Dissolving the Boundaries: the challenges of collaboration and reciprocity in practice

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This entire process of collaboration has shown me that to develop meaningful and engaging training and education within higher education: research and teaching must draw from and learn from practice in partnership. The relationship can be considered symbiotic; without teaching and research, good practice becomes lost to future generations of learners; and without good links to practice, professional higher education becomes stagnant and dislocated from the reality of contemporary health and social care practice

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Making Meanings

1. Can we dissolve the boundaries between the 'in here and the out there'?

2. How do we build collaborative partnerships?

3. How de we negotiate different agendas, issues of power and space?

4. What is the purpose of a University and indeed higher education?

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Case study – Joanna Project

- **Background**
- JP - small faith based project – registered charity
- Works with women who sell sex in Leeds
- Subject of ongoing evaluation – support / services provided
- Exposing moral / political dimensions of practice

This case study will:
- Outline Joanna Project
- Foreground moral / political aspects of practice - its impact on ongoing professional formation

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Overview of Joanna Project

- Joanna Project operates from Joanna House in 'Managed Area'

'MANAGED AREA' FOR PROSTITUTES IN HOLBECK...
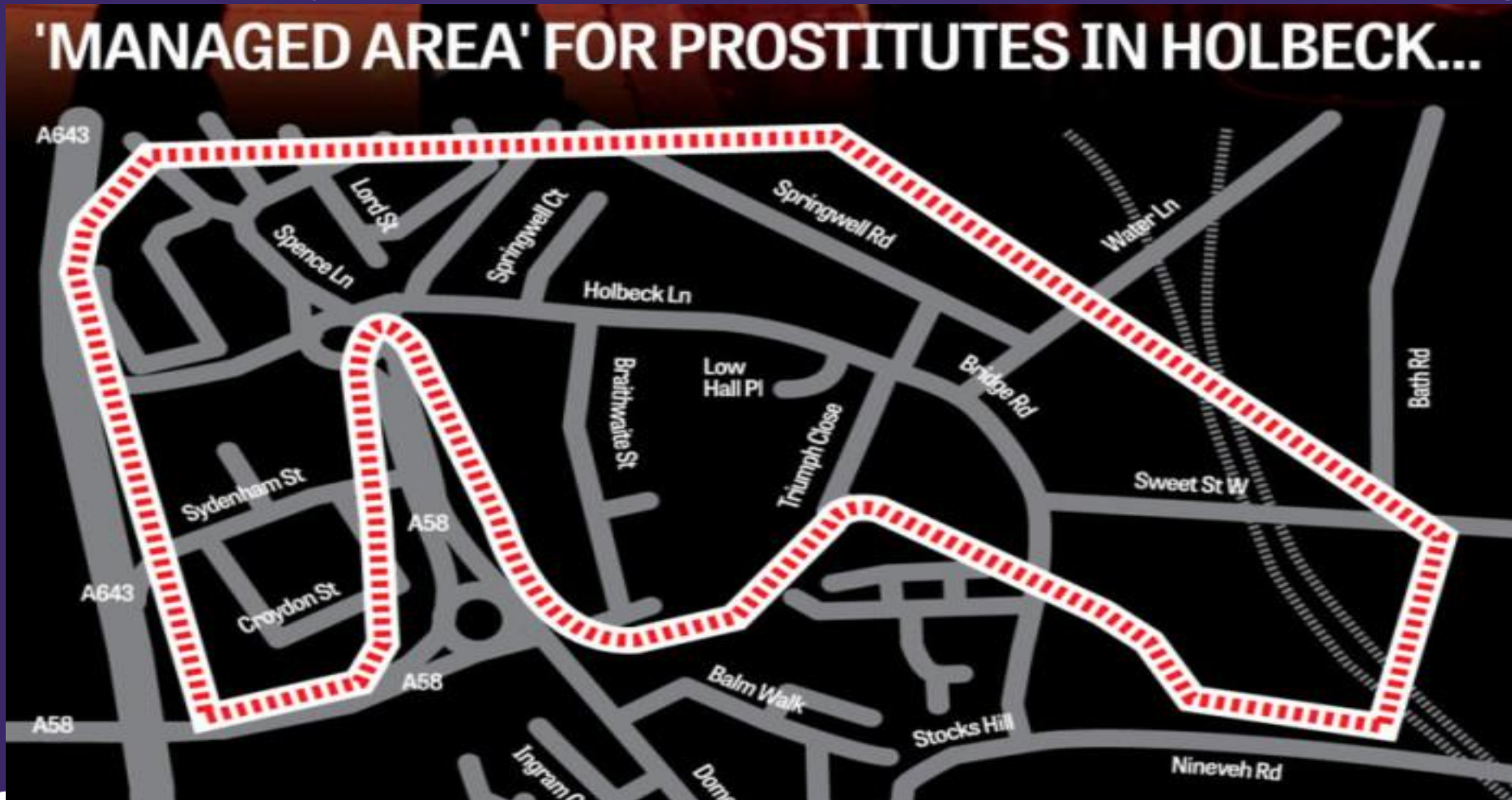
Joanna Project – distinctive approach

