Navigating Psychopathology

IATL

Interdisciplinary module

Viv Joseph

2018-19 Week One

Please remember…

- Confidentiality (personal information shared in a discussion should not be discussed with others)

- Respect (be mindful of others' feelings)

- … And please sign the register!

The plan for today

1. Preliminaries: module aims, interdisciplinarity, essays and reflective journals.

2. Group work: What's important

                        (roughly an hour)

3. Short break (5 mins).

4. Setting the scene: introducing themes and questions.

5. Group work: Different perspectives

Preliminaries – Overall Aims

- To enable you all to develop a deeper understanding of aspects of mental ill-health from a variety of perspectives;

- Do this by facilitating your engagement with the subject matter through active learning:

  - Reading (individually and in groups),

  - Presentation (in groups),

  - Feedback and discussion.

- Reading will usually be available online.

Active Learning...
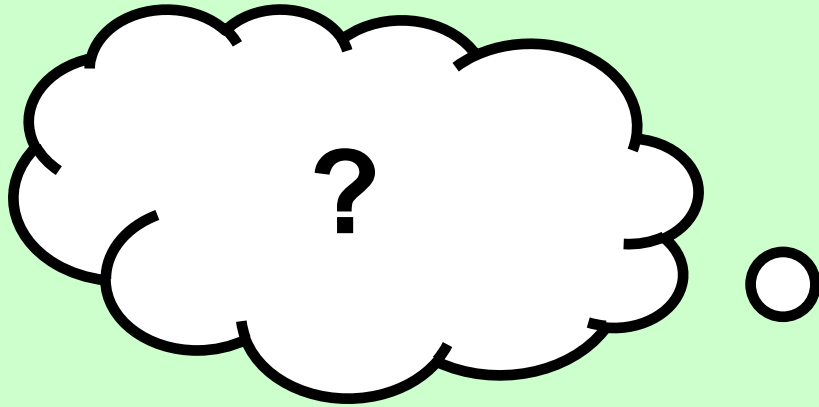
Why Active Learning?

- Reading followed by discussions and presentations encourages you to *analyse* and *digest* information.

  - Taking in information can easily become a passive process.

  - Using reading in discussions and presentations gives the reading a focus, and if groups are given different reading, we can cover more material.

  - The whole process deepens your understanding.

Some Benefits of Active Learning

- According to a 2011 NUS/CBI report (Working Towards Your Future), a **quarter** of employers surveyed said they were unsatisfied with graduates' self-management skills, a **fifth** said they were not satisfied with graduates' teamwork, and **just under a fifth** said they were not satisfied with graduates' problem solving. These are some of the skills you will use and develop on this module.

Preliminaries - Interdisciplinarity

- Why (and how) is the module *interdisciplinary*?
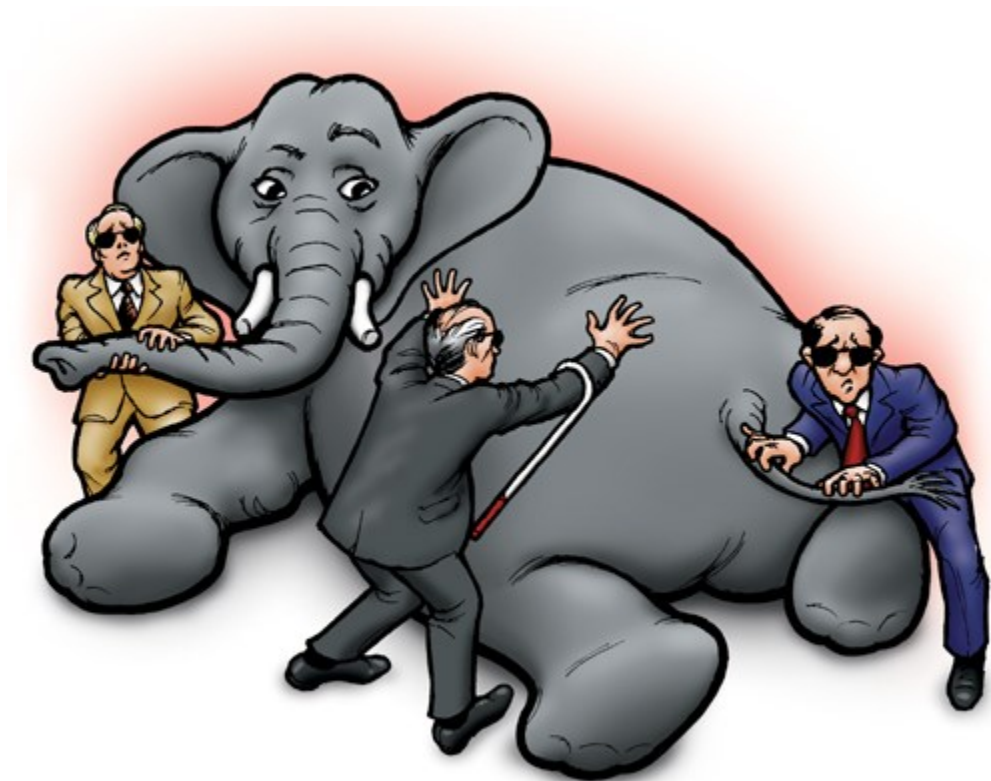
Interdisciplinarity

