

Institution: Kingston University		
Unit of Assessment: 3 – Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy		
Title of case study: The Therapeutic Engagement Questionnaire: a tool to quantify and give recognition to registered mental health nursing therapeutic engagement activity		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2000 – 2018		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Names:	Roles:	Periods employed by submitting HEI:
Mary Chambers Kenya Kantaris	Professor of Mental Health Nursing Research Associate	Feb 2004 – present 2012 – 2019
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2018 – present		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		

1. Summary of the impact

Although therapeutic engagement is perceived as the crux of mental health nursing, prior to the Therapeutic Engagement Questionnaire (TEQ) there was no metric to measure this objectively in acute inpatient mental health settings. The TEQ was developed and validated in England as a tool that can quantify and give recognition to registered mental health nursing therapeutic engagement activity with service users within a therapeutic environment. It has been adopted and implemented by the National Health Service (NHS), Mental Health Trusts and independent mental health hospitals in England. The TEQ has also been successfully implemented internationally, in Slovenia, Finland, and Malta. Implementation has led to TEQ data being utilised by nursing staff at all levels of seniority to assess and improve registered mental health nurse therapeutic engagement activity.

2. Underpinning research

Since the inception of Peplau's [1952] seminal work emphasising the primacy of the nurse-patient relationship, therapeutic engagement has been considered the crux of mental health / psychiatric nursing [McAndrew et al., 2014]. Given the perceived importance of therapeutic engagement in mental health nursing, it is important to measure quantitatively registered mental health nurse-service user therapeutic interactions, from both nurse and service user perspectives, in the acute inpatient mental health setting. Prior to the Therapeutic Engagement Questionnaire (TEQ), there was no such quantitative tool available. Consequently, unwarranted variation in mental health nursing practice could arise, as it was not possible to apply objective measures. Therefore, Chambers' team sought to address the overall research question: can a short, simple tool be developed for routine use within acute inpatient settings to quantify and give recognition to registered mental health nursing therapeutic engagement activity?

Professor Chambers led a team of national and international academic researchers (Dr Kantaris; Professor McAndrew, University of Salford; Professor Nolan, University College London; Professor Kuosmanen, University of Eastern Finland; Associate Professor Al Hadid, University of Jordan; Dr Sammut, University of Malta; Associate Professor Štiglic, University of Maribor; Associate Professor Al-Sagarat, Mutah University, Jordan), service users, and registered mental health nurses, to co-design and validate the TEQ.

Six underpinning research studies [R1 - R6] of service users and registered mental health nurses were undertaken in acute inpatient settings. From the perspective of service users, dignity, respect, and being listened to were highlighted as important values in therapeutic engagement [R1]. Registered mental health nurses appreciated a positive therapeutic environment, and valued time to relate to and engage with service users. Nonetheless, they could experience fear and vulnerability in response to high levels of service user distress and disturbance [R2, R3]. Some attitudinal differences to service users and to therapeutic

engagement were reported among mental health nurses across European countries; related to social, cultural, and nursing practice context [R4].

The TEQ is the first intervention in acute inpatient settings to be collaboratively co-produced with both service users and registered mental health nurses, resulting in the TEQ being the first tool with the capacity to assess therapeutic engagement activities from the perspective of both groups. An initial questionnaire in two versions (service user and registered mental health nurse) was developed in 2012-2015 based on existing literature [R1 - R4], feedback from a workshop with 70 service users, clinical nurses and nurse academics, and the results from in-depth interviews with 19 detained service users [R5]. An expert panel of clinical and academic mental health nursing members and service users also reviewed the questionnaires [R5]. Further research (2015-2016) refined and validated the TEQ through principal components analysis and comparison with two other validated questionnaires that measure therapeutic alliance. The research involved 714 service users and 611 registered mental health nurses across 26 NHS Mental Health Trusts in England. Findings showed that the TEQ is psychometrically sound and acceptably valid as a measure of registered mental health nurse-service user therapeutic engagement in acute inpatient settings [R5, R6]. Subsequently, the TEQ has been translated into Arabic, Dutch, Finnish, Maltese, and Slovenian. It has been validated in Malta (2018-2019), and the psychometric properties evaluated and shown to be sound in Jordan (2017) and in Finland (2019).

