

PANEL 4: AGE - YOUNG TO OLD

“Education is wasted on the young” – a psychosocial evaluation of the benefits of Higher Education to older people.

The title, suggests that older people returning to education make excellent students - attentive, keen to learn and grateful for the opportunity (The Guardian, 2007). Social changes, in the 21st Century, including later national retirement age, pension provision and extended working life have made it increasingly necessary for people to develop and continue learning into later age (Hyde and Phillipson, 2014). This primary research project will provide quantitative data of older participants in Higher Education (HE) by using a self-completed questionnaire to discuss age, educational background, employment history and motivation for undertaking a degree. Qualitative data, using a focus group, will provide testimonies of personal motivation and anticipated social capital gains of a degree alongside the economic benefits to self, family and society. A critical evaluation will discuss whether HE for older adults is beneficial to the educational gerontology discussion and what, if any, are the advantages of older learners within society.

Public vs Professional perceptions of drug use amongst young people causing criminal behaviour

My dissertation will be based on youth offending, the purpose of this research is to explore whether there is a link between young people and the use of illegal drugs as a cause of criminal behaviour, and if this then leads to a cycle of reoffending and whether certain measures can be applied to help prevent this cycle reoccurring. The methodology used within this study will be a 15 question questionnaire, one has been sent to professionals working within the youth work industry and another to the general public. This is to enable me to compare views and to see if the public's perception of youth crime and illegal drugs is different to those working within youth services. Following on from this my focus will be to assess what support is available to youths taking illegal substances who also may be involved in the criminal justice system from the professional point of view and comparing it with the public's view of support offered in these circumstances.

Public perceptions of Youth crime

Youth crime has been an ongoing problem since the early 1900s, to find the root cause and to potentially reduce youth crime, it is important to focus on the causes of juvenile offending. My dissertation will be based on the perceptions of the causes of youth crime. I will be concentrating my research on the public perceptions and how if so, they have changed over time. Therefore, I will be looking at the general population and their explanations and experiences that explain why the youth turn to crime. To do so, I will be distributing questionnaires via social media, which will include both open and closed end questions, the open-ended questions will allow me to get more detail about the opinions and perceptions the public hold regarding the causes of youth crime. I will also be

carrying out secondary research to compare if the perceptions have changed over time. In order to do this, I will be using journals, reports and books.

Ageing society- A psychosocial analysis of the stigma associated with dementia, and the effects experienced by carers/family of individuals with Dementia, in Peterborough.”

My dissertation will analyse the stigma associated with dementia and its effects; such as social exclusion. I have personal experience working with individuals affected directly or indirectly with dementia, and I have found that services provided for older people within Peterborough, fail to accept individuals past the first stage of dementia, or at all, due to stigma, lack of training, finances, volunteers, and extensive waiting lists. This can result in individuals with dementia; and their carers, being excluded from institutions unless they join an established/labelled dementia organisation. Reducing stigma associated with dementia, could lead to people with dementia being accepted within their communities for who they are individually, not as an individual with dementia, which in turn could lead to an overall reduction of social exclusion for our ageing population.