

MONASH University Arts **Go Boldly.**

“The Power of Pyjamas”

Everything effects everything else: power, perception and hidden forms of restrictive practice in shared supported accommodation.

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Overview

- “The power of pyjamas”: research poetry drawn from participant voices
- Background to Research
- Research Approach
- Aims & Questions
- Observations (perceptions) & Outcomes
- Challenges in Participatory Research

 **Victoria**
The Place To Be

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“The Power of Pyjamas ...”

Once they're in their pyjamas, that's it. They don't want to do anything. You say 'Kim, I'm going down the supermarket. Want to come?'	'No, I don't want to.' But that's their choice to do it or not. If she's not in her pyjamas she will come. But once they're in their pyjamas, they don't want to do anything.
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'No, I'm in my pyjamas'
You'll say, 'Kim go and get
changed.'

(Research poetry including two
participants' voices)

 **Victoria**
The Place To Be

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Policy & Practice Background

- Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-2012
- Disability Act, 2006
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, 2006
- Appointment of Senior Practitioner, Disability Services
- Statewide commitment to reduction of 'Restrictive Interventions in Disability Services' (RIDS)



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Restrictive Interventions

Any intervention that is used to restrict the rights or freedom of movement of a person with a disability, including (involving the use of, but not restricted to) chemical restraint, mechanical restraint or seclusion. (DHS, 2006)



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"The Power of Pyjamas..."

Kim, likes to get in her pyjamas early.
But ... how do you say this?
We don't like our ladies
changing into their pyjamas too early,
You know, we like them to do tea,
clean up or whatever,
watch a bit of telly and then,
about 8 o'clockish go
and change into their pyjamas.
(Research poetry from participants' voices)



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Research Background & Approach

- Office of the Senior Practitioner Research Partnership Grant, 2009
DCS, DHS & Monash, Gippsland
- Participatory Action Research (PAR)
Learning & change through participation & collaboration
- Key concepts: Power, perception, 'doing things differently', hidden/subtle restrictive practices



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Research Aims

- To contribute to improving the quality of life and dignity of people living in shared supported accommodation who are subject to restrictive practices
- To address subtle, less obvious forms of restrictive practice, such as household rules and dietary regimes.
- To adopt a partnership approach by engaging with support staff in order to define, identify and develop strategies for challenging the inappropriate exercise of power, which occurs at interpersonal and systemic levels in supported accommodation environments.



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Questions

- What forms of subtle restrictive practices currently exist in Community Residential Units within Disability Accommodation Services, Gippsland ?
- How might these subtle restrictive practices be defined, identified, named and addressed by the staff employed in these houses?



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Methods

- Literature review
- Participant Action Research (PAR) meetings
- Audio & written recording
- Transcripts
- Analysis – themes, research poetry created from transcripts of participants' voices



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PAR meetings

- Disability Accommodation Services (DAS) support staff in seven houses invited to participate
- Nine staff responded, eight staff participated
- Six meetings, 3 hours each encompassing
 - *engaged discussions - exploring 'subtle forms of restrictive practice'
 - *eco-maps
 - *strategies for change
 - *different practice approaches.



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Power :
Perceptions of power effect how we understand capacities, relationships and opportunities for change.

Marxist:	Foucauldian/poststructuralist:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Power as a commodity, a thing, which individuals & groups possess and use to oppress.• Money & social class = power.• People at the top 'have' the most power.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Power as action, a productive process.• All relations are relations of power and resistance• "Knowledge is power".• Power is diffuse, at all levels, all components & actors in a system use it and are subject to its effects.



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Power ... in DAS houses

- Power operates as a diverse and diffuse network of productive and oppressive actions throughout disability accommodation services across interpersonal, organisational and political levels.
- Restrictive interventions are actions (of power) which seek to produce and constrain client behaviour (use of power).
- 'Behaviours of concern' – acts of resistance to actions of power which define & limit freedom of choice and possibility.



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"The Power of Pyjamas ..."

