



Narrative stories of people with mental ill health

Kim Heyes

Manchester Metropolitan University – UK

Twitter: @Kimberh123



Real title:

Why people use online support for their mental ill health

- Background
- Phase 1
- Phase 2
- Model of online social support
- What next?



Online support forums and NHS funded support

A screenshot of the NHS website showing two online support services. The first is 'Big White Wall', described as an anonymous digital service for mental health issues, with a 4.5-star rating. The second is 'FearFighter', a CBT-based self-help course for panic and phobias, with a 4.5-star rating. The right sidebar contains links to 'Moodzone', 'Benefits of talking therapy', and 'Mental health services'.

www.nhs.uk/Conditions/online-mental-health-services/Pages/introduction.aspx

List of mental health | Emerald Publishing | Many Mental Health | Kim.heyes@gmail.com | Over LifeBird Trainin | Annual Conference 2 | Welcome to

Big White Wall

Big White Wall is an anonymous digital service that supports people experiencing common mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. It's available around the clock and is staffed by trained "Wall Guides" who make sure that the community is safe and supportive.

Big White Wall is available on the NHS in some areas, or you can join by paying a subscription of £25 per month.

How others rate this service
★★★★☆ Based on 66 ratings

See more about [Big White Wall](#)

FearFighter

FearFighter is a CBT-based online self-help course for treating panic and [phobias](#). It consists of nine computer-based sessions lasting about an hour each. The course explains how anxiety affects the mind and body and helps you to face the things you fear and avoid.

FearFighter is available on the NHS in some areas with a referral from your GP or another health professional. You can also pay to do the course privately.

How others rate this service
★★★★☆ Based on 33 ratings

Moodzone

Feeling stressed, anxious or depressed? NHS Choices Moodzone can help you on your way to feeling better

