Using creative methods throughout the research journey

Dr Julie Latchem-Hastings
Health and Care Research Wales
Postdoctoral Fellow
What are we going to do in this next hour?

- Quick chat about what creative methods are
- Why we might use them
- How and when to use them
- Skills needed to use them effectively
- Have a go at three creative methods
- Evaluate them
- If time – show you an example of a patient and public involvement project conducted in its entirely using creative methods
What are creative methods?

• Creative methods engage participants outside the parameters of traditional qualitative data collection and analysis.

• They often include empathetic, artistic, narrative, or aesthetic expression as the basis for investigating, intervening, creating knowledge, and sharing information.

• Such methods are intended to evoke deeper research insights and richer or more nuanced interpretations.

• They can facilitate meaning making and highlight alternative types of knowledge and ways of knowing.

• (Resourceful and resilient communities)
Examples of creative methods

- Drawing, collage, poetry, storytelling, photo-elicitation, fictionalisation, timelines, photo and video diaries, dance, theatre, sculpting/modelling, graphic novels/comics, song, music and soundscapes, puppetry, self-portraiture
Why use creative activities and methods?

- Powerful elicitation tools – help people access thoughts, feelings, structure or open up their thinking
- Aid expression and help people tell their story
- Flatten hierarchies and act as great ice breakers
- Enhance/enable access to involvement
- Support more inclusive engagements by making sure that a wide range of voices are heard and valued.
- “Spark disruptive ideas and imaginaries through lateral thinking and radical speculation”
- Highlight metaphors and narratives that are aligned with people’s deepest values
How and when to use them

• Throughout the research journey, from conception to dissemination creative methods have something to offer
• Patient and public engagement and stakeholder consultation
• Data collection
• Intervention development
• Evaluation
• Dissemination
• Impact making
Skills needed to use them well

- Fundamental respect for the method(s)
- Willingness to be taken in different directions, be open minded and try new things
- Willingness to work with dis-comfort
- Confidence in explaining activities to participants as individuals or groups
- Some structure to the activities
- Preparation of how to support and upskill (if required) participants
- What is the creative activity for? Generating research ideas? Consultation? Elicitation? Data in its own right? Part of an intervention? A tool for dissemination? All of these things?
Timelines

• Get CreActive – exploring physical activity with adults with hip dysplasia
• Supported the delivery of their hip dysplasia experiences and overall journey/narrative
Collages (and mixed media)

- **FEAST** – Getting to know you through food
- Generated individual representations of self and life
- Collective storytelling
- Working conditions for carers
Photos

- Photo elicitation (within interviews)
- Photo diaries
- Used as a base for digital stories
- High quality outputs, imbued with deep meaning as a collection, easy to share and promote
Hip Dysplasia Life

A how-to guide for surviving and thriving with you and your family

- Hipdysplasialife.org
- https://www.hipdysplasialife.org/our-stories