

# Intergenerational Care in Care Homes

What does the research tell us?

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# Today's workshop

- ▶ **Aim:** to explore the caveats and considerations of supporting intergenerational activity in care homes
- ▶ 1. Background & findings from research - Steff Green
- ▶ 2. Lessons learned from a PhD study in South Wales - Kate Howson  
~ Coffee break ~
- ▶ 3. Setting up an intergenerational program - ideas and activities  
OR, reflections of an intergenerational journey from a care home



Galluogi Ymchwil Mewn Cartrefi Gofal

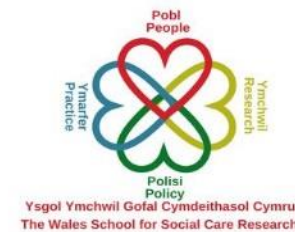
**ENRICH CYMRU**

Enabling Research In Care Homes

A national network designed to make it easier for Care Home staff, residents and loved ones to design and participate in research in Wales.

## Provides resources & support for Care Home staff:

- Regular newsletter and email updates with research opportunities
- Invitations to free seminars & staff professional development



# Why focus on research?

- ▶ Research can help:
  - ▶ Find answers and fill gaps in knowledge
  - ▶ Develop better methods of prevention, treatment & care
  - ▶ Provide an evidence base for care and treatment



# Overview of intergenerational research

- ▶ Potential benefits of intergenerational activity
- ▶ What does the research tell us about considerations
- ▶ Points for discussion

# Background

- ▶ UK is one of the most segregated societies by age group - United for All Ages report in 2018
- ▶ Recently, a growth in hearing about ‘intergenerational’ activity, care, practice, programs - both in the UK and around the world.
- ▶ Over-arching aim: to support relationships across social divides, which includes links between people of various ages

# What is it exactly?

- ▶ “Intergenerational Practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations. It is inclusive, building on the positive resources that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them.” (Beth Johnson Foundation, 2001).

# Potential benefits

- ▶ Countering ageism and age segregation
- ▶ Enabling different generations to connect with and learn from each other and support enriched community development (Hagestad & Uhlenberg, 2005; Williams et al., 2012).
- ▶ More awareness of older adults and changed attitudes to dementia
- ▶ Character building
- ▶ Improved mood and behaviour (Galbraith *et al*, 2015)



“ I have found  
my life has  
changed quite  
a bit since  
meeting the  
children. I think  
they’re lovely.”

**Pauleen**



“ We had a lot of fun. I realise what I’ve been missing and I really have enjoyed their company.”

**Beryl**



# What does the research tell us so far?

- ▶ The evidence base for the effectiveness of intergenerational practice is still weak
- ▶ Lots of anecdotal evidence e.g. reduction in use of medication
- ▶ There is a need for more research to inform practice

Springate, I., Atkinson, M. and Martin, K. (2008)

# Considerations for residents: preferences

Focus groups with residents Cook and Bailey (2013):

*'It isn't every grown up that likes children.'*

*'I don't want to bore the young children.'*

# Considerations for residents: understanding difficulties

- ▶ Communication, sensory and mobility problems limited what they could do and how they interacted with other people.
- ▶ Some residents were concerned that young people (particularly children and teenagers) would not understand their problems nor have the skill to accommodate for their difficulties.

# Considerations for residents: training & support

- ▶ The involvement of very young people should be supported by adults who were sensitive and responsive to the needs of residents.
- ▶ Short-term rather than nurturing longer term relationships was preferable.

# Considerations for residents: type of activity

- ▶ Offering a range of focused experiences and activities
- ▶ Providing information about intergenerational activities, as well as providing time to deliberate, enables residents to make informed choices about participation.
- ▶ The type of activity should promote relationship building and shared growth

# Considerations for staff: planning the activity

- ▶ Risk of infantilization in intergenerational programmes, which can occur when adults and children are treated as status equals and the activities and environments are solely child orientated (Salari, 2002).
- ▶ Possibility of isolating and disengaging children from activities which are more suitable for older adults (Robinson et al, 2006)



# Considerations for residents: family visits

- ▶ A few participants indicated that they preferred just having contact with their own family
- ▶ This needs to be well supported in the care home environment to ensure residents are prepared for visits and in circumstances they choose

# Considerations for staff

- ▶ In the wider literature, challenges from the staff perspective have also been identified including lack of intergenerational experience and staff attitudes toward intergenerational contact (Hayes, 2003; Middlecamp and Gross, 2002 Salari, 2002).
- ▶ **Take home message:**

It is important that staff involve residents in decisions about how to set up an intergenerational program.

# Considerations: Coordinator role

Research recommends designating a coordinator who is equipped to:

1. Deal with the needs of participants
2. Able to present activities that promote cooperation between generations
3. Ensure the formation of positive relationships

(Gigliotti et al, 2005; Hamilton et al, 1999).

# Summary

- ▶ Considerations for residents:
  - ▶ Preferences and support needs
  - ▶ Type of activity
- ▶ Considerations for staff:
  - ▶ Training and support
  - ▶ Involving residents in the planning stages
  - ▶ Designated support role

## For discussion

In your experience, what might be some of the key considerations when planning an intergenerational program of activity in a care home setting?