

Sonia Hutchison PHD Proposal
DRAFT August 2013

- A working title of the topic area

How does my lived experience, from being 'a child in care' to being a leader of a carers' charity, sustain the hope that we can be the change we want to see in the world?

- General overview of area

Using an ethno-autobiographic (Kremer, 2003) method my research will begin by looking at my lived experience of being a child of a mother with German and Polish descent who had schizophrenia and drug issues and a father from English, Scottish and black West African descent and also had schizophrenia and drug and alcohol issues. After being in short term care twice I was moved into long term care at the age of three and a half. The educational outcomes for children in care are expected to be low only 13.2% gain 5 GCSE's A-C compared with 57.9% of the general population <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000930/sfr08-2010.pdf> and only 6% go to university compared to 38% of young people <http://www.education.gov.uk/researchandstatistics/datasets/a00196857/children-looked-after-by-las-in-england>. And these figures were even lower when I was in care. As a child born to two schizophrenic parents I have 36.6% (Slater and Cowie, 1971) chance of developing schizophrenia myself.

These damning statistics are only the tip of the iceberg for the statistical predictions for my life. This is a large reason why I am choosing not to use an empirical form of research as my experience has been that statistics do not encourage hope and have the danger of creating self-fulfilling prophecies (Merton, 1968 p. 477) if these are the only stories that are told in research.

As a teenager I researched schizophrenia as a school project. I remember finding out how high the probability of me developing schizophrenia was and feeling very concerned. On my 30th birthday I felt real relief that I had made it through my teens and 20's and had not developed schizophrenia as these are the most likely years schizophrenia will emerge. The weight of these statistics meant I had held this concern for over a decade, luckily they had not become a self-fulfilling prophecy for me.

Similarly I did get my GCSE I actually achieved 9 GCSE's A-C and did get my degree. I also achieved my ambition to enjoy my job and have a job that would help people. I have achieved this and thrived to become a Chief Executive of a Carers' Charity and been recognised for a community achievement of the year award for my tireless work in the local community. I am motivated to be the change I want to see in the world (paraphrasing Gandhi, 1913) and to support others to do the same and not be limited by the weight of statistical analysis of your likely outcomes. I have been told many times that my story is inspiring and that people are moved by what I have achieved despite my background.

My aim of my research is to inquire in depth into my own story, not a smooth story of self but a story that carries the authenticity of the narrative wreckage (Whitehead, 2008). Through this inquiry I am aiming to make an original contribution to knowledge that influences a wider audience of practitioners to hold the hope for the people they are seeking to serve. My thesis will be values based as my values of hope, love, justice and participation guide me personally and as a leader. I will use a living theory methodology (Whitehead, 1989) which enables me to use action research cycles to research what I am doing, starting with my story and values and enabling my living theory to emerge in my life and my leadership.

I will aim to use a participatory research method to collaborate with those I serve as a leader. I will aim to evidence the relational dynamic that is evident with those I serve as staff, volunteers, trustees, beneficiaries and wider stakeholders. I will inquire into how we are able to have a pooling of energy (Hutchison, 2011) to sustain us to continue doing what we are doing. I will finally aim to research my wider influence on social formations within which I work by looking at what is said about me from third parties.

- Identification of the relevant literature

I am using a living theory (Whitehead, 1989) methodology in my research which makes the 'I' central to my research. I am not distinguishing between myself as a practitioner and my wider life as I believe like Sarason (1988) the two are impossible to distinguish between. Our values are living and can't be rarified. Living Theory methodology starts by asking questions of the nature 'How can I improve what I am doing?' The research will start with who I am and my story, as I am keen that there is not a danger of a single story (Adichie, 2009) being told about children in care. Using ethnoautobiographic (Kremer, 2003) method I will ground my research in my 'ethnic, cultural, historical, ecological, and gender background pg 9.' This is a slightly different term to the more usual word autoethnography (Reed-Danahay, 1997). I choose to use this as Kremer is highlighting the issues of ethnicity in the inquiry and I want my story to be used to influence social formations which is why favouring of ethnography appeals to me.

Autoethnography has been strongly criticised arguing they are self-indulgent and narcissistic (Coffey, 1999). In order to ensure my research is not criticised for this I am clear that my story is important to further the understandings of my research and that by understanding my story it will become clear where my values and my sustained hope that we can be the change we want to see in the world comes from. I feel without bringing my story to the research I would be revealing only a fraction of the data and learning.

Through my story I will identify the strong values I have developed in my life and will ask questions such as 'am I living my values fully?'

