and practice change were more evident in world café events, but this information arose from targeted questions not covered in forum theatre events. Whilst there are some limitations with comparing four individual case-studies due to variances in project aims and objectives, the participant demographics and the type of crime being discussed, some common themes emerge from reflections on practice using the Gibbs (1992) reflective model. Discussion is a common feature to both world café and forum theatre and in all case-studies discussion stimulus was visual combined with verbal information presentation that engaged visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic learners (refer to Fleming and Baume, 2006). Dramatical presentation of information was perceived as an effective communication tool and conversation starter, better than more traditional teaching presentations. Actors and other professionals role modelled how to have important lifesaving and safeguarding conversations. As such, social learning was apparent and effective in enhancing crime prevention understanding. Young people also indicated that world café style crime prevention education is positive for learning exchange.

World café data was richer than forum theatre with more victimisation lived experience information being captured. Small group discussions allowed for greater peer learning and disclosure. Whereas larger group gatherings generated more legislative debate. In both world café and forum theatre learning occurred through information
presentation and peer conversations. Understanding from those with lived and learned experience enhanced empathic session content.

Our findings indicate that social relations seemingly have implications for whether young people contribute information, as does age, vulnerability and having the sense of safety and not being judged. Having appropriate adults present may conflict with data density pertaining to lived experience of illegal activity. When conducting forum theatre as a research and education tool, using smaller group discussions modelled by world café may achieve richer data. In world café consulting with young people about rotation intentions suitability, rather than being directive might reduce social relation barriers to discussions. Maximising participation of young people in projects is likely to enhance project and research team outcomes. Sharing insights with others with less direct lived and learned experience helps there to be more parity on a participatory research team. Reflections on practice indicate that identifying a static position on the participatory continuum may not be possible because collaboration and shared power can increase as people grow in their learned experiences of designing and delivering participatory education and research.

The case-studies evidenced propensity for participatory methods of world café and forum theatre to be used for crime prevention education and research with young people and young adults. Both methods demonstrate that social learning can take place and solutions to issues can be established. Creating space for young people and young adults to feel safe in contributing their lived and learned experiences to peers and adults plays an important role in the crime prevention agenda, along with the role-modelling of safeguarding skills. Based on the research findings, it could be argued that young people are being failed by the current education system and government in developing civic and legal understanding that could safeguard them and others. Participatory practices such as world café and forum theatre can address this issue more energetically than traditional teaching methods, with the recommendation of small group discussion to enhance compassion generated from lived experience sharing following information presentation to a wider cohort young people and young adults.

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