Our ladies just don't
get into their pyjamas too early.
The Supie would say,
'No, our ladies are to wait.'
Because once they've had showers
our ladies think 'Well, that's it,
I've done my jobs for the night,
I'm in my jarmies.
I don't have to do any more now.'
(Research poetry from participants' voices)



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Subtle forms of Restrictive Interventions (SRIDS) identified by PAR group

- Restrictions on recreational activities
- Household routines – daily shower/baths
- Limiting where clients can go, what they can do in the house
- Locked food cupboards
- Removal of house taps
- Rationing of toilet paper
- Putting brakes on/hiding wheelchair
- Limiting food and drink choices
- Limiting where they can have hot drinks
- The way clients are spoken to – telling not asking



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Obstacles to reducing SRIDS

- Differing perceptions of what constitutes best practice, and the best interests of clients
- Tension between worker roles of care and or support
- Household routines – supervisor and community expectations
- Individual choice versus collective harmony
- Support worker overload of responsibilities
- Limited access to knowledge/training
- Administrative demands and resource limitations
- Staffing shortages



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“The Power of Pyjamas ...”

*Ours like to have their showers,
4 - 4.30 pm and get into their pyjamas.
We don't have a problem.
See, I'm a jarmie person myself,
If I'm at home, I've got my pyjamas on.
I think we all bring in our
own little family routines.*
(Research poetry from participants' voices)



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Reasons why SRIDS occur - literature

- Staff attitudes – some staff see restrictive interventions as positive & necessary, eg. to avoid harm of client to self or others
- Poor communication between staff and clients
- Poor relationships between staff and clients
- Different forms of & capacities for exercising power
- Lack of support & training for DAS house staff
- High stress levels
- Staff frustration and sense of powerlessness



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Reasons why SRIDS occur - participants

- Staff believe they are doing the right thing
- Fear of change/ doing things differently will disrupt the peace/order in the house
- To avoid extra work
- Not exploring alternatives
- Because other workers/'professionals' have made it part of the client's plan (eg. Drs, dieticians, physios, etc)
- Staff don't realise they are doing it
- Lack of training, knowledge, experience
- Client ignores or resists initial 'instructions'
- Need to manage household dynamics (eg. clients exercising their power inappropriately)
- Risk aversion: Duty of care overrides dignity of risk



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"The Power of Pyjamas ..."

I have to try and get them into their routine as well. If you came and worked with us and said 'Let her get in pyjamas early', we would probably turn around and say 'No, in here we work like this and this, because our ladies are in their routine, and sometimes, if you throw something in that's not there, it can upset their whole night.' (Research poetry)



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Reasons why SRIDS occur - research team

- Need to maintain household order: completing domestic tasks as well as managing client relationships in a shared home.
- Differing perceptions of roles along axis of care/support
- DAS houses are complex spaces: home and workplace, making institutional regimes and routines difficult to avoid
- House staff capacity to bring about changes in work practice depends house supervisor values and beliefs
- Requirement to carry out professional instructions
- Lack of resources to support individual client activities
- Perceived unsupportive management structures
- Policy implementation does not actively engage support staff as important participants in change process



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“The Power of Pyjamas”

That’s the way the Supie looks at it.
While they’re dressed you’re still
going to do active support
or do things with them at night.

(Research poetry from participants’ voices)



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Observations (perceptions) & outcomes

- Participants expressed a strong, often impassioned, desire to ensure work practices resulted in the ‘best’, or most desirable outcomes for clients.
- Contestation over a balance between ‘best’ care and support for clients.
- Enthusiasm for developing positive, creative solutions and strategies for improving quality of life for the client group.
- High levels of frustration over perceived barriers to achieving the most desirable outcomes for clients.
- Participants became more empowered to approach management.
- Management more responsive to participants’ voices.



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“The Power of Pyjamas ...”

In some houses clients
come home from placement -
showers, pyjamas ...
sitting there waiting to have tea.
The staff have done all the jobs
that the clients have to do for the night.
Staff do have a big influence
because we’re with them all the time.

(Research poetry from participants’ voices)



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Methodological Challenges

- Participation
 - meaning of active participation?
 - Government funded grant: not designed by participants
 - participant perceptions of identities – workers/researchers
- Power of participants/power as researchers
 - participant agenda versus research agenda
- Change
 - no capacity to measure or observe practice
 - dependence on participant perceptions
- Practice context – significant events causing staffing changes
- Time – 6 months/ 6 meetings
- Size of group – small numbers



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Thank you

Questions?



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