Benefits of talking therapy

Find out about counselling and talking therapies, and how they can help

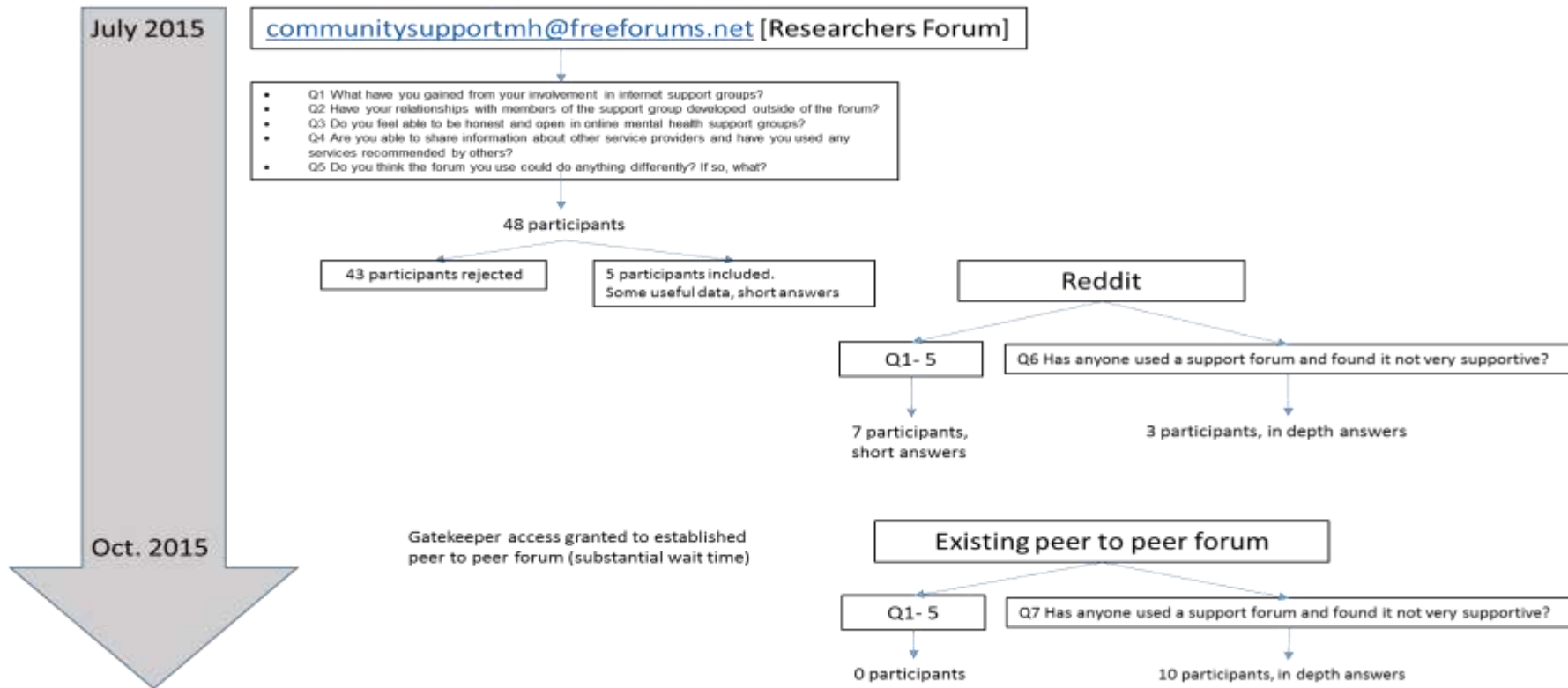
Mental health services

Find out what mental health services exist and how to access them

Fig.1. The top two online support services on the NHS website. Accessed June 3, 2017.