3. References to the research

R1 – Chambers M, Gallagher A, Borschmann R, Gillard S, Turner K and **Kantaris X**. The experiences of detained mental health service users: issues of dignity in care. BMC Medical Ethics 2014;15:50. DOI: [10.1186/1472-6939-15-50](https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6939-15-50)

R2 – Chambers M, Gillard S, Turner K and Borschman R. Evaluation of an educational practice development programme for staff working in mental health in patient environments. Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing 2012;20(4):362-73. DOI: [10.1111/j.1365-2850.2012.01964.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2850.2012.01964.x)

R3 – Chambers M, **Kantaris X**, Guise V and Välimäki M. Managing and caring for distressed and disturbed service users: the thoughts and feelings experienced by a sample of English mental health nurses. Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing 2015;22:289-97. DOI: [10.1111/jpm.12199](https://doi.org/10.1111/jpm.12199)

R4 – Chambers M, Guise V, Välimäki M, Botelho MAR, Scott A, Staniulienė V, Zanotti R. Nurses' attitudes to mental illness: A comparison of a sample of nurses from five European countries. International Journal of Nursing Studies 2010;47:350-62. DOI: [10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2009.08.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2009.08.008)

R5 – Chambers M, McAndrew S, Nolan F, Thomas RN, Watts P, **Kantaris X**. Service user involvement in the coproduction of a mental health nursing metric: The Therapeutic Engagement Questionnaire. Health Expectations 2016;20(5):871-7. DOI: [10.1111/hex.12526](https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.12526) REF2ID: 03-102-295

R6 – Chambers M, McAndrew S, Nolan F, Thomas B, Watts P, Grant R and **Kantaris X**. [The Therapeutic Engagement Questionnaire \(TEQ\): a service user-focused mental health nursing outcome metric](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-019-2326-x). BMC Psychiatry 2019;19:384. DOI: [10.1186/s12888-019-2326-x](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-019-2326-x) REF2ID: 03-048-55

The underpinning research on development and validation of the TEQ resulted in invitations to Professor Mary Chambers to present at national and international conferences. Accepted invitations include presentations to: European Conference on Mental Health, Tallinn, Estonia, 2014 (Keynote); International Network for Psychiatric Nursing Research conference, Manchester, 2015; International Meeting on Nursing Research and Evidence Based Practice, Melbourne, 2017 (Keynote); 6th World Congress on Nursing and Health Care, Durban, 2019 (Keynote); European Society of Person Centered Healthcare Conference, London, 2019; and European Society of Medicine General Assembly, Berlin, 2021.

Impact case study (REF3)

Development and validation of the TEQ in acute inpatient mental health settings was part of the following awards from national peer review funders:

- 2014-2016 Department of Health (Mental Health Nursing Division). Principal Investigator: Mary Chambers. GBP58,000
- 2017 The Burdette Trust for Nursing - BRN/SB/jll/101010662/139174. Principal Investigator: Mary Chambers. GBP7,900

4. Details of the impact

The Therapeutic Engagement Questionnaire (TEQ) has been implemented nationally and internationally in acute inpatient mental health settings as a reliable and valid therapeutic engagement measurement tool. It is used to assess and improve registered mental health nurse - service user therapeutic engagement activity. The information gathered by the TEQ has helped to inform nursing staff at all levels of seniority, including Directors of Nursing and ward managers, about the nature of registered mental health nursing therapeutic engagement activity and how it is experienced by service users. The tool has demonstrated its value in highlighting the role of registered mental health nurses in therapeutic engagement activity, and in identifying practice variation and support and training needs. This has resulted in national policy impact and impact on nursing practice in the UK and internationally.

National policy impact

NHS England promotes the TEQ in its Atlas of Shared Learning [S1], emphasising the importance of the TEQ in supporting delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan. The Atlas is based on selected case studies providing evidence of how nursing staff have identified and addressed variation in practice leading to improved patient outcomes. It provides a key evidence base of new practice to help drive delivery of NHS healthcare priorities over the next ten years, as set out in the NHS Long Term Plan. The NHS England and NHS Improvement Clinical Lead for Mental Health supported a letter being sent from Professor Chambers through the National Mental Health Nurse Directors Forum to all members, on the value and benefits of implementing the TEQ. This prompted take-up of the TEQ by three additional NHS Mental Health Trusts. The Clinical Lead also invited Professor Chambers to present the impacts from implementation of the TEQ at an NHS England & NHS Improvement Mental Health webinar in March 2021.