My research will consider the literature on children in care (Leeson, 2007; Macleod, 2007; Munro, 2001). Going to University from Care (Jackson et al, 2005) is an

inspiring piece of research highlighting that 129 children in care have managed to get to university and makes many good recommendations. However as third person research I feel the story is being told for the care leavers and I am keen to tell my story myself in my research. I am keen to use participatory research (Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995) methods to empower others involved in my research to tell their own story. I will bring myself into the research include how I am influenced by my story, and those of others to improve the organisation I am leading and the social formations I am influencing.

The academy does not always accept participatory research or indeed first person research (Kuokkanen, 2004) as the type of knowledge that is created from this research is not seen as valid. In order to meet this criticism I will use Habermas (1976) criteria of validation through several validation groups trying to gain wide criticism of my thinking to ensure what I am saying is authentic, comprehensible, right and truthful.

In my current position as leader of a Carers' Centre I am familiar with a wide range of literature about carers (Carers UK, 2004; 2007; 2011; 2013; Clarke and Riley, 2006; Clifford et al 2011) and young carers (Becker et al, 2000; 2004; 2008; Fives et al, 2013) Whilst I use these research papers as an excellent resource for funding (see appendix 1) bids in my practice and find the stories described in them interesting and useful illustrations the third person nature of the research means I feel there is a gap between the researcher and the carers in the research. My original contribution to the carers literature will be to research from the perspective of a carer for my mum with mental health issues and drug addiction, leading a carers' centre and encouraging the carers I support to tell their own stories to be included in the research as part of the participatory method.

The literature of carer involvement or participation (Roulstone et al, 2006) is often incorporated with service user involvement or participation as carers are usually included as 'service users and carers' (Levin, 2004) in the research. I would argue that this does not take into account the differences in the lived experiences depending on whether you are a service user or carer. The barriers to participation I would argue are different. I am also influenced by Unicef's The Convention of the Rights of the Child and article 12 in particular as this was introduced to me as a child in care and affirmed the belief I held as a child that my views should be taken into consideration. The literature on participation is a contradiction as it writes about those that are participating in the third person making them removed from the researching process.

The literature on leadership is diverse (Bolden, 2003), I have engaged with literature on authentic leadership (Chan et. al, 2005; Avolio and Gardiner 2005; Gardiner, 2011; Walumbwa et al, 2008; Shamir and Eilam, 2005; Sparrowe, 2005) as I feel it is important to be true to my values as a leader. However I feel the literature even on authentic leadership lacks authenticity as it is talking about leaders authenticity from a third person perspective lacking the authenticity of the voice of the leader researching their own leadership in the research. In my research I am interested in how I am leading my own learning the learning of others and the

learning of social formations which necessitates starting from the first person (Hutchison, 2011; Hutchison, 2012; Hutchison, 2013 and Walton et al, 2013).

- Key research questions

1. How can I use my story to inspire myself and others to be the change we want to see in the world?
2. How can I draw insights from participatory research to develop my living theory methodology?
3. How can my research make an original contribution to knowledge that will be useful to other leaders; to people interested in developing participation models, and improving their ability to put the value of participation into practice; and to others supporting carers or being a carer, by being an inspirational role model, and providing them with a method of reflecting on and improving their practice.
4. How can I, in collaboration with others, continue to improve my practice as I develop unique knowledge and understanding in being a leader in a carers charity and fully live my values of participation?

- Methodology

I am planning to use living theory action research (McNiff and Whitehead, 2006) as a methodology to develop unique knowledge and understanding in how being a leader in a carers charity can fully live values of hope, love, justice and participation. living theory methodology enables a use of methodological inventiveness (Dadds and Hart, 2001) where I will choose methods that fit with my values and enable my research to be values based. I will use ethno-autobiography (Kremer, 2003) as a method to tell my own story grounded in socio cultural factors that have affected me and enable carers to tell their stories through the research. I will use multimodal methods (Crotty, 2012) including multimedia approaches (Whitehead and Huxtable, 2009) as it enables the embodiment of the expressions of the stories which hold evidence of the pooling of energy within the values of the relational dynamics as they emerge in practice. I will use a narrative method where those involved in the research will use stories and reflection (Clandinin and Connelly, 1991).

I will also seek to use a participatory research as a method to enable me to live my values to empower people through their participation to enable change to occur. Living theory is about improving practice, this involves constant learning and change. Reflection is important to improve my practice, however participation of those involved in the organisation enables my personal improvement of practice but moves it beyond continual professional development into research which changes the carers I support to improve their social context.