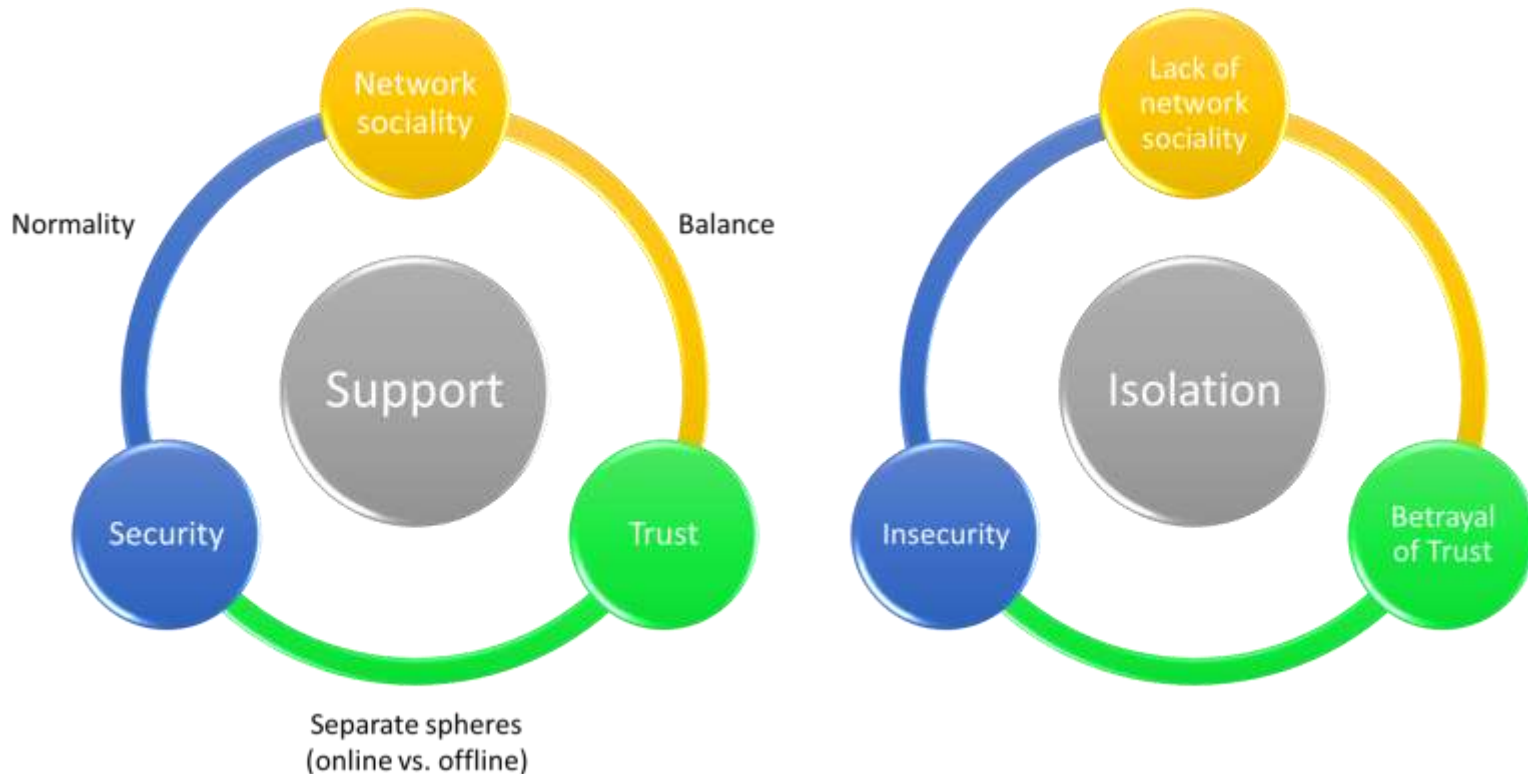


Phase 1 – Researching Online Support Forums (Virtual Ethnography)





Results of Phase 1 (Model of Online Social Support)





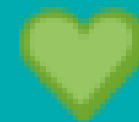
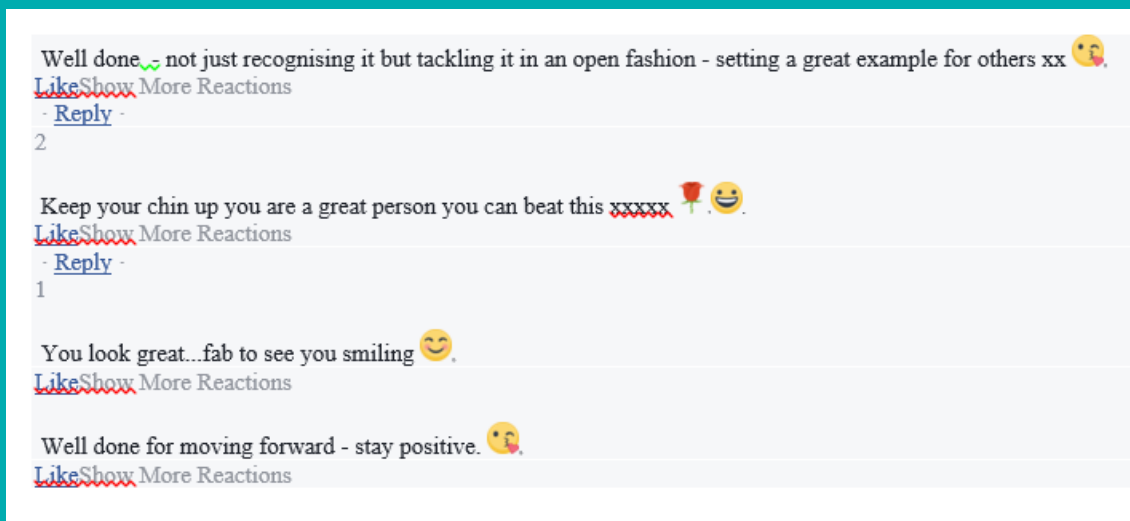
Phase 2 – Qualitative face-to-face interviews

- **Diagnosis and treatment**
- **Online Support**
- **Barriers**



'Outing' and social obligation

- Sinead O'Connor
- Facebook
- Feelings of social obligation





Conclusion

- Online support needs to be a key feature of any five year forward plan
- We need to understand it better
- We need to work out what personalisation of care means and overhaul the whole mental health system.



Thank you for listening

Kim Heyes

K.heyesh@mmu.ac.uk

Twitter: @kimberh123

Publications on Virtual Ethnography and Online Support:

- Heyes, K (2017) *Using virtual ethnography to research vulnerable participants online: A case study of mental health online community support forums*. Online: SAGE Research Methods DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526403605>
- Heyes, K (2017) Socialisation or Social Isolation? Mental Health Community Support in the digital age. In El Morr, C (ed) (2017) *Novel Applications of Virtual Communities in Healthcare Settings* PA, USA: IGI Global (In Press – due October 2017)