



Intensive Interaction Newsletter

July/August 2004

Issue 7

News in Brief:

- Dave Hewett is running some 'open access' 1 day courses on *Intensive Interaction* over the next few months. The dates are on:

11th Oct '04 in Marsden, W. Yorks; 29th Nov '04 in Watford; 4th March '05 in Birmingham and 8th April '05 again in Watford.

Further details can be obtained from Dave's office on Tel: 01920 468621 or by visiting his website at:

www.davehewett.com

- Anyone wishing to put their names forward for the *Intensive Interaction* courses run by Marion Crabbe (SLT) and Graham Firth (II Project Leader) in Leeds should contact Marion on 0113 3055393.

More dates for the training days 'Using *Intensive Interaction*' led by Janet Gurney, and 'Getting to Know Each Other' led by Phoebe Caldwell have been arranged. To find out more contact Concept Training on:

Tel: 01524 832 828

or via the website at:

www.concept-training.co.uk

- Dave Hewett is presenting a 1 day course on 'Empathic Handling' at the Blenheim Centre in Leeds on Friday 12th November. The cost is £30 but places are limited. To find out more please contact ILS manager, Margaret Farrar on 0113 245 1580

Leeds MH NHS Trust Research Project Analysis

The Leeds Mental Health NHS Trust *Intensive Interaction* Research Project is currently coming to the end of its evidence gathering phase. The amount of evidence provided, and its richness in both detail and depth has been most gratifying, and that is all down to all those care staff and managers who so kindly took part. Without their efforts none of the ensuing results and analysis would have been possible.

The staff who were interviewed gave the project team a real insight into their working practices, what they thought of their training in *Intensive Interaction* (oh no!— GF) and the kinds of impact the training had on their care practices.

They also provided evidence of what they thought about using the approach with their own clients in their own social care setting (and perhaps having other people watch), what worked well and what were the difficulties, how their clients responded to the use of different interactive techniques and what they thought might become of the approach in the future.

A number of very interesting themes emerged concerning staffs' attitude to age-appropriateness and normalisation issues, what staff saw as confirming feedback from their clients, and even how different staff constructed different definitions of what they thought *Intensive Interaction* actually is.

The project team is currently writing up the initial draft of the report, and copies will be available upon completion—whenever that is (hopefully by early November). GF.

IntensiveInteraction. co.uk

The Intensive Interaction website is getting bigger and better all the time.

Now, as well as the journal paper and book lists there are pages of information about the 'what', 'why' and 'who for' of Intensive Interaction, as well as a discussion forum and a place to subscribe to an e-mail newsletter.

To view the site just log-on to the web address at:

www.IntensiveInteraction.co.uk



Helen Elford

Helen is leaving the Leeds *Intensive Interaction* project for pastures new, and we would just like to thank her for all her work over the last year: your contribution has been invaluable! Thanks Helen!

Quote of the month!

Intensive Interaction is: '... communicating in the way they [the clients] want you to communicate with them, identifying sounds, watching behaviours, and just taking it a step further, with you joining in that behaviour, or that sound, and just seeing what evolves from there.'

(Research respondent—Leeds MH Trust care worker May 2004)

NAME: MARION CRABBE

**ROLE/POSITION: SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPIST
with East Leeds PCT**



Service locations: A variety of locations accessed by adults with learning difficulties: mostly group homes and day centres for clients with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

When I first began working as an Speech and Language Therapist I worked with children. I was aware I had good sessions at times, but others didn't feel as good. I tried to think about why this was but never reached any particular conclusions.

Some 5 years later, I began working with adult clients and went to a Dave Hewett day. After this I thought that perhaps my better sessions were when I was more fully focussed on the person I was working with. I tried consciously focusing on individuals in my sessions (rather than worrying about getting to my next appointment, etc, etc). I think the quality of my sessions improved.

Since working in adult services full time I've tried to apply an *Intensive Interaction* approach throughout my work, as well as helping staff to engage in *Intensive Interaction*. Sadly, I now have less client contact time than in the past so I don't have the opportunity to practice my skills as much as I would like.

