

# A CEN's first steps into clinical research

West Midlands SLI CEN

# Why a CEN?

- Because CENs are open to all of us.
- Can be specifically clinically focused, and offer protected 'space'.
- Can arrange study days and speakers to contribute because can have a budget
- Not scary!!

# Where to start?

- Advertised a study day that included a 'clinical research' slot
- Surveyed attending members' interest in becoming involved with research via discussion.

# During the meeting:

- Looked at RCSLT's presentation for CENs, so were aware of some of the main things that we had to do, eg. Using PICO formula:
  - Patient's disorder/problem
  - Intervention
  - Comparison intervention
  - Outcome
- Knew about the importance of:
  - Managerial support
  - Building a multiskilled network
  - Ethics/Research & Development guidance from Trusts

# Aims

- To identify a research question - discussed areas of interest to focus on that were clinically relevant for our caseloads.
  - Found **lots** of different ideas and priorities.
  - Needed to focus things. Identified interest in children's comprehension difficulties. Too big!
- To identify evidence-based resources/ literature that answer the question – preferably to find a current project to join

# Information gathering...

Approached local academics from HEIs to ask for support.

RCSLT's Research Centre, looking for a structure or pathway

Liaison with other CEN involved in research

Courses : UCL's 'Developing Research Ideas' session-application of PICO formula/literature searching

- Twitter
- Reading for interest, ie not formally critically appraising literature, but having a go.

- Decided that we would like to find a current project to join if possible.....
  - Tried to find something via RCSLT and monitoring the Research Champion Network.



# Meanwhile...

- Attended external training – ‘Sound Reasoning’, C.Bowen- but recognised the need for practice in applying new knowledge to our caseloads
- Advertised a study day to do that
- Appeared to fill a gap in our CPD journeys

# Study Day

- Structure of 'Theory in Action' day:
  - Committee chose one element of the course to focus on (intervention approaches to speech sound disorders – minimal pairs: Maximal oppositions, Empty set, Multiple oppositions)
  - Committee presented a summary of the theory relating to that element
  - Used case studies to discuss relevance and application of theory to caseload and discussed.

# Meanwhile.....

## Research Champion Network Event:

- Asked to reflect on contribution to workplace in this capacity
- Pro forma supplied

**Name** Beth Madigan  
**Affiliation** SLT Staffs

## Lay summary

A study day working on application of theories described in 'Children's Speech Sound Disorders', C.Bowen, to case studies of children with SLI aged 6-9 years old was offered and run, and feedback was gained from members following the day.

## Question/Rationale



*It is assumed that practicing SLTs are interested in accessing the current evidence base, in order to inform best practice in clinical situations. The West Midlands SLI CEN aimed to establish whether its members valued an opportunity to explore and apply current theories of treatment for children with phonological disorders.*

## What did you do?

Method step 1 here...

Advertised the study day, including an agenda.



Method step 2 here...

Presented 4 case studies and summaries of treatment options, which were then discussed and presented



Method step 3 here...

Gained verbal feedback from members to find out how interested they felt about the focus of the study day

## What did you find out?

Verbal feedback supported the assumption that practicing SLTs are interested in accessing the evidence base, amongst the therapists that attended the CEN meeting.

### Next steps:

Evaluate the effectiveness of the CEN forum as a mechanism for practicing SLTs to explore the evidence base via post-event questionnaire, and in comparison to other mechanisms such as clinical supervision.

### Implications:

Practicing SLTs report difficulties with accessing the evidence base for various reasons. Some reasons may be identified as being easier to surmount using appropriate fora for dissemination and discussion of EBP.

# Meanwhile.....

- #wespeechies topic on Twitter focused on comprehension difficulties in children!
- Lots of food for thought, and.... A relevant current research opportunity!

# What we think works

Being part of a group, but only if you allocate jobs/interests.

- Having a specific role within the group for someone/a group of interested people to scan Twitter, Research Champion Network, Facebook groups/Journal clubs
- Accessing relevant training – eg developing research ideas session at ucl- to help with applying PICO formula
- Not being too democratic! Decide on something and present that.

- We thought that we needed to follow a specific pathway to be involved in EBP (external scientific evidence, clinical expertise and the patient perspective)
- Our ideas were that we needed to have a certain process, that required specific skills and knowledge, to work towards a specific aim
- Ideas have evolved naturally as a ‘process of discovery’

- We found that some of our original ideas were becoming barriers to action and moving forward with interests
- Needed to find other pathways – see what happens and evolves naturally
- It was all increasing our knowledge of the evidence base and prompting application to our caseload.



# What next?

- More opportunities for exploring theory to practice following courses and literature searches
- Skills training for members. Eg literature searching, critical appraisal, using social media
- Involvement in existing research in comprehension difficulties and shape coding.
- Working out how to report what we're doing