- Some topics and research problems cross disciplinary boundaries.
  - Climate change (geoscience, politics…)
  - Consciousness (philosophy, neuroscience, psychology…)
- Some areas of practice require input from different practitioners.
  - Space program (physicists, engineers…)
- *Both* are true of psychopathology (the study of mental ill-health).

Interdisciplinarity

- A wider understanding of what mental health/ill-health is arguably requires psychological, psychiatric, neuroscientific, philosophical, historical, sociological *and other* perspectives.

- Mental health teams working with patients often consist of psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, nurses/care workers (perhaps others).

- This module will look at some aspects of theory and practice.

Working Together

- How do we 'do interdisciplinary work' together?
  - Begin to think and communicate in a way that makes sense to people outside your discipline:
    - In group discussion: check what your audience knows (try not to make assumptions). Get everyone's input: you are trying to arrive at a *collective* understanding.
    - Explain discipline-specific concepts and debates if necessary.
  - Question the assumptions your own discipline makes – what are they? What are the alternatives?

Assessment – Essay

- Pick a topic that combines an academic discipline (likely, your own) and an aspect of mental health. Use your presentations for ideas!
  - Please check your essay topic with me before you start writing. You have a limited word count (3,500 for 15 CATS, 2,500 for 12 CATS).
  - Use discussions and feedback to test out ideas.
  - Structure your essay to explain a debate/topic and set out your own view, along with supporting evidence/argument.
  - **Deadline: check website (I'll put this up very soon).**

# Assessment – Reflective Journal

- Read the online guidance, and add to your journal every week (ideally after every session): up to 3 of the most significant things for you that week (from the lecture or discussions); ~300-500 words each week (5000 words max.).

- The purpose of the journal is to show (i) what made the greatest impact on your thoughts and feelings about the subject, and (ii) how your thoughts and feelings on the subject have been affected by what you've heard and discussed.

- **Deadline same as essay (check website).**

Getting Published

- Warwick IATL, in partnership with Monash University, produce an international online journal of undergraduate research, called Reinvention.

- Reinvention publishes high-quality original research from undergraduates in any subject.

- Get more information here:

