Creation of an observational framework to support young people who communicate in ways other than language to contribute meaningfully to staff recruitment *(Jennifer McElwee, Mared Owen, Lucy Bennett Downes and Emma Alm, An observational framework for young people's participation in interviews)*

Stream 3 of the wider project: Gathering feedback and measuring outcomes and change with Children and Young People with Learning Disabilities (LD)
Good practice example from 'Hearing the Voice' of children and young people with moderate, severe or multiple and profound learning disabilities

We were interested in hearing about helpful ways to listen to the 'voice' of children and young people with moderate, severe or profound and multiple learning disabilities. When we say 'voice' we mean communication, in whichever form works best for the child or young person.

We asked people to write a summary of what they are doing and send it to us. Below we list summaries of what people did, what was helpful and what were the barriers. The summaries contain lots of ideas that can be applied to working with children and young people of different ages with a range of complex needs across the levels from own life, through service development, training and research and community and cultural change.

Find more information here:
https://www.corc.uk.net/outcome-experience-measures/feedback-and-outcome-measures-for-children-and-young-people-with-learning-disabilities/

PROJECT SUMMARY

We wanted to gain the views of young people who communicate in ways other than language about candidates interviewing for a post in the NHS. As part of the interview process, we asked candidates to spend some time with a child/young person who communicated in ways other than language and their parent. We used an observational interview framework to think about engagement and used this to inform decisions about who should be offered the post.

WHAT WE DID

We spoke with Nick Gore and Jill Bradshaw about creating a framework for structured observation of 'observable indicators' of a child/young person's engagement. Working together as clinicians and parents, we created a 'Framework for structured observation' and a 'Framework for candidate feedback'.

FRAMEWORK FOR STRUCTURED OBSERVATION

Part A

This section is a short discussion or 'interview' between candidate and parent before meeting the child/young person. We wanted to give the candidate a chance to ask about the child/young person and think about how best to engage them.

A. Parent interview (assessing what candidate says):

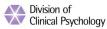| Question	Important points for candidate to cover	Not present (0)	Partially present (1)	Fully present (2)
What would you like to know about *(my child)* before you meet?	• How the child communicates • What child enjoys • What makes the child happy • What child is interested in • How best to engage child			

Additional comments:

Part B

This section is focussed on observable indicators that the young person is engaged, alongside observations about how the candidate is trying to engage the young person.

B. Time spent with *(child)* (assessing what candidate does):

(i) Is (child) engaged?

Indicators of (child)'s engagement

Indicator	Not present (0)	Partially present (1)	Fully present (2)
Smiling			
Eye contact			
Initiating interaction			
Following/copying the candidate's lead			
Engaged body language e.g. animated body movements			
Specific signs of *(child)*'s engagement: **Add signs specific to child**			

Additional comments:

(ii) What does the candidate do to try to engage (child)?

Indicator	Not present (0)	Partially present (1)	Fully present (2)
Smiling			
Eye contact			
Initiating interaction e.g., using visuals/objects of reference, signing			
Following/copying the child/young person's lead e.g. alter tone/speed of voice according to context			
Engaged body language e.g. getting on the same level as the child			

Does this vary according to need?

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No (0)	Possibly (1)	Yes (2)

We really value child/young people's and parents' views around engagement and connectedness that are hard to capture within more formal interview processes. Part B therefore includes a section to capture more qualitative feedback.

2. Overall impression

(i) Would you as a parent want to work with this candidate?

No (0)	Possibly (1)	Yes (2)

Why?

(ii) Would (child) want to work with this candidate?

No (0)	Possibly (1)	Yes (2)

Why?

(iii) What is your overall impression? Is this candidate appointable?

Why?
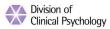
FRAMEWORK FOR CANDIDATE FEEDBACK

We wanted to hear candidate's thoughts about the observation process and also give them space to reflect on anything they noticed or would have done differently. We were also interested to see if candidates and observers' ratings of behaviour were similar.

Introduction

We would like to give you a chance to reflect on the process of being part of the child and parent interview. We understand that you will have very limited time to reflect, and are looking only for your initial reaction to being part of the process. Please take a maximum of ten minutes to complete this form and then hand in to reception.

A. Meeting the parent

What was it like to meet the parent?

B. Time spent with the young person

Did you notice these indicators of the child's engagement?

Indicator	Not present (0)	Partially present (1)	Fully present (2)
Smiling			
Eye contact			
Initiating interaction			
Following/copying the candidate's lead			
Engaged body language e.g. animated body movements			
Specific signs: **Fill in signs**			

Did you use these methods to engage the child?

Indicator	Not present (0)	Partially present (1)	Fully present (2)
Smiling			
Eye contact			
Initiating interaction e.g., use visuals/objects of reference, signing			
Following/copying the child/young person's lead e.g. alter tone/speed of voice according to context			
Engaged body language e.g. getting on the same level as the child			

Is there anything you would like to add?

WHAT HELPED?

- It was really important to work with clinicians and parents as co-creators of this framework and documentation. This enabled us to incorporate different points of view about what we should be looking out for.

- Working with children/young people in this way gave us a completely different insight into candidates that we weren't able to capture during the formal interview.

- Setting up the interview process so that children/young people had fifteen minutes with the candidate, followed by a break and an opportunity to go outside, meant that the children/young people stayed focussed and had fun.

WHAT WERE THE BARRIERS?

- We asked the parent and a clinician to be observers, and there was also another clinician in the room to support the child/young person. This meant that there were a lot of adults in the room when the candidate was also present. Next time, we will aim to work with observers behind a screen to reduce the number of people in the room.

- Trying to organise logistics so that the child/young person was part of the process, had a chance for regular breaks, but didn't have to be present for too long, alongside the formal interview process. We managed to create quite a complicated timetable with candidates moving from the observational part of the interview through to the formal interview process, which worked most of the time!