- Work with women with multiple / complex needs – not as 'problems' to be 'solved' / but as unique valued individuals

- requiring support, access to services…..and

- Encouragement, holistic care…and love (Big Sister)

- Promotes rights based approach

- Believe women pushed / coerced – sex work always exploitative

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Faith – key component to JP

- Strong set of Christian beliefs / moral outlook

- Believe women should receive unconditional support - as long as needed - not be a targeted outcome

- Philosophy 'walking' or 'journeying with'

- Starts from 'where they are' – and goes beyond

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Joanna Project – support / services

- 2 parts to JP – outreach service & Joanna House

- Outreach van - volunteers (2 nights)hot drinks / food / condoms / rape alarm etc

- Joanna House – homely space (sitting rooms, bathroom, washing machine, kitchen - hot food / drinks - home made cakes, walled garden, plus activities

- + practical support (housing, harm reduction, sexual health)
- + emotional support (hugs, birthday's celebrated, 'family' outings)

Personal Reflections…

Mindful when working with women at JP…

- Working with ambivalence - eg women may present as making 'choices' but controlled by life changing addictions / background of abuse / neglect

- Understanding asymmetrical power dynamics - not always powerless; dynamics shift as context shifts

- Understanding how some women create own 'community' - find solace / companionship / 'buzz'

- Recognising importance of continuity / companionship irrespective of circumstances – always hopeful something may change / intervention might make a difference that day or more significantly over time…

Walking with….what I've learnt

- Value of approach cannot be underestimated

- Not Fluffy / 'Do Gooding' approach - dynamics not always comfortable - challenge / confrontation

- Stems from engaging 'where they are' / not… 'ought to be' **and** not exclusive to Social Work or Youth Work / Community Development practice – shared moral / political outlook

- Ethics / values not only embedded in codes / policies of professional practice – infused / overlaid with personal beliefs

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Walking with….what I've learnt

- Working with complex needs…. More than delivering services within legal/policy framework

- Partnership with JP brings the 'out there' 'in here' and brings alive theory/practice dynamics

- Partnership greater than constituent parts, e.g placements, guest speakers / evaluations – creates collaborations that have authentic impact…..

- Mindful that practice/practitioners shaping the moral/political domains of world (Thompson 2017)

What makes for positive partnerships?

- Shared values, reciprocity, respect, cooperation…. – generative nature of relationships

- Young people from 3rd sector agency 'Health for All' in University to support Health and Well-being module through session delivery and formative assessment

- Group in need of peer mentor training

- Peer mentor package developed

- Offered to The Children's Society for a group of Asylum seekers

- Package then given to Children's society so they can deliver themselves.

- So…young people supporting student learning led to us supporting asylum seekers

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Challenges

1. Ensuring partners are given equal recognition and status
2. Stepping out of the world of static theoretical perspectives into the messy world of practice
3. Ensuring partners are welcomed into the environment - these people (young people, homeless people etc) often recognised as not belonging 'in here'
4. Gaining recognition by the University so the work is supported

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Strategies developed to overcome challenges

1. Partner status – development of a more appropriate memorandum of understanding

2. Stepping into messy world of practice – challenge but really belongs as a benefit

3. Partners welcomed – still a challenge. Informing security staff has at times caused more problems, considered counter productive at this point to inform security managers. Meet and escort.

