

# Improving Community Health Networks of People with Severe Mental Illness: A Case Study Investigation

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# Personal networks and Recovery

## Research into Recovery Network

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## **Study partners:**

THE UNIVERSITY *of* York



Imperial College  
London



# Research questions:



**How do people with SMI use their networks to support health and well-being?**

**How do organisations support people with SMI to use their networks to support health and well-being?**

**How do organisations work together to develop more effective community health networks for people with SMI to improve health and well-being? What are the barriers and enablers to achieving this?**

# The CHN study:



**Two sites: London, South West England**

**Mapping networks of 150 people with SMI and  
41 qualitative follow ups**

**44 practitioners interviewed**

**30 stakeholder lead interviews and 12 interviews  
with health and social care leaders**

# Why was it needed ... linking to recovery?



- 1. Providing evidence to support recovery focused practice**
- 2. Timely – services are changing. Some are disappearing. We wanted to identify what resources people have to complement or replace services and other mainstream resources**
- 3. Holistic – looking at the potential of the CHN approach for delivering person centred services.**

# Mapping networks

- 6 month piloting to refine network mapping tool
- All current and regular social ties, meaningful activities and place connections mapped – including home
- Participants asked to evaluate wellbeing impact of all connections, network satisfaction and barriers
- RGUK, health resource generator, SWEMWBS, CO OP Dartmouth Scales, socio-demographics, also collected

# Name generating ....

- **People, places and activities**
- **Examples of “people” connection questions**
- Who are the people you currently particularly enjoy seeing?
- Who do you currently have to see but would prefer not to?
- Most people discuss important matters with other people. Who are the people with whom you discuss matters with?
- If you needed to obtain advice, help or support with a health or emotional problem, who would you approach?
- Who approaches you for advice/help or support with health or emotional problems?
- Which health or social care practitioners do you see regularly?
- Who has recently helped you with tasks, such as housework, shopping, filling out forms, and finding out information?



**Age** Under 18    18-30    31-45    46-65    Over 65

**Gender**    Male    Female



**Role relation ( you can say more than one if applicable)**

Immediate Family    Wider family    Partner    Friend    Neighbour    Colleague  
Acquaintance    Health and social care practitioner

**How often are you in contact (face to face/telephone/internet)?**

Daily    At least once a week    At least once a month    Occasionally    Never / no longer

