



SCAN ME

Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) & mental health: the experiences of speech and language therapists (SLTs) & mental health professionals



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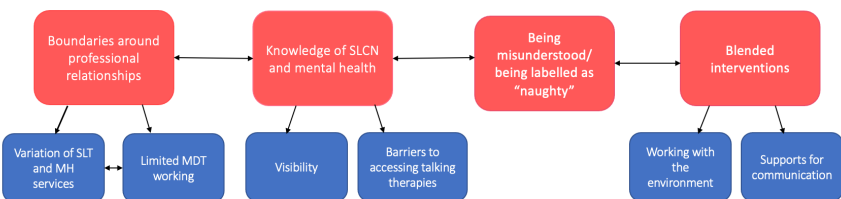
1) INTRODUCTION:

+ Previous research shows Children and Young People (CYP) with SLCN are at risk of poor mental health (1).

+ Less is known about certain types of SLCN and mental health difficulties, such as, Developmental Language Disorder.

+ There is a large gap in the evidence base for diagnostic and intervention-based studies for CYP who experience difficulties in both areas.

6) RESULTS:



2) QUESTIONS:

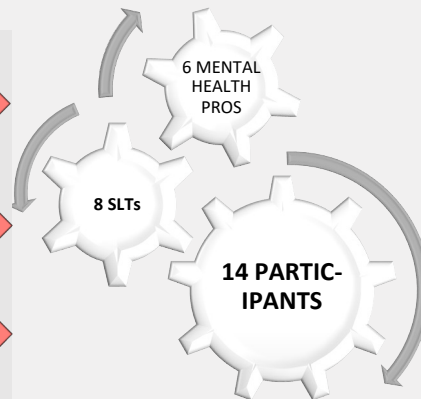
What difficulties do CYP with SLCN and mental health needs present with?

How do clinicians experience assessing and delivering therapies to CYP with SLCN and mental health difficulties?

What treatments are thought to be clinically useful for CYP with SLCN and mental health difficulties?

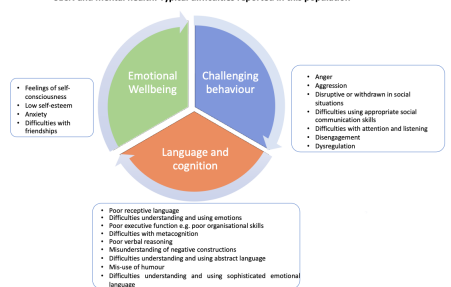
"I don't think that's typical for mental health practitioners (to consider language difficulties)".
Mental Health Professional

3) PARTICIPANTS:



"... we're often funded by different streams and funded by different people, we work in different health trusts quite often, and that actually has massive implications" Mental Health Professional

SLCN and mental health: Typical difficulties reported in this population



4) METHOD:

Reflexive Thematic Analysis (2) was chosen as answered Research Questions.

This approach facilitated an exploration of clinician experiences, observation and knowledge.

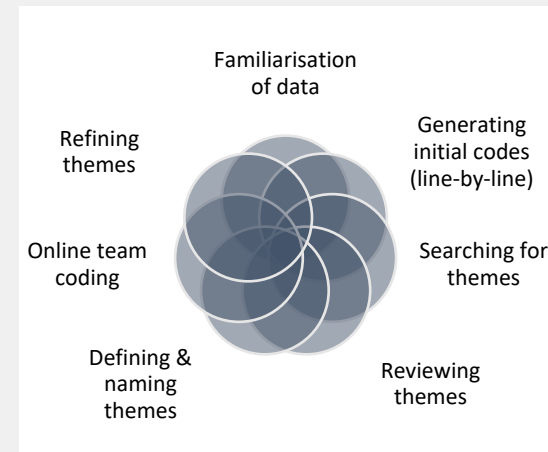
Method placed emphasis on the researchers subjectivity; Female SLT, hypnotherapist, NIHR Fellow.

Semi-structured interviews lasted for one hour on Microsoft Teams. Video-audio data was collected. Interviews were recorded and transcribed.

7) KEY MESSAGES:

- 1) This population is not well understood by professional leading to CYP being undiagnosed or misdiagnosed.
- 2) Organisational boundaries between SLT and mental health which was perceived to contribute to a lack of understanding of this population.
- 3) Traditional talking therapies thought to be potentially ineffective and inaccessible for CYP with SLCN and mental health difficulties.
- 4) Interventions used in SLT and psychotherapy were perceived as clinically useful if combined.
- 5) Play Therapy as a potentially useful psychotherapy for this population.

5) ANALYSIS:



8) FUTURE:

This study has important implications for the efficacy of treatments provided to this population and to the services currently treating this group of children and young people.

Larger scale PhD project examining Developmental Language Disorder and accessibility to psychological therapies.

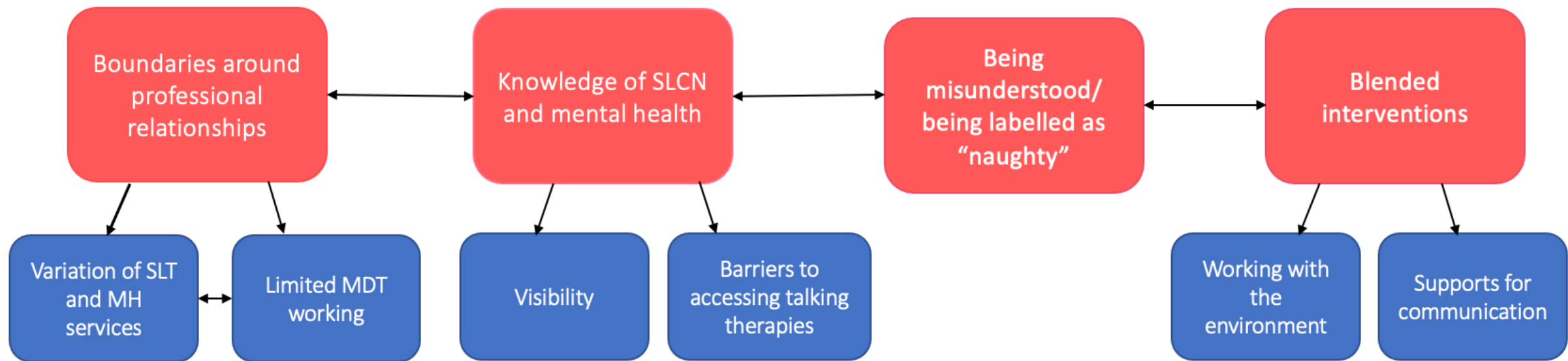
10) REFERENCES:

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Cohen, N. J., Farnia, F., & Im-Bolter, N. (2013). Higher order language competence and adolescent mental health. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, 54(7), 733-744. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12099>

SLCN & mental health difficulties are perceived to co-occur, but are not well understood and may not be accounted for.



SLCN and mental health: Typical difficulties reported in this population