    https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/iatl/reinvention

Any Questions?
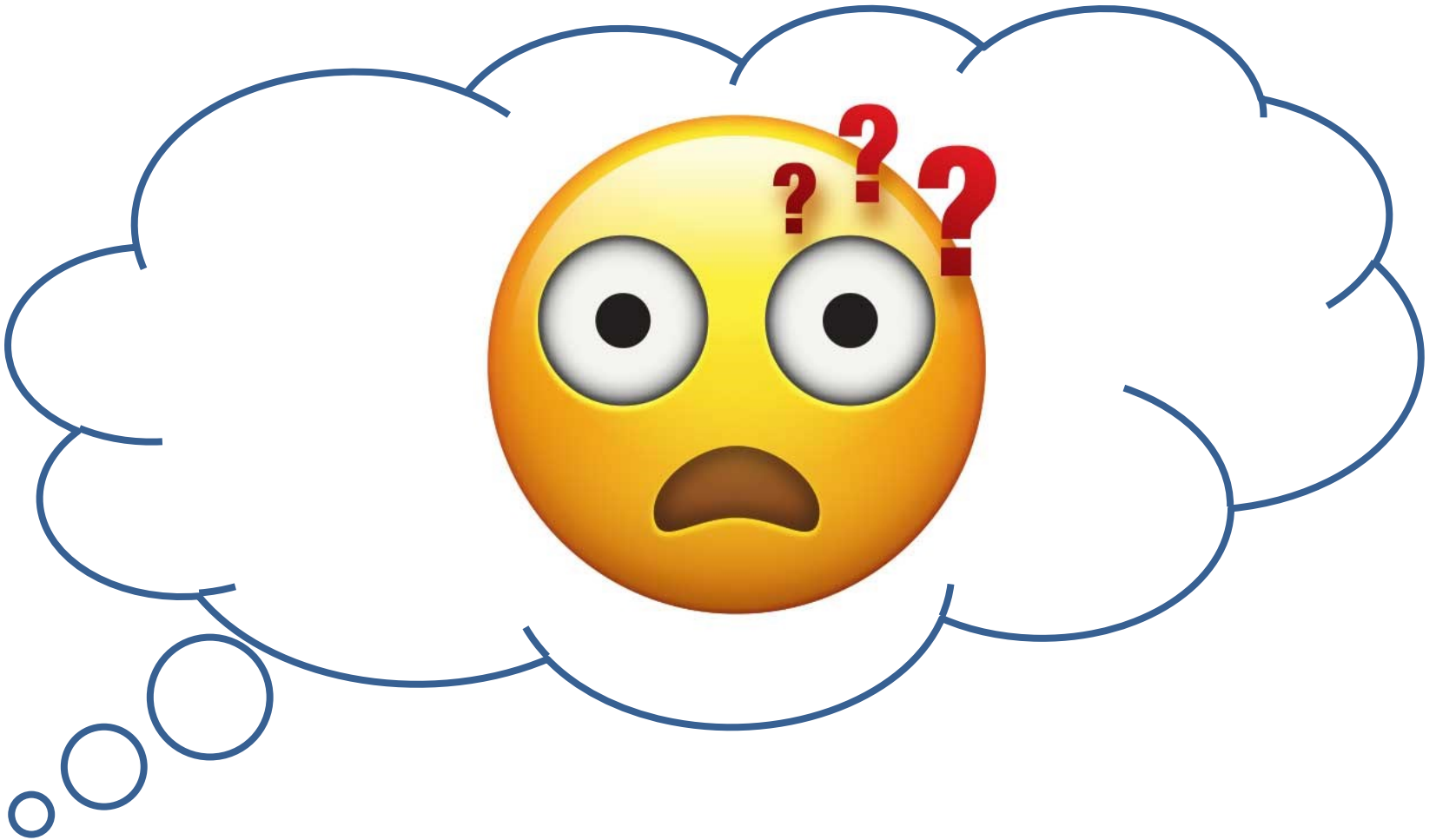
Group Work – What's Important

- Decide *what* the three most important things about mental health are for your group, and *why*. **10 minutes!**

- **5 minutes** for each group to tell everyone else what they've chosen and why.

- Use the laminates to prompt ideas and (short) discussion.

Some Themes and Distinctions

1. *Descriptions* of phenomena

   - Person-centred perspectives (e.g. first-person accounts of experiences of mental distress and living with mental health problems) versus disease-centred perspectives (e.g. neurological or psychiatric descriptions of mental disorders); diagnosis (grouping data together) versus formulation (retaining individual differences); 'organic' (bodily differences) versus 'functional' (behavioural differences).

       - *Note:* the same thing can be described in different ways, and different things can be described in ways that make them sound the same.