**How long have you known this person?**

Less 6 months    6 months to 5 years    5 – 10 years    More than 10 years

**Do they know that you experience mental illness?**

Yes    No    Don't Know

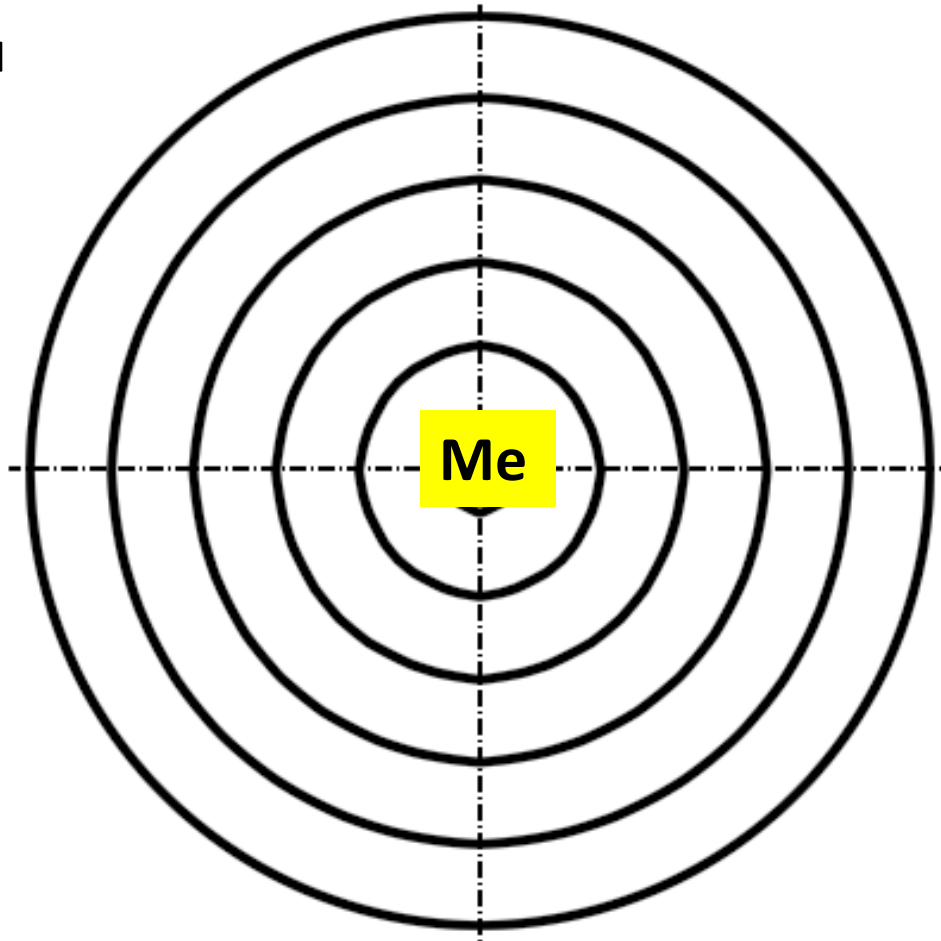
