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# Co-production: What is it and how do we do it?

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# Who are we?

- Gary Hickey

- Kati Turner



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# Learning Objectives

- Understand the relationship between co-production and patient and public involvement in research
- Be able to define the principles of co-production
- Understand how the co-production principles can find expression in research
- Be able to apply the co-production principles to a research scenario





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## What will we do today?

- Our interpretation of co-production
- Take you through the five principles of co-production
- Identify some challenges and solutions
- Some reflections on helping co-production flourish
- Feel free to ask questions

# Drawing on examples from...



- Guidance on Co-producing a Research Project
- Co-production in Action series
- Research Design Service South East
- Personal experiences/reflections



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## A question for you?

- In your group you have 5 mins to consider...
- What words spring to mind when you hear the term 'co-production'?
- There are no wrong answers! What do you think it is, and what do you think it isn't?

# Our approach to co-production

- A way of evolving and improving patient and public involvement
- Patient and public involvement is about public/patients fitting into existing research structures/processes
- Co-production challenges existing structures/processes
- Principles based – not a fixed set of tools or techniques
- Journey is key, not the destination



# What is co-production?

- “...an approach in which researchers, practitioners and public work together, sharing power and responsibility from the start to the end of a research project, including the generation of knowledge.”

Guidance on  
co-producing a research project





# What is Co-Production?



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NIHR | INVOLVE

**UCLPartners**  
Academic Health Science Partnership



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Principle:  
Sharing of  
power



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# Changing how we do meetings

- Rotating chair
- External chair
- Ground rules/ways of working
- Voting
- Time-limit



# Ways of working example

- Prepare in advance for the meetings
- Listen to all viewpoints without interrupting and respect the views of others
- Keep points succinct and on topic
- Be mindful of the sensitive and confidential nature of some issues and/or situation of others
- Encourage friendly, constructive, courteous, healthy debate
- Embrace co-production in a pragmatic way
- Respect the confidentiality of the research matters being discussed as well as any personal matters which may be disclosed
- Encourage and allow others to contribute when they are willing and able
- Maintain a friendly, easy and welcoming atmosphere for all
- Be tolerant, considerate and all-inclusive – to include individuals, communities or cultural groups with understanding and without prejudice
- Disagree agreeably – people should feel that this is a safe space in which to disagree and challenge respectfully

Principle: Respecting and valuing the knowledge of all those making a contribution





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## Asking some questions

- What (transferable) skills/knowledge do people have?
- How do they want to develop?
- What support do people need?



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## But....

- Researchers divesting themselves of power
- Engaging on researcher/professionals terms



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# Principle: Reciprocity







# Moving from transactional to relational

**“It gave me self-worth, and to have self-worth back is critical. You realise you’re a valued person, it doesn’t look all so bad, it can always improve, and when you’re a bit down, you can take solace in that... I have found that my involvement with this research has allowed me to focus on my own issues, so that my own general wellbeing and health has benefited, in particular my intellectual wellbeing... my own health and mental outlook has improved inestimably... it wouldn’t have been possible without all of this [the research], I am indebted to this project...”**

# Valuing impacts that emerge from the research process

“Watching people grow in terms of confidence and self-belief has been hugely rewarding and empowering. This has proved to be influential in motivating me to persevere when things get tough, but has also made me **re-evaluate traditional notions of research success i.e. academic outputs**. Being alongside John [patient research partner] and sharing the experience of him being able to leave the city and catch a train for the first time in three years to co-present our research was truly an honour and a highlight. **This experience has taught me it’s not all about the final output, it’s also about the process you adopt, and the connections you make along the way.**”

“The journey is key, not the destination”



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Principle:  
Building and  
maintaining  
relationships



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## Stepping outside of roles

- Dropping titles
- Ice breakers
- Build in time for lunch/socialising
- Celebrate events
- Neutral settings/more comfortable setting

# Creative approaches to knowledge generation - design

- Sandpits
  - Creative exercises
  - Voting





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Principle:  
Including all  
perspectives  
and skills





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**BREAK**





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# Measuring impact



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## Things to consider...

- What are you measuring?
- How are you going to use the information?
- How will you capture this information?



