

How might social
representations theory innovate
social and behavioural change
programming?

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Overview

Epistemology

Stigma

Design

Epistemology

Two overarching epistemologies in the making of a modern social psychology (Marková, 2008; Moscovici & Marková, 2006):

Dynamic and Relational

Individual & Static

Dynamic and Relational

Versus

Individual & Static

Motivated



Situated



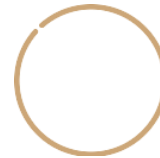
Polyphasic



Agnostic



Abstract



Unified

Mental Health-Related Stigma

Epistemology



Agnostic



Abstract



Unified

Change
Strategy



Knowledge



Social Contact

Themata & Epistemology

Epistemology

Motivated



Situated



Polyphasic



Themata

“Themata are basic elements of thought, usually taking the form of dyadic oppositions.” (Marková, 2015, p.4.1)

Research Design Summary

Drawing on a dynamic and relational epistemology we explored the latent themata concerning representations of mental health and illness in three communicative contexts (news reports [N = 529]; focus groups [N = 20]; and focus groups [N = 20])(Walsh & Foster, 2022).



Triangulation



Home



Student

The death of Mason Pendrous: Uni halls a 'ticking time bomb'



"I am deeply perturbed and want an answer to the same question the investigation is considering – how was this young man missed?"

"Oh it's like it's a physical, its like you break your leg but it's in your brain, a lot of it to do with like brain chemistry, right? Like, dopamine, serotonin.

I've just been exposed to so many different kinds of people with different kinds of -- disorders. Um, and they're just totally normal... It's kind of really freaks me out sometimes... with these disorders but you don't seem to realize. You have no reason to"

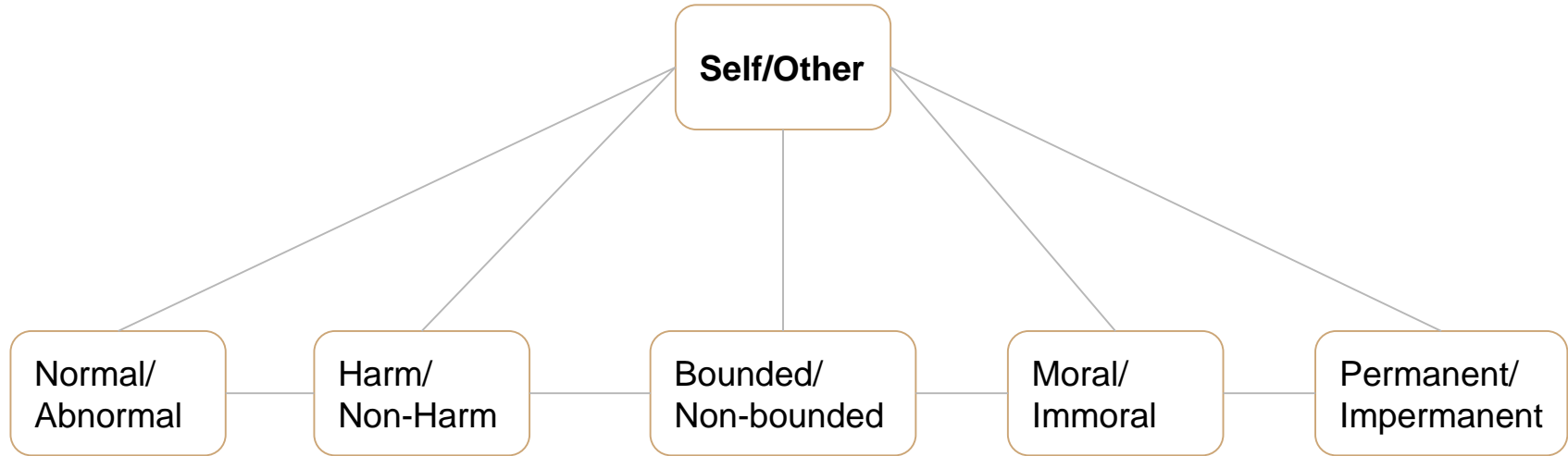
"I can't be around that for too long because it starts to affect me and everything's all good if it doesn't affect me, but it once it does, I'm like, [laughs] 'Bye.'"