**Do they use mental health services?**

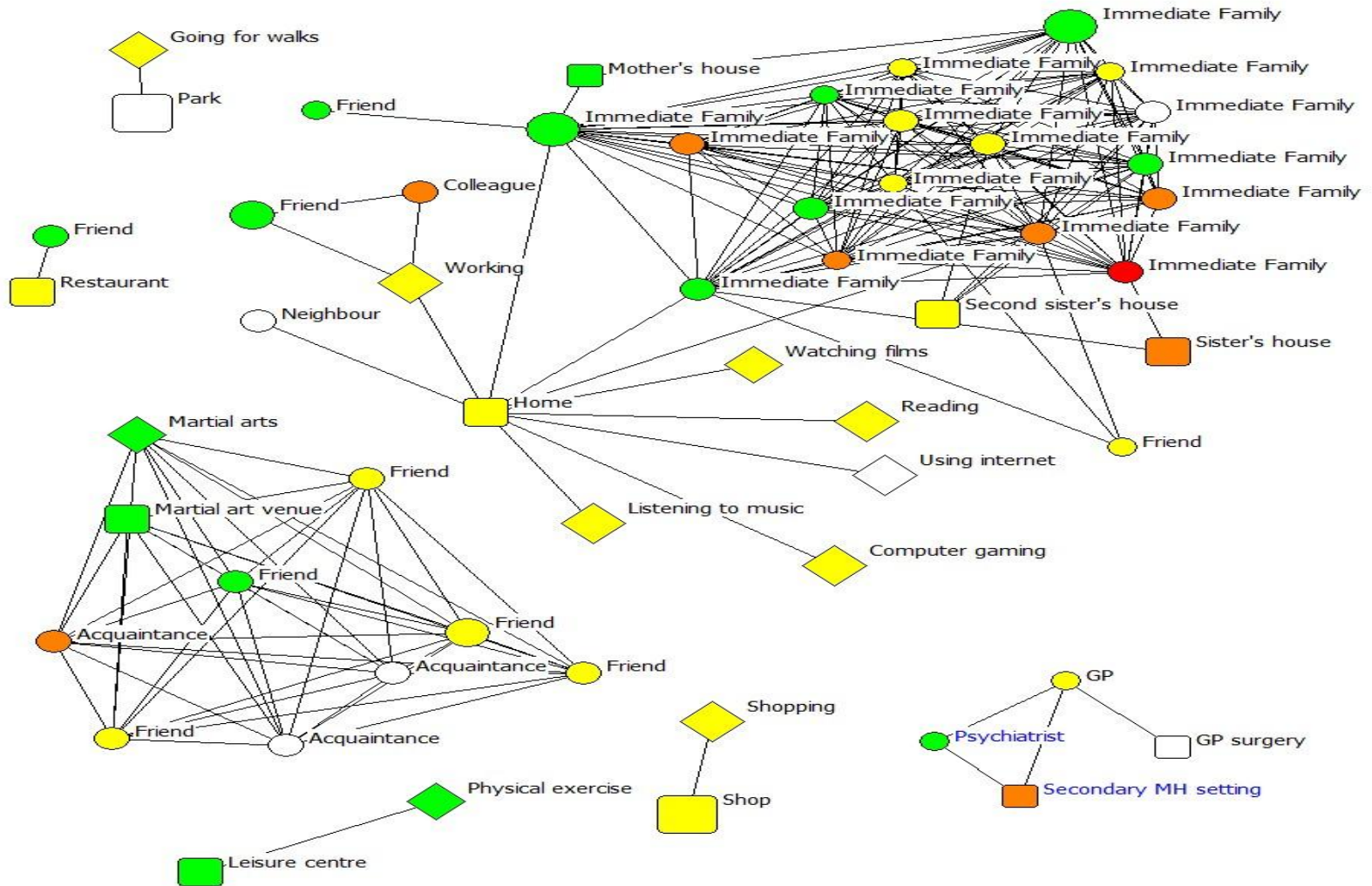
Yes    No    Don't Know

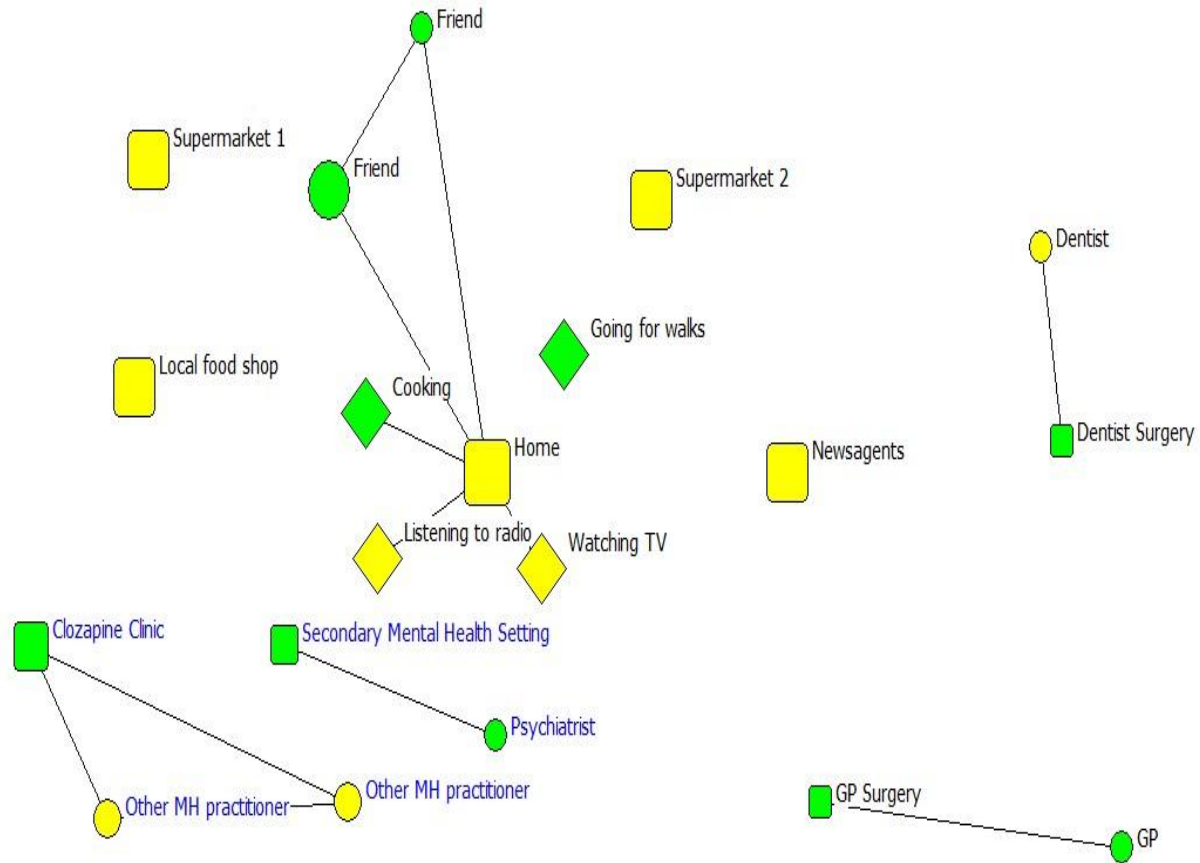
**Wellbeing SCORE**    General:    Best:    Worst:

