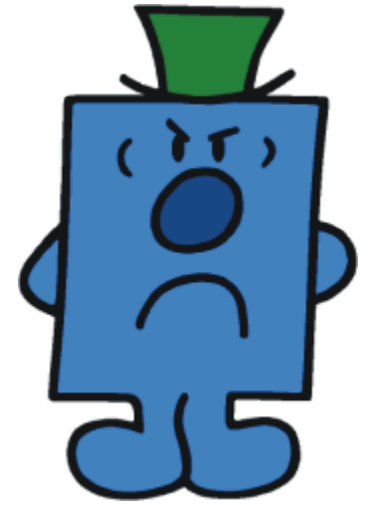# An Examination of Emotional Recognition, Regulation, Alexithymia and Challenging Behaviour

Bronwen Davies

Why?

- People with a LD have increased risk of experiencing disrupted emotional development

- Research to date has focussed largely on emotional recognition from photographs or pictures and has been limited to two emotions (e.g. happy and sad)

- If individuals are unable to recognise their emotions they are unlikely to be able to regulate them or express them appropriately- leading to challenging behaviour

- Alexithymia encompasses emotional recognition and regulation, it has never been applied to a LD population and may be helpful in understanding challenging behaviour.

Why? Clinical Relevance

- To increase the understanding of the role of emotions within challenging behaviour
- To identify the influence of alexithymia considering it's usefulness in future assessment and interventions
- To provide information relating to the ability of people with a learning disability to engage in dialogue about emotional issues- as required in psychological therapy

Aims

- To examine the relationship between emotional recognition, regulation and alexithymia to challenging behaviour in a learning disabled population.

- To gain knowledge of the emotional understanding of people with learning disabilities.

- To work towards the development of a clinical tool for measuring emotional recognition that can be used with people with a learning disability.

Objectives

- To identify whether emotional recognition is related to emotional regulation.

- To clarify whether emotional recognition is correlated with a specific difficulty in the 'identifying feelings' element of the alexithymia scale, further validating the scale for clinical use.

- To examine whether emotional recognition and regulation skills are correlated with challenging behaviour.

- To explore whether carer-measured alexithymia is correlated with service user rated alexithymia and emotional recognition and regulation.

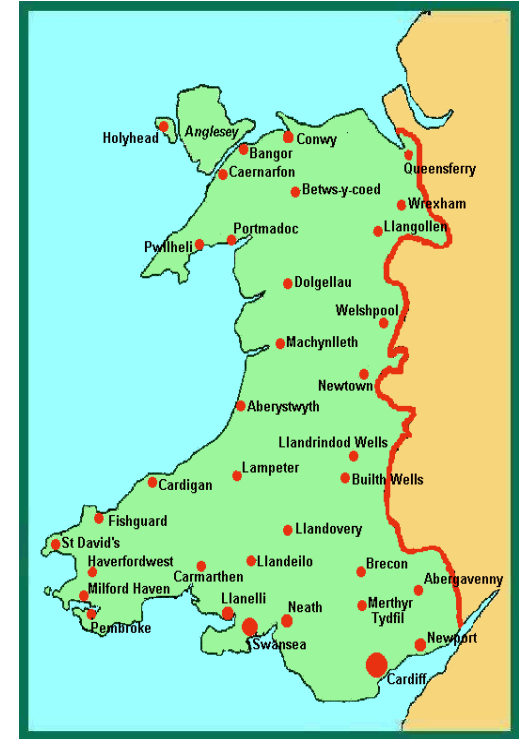- To explore whether alexithymia is correlated with challenging behaviour.

Who?

- People with a mild or moderate learning disability
- People who can communicate verbally
- People who are able to consent to participation
- 50% of the population must present with behaviours that challenge
- People who do not have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder
- A carer who knows them well and for at least one year

Where?

- Homes
- Day centres
- CLDTs/ CST's
- Clubs
- Assessment and Treatment Units
- Wherever the service user/ carer requires. The venue needs to have a private quiet place where we can complete the questionnaires.

- Areas: Gwent 5 boroughs, ABM RCT, Cardiff, Vale and Merthyr

What?

- Service users will be provided with accessible information and consent forms. These will be read through, checked and agreed with the researcher before participation.

- Service users will be supported to complete questionnaires around emotional recognition, emotional regulation and alexithymia (total 3)

- Service users will be asked to identify a carer who knows them well

- The carer will be approached and asked to complete questionnaires around challenging behaviour and alexithymia (total 2)

Outcome Measures

Service Users
- An Emotional Recognition Questionnaire
- The Alexithymia Questionnaire for Children
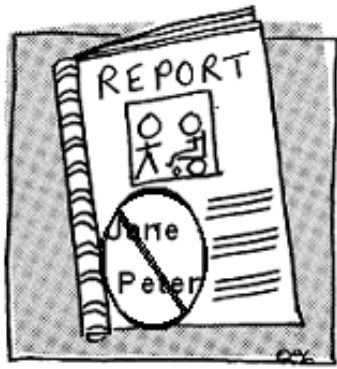- Emotional Regulation Questionnaire based on CERQ

Carers
- The checklist of Challenging Behaviour
- The Observational Alexithymia Scale

How long?
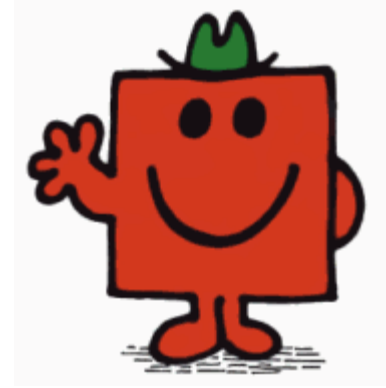- It will not take either the service users or carers more than half an hour

When?

- Ethics meeting on 19th September
- After ethics R and D approval will be sought
- Data collection aiming for October to January
- Dissertation submission 28th May 2013
- I am happy to present findings back after this date.

How?

- How Many?
  - I need to recruit at least 70 people, half of which must present with behaviours that challenge

- How can you help me?
  - Please ask team members if they can identify clients.
  - Gain consent form clients for me to approach them
  - Pass contact details on to me
  - Identify a link person who can collect the names and I can maintain contact with.
  - Keep it alive in the teams

- How can I help make things possible? Is there anything I can do to make things easier for you/ teams?

Thank you and any questions?