Impact on practice in NHS Mental Health Trusts and private mental health hospitals

In England, four of the NHS Mental Health Trusts have fully implemented the TEQ and a further three are in the process of implementing the tool. This is 13% of the 54 NHS Mental Health Trusts in England. The independent provider, The Priory Group, has also implemented the TEQ in three of their adult acute mental health units. Feedback from registered mental health nurses, nurse managers and Directors of Nursing has been positive about the value of the TEQ. In several Trusts, robust and transparent monitoring though use of the TEQ has highlighted barriers and obstacles to registered mental health nurses delivering perceived appropriate and valued therapeutic activities. As a result of being made aware of these problems, managers and nurses have been able to institute supportive and remedial actions [S2-7].

The TEQ has been implemented as part of the SW London and St George's NHS Mental Health Trust Quality Improvement and Innovation (QII) initiative, outlined in their 2018-2023 strategy. Using the TEQ, the Trust's QII Project Manager found that registered mental health nurses gave higher scores than service users for the contribution of nursing staff to the recovery of service users in the general ward setting (8.20 v. 7.07, with '10' the most helpful they could be) and in one-to-one clinical sessions (8.34 v. 7.14). There was wide variation in the scores given by service users, suggesting differential experiences and variation in nursing practice. The TEQ results also highlighted specific improvement areas from the service user perspective: support in making choices and planned care risks, working in partnership, and coordinated and collaborative care planning. In response, the Project Manager has worked with ward managers to identify appropriate quality improvement interventions to be piloted and assessed using the TEQ [S2]. These include named nurse sessions being protected times and scheduled within shifts. Additionally, cultural changes are being introduced at ward level. One ward manager, for

example, now references the TEQ in clinical supervisions with nursing staff to identify and illuminate therapeutic engagement support they should be delivering; one of several impacts of the TEQ presented by the ward manager at the National Mental Health Nurse Directors' Forum Conference, 2020 [S3]. Additionally, the Trusts' Director of Nursing and Quality reported that the TEQ was '*continuing to have a positive impact on the care we provide*' and '*continuing to be influential as the results have already been used to influence and inform wider pieces of work in the organisation*' [S4].

Several Trusts identified, through use of the TEQ, that service users are less involved in planning their care than rated by registered mental health nurses. This has resulted in Trusts initiating nursing practice improvements to help increase service user engagement. In Cumbria, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear (CNTW) NHS Foundation Trust, identification of a significant difference in how service users and registered mental health nurses score service user collaboration in care planning in one-to-one clinical sessions (64.3% nurses strongly agreeing with care-planning TEQ statements v. 41.2% service users) has supported changes for improvement. Nursing managers have re-established nurse-service user engagement as a priority and the Group Nurse Director led reflective sessions with nursing staff on increasing meaningful service user collaboration in care planning. The Executive Director of Nursing and Chief Operating Officer described the TEQ as '*an enabler, motivating the nursing workforce to helpfully challenge practice and engage meaningfully with the multi-disciplinary teams*' and stated that the TEQ findings have '*influenced the implementation of the new Central Inpatient Nursing Staffing Model, with increased numbers of senior and experienced mental health nursing staff on each ward supporting quality of care delivery, enhancing nursing as a defined profession and promoting the importance and value of therapeutic engagement*' [S5]. The CNTW Trust are discussing with teams '*to extend the use of TEQ ...[to]... other nurse and service user contact points such as therapeutic and protected medication administration*' [S5].

The TEQ was implemented in all mental health adult inpatient wards of the NE London NHS Foundation Trust. Findings highlighted that service users in the older adult ward rated the quality of therapeutic engagement received higher than service users on the general wards, where there has been significantly faster turnover and discharge during the Covid-19 pandemic. Identification of this issue has led the Trust Director of Nursing and the team leading implementation of the TEQ to explore with ward managers how good practice on collaborative therapeutic working can be shared and trialled across wards. The Director of Nursing also reported that the Trust have linked learning from the TEQ '*into the development of all our wards to achieve AIMS (Accreditation for Inpatient Mental Health Services) and it has enabled us to hear the user and staff voice in relation to our service developments*' [S6].

Having identified through implementation of the TEQ that service users on one unit did not know their named/primary nurse, the Priory Group were persuaded to introduce a new practice model that involves the named/primary nurse introducing themselves to the service user at each twice-daily nurse handover. The nurse also asks the service user open-ended questions about their care. The Priory Group's Specialist Director further reports an '*increase in numbers of nurses requesting to attend therapeutic engagement-based CPD courses*', reflective of their increased awareness of the value of therapeutic engagement. Additionally, the Director stated that they '*plan to include some information about the (TEQ) implementation project in the next set of Priory Quality Accounts 2020-2021*' and that another of the Priory's adult acute service units is considering implementation having been '*very impressed with the TEQ*' [S7].

