

The walk of doom, the rabbit warren and the tardis: therapists, clients and ethnographer's experiences of the clinical corridor in an NHS psychotherapy setting.

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Introduction

- Therapeutic settings and therapeutic spaces are a little studied feature of psychotherapy (Fenner, 2011).
- How these settings and spaces are experienced by therapists and clients may contribute to the atmosphere of therapy and what is experienced as more or less therapeutic about it.
- Individual contexts and individual purposes for being in specific spaces also suggests that we occupy spaces in different ways (Seamon, 1979, Finlay, 2011).
- The environment of therapy may affect individuals physically, as therapists and clients move within it and occupy it. It is also interpreted in different ways, such as psychologically or emotionally (Pressly and Heesacker, 2001).
- These experiences therefore involve engagement with both the physical and the interpreted environment.
- It is difficult to capture these experiences of therapy environments: the ways in which we occupy spaces are often out of our awareness.
- This poster will show how participants' use of metaphors expressed in response to photographs of a clinical corridor in an NHS setting, captures some of these experiences.

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Aims

- To give some specific examples from a larger PhD ethnography, about how photo-production based interviews, can capture therapists and clients experiences of the clinical corridor in an NHS psychotherapy centre in the West Midlands.
- To show how the clinical corridor environment may intertwine with client and therapist experiencing.

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Analysis

The combination of participants' photographic choices and use of metaphors during the interview are analysed using a cognitive linguistic approach (Kovecses, 2006). This approach involves two main processes that consider conceptual metaphors - 'entailment' and 'non-linguistic realisation'. *Entailment* is referring to a blend of general meanings of a metaphor with possible contextual and experienced meanings of the participant expressing it. This leads to potential inferences about the use of this metaphor in this context. *Non-linguistic realisation* is referring to the socio-physical application of the metaphor. That is, what are the consequences of interpreting these metaphors, in this way.

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Findings 5



Metaphor "the walk of doom"

Quotation: "I can see why my patient calls it 'the corridor of doom' it's just so enclosed and horrible" (Chris)

Atmosphere Clinical corridor: lonely, fearful trajectory towards the exit.

A possible consequence of these interpretations: Exit trajectories may exacerbate the effects of feared outcomes.

Methodology

- **Sampling - Site:** Raven Place Specialist Psychotherapy Service is one of two sites that agreed to take part in the overall study. The Service is located in two blue connected portacabins (pods) in a large car park.
- **Participants:** 10 therapists and 5 clients who are involved with Raven Place, took part in photo-production based interviews in the second of three phases for the larger PhD study.
- **Inclusion criteria:** all adults who are psychotherapists at the second of centre were potentially included.
- **Exclusion criteria:** Client participants with particular mental health concerns, such as acute distress. This may have led to difficulties in informed consent. Screening took place via the Centre Manager and therapists of potential client participants.
- **Design:** This poster is focussing on specific examples from Phase 2 of a 3 phase PhD ethnography. This phase involved photo-production based interviews with all participants.
- Photographs were selected as a research tool as they can facilitate conscious reflections of our experiences of spaces (Reavey, 2011).
- **Procedure** Photographs were taken by one of the centre managers, early in the morning, when staff and clients were not in the centre. Photographs included all therapy rooms and shared areas of the therapy setting and did not include photographs of people.
- Semi-structured interviews were carried out and audio-recorded. The interview involved selecting photographs of the therapy environment and discussing these choices.
- Participants' chosen photographs were then photographed during the interview to form part of the data collection.
- Interviews were transcribed and participants' selections of photographs were inserted into the transcripts for analysis.
- **Ethics:** The research study proposal was reviewed by the National Health Service Research Authority. The NRES Committee, West Midlands - Coventry and Warwickshire. Ethical approval was granted on 6 March, 2014.

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Metaphor "The rabbit warren"

Quotation: "Every time you'd see that (photo)...and it's just like the long corridor with lots of doors... that rabbit warren. It kind of...reminds me of something from *The Shining*." (Linda)

Atmosphere: The clinical corridor as a confusing, strange and fear increasing trajectory towards the safe space of therapy.

A possible consequence of these interpretations: Entry trajectories through this clinical corridor may facilitate confusion and uncontained fears. This may also increase experience of the therapy room as the safe space.

Concluding Reflections

- A methodological approach combining interviews and photographs brings experiences of the clinical corridor into more conscious reflection.
- The clinical corridor in Raven Place is not experienced as a neutral thoroughfare, but a dynamic and fearful trajectory.
- The process of entry and exit from the clinical corridor evokes:
 - fearful emotions
 - disorientation
 - the need for a therapist guide to cross the thresholds.
- Reactions to the shape and lay out of this clinical corridor may also increase trust in the therapist, as a physical and psychological guide which matches the mainly psychoanalytic modality practised by the therapists.
- The therapy room may be experienced more markedly, as a safe space for therapy.
- Alternately, the therapy may be experienced as the inevitable, painful outcome, of walking through this corridor.

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Metaphor "The Tardis"

Quotation: "As they (clients) are preparing to leave, I have a form of words I have to say... 'there are four doors between here and the waiting area...it's fairly one way but people's sense of it, is a tardis.'" (Mark)

Atmosphere: the clinical corridor as punctuated by strange and disorientating threshold crossings at which the therapist is a experienced navigator. On entry to the clinical corridor and on exit from the therapy room.

A possible consequence of these interpretations: Moving across thresholds to this clinical corridor increases interpersonal navigation tasks. Clients are entering an unusual corridor environment in shape and purpose. A space between therapy, and not therapy. An expert guide (therapist) at entry and exit helps with this physical and psychological shift.



References

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