

## WCDA 2019: Developing and testing a preliminary framework to engage young men in help-seeking, using a transdisciplinary approach of mental health, screen studies and participatory design - Oksana Zelenko - Queensland University of Technology (QUT)

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Only about 50 per cent of people with depression & 30 per cent with anxiety seek professional help, which is a significant barrier to treatment delivery. Thus, the promotion of help seeking behaviors is of paramount importance for service providers & policy makers. Young men are a high-risk & disengaged group with low access to mental health services & declining help-seeking despite the wide availability of technology-enabled interventions for engagement.

As a response, this exploratory pilot study used a novel configuration of transdisciplinary approaches using the intersection of mental health, screen studies & design research, to develop a novel framework to engaging Young Men in help-seeking. The foundational research extrapolated key patterns of audience engagement from globally renowned “Hollywood” genres (such as action, adventure & comedy), focusing on key codes, conventions & shared frames of cultural references, to inform the development & wider adoption of health communication approaches for Young Men. Further, Young Men were directly involved in the design & testing of mental health resources during two participatory design workshops (PDWs). The workshops included exploring YM’s preferences of screen genres, narratives, communication pathways & technology use in the context of mental health help-seeking. YM participated in creative activities to co-design a mental health campaign that promotes YM’s engagement to discuss & seek help for mental health issues. Further outcomes of the project included the development & testing of a preliminary framework for screen genre- & narrative-based engagement strategies to improve help-seeking behaviors in Young Men. By integrating evidence-based mobile health interventions with screen media & co-design, this research has extended understanding on how to engage Young Men around the topic of mental health in relevant & meaningful ways.

Our research approach & the processes adopted to refine & test the Framework, are informed by action research & transdisciplinary approaches. Specifically, we have drawn upon the ‘peer review’ approach. According to Funtowicz & colleagues, extended peer review is the process of including a range of non-academic stakeholders with relevant expertise & experience in the processes of assessing & validating the quality of research. Liberatore & Funtowicz explain that: ‘A plurality of perspectives is considered as enhancing both procedural legitimacy & quality of knowledge. Peer review also

aims to ensure that the quality of research supports its application beyond academe, into policy or other uses. We have drawn upon the approach to test & improve the Framework.

In conclusion, the participatory extended peer review approach taken in this project made it possible to gather & incorporate practitioner knowledge into the development of the THRIVES Framework, as well as acting as a sounding board to help maximize the Framework’s relevance & utility for practitioners. The approach outlined in this paper relates to wider calls for bridging diverse knowledges & co-producing new knowledge between researchers, professional communities & citizens to create health-promoting built environments.

Our example shows how active participation & co-production can happen, albeit in a relatively contained exercise compared to the long-term processes of urban development. Our reflections have implications for effective engagement in the field of healthy urbanism: diversifying knowledge in the research process; creating platforms for participation; forming networks of practitioners; & building collective knowledge. Based on our results during this process, we believe that the Framework offers a way to bridge the divides – be they conceptual or disciplinary – faced by built environment & public health professionals alike, & to reconceptualize what healthy place making means in the 21st century. Such a paradigm shift will be essential if we are to solve the most urgent environmental & health challenges we face & transform our towns & cities into vibrant, inclusive places that sustain human & planetary health alike.