Some Themes and Distinctions

2. *Nature* of phenomena

- Physical versus mental
  - are experiences of mental distress purely physical differences in the brain, or are there mental aspects of the experience that cannot be made sense of in physical terms?

- neurological versus social
  - Are experiences of mental distress best understood by looking at the brain, or do we need also to consider social factors?

- medical versus social
 - Is mental distress a *medical* problem or a *social* problem?

Background for Group Work

- Taboos against human dissection in the Ancient world meant that a lot of anatomical knowledge was derived from animal dissection (e.g. Ancient Medicine, Nutton 2004, p.119).

- There was very limited understanding of how the brain worked: "As an isolated object, its inner workings are completely inscrutable... The brain has no obvious moving parts..." (Brains: The Mind as Matter, Kwint and Wingate 2012, p.22)

Group Work – Perspectives

- In your groups, read and summarise the handout you've been given. **15 minutes!**

- **5 minutes** for each group to feed back their summaries.

- Can you see any themes emerging?

  - Historically?

  - Scientifically?

Why it Matters

Care

Cure

Custody

Theory

Practice
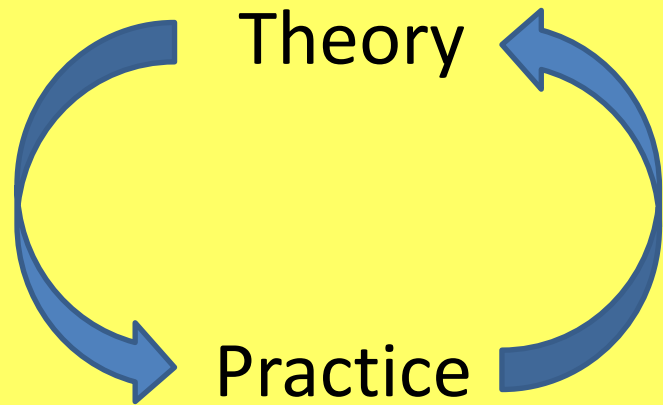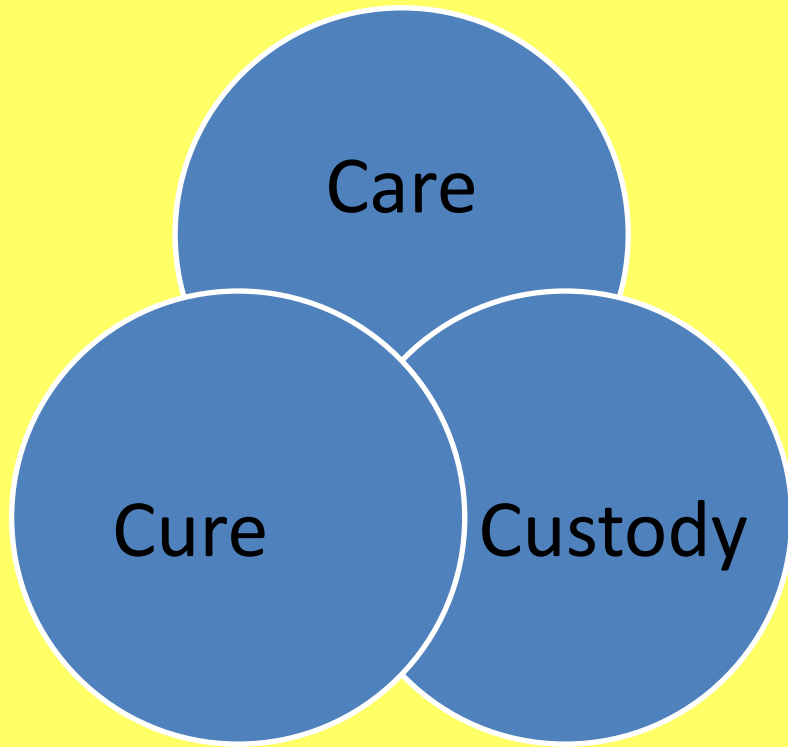
What we think mental illness is affects how we treat people we decide are mentally ill, and vice versa.