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Concept mapping in context as a means of understanding how people with lived experience of mental health problems make sense of citizenship


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People with lived experience of mental health problems (MHPs) are often marginalised and have difficulty achieving community inclusion. Citizenship provides a means of understanding what is necessary for marginalised individuals and groups to gain a sense of belonging within their communities. Developing a model of citizenship provides a basis for understanding the components of community integration and social inclusion that are often underdeveloped for people who experience MHPs. Concept mapping was used to produce visual representations and maps of ideas of how people with lived experience of MHPs made sense of the concept of citizenship within the Scottish context. A mixed methods participatory methodology was adopted, consisting of the following steps: (1) preparation (including recruiting peer researchers and identifying key stakeholder groups), (2) generating statement items through focus groups ($n = 77$) with key stakeholder groups, (3) structuring through participants sorting and rating statement items, (4) visual representation of statement items through computation of concept maps, using multidimensional

scaling and cluster analysis, (5) interpreting conceptual maps of citizenship, and (6) utilisation of a conceptual model. Reflecting on adopting a concept mapping approach, it encourages the expression of the conceptualisation of citizenship to be entirely grounded in the language of the participants; and yields a graphic outcome which displays all major domains of citizenship and their inter-relationships. It entails cognitive processes that involve decision-making about the relationship between fairly abstract concepts and an ability to sort and make connections between these. Consideration as to how this method could be adapted to incorporate other forms of media such as art and photography, when working with participants with, for example, developmental and/or cognitive challenges, is an exciting area that warrants further investigation. It is essential that the conceptual model of citizenship is contextualised through drawing upon the personal accounts and experiences of participants within their given communities.

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