

Ethnography in a prison based personality disorder treatment unit

**‘GREEN’ PRISON RESEARCHER’S
EXPERIENCE OF THE RISKS AND REWARDS
OF ‘BEING THERE’**

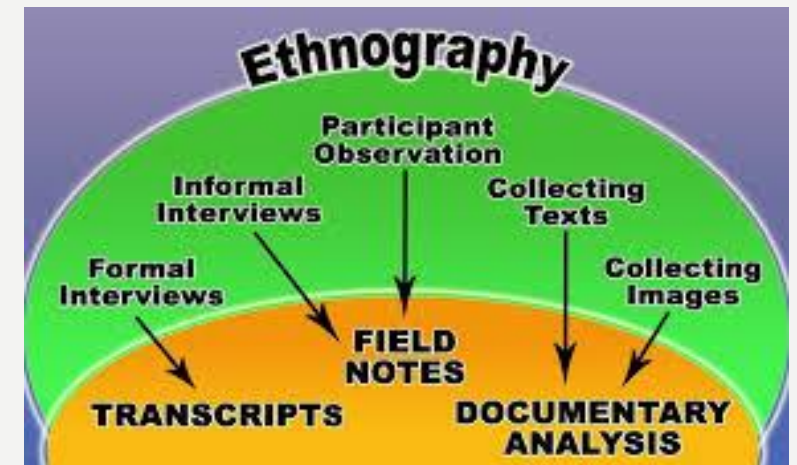
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ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnography is a qualitative research approach where the intent is to provide detailed, in-depth description of everyday life and practice.

Ethnographers generate understanding of culture by providing an 'insider's point of view'. This allows for critical categories and meanings to emerge from the ethnography rather than imposing these from existing models (Brian Hoey, 2014).





THE PRESENTATION

The purpose of this presentation is to share my personal experiences of conducting an ethnography as a 'green' prison researcher

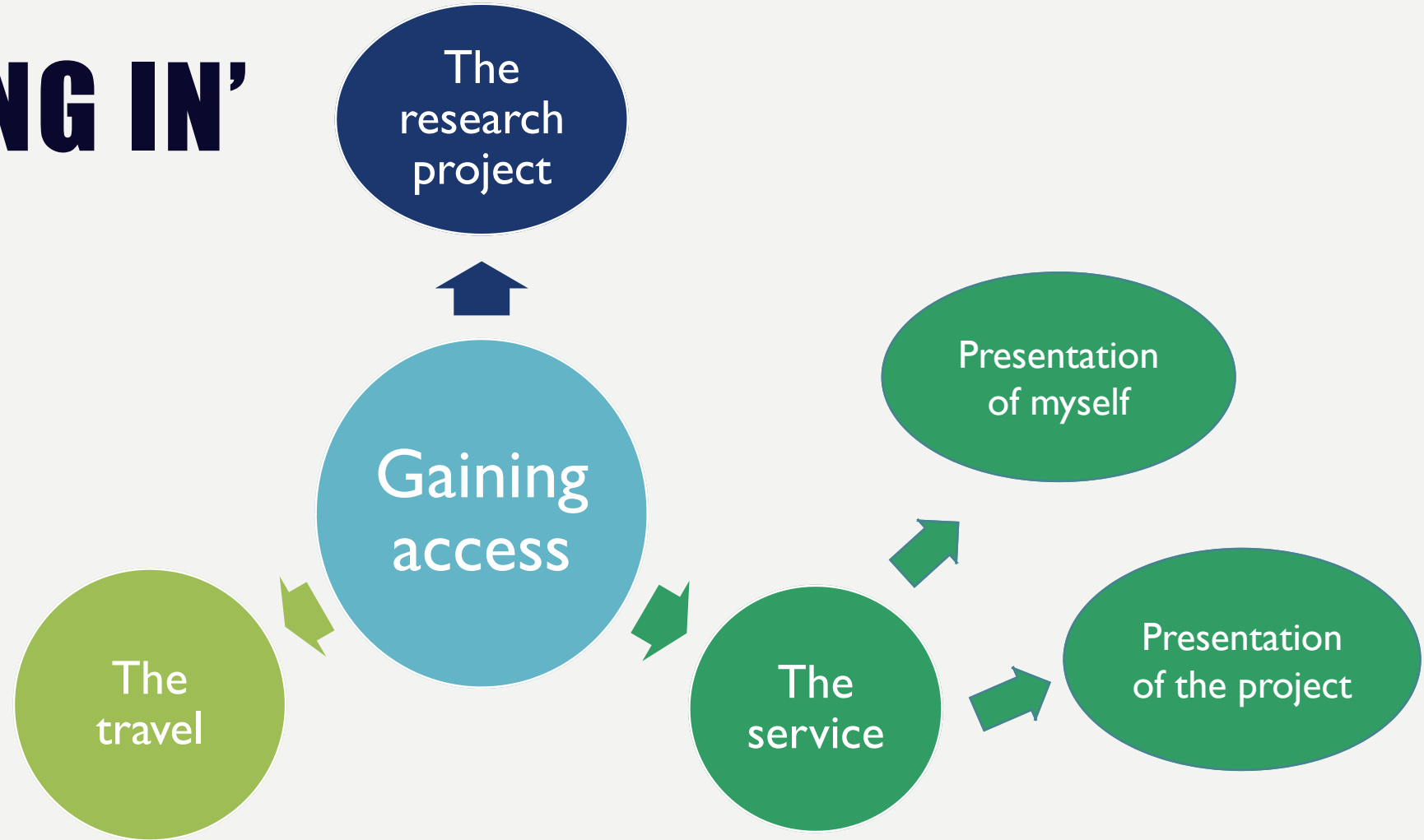
The Ethnography

- Medium secure prison PD unit
- 10 months – 3 days a week (sometimes 4 days including weekend) – 8 hours a day
- Spaces: clinical staff room, officer staff office, meeting rooms, general communal space

Framework adapted from David Buchanan and colleagues (1988)

- 'Getting in'
- 'Getting on'
- 'Getting out'

'GETTING IN'



'GETTING ON'

'Being in the Way'

- Being 'roleless' in a treatment service

'Who am I?' 'What am I doing?'

- Am I a staff member?
- Just sitting there

'The More Dramatic the Better'

- Pain and frustration is good data

'GETTING OUT'

What happens next?

- Feeling guilty at the prospect of leaving
- Invested in everyone's narrative and belonging
- How is this fair?

How do you leave the 'field'?

- Marking my last day in the service



LIFE AFTER DATA COLLECTION

Reflections of my time doing ethnography

- The fieldwork shaped me
- The emotional element to the research continued

The value of 'Being There'

- Understanding the effects of noise
- Understanding the impact of small spaces
- Understanding what it means to listen

Thank you for your attention!

I would like to express my gratitude for the help of Mental Health Trust without whom this project could not be possible.

References

Sources

Hoey., B. (2014). *A Simple Introduction to the Practice of Ethnography and Guide to Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. *Marshall University Digital Scholar* Available at: http://works.bepress.com/brian_hoey/12/

Image sources:

Ethnography graph:

What Is Ethnography in Sociology? hummedia.manchester.ac.uk/institutes/methods-manchester/docs/ethnographyinsociology.pdf.

Coffee morning picture:

Coffee Morning swalwellprimary.org/2019/02/coffee-morning/