

HOW THIS BOOK CAME ABOUT

This book was developed during a five-year research programme funded by the UK's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). This study aimed to improve service user and carer involvement in care planning in mental health services. The study was called Enhancing the Quality of User Involved Care Planning in Mental Health Services (EQUIP).

As part of our work on EQUIP, we developed and delivered a successful research methods course for service users and carers. The aim of this course was to help these individuals engage with our research and research team and to work together in true partnership.

This book has arisen out of our partnership, and has been co-written with our service users and carers.

Its aim is to help other public and patient representatives increase their understanding and skills in research methods.

The EQUIP programme used a range of different research methods to achieve its goals, and you will read more about these as you progress through this book. More detail on the EQUIP programme is provided on page 8.

The EQUIP programme involved patient and public representatives with lived experience of mental health services, but all of the research methods that we discuss are used in both physical and mental health research. Whatever your background, or health experiences, this handbook could be helpful.

HOW THIS BOOK IS PRESENTED

Each chapter will provide a brief overview and outline key learning objectives before moving onto the main body of the chapter. All chapters end with a reflective exercise, to help you check what you have learnt. Where helpful, there are also some suggested sources of additional reading.

You will find stories from some of the PPI representatives who worked on EQUIP scattered throughout. These stories reflect on our representatives' own experiences of being involved in the different types of research we discuss.

Andy, Lindsey, Lauren, Debbie and Joe attended our first research methods course. Andy, Lindsey, Lauren joined the EQUIP team as grant co-applicants and researchers. Along with Garry, Debbie and Joe became members of our Service User and Advisory Panel.

Andy, Lauren, Debbie and Garry have lived experience of mental health difficulties, and of using mental health services. Lindsey is a carer for her son, who lives with psychosis. Joe has worked as a mentor with AnxietyUK. We hope you find their stories interesting.