Emotional Labour, Feeling Powerless, and Researcher Vulnerability: Reflections on Ethnography with Team UK Invictus 2023

Exploring the Impact of the Invictus Games Düsseldorf 2023

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experience = 0

Where we started...

Disabled



Women



Immigrants

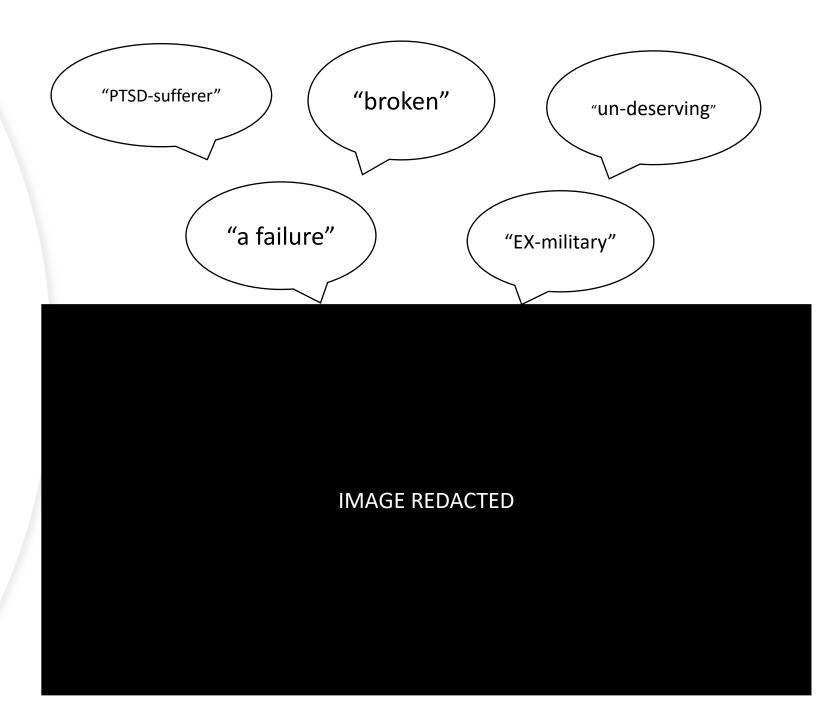


Work we do is to serve marginalised groups, but marginalised groups have unique stories, experiences and 'solutions' to equity

For me – awkward ambivalence

Where They Started...

- 64% diagnosed mental health illness
- 66% two or more chronic conditions
- Loss of identity
- Perceive low resilience
- "If you've not been through it you just won't get it"



A Coming Together of Awkward

Introducing the team



Dr Don Vinson

Specialism in evaluation and
Coach learning



Dr Emma Richardson

Specialism in adapted sport
and exercise research

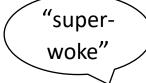


Dr Gabriela Misca
Specialism in military and
veteran families research



Professor Győző Molnár Specialism in sociology of sport and identity





"ivory tower dwellers"

"smelly civvies"

"parasites"

"outsiders"

Why (or wouldn't they) think that?!

Long and very chequered history of research done ON disabled communities by nondisabled researchers for own gain (Fitzgerald, 2009)

Previous experiences of being made to do research they didn't really want to do as they did not have power to say no

Experiences of commissioned officers with degrees "lording over" members without degrees

We do not come to research as empty vessels, and neither do participants

Where we are now

- "You guys are seriously part of the team"
- "We're so glad you're coming"
- "Research wankers!"

• How did we get there?



Vulnerable Observers (Baher, 1996, 2022)

- Researcher vulnerability essential part of ethnography
- Affect and are affected emotionally, physically, ontologically

"...vulnerability doesn't mean that anything personal goes. The exposure of the self as a spectator has to take us somewhere we couldn't otherwise get to. It has got to be essential to the argument, not a decorative flourish, not exposure for its own sake..."

(p.14)

Sharing Our Transparent Selves

 Vulnerability is a shared ontological condition – to ask participants to be vulnerable, we must be vulnerable ourselves (Rodgers et al., 2012)

Being A Grunt

 "Finally, a practical job academics can do!"

(Re)Interpreting 'Ethical' Rules

 "When we privilege highly bureaucratized protocols over human-to-human communications, we risk an erasure of humanity of everyone involved in research" (Lake & Hartmann, 2023)

Broken Just Like Us!

• "That's why you were the perfect people for the job. You're broken just like us!"

What were the costs of vulnerability?

Relationships

Triggering own traumas

Guilt

Weight of responsibility

Carrying 'feels' with us

All the emotions!

Hobbies and past times

Burnout

Injury

We'd rather be a good people than good researchers, but it's a shame we sometimes have to choose.

References and Image Credits

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