(FG4P1)

"Somebody with like crazy hair, like sore red-eye, and probably locked up in a hospital or someplace... I would probably set locks for a start to tenants go into your bedroom or something like that. I guess a tenant can access anything, toilets, kitchen, living room, shower, that's all fine, just not some your living room because you're going to be locking things up, valuable stuff in your living rooms." (IP3)

"For a while now, when I'm with my friends, and I'm having fun, I just randomly feel guilty for no reason. I just feel like I just couldn't fully put all my energy into it. I just felt so far away from everybody in that sense. (IP5)

Themata



Themata & Change Strategies

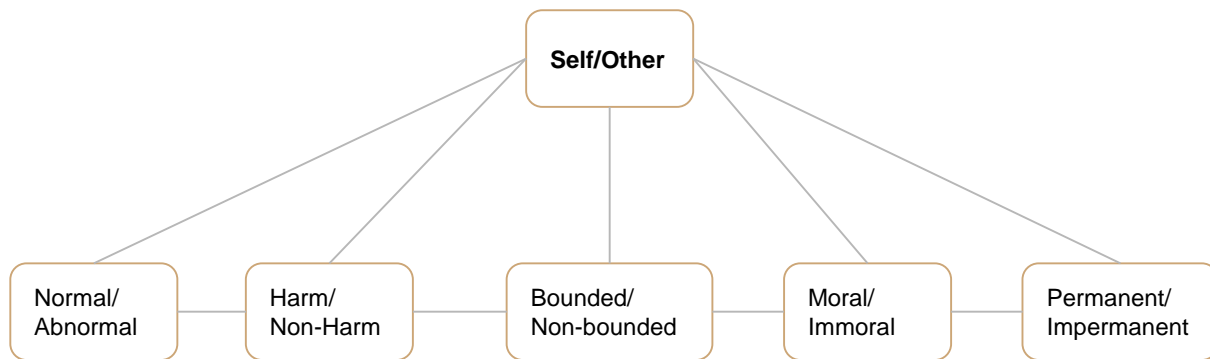
The application of themata to dominant anti-stigma change strategies evidenced profound issues in problem conceptualization. Rather than lacking 'knowledge' or 'contact' with mental illness, concerns for a loss of Self sustained distancing representations as 'unknown' and unfamiliar'.



Knowledge

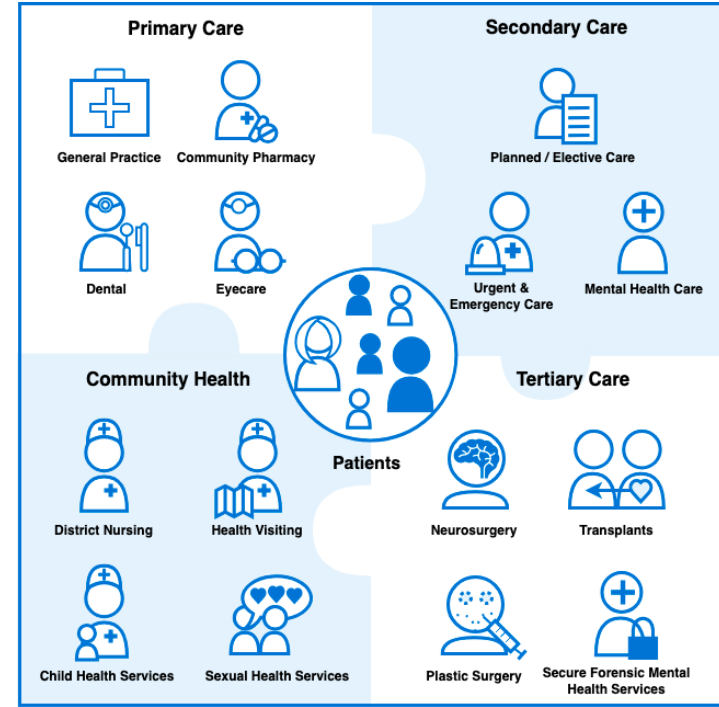
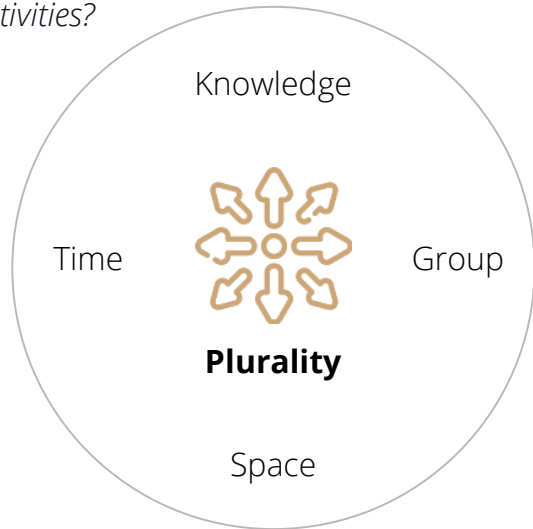


Social
Contact



Directions forward: Themata & Design

Can themata help us comprehend the taken-for-granted differences in how groups represent the challenges and opportunities presented by health and illness, and provide a framework for aligning groups understandings in regular design activities?



NHS, Introduction to Healthcare Technology (2021)

Summary

Researchers can critically engage with social and behavioural change strategies by critically examining their underlying epistemology.

The development of research procedures rooted in a dynamic and relational epistemology evidenced the flawed basis of dominant anti-stigma strategies.

We should explore the application of themata as a design tool for addressing the complex social processes that reproduce stigma in society.