Author’s response to reviews

Title: Motivations and experiences of volunteers and patients in mental health befriending: A thematic analysis

Authors:

Megan Cassidy (m.cassidy@qmul.ac.uk)
Rose Thompson (RoseThompson@mcpin.org)
Rawda El-Nagib (rawda.3@googlemail.com)
Lauren Hickling (lauren.hickling@nhs.net)
Stefan Priebe (S.Priebe@qmul.ac.uk)

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor

Many thanks for your response to the submission of our paper and the comments of the reviewer. We have revised the paper in the light of the comments. Our detailed response to the points of the reviewers is as follows.

Reviewer reports:

Janhavi Vaingankar (Reviewer 1): Thank you for addressing my comments. I see that lack of information on befrienees motivations has been added to the limitations and suggested as a future research area. Thank you for renumbering the participant numbers as well to ensure confidentiality. It would have been good if the duration of the volunteer-befrienee relationship and further background data were collected. I understand that defining the research question and scope of a study is important, but I believe if the research explores impact and experiences of a relationship, it might have been worthwhile to consider how the length of this relationship could have influenced these experiences. Authors could state these as limitations or why these were not deemed relevant for this research and discuss briefly (in 2-3 sentences) how availability of these could have had some bearing on the findings.
Thank you for noting the changes made in our previous revision, we are pleased that they are evident. We agree that this is a limitation, and one that could be considered by others in future research rated to this topic. As such, we have added a statement to lines 430-433 outlining how we believe this information could have affected the findings. A comment has been added to the end of line 443 to note that this could be considered in future research studies.

Technical comments:

1. We note that you have stated that "As part of the process of informed consent, participants were aware that their anonymised data would be published in a report with identifiers removed." However, your manuscript contains potentially identifiable information; i.e. age, sex, etc., after each included participant quote. Please amend the manuscript to address this issue by removing the sex and ages of participants.

Thank you for this comment. The sex and ages of the participants has been removed from the quotes in question, to ensure anonymity.

2. Please carefully review the referee comments found at the end of this email and revise your manuscript accordingly.

This has now been done, as suggested. Please see our response to the Reviewer reports for these changes.

3. When submitting your revised manuscript please ensure you do so as a single clean copy without any tracked changes, colored or highlighted text, as these are no longer required at this stage of the editorial process.

Thank you for this feedback. You will now see that the revision has been submitted as a single clean document.

We hope that this revised version of our manuscript may be acceptable for publication in BMC Psychiatry.

Yours sincerely

Stefan Priebe