



Department of Social  
Work

Research Seminar

## Evaluation of the Connecting People Intervention: A Quasi-Experimental Study

**Date:** Friday, 15th February **Time:** 4-6pm

**Venue:** Room G3, 11 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3RA

The concept of social capital is emerging as a way of articulating the social work process of connecting people with other people and resources. Defined as the resources that are embedded within social networks, social capital can lead to greater occupational prestige, income and better health when mobilised. Enhancing the access to social capital of socially isolated people with mental health problems or a learning disability should therefore be a priority for mental health social workers.

This seminar will hear about the pilot of a new social intervention in England – the Connecting People Intervention (CPI) – which aims to support isolated people to develop new social connections. The rationale for the study will be presented in the form of three systematic reviews which all reveal a dearth of rigorous intervention research in this field of social work practice.

The CPI is currently being piloted in 18 health and social care agencies in England in a quasi-experimental study which is testing the hypothesis that higher fidelity to the CPI will be associated with improved social participation, well-being and increased access to social capital. Up to 240 people with a mental health problem or a learning disability are being recruited to participate in the study and followed up over the course of 9 months. The study also includes economic and process evaluations.

This seminar will discuss baseline data of the participants recruited to the study to date. It will report on our experience of training over 100 workers in the intervention, in the context of scepticism about standardising social work practice and ever-increasing time pressures. Finally, it will reflect on how high quality research evidence can both improve social work practice and enhance the access to social capital of socially isolated people with mental health problems.

**Speaker: Dr Martin Webber is Anniversary Reader in Social Work in the Department of Social Policy and Social Work at the University of York**

Martin is principal investigator on two National Institute for Health Research-funded studies which, alongside his other research activities, aim to enhance the evidence base for social work practice. He teaches research methods to social work students and is currently supervising four social work PhD students. He has published 26 peer reviewed journal papers, 11 book chapters, numerous blog posts on martinwebber.net, Community Care and The Guardian Social Care Network, and two books. He is currently editing a book for Palgrave Macmillan on applying research in social work practice. He is also a social work graduate from Royal Holloway.

***The seminar is free but space is limited. To book a place please contact:***

***Liz Hudson: [L.Hudson@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:L.Hudson@rhul.ac.uk)***