4. Gaining recognition – although we consider the work to have intrinsic value, some external 'measure' is necessary for wider recognition and support. Erika will consider the problem of 'measure' shortly.

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An examination of the broader benefits to our partners, our students and ourselves

1. Being able to relate present tense stories to students
2. . A remembrance that 'the rub between theory and practice is not always neatly resolved'
3. Building of relationships with partners grounded in common experience and genuine collaboration

(Intrator and Kunzman, 2009)

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1. Being able to relate present tense stories to students

2. A remembrance that 'the rub between theory and practice is not always neatly resolved'

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Due to the 'common experience and genuine collaboration' our relationship with partners have changed. We have more understanding of the day to day work of one another; we understand better each other's skills and expertise are more confident to call on it when needed; and we have shared experiences that help us consider each other as colleagues. On a more human level we have grown to know, like and respect one another and we value the relationship we have formed.

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Interconnectivity as fact and as practice

We all experience separate identities and life as a series of 'outside of us' events. Yet there is also a unity and cross matrixing of all things. New quantum physics theory explains that matter is not composed of basic building blocks but complicated webs of relations.
That actually interconnectedness lies at the core of all that exists.
These big idea should help dissolve the barriers and silos we have created.

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Quantum Entanglement
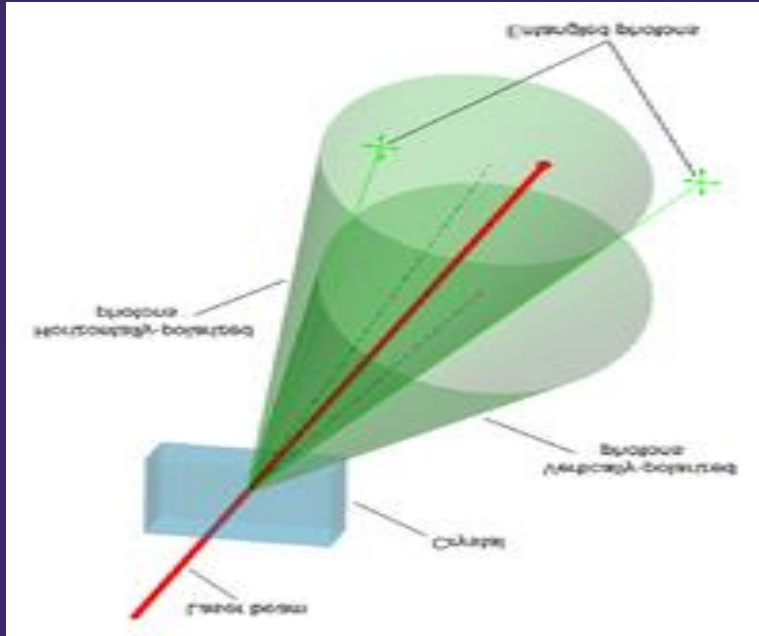
- **Quantum entanglement** is a physical phenomenon that occurs when pairs or groups of particles are generated or interact in ways such that the quantum state of each particle cannot be described independently of the others, even when the particles are separated by a large distance—instead, a quantum state must be described for the system as a whole.

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What is entanglement?

An entangled system is defined to be one whose quantum state cannot be factored as a product of states of its local constituents; that is to say, they are not individual particles but are an inseparable whole. In entanglement, one constituent cannot be fully described without considering the other(s).

Note that the state of a composite system is always expressible as a *sum*, or superposition, of products of states of local constituents; it is entangled if this sum necessarily has more than one term.
Quantum systems can become entangled through various types of interactions.

Entanglement is broken when the entangled particles decohere through interaction with the environment; for example, when a measurement is made.

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York Street

- (LCHT) community trust so not asymmetrical power
- No longer exits because of the commissioning process
- Relationships were/are deeply embedded over a number of years
- Hugely beneficial and reciprocal (co-production, local networks, an advisor for curriculum development

Making Meanings/any answers

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