I have used and recommended the use of an *Intensive*

Interaction approach for individuals with autism, so-called 'challenging behaviours' and with clients with profound and multiple disabilities. I have not tended to use equipment but have rather tried to 'tune in' to how a person is responding/reacting towards the environment. I have used somewhat different techniques when working with people's 'challenging behaviours' although this depends on who exactly is challenged by what!

My first intentional communication using this approach was with a gentleman who was said to have no interest in people or communication. He had profound learning disabilities and a number of challenging behaviours. When I first met him, he was lying on the floor, banging his head against the wall/floor joint, screaming and hitting his face with his hand and forearm. I laid down on the floor a short distance away and mirrored the arm movement. Within 10 minutes we were achieving eye contact and turn taking, the screaming had stopped, the head banging and hitting had stopped. We maintained our interaction for nearly half an hour. I was totally won over by this approach.

Since this time I've met a number of individuals for whom the approach has been equally successful in a very short period of time. I've also worked with individuals who begin to respond to another person very slowly, over long periods of time, or who respond in ways that are very subtle and can be difficult to detect without video evidence or an observer being present. I've only come across a handful of people (at most) who have not responded to my attempts to introduce *Intensive Interaction* – I tend to see this as my failing or lack of time invested rather than a difficulty with the approach.

MARION CRABBE



Reducing Stereotyped Behaviour: an experimental analysis of *Intensive Interaction*

Robert Jones & Huw Williams, in the

International Journal of Practical Approaches to Disability, Volume 22, (2/3), p.21-25.

Stereotyped behaviour such as body rocking, hand gazing and head swaying is a particular problem frequently reported in people with severe and profound learning disabilities. Previous studies demonstrated that naturally occurring interactions with staff could reduce stereotyped behaviour (Brusca *et al*, 1989; Lovell *et al* 1998; Ephraim, 1982). This research study investigated the effects of an *Intensive Interaction* intervention in comparison to the effects of a proximity-only intervention. The focus of the study was on the decrease of stereotyped behaviour as opposed to any effects on social behaviour.

Participant:

The participant was a 35-year-old man with a severe intellectual disability. The stereotyped behaviour occurred at high frequency. This consisted of flapping both hands.

Method & Findings:

The researchers conducted two single subject experiments. The first experiment used an alternative treatment design in order to compare the *Intensive Interaction* intervention with the effects of proximity-only intervention. The participant was observed in his normal environment during the baseline period. At the intervention phase staff were asked to sit near the participant (proximity) or sit near the participant and imitate his *stereotyped behaviour* (*Intensive Interaction*). The results of this experiment indicated that there was an apparent *decrease* in the participant's stereotyped behaviour to levels below baseline, shortly after the beginning of the *Intensive Interaction* intervention.

In the second experiment the researchers examined the effects only of stereotyped behaviour and the proximity was included as an element of conditions at baseline. A member of staff sat near the participant or sat near and copied the participant's interaction. From this experiment, it appeared that interaction had a reductive effect on the participant's *stereotypy* compared to both proximity only conditions found at baseline.

Discussion:

Overall, despite the positive and seemingly supportive evidence listed above, the effects were small and so not viewed as conclusively proving that *Intensive Interaction* is a therapeutic intervention for stereotypic behaviour. However, stereotyped behaviour is very difficult to reduce, and many studies have been unable to provide evidence of effective reduction whilst using a variety of other interventions.

Anna Sampson

(Research Assistant Psychologist - Leeds MH Trust)

Contact us!

Have you got any pieces of news or information that you think might be of interest to other people working in this area? It might be your own story of using *Intensive Interaction*, perhaps a book review, or some information on a training event. Anything will be very gladly received.

If you have, then just send it in to the address below.

Graham Firth, Leeds Mental Health NHS Trust, *Intensive Interaction* Project Office, Psychology Dept.,
St Mary's Hospital, Green Hill Road, Leeds LS12 3QE.

Phone: 0113 3055160

Fax: 0113 3055013

Email: graham.firth@leedsmh.nhs.uk