



User Involvement Project

The VESFA (Virtual Elaborated Semantic Feature Analysis) research project explored the feasibility of elaborated Semantic Feature Analysis (SFA) with conversations delivered in EVA Park. In the intervention development phase, we undertook Public Involvement (PI) activities funded by BAS.

PI describes research carried out 'with' or 'by' members of the public rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them [5]. The term 'public' describes patients and potential patients, carers and people who use health services.

This PI project consulted people with aphasia (PWA), those who would *receive* the intervention, and speech and language therapists (SLT) as those who *deliver* interventions.

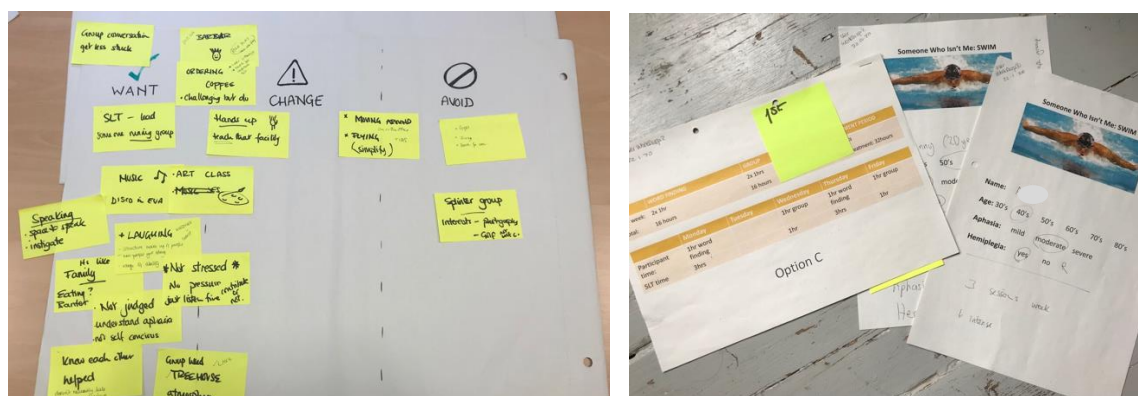
Aims:

1. Refine the goals and content of VESFA intervention in response to user opinion
2. Develop acceptable research procedures
3. Explore the delivery of VESFA
4. Explore the meaning of the findings
5. Explore how tell PWA and practicing clinicians about new research
6. Understand how VESFA can be integrated and implemented into clinical practice

Four PWA collaborated in five user involvement workshops (table 1).

Workshop 1: Content	What goes into the therapy?
City, University of London January 2020	Explored and charted the content of group therapy Explored priorities for therapy
Workshop 2: Regime	How is the therapy delivered?
City, University of London January 2020	Explored intensity of assessment and treatment regimes
Workshop 3: Experience	Consultants experienced a taster VESFA session
City, University of London February 2020	Feedback on a model VESFA session
Workshop 4: Results	What do the research results tell us?
City, University of London October 2022	The important results, the main message and next steps
Workshop 5: Tell	How best to disseminate findings to the aphasia community?
Online, March 2021	Explored dissemination methods

Table 1. Workshops with users with aphasia



Methods: Image (left) from workshop 1 and image (right) visual supports from workshop 2

Focus groups with three aphasia clinicians explored how this treatment approach could be integrated and implemented into clinical practice. Clinicians shared current situated language therapy practice. Elements that could translate to virtual world therapies were discussed. Clinicians were presented with the planned VESFA protocol and discussed the feasibility of running the protocol within their clinical settings.

PWA identified therapy content, a therapy regime, strengths and weaknesses of VESFA, important results and dissemination methods. Clinicians ratified the resulting treatment protocol. As a result of user involvement, the VESFA protocol included:

- an acceptable regime (4 sessions a week over 8 weeks),
- equal weighting to SFA sessions and conversation groups (16 ESFA sessions and 16 conversation groups)
- topic based conversation groups that are SLT led and focussed on situated language
- simplified navigation in EVA Park
- users highlighted quality of life changes as important
- dissemination activities will include a video and talks at aphasia groups

This PI project drew upon the expertise of people with aphasia to produce a treatment regime, research procedures, interpretation of results and a dissemination plan for a feasibility trial. Through this process current research findings were shared and discussed with people with aphasia. Knowledge of aphasia will be promoted through the dissemination activities.

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References:

[1]

INVOLVE. Briefing notes for researchers: involving the public in NHS, public health and social care research. INVOLVE, Eastleigh; 2012.