# Closeness map

People who you  
do not feel  
close to place  
outside of map







# What does our study have to say about recovery?



**Quite a lot!**

**Recovery framework – connectedness and meaningful activities (a purpose in life)**

**Connectedness – the CHN approach investigates links between people, places and activities**

**Understanding meaning – moving away from norms that are inherent in studies of social networks**

# What does our study have to say about recovery?



**Mapping dimensions of connectedness as part of a recovery journey:**

- 1. To people: not only as supports but as identities; including positive and negative ties**
- 2. To activities: as structures, routines and meanings; including regaining those lost through illness and physical activity**
- 3. Places and spaces: Community integration, community resources, safety, isolation, transport, mental health ghettos, understanding referral and 'network building'**

# What does our study have to say about recovery?



## Networks as a framework for understanding:

- **Social inclusion / exclusion**
- **Social capital and health resources**
- **Social support**
- **Social role and identity**
- **Connection to community – feeling a sense of connection**
- **Impact of stigma – perceived or real**

# Network stability and fragility



- **Some networks are resource rich with accessible family, friends, structured activity**
- **Others are isolated and sparse**
- **Others are resourceful but fragile – reliance on practitioner or one important family/friend contact**
- **Understanding source of resources and fragilities in network as a key perspective in times of service change**



# Whose role is network building?



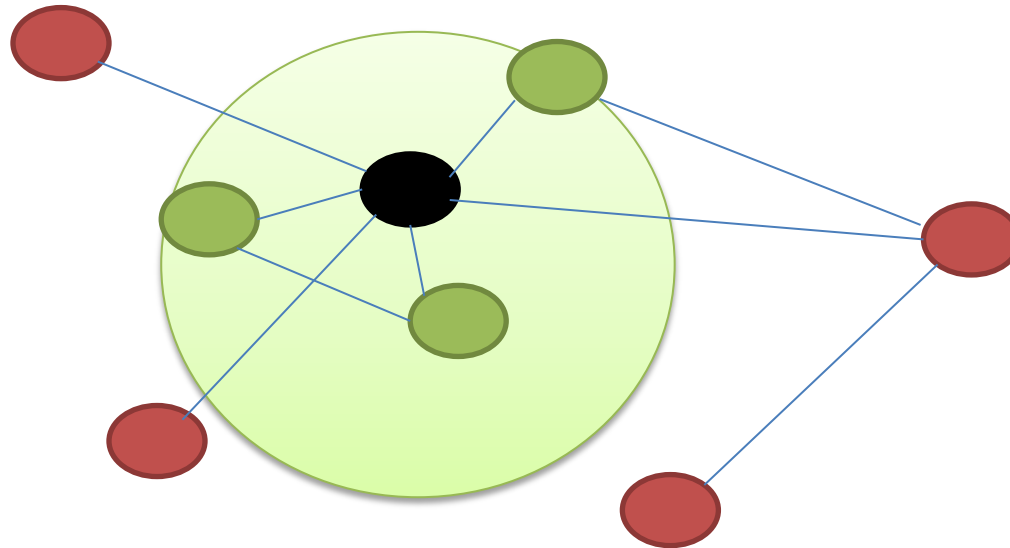
- **The individual themselves?**
- **The informal network – friends, family, colleagues**
- **Primary care is increasingly a network hub**
- **Peer support workers?**
- **Role of CPNs and social workers?**

# Network meaning

Importance of understanding meaning of networks to the individual rather than making normative assumptions

We looked at home place in some detail as one example

For example: smaller may be more manageable:



# Applications of network perspective



- **Birds eye view – another perspective on the individual, their social context, interests and wider aspects of their lives**
- **Precursor to recovery goal planning: Identify what connections are there and what is missing**
- **We found the process of mapping itself instigated change in behaviour for some participants**
- **Person centred approach – individual decides what is mapped**
- **A non-diagnostic perspective based on current network composition and structure as reflecting stage of recovery**
- **Importantly, the network structure is not fixed, it is dynamic and can be changed**

# Thank you

**We are working on publications and the final report was submitted to the funder yesterday.**

**We welcome feedback and ideas on linking research on networks and recovery**

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