International impact

The TEQ has been implemented in Slovenia (2018), Finland (2019), and Malta (2020). Jordan will implement the TEQ in 2021.

In Slovenia, implementation of the TEQ in two acute inpatient mental health institutions '*was key in identifying the variation in practice across the institutions, something which had not been achieved before.*' The TEQ found significant differences between the two institutions in the average scores given by both service users and registered mental health nurses for the quality of general ward therapeutic engagement actions, and one-to-one therapeutic engagement

interactions. The TEQ results also identified two key problematic issues - nurses giving service users *'control over their care plan'* and *'encouraging service users to step out of their comfort zone.'* As a result of these findings, *'clinical nursing staff will review their current nursing practice. Accordingly, they will update their guidelines on engaging with patients and how to directly involve patients in planning their care.update their guidelines on engaging with patients, in particular how to directly involve patients in planning their care'* [S8].

In Finland, pre-testing of the TEQ across 10 acute psychiatric inpatient units of two hospitals generated positive feedback on the benefits of the tool from both service users and registered nurses. Following this feedback the TEQ has been implemented across 20 units in two Helsinki hospitals. The pre-testing phase found some variation between units in the scores given by service users for therapeutic engagement practice, on the unit in general and in one-to-one interactions. Managers and nurses reported that this was useful learning since units with poorer results could put in place quality improvements to address variation in nursing therapeutic engagement practice. Service users reported feeling that as a result of the tool making nursing activity more transparent, the quality of their care would improve [S9]. The Nursing Director at Helsinki University Hospital upheld the TEQ as a tool *'for quality improvement because it helps deliver standardized quality therapeutic care for service users, by driving out any identified poor nursing practice'* [S10].

Implementation of the TEQ on the main admissions ward in Malta's mental health hospital showed that service users gave slightly lower overall scores than psychiatric nurses for statements in relation to the therapeutic environment and atmosphere of the ward (62.1 v. 67.7), and to one-to-one clinical interactions (65.9 v.67.7). The TEQ also highlighted particular problems relating to the inclusion and dignity afforded to service users by psychiatric nurses. Discussing the findings in a focus group, the ward manager and psychiatric nurses reported that the TEQ had provided insight into aspects of therapeutic care they may have *'taken for granted'*. Additionally, by highlighting *'problems that were not obvious to them'* the TEQ will enable them to target specific areas for further training and improvement. As a result of these findings the Director of Nursing at Malta's Mount Carmel Hospital considers the TEQ *'to be of value to our organisation and it can be included as part of our regular audits in the clinical area'* [S11].

In addition to the specific impacts described above, the wider value and significance of the TEQ (and its underpinning research) to mental health nursing, is recognised by Professor Mary Chambers being awarded the [Eileen Skellern Memorial Lecture in 2017](#). This prestigious annual award celebrates significant advances in the field of mental health and mental health nursing.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

S1 – NHS England. The Atlas of Shared Learning: [TEQ Case Study](#)

S2 – Presentation by the QII Project Manager, SW London & St George's Mental Health NHS Trust, *TEQ. Results of 4 in-patient wards data collection*. October 2020.

S3 – Presentation by the Lavender Ward Manager, SW London & St George's Mental Health NHS Trust, National Mental Health Nurse Director's Forum Conference, December 2020

S4 – Letter from the Director of Nursing and Quality, SW London & St George's Mental Health NHS Trust

S5 – Letter from the Executive Director of Nursing and Chief Operating Officer, Cumbria, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

S6 – Letter from the Director of Nursing (Clinical Effectiveness), NE London NHS Foundation Trust

S7 – Letter from the Specialist Director, The Priory Group

S8 – Letter from the Associate Professor, University of Maribor, Slovenia

S9 – Kuosmanen L., et al. (2020) Therapeutic Engagement Questionnaire (TEQ) within mental health care in Finland. *Tutkiva Hoitotyö*, 19(1), 3-11.

S10 – Letter from the Nursing Director, Helsinki University Hospital (Psychiatry), Finland

S11 – Letter from the Director of Nursing, Mount Carmel Hospital, Malta