- Timescale/research planning

My research will focus around three main view points in my thesis looking at the 'I', 'we' and 'them' as I explore from 'child in care' to leader of a carers' charity:

As this is a living theory methodology the structure will emerge through the process of my research, however it will include:

- Introduction, identifying the purpose of my research and setting out the structure of my thesis.
- Methodology
- ‘I’ this section will be first person research. It will explore how I came to be where I am today, it will tell the story of my early life, how I came to work in my current role, the significance of values such as hope, love, justice and participation. The story will explain how I came to learn about living theory and how I realised that my values based practice is highly significant as a means for improving my practice and enabling me to live my values in practice. I will also review and create multimodal data including pictures I’ve drawn, diaries, video, photos, reports and funding bids.
- ‘We’ this section will be second person research, however I will use a participatory method and empower others to tell their own story so I am not acting as the researcher who tells their story for them. I will use a multi media approach to make the research as inclusive as possible. I will explore with my co-researchers whether those I serve as a leader see me living my values in practice, if they see my leadership is influencing others to improve their practice and whether my leadership is seen as authentic.
- ‘Them’ this chapter will identify what I consider I am contributing of wider social value, what influence I am having on the wider world and will connect my research and findings with the literature on authentic leadership, carers, and participation.
- I will draw conclusions which highlight the overall significance of my research and the original contribution to knowledge it has made. It will look at the overview of why my approach to research is important in looking at how to improve in the areas of practice I will focus on in my research. These include improving people’s life chances rather than reducing them (Goffman, 1963:15), leadership practice, supporting carers and their families.

Throughout my research I will check the validity of my research through a variety of validation groups and checking with those involved in the research. I will use Habermas’s validation criteria to check the comprehensibility, truthfulness, rightness and authenticity of the explanation. Validation groups will also be used to strengthen the rigour (Melrose, 2001) of the research.

- Bibliography

Adichie, C., N. (2009) The danger of a single story. TEDGlobal 2009 Retrieved 5th August from

http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html

Arnstein, S. (1969) 'A ladder of citizen', *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, vol 35, no 4, pp 216-224.

Avolio, B. and Gardner, W. (2005) Authentic leadership development: Getting to the root of positive forms of leadership, *The Leadership Quarterly* 16 (2005) 315-338

Becker, S., Dearden, C. and Aldridge, J. (2000) 'Young carers in the UK: research, policy and practice', *Research, Policy and Planning*, Vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 13-22.

Becker, B. and Becker, S. (2008) *Young Adult Carers in the UK Experiences, Needs and Services for Carers aged 16-24*. Woodford Green: Princess Royal Trust for Carers.

Bolden, R., Gosling, J., Marturano, A. and Dennison, P. (2003) A review of leadership theory and competency frameworks. University of Exeter: Centre for leadership studies. [Online]. Available: http://business-school.exeter.ac.uk/documents/discussion_papers/cls/mgmt_standards.pdf (accessed 5th August 2013)

Carers UK. (2004) *In Poor Health The Impact of Caring on Health*. London: Carers UK

Carers UK (2007) *Real Change Not Short Change, Time to Deliver for Carers*. London:

Carers UK (2011) *Valuing Carers 2011 Calculating the Value of Carers Support*. London: Carers UK

Chan A. S.T. Hannah, S.T. Gardner, W.L. (2005) Veritable authentic leadership: Emergence, functioning and impacts, in W.L. Gardner, W.L. Avolio, B.J., Walumbwa, F.O. (Eds.), *Authentic leadership theory and practice: Origins, effects and development*, London: Elsevier, pp. 3-41.

Clandinin, D. J. and Connelly, F. M. (1991) Narrative and Story in Practice and Research. In D. Schön (Ed.), *The reflective turn: Case studies in and on educational practice* (pp. 258-281). New York: Teachers College Press.

Clarke, M. and Riley, S. (2006), *Best Practice, Better Practices - A New Deal for Carers in Primary Care*. Woodford Green: Princess Royal Trust for Carers.

Clifford, J., Theobald, C., Mason S. (2011) *The Princess Royal Trust for Carers: Social Impact Evaluation of five carers' centres using Social Return on Investment*, London, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers.

Coffey, P. (1999). *The ethnographic self*. London: Sage.

Cornwall, A., and Jewkes, R. (1995). What is participatory research?. *Social science & medicine*, 41(12), 1667-1676.

Crotty, Y. (2012) Ph.D. Thesis, How am I bringing an educationally entrepreneurial spirit into higher education? Dublin City University.

Dadds, M. & Hart, S. (2001). *Doing practitioner research differently*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Dearden, C. and Becker, S. (2004). *Young Carers in the UK: The 2004 Report*. London: Carers UK.

Fives, A., Kennan, D., Canavan, J., and Brady, B. Why we still need the term 'Young Carer': Findings from an Exploratory Study of Young Carers in Ireland. *Critical Social Work* 2013 Vol. 14 No. 1

Gandhi, M. (1913) Vol. 13, Ch. 153.

