

# The Development and Preliminary Evaluation of CHORD Manual

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Why singing?



# Singing for people with dementia

- ◆ In the community e.g. ‘Singing for the Brain’ (Alzheimer’s Society)
- ◆ In care homes e.g. sing-along for residents and staff
- ◆ Key benefits of group singing highlighted in the literature review
  - ◆ Stimulating and accessible
  - ◆ Social engagement
  - ◆ Relationship enhancement
  - ◆ Emotional wellbeing
- ◆ Practice
  - ◆ Relies on individual facilitators’ skills
  - ◆ No standardised manual

# CHORD manual development: Aims

- 🟢 Optimising the benefits of singing – clinical effectiveness
- 🟢 Skill-sharing - transferring Music Therapy skills & techniques
- 🟢 Practical advice for setting up and running groups
- 🟢 Production of an implementable manual

# The development of CHORD Manual (MRC Complex Intervention)

**Development:** literature review, experts consultations, consensus meeting, production of draft manual

**Feasibility study:** weekly singing group at Memory Service

**Preliminary evaluation:** feedback from participants and the facilitator, refining draft manual, expert consultations

# CHORD Manual

- 1. **Starting a singing group:** how to set up a new group, things to consider when working with people with dementia and supporters
- 2. **Skills and Techniques:** session structure, choosing songs, musical techniques, 'being in the moment of' a shared musical experience'
- 3. **Musical resources:** suggested songs
- 4. **About Dementia:** key information for facilitators
- 5. **Further information and training**

# CHORD Manual Feasibility Study: weekly singing group (10 sessions)

- ◆ Open to: Memory Service clients and their families/friends
- ◆ Referral through Memory Service staff
- ◆ 10 referrals. 7 agreed to participate. Reasons for not participating (3 people): moving out of the area, difficulty with family, health concerns
- ◆ 7 Memory Service clients (6 female, 1 male) plus carers
  - ◆ Age mean 78 (range 70-85). All recently diagnosed. Alzheimer's Disease (5), mixed (1), unspecified dementia (1).
  - ◆ White British (3), Black British (1), Asian British (1), White other (2)

# Feasibility study feedback 1

- ◆ Participants (written) feedback
  - ◆ ‘Very much enjoyed the session but made me realise how very much my voice has ‘gone’! – but I also realise how much I still enjoy trying to enjoy listening to myself and also with others’. (Client R)
  - ◆ ‘He (client) has enjoyed the group but finds communicating with others hard – but has enjoyed singing along with others’. (Carer E)
  - ◆ ‘So beneficial to me and I greatly appreciated the leadership displayed. I loved being with these dear women and seeing their joy which I shared. Can’t say enough’. (Client M)

# Feasibility study feedback 2

- ◆ Facilitator feedback
  - ◆ ‘... it made me realise the importance of more conscious and intentional use of song resources’
  - ◆ ‘... it has highlighted the intuitive and immediately meaningful way that people respond to and use the opportunity to sing together; they are open, trusting, and very receptive...’
- ◆ Balance between: 1) promoting skill-sharing and 2) not recommending skills/techniques that require in-depth training

# CHORD core clinical components

- ◆ **‘How’** more than **‘What’**
- ◆ **Pace and space** – picking up cues from each participant
- ◆ **Being in the moment of shared musical experience** - responding to ‘Here and Now’ needs of participants, acknowledging the past
- ◆ **‘Togetherness’** – optimising opportunities for mutual support (looking out for each other, helping transitional phase)
- ◆ **Genre of music** – valuing uniqueness of individual participant
- ◆ Following planned **structured activities vs. flexibility**

# Next steps

- ◆ Testing a wider implementation of CHORD manual (Becky Dowson, PhD candidate, University of Nottingham)
- ◆ Making the CHORD manual more widely available
- ◆ Potential challenges
  - ◆ Communicating clinical interventions through a standardised (written) manual
  - ◆ Teaching ‘how to be’ with a person with dementia

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