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# The importance of reflecting

- Acknowledge power relationships
- Safe spaces
- Reflect on the extent to which you are addressing principles



# A real world example

- How can the public can be involved in implementing research evidence? What roles? How can we support?
- Data collection
  - Literature review
  - Interviews
- Underpinned by ...
  - Realist evaluation
  - Co-production



# Realist evaluation

Context

Mechansim

Outcome



# Introduction of reflective sessions

| Co-production principles  | Example | Describing the experience | What is working well? | What could be done differently? |
|---|---------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Sharing of power</b> - the area of work is jointly owned and people work together to achieve a joint understanding   |         |                           |                       |                                 |
| <b>Including all perspectives and skills</b> – make sure the team includes (all) those who can make a contribution  |         |                           |                       |                                 |
| <b>Respecting and valuing the knowledge of all those working together on the research</b> – everyone is of equal importance   |         |                           |                       |                                 |
| <b>Reciprocity</b> – everybody benefits from working together   |         |                           |                       |                                 |
| <b>Building and maintaining relationships</b> – an emphasis on relationships is key to sharing power. There needs to be joint understanding and consensus and clarity over roles and responsibilities. It is also important to value people and unlock their potential. |         |                           |                       |                                 |



# How are we doing?

- What are we doing well?
  - People feel respected and listened to
  - Sharing power
  - Gained knowledge
  - Safe environment
- Where could we improve?
  - One way communication
  - 'We will be the judge about whether the information is too complex'



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## Outcomes of reflective session

- Researchers to be clearer about 'what is their ask'
- PPI Lead to check all papers for plain English
- Keeping a log of changes and suggestions
- A new and creative way of developing the 'CMOs'





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# Scenario



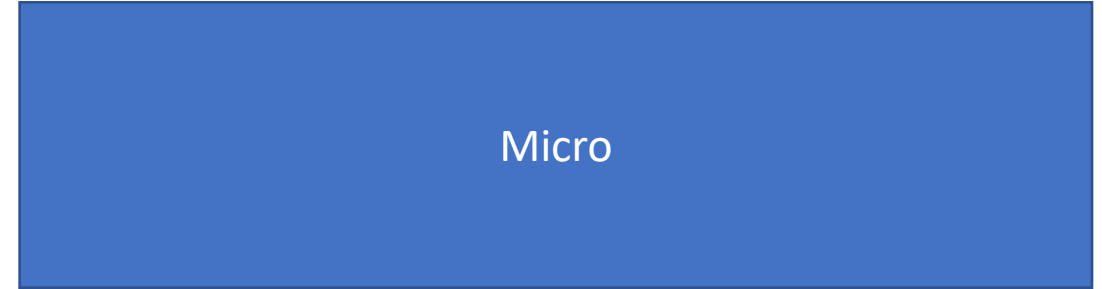
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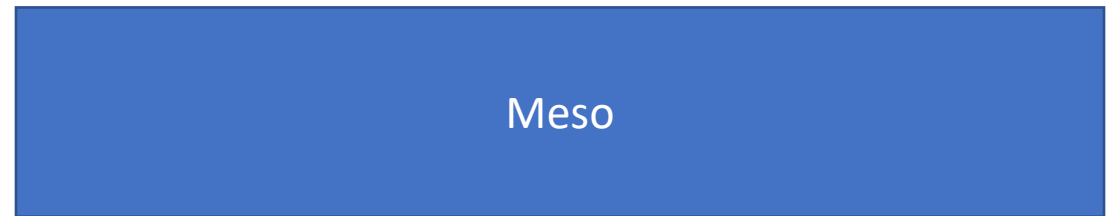
**BREAK**

# What would help co-production flourish?

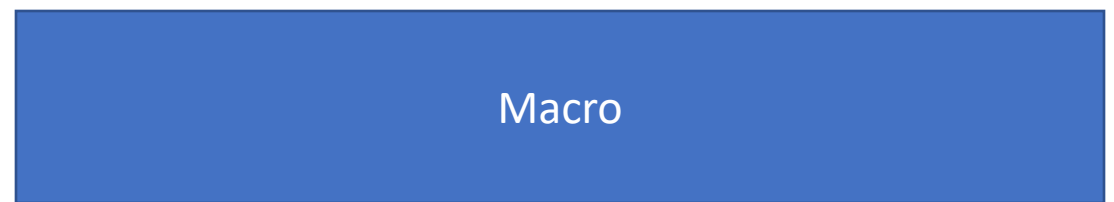
- Changing 'how we do meetings'
- Stepping outside of roles
- Creative approaches to knowledge generation
- Reflecting



- Moving from transactional to relational connections



- Changing the culture of the research environment



# Concluding comments

- Explained co-production
  - Practical tips
- Is 'true' co-production possible?
  - Wider forces
- Co-production as an aspiration?
  - Reflect



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# Thank you for listening

Any comments or questions?