Gardiner, R. (2011) A Critique of the Discourse of Authentic Leadership, *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2 (15) 99-104).

Goffman, E. (1963) *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoilt Identity*. London: Penguin Books

Habermas, J. (1976) *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. London; Heinemann.

Hutchison, S. (2011) How can I improve my practice as a Chief Executive working with carers and their families creating my living theory of mindfulness and learning? Presented at BERA 2011 at the University of London, Institute of Education. Retrieved 5 August 2013 from <http://actionresearch.net/writings/bera12/sonia060911bera.pdf>

Hutchison, S. (2012) My gift of authenticity as a leader. Liverpool Hope University. Retrieved 5 August 2013 from <http://actionresearch.net/writings/module/shmastersgiftsandtalents.pdf>

Hutchison, S. (2012) How have I improved my practice and developed my living theory of mindfulness and learning since presenting at the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) Conference in 2011? Liverpool Hope University. Retrieved 5 August 2013 from <http://actionresearch.net/writings/module/shalandkcmaunit.pdf>

Hutchison, S. (2013) A Living-Theory of Care-Giving. A presentation at the Inaugural Conference of the Action Research Network of the Americas in San Francisco, 1-2 May 2013. Retrieved 5 August 2013 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/sonia/soniaarnpaper300413.pdf>

Jackson, S., Ajayi, S. and Quigley, M. (2005) *Going to University from Care*. London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Kremer, J. W. (2004) Ethnoautobiography as practice of radical presence - Storying the self in participatory visions. *ReVision*. 26(2), 5-13.

Kuokkanen, R., J. (2004) Toward the hospitality of the academy: the (im) possible gift of indigenous epistemes
<http://staging.maramatanga.ac.nz/sites/default/files/TKC%202005.pdf#page=81>

Leeson, C. (2007) My life in care: experiences of non-participation in decision-making processes. *Child and Family Social Work* 2007, 12, pp 268-277

Levin, E. (2004) Involving service users and carers in social work education. SCIE Guide 4

MacLeod, A. (2007) Whose agenda? Issues of power and relationship when listening to looked-after young people. *Child and Family Social Work* 2007, 12, pp 278-286.

McNiff, J. and Whitehead, J. (2006). *All You Need To Know About Action Research*. London: Sage.

Melrose, M. J. (2001). Maximizing the rigor of action research: Why would you want to? How could you? *Field Methods*, 13(2), 160-180.

Merton, R., K. (1968). *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: Free Press. p. 477.

Munro, E. (2001). Empowering looked after children. London: LSE Research Articles Online. <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/archive/00000357/>

Reed-Danahay, D. (1997). *Auto/Ethnography*. New York: Berg.

Roulstone, A., Hudson, V., Kearney, J. and Martin, A. with Warren, J. (2006) *Working together: Carer participation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*. London: Social Care Institute for Excellence.

Sarason, Seymour B. (1988). *The Making of an American Psychologist*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Shamir, B., & Eilam, G. (2005). "What's your story?": A life-stories approach to authentic leadership development. *The Leadership Quarterly*. 16: 395-417.

Slater, E., and Cowie, V. (1971). *The Genetics of Mental Disorders*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sparrowe, R. (2005) Authentic leadership and the narrative self, *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16: 419-439.

Walumbwa, F., Avolio, B., Gardner, W., Wernsing, T. and Peterson, S. (2008) "Authentic Leadership: Development and Validation of a Theory-Based Measure" *Journal of Management*, 34 (1), 89-126.

Walton, J., Harrison, N. and Hutchison, S. (2013) Using a living theory approach to action research to develop authenticity as an organisational leader. A successful

proposal for presentation at the 2013 Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association in San Francisco 28 April - 1 May 2013. Retrieved 5th August 2013 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/sonia/soniaaera13prop.pdf>

Whitehead, J. (1989) Creating A Living Educational Theory From Questions Of The Kind, "How Do I Improve My Practice?' *Cambridge Journal of Education*, Vol. 19, No.1, pp. 41-52.

Whitehead, J. (2008). Using a living theory methodology in improving practice and generating educational knowledge in living theories. *Educational Journal of Living Theories*. 1, 103-126.

Whitehead, J. and Huxtable, M. (2009) How do we recognise, express, represent and develop talents in the production of gifts for the educational knowledge-base of education? Paper presented at BERA 2009 annual conference 2nd September 2009.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Successful Funding Bids

2011 Lloyds TSB Foundation - £24,000 over 1 year Co-bid Writer
2012 Carers Service Tender - 2.1 million over 5 years Lead Bid Writer
2013 Young Carers Service - £212,000 over 4 years Co-bid Writer
2013 Big Lottery - £300,000 over 3 years Lead Bid Writer