

Amy Fellowship Int Final

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Hi, I'm Amy Harrison. I'm a, I'm an associate professor in psychology. And I'm also a clinical psychologist at UCL, I work in the department of psychology and human development in the Institute of Education. And I research eating disorders. And I supervise PhD students and undergraduate students research projects in this area. And I teach cognitive behavioural therapy, I was hoping to learn more about the different ways in which my work could impact broader audiences. And I was hoping to learn more about the practicalities of how to go about doing that. I was also hoping to meet some new people within UCL that I might not ordinarily have a chance to sort of come across in different departments working in different areas. And I was hoping to build some confidence in my ability to Yeah, to think about the different ways and put it into practice, put it into sort of bring it to fruition around impact, I would say that my project is largely the same as the one that I proposed when I applied. But one thing I learned about impact when I was writing that proposal, and kind of preparing for the to apply for the fellowship was that you can impact people by involving them in research or involving them in activities that bring about change. And that really appealed to me because I had done quite a bit of work before with, with people who have lots of lived experience of different mental health difficulties, particularly eating disorders. And I previously had a Medical Research Council grant, where we've been looking at decision making in childhood, and how that might be related to symptoms of eating disorders at across adolescents. And so the project that I've proposed was to really try and think about how to implement some of the findings that we had from that, that work, which was that the children who's who weren't as advantageous in their decision making skills were in childhood were more likely to have eating disorder symptoms in adolescence. And actually, this was a great piece decision making skills developed, less across adolescence, and sorry, across childhood and into adolescence. So I think my idea was to try and work with people in this target group, so children aged 11, to 14, to design something together that would help with these skills. So to impact this group, by utilising their lived experience and expertise in eating disorders, and to co design a game that would then teach advantageous decision making. And then I guess at a later stage, we'll try to get some more money to actually make this game and bring it to life and test it out, and see whether it can actually impact people positively, by helping to protect against eating disorder symptoms. And so I've been working with, I've run two workshops. And I've worked with 14 young people aged between 11 and 14, who have experience of eating disorders, either themselves, or they've had a sibling with an eating disorder. And we've been thinking together about what this game should look like, what the scenario should be, what the virtual environment should be, what the character should be like, and how, you know, really, we've been co creating a very engaging, fun and relevant game that can help with these skills. One of the major things that I've learned from this

fellowship is it's really about how to work with the right people, how to get in touch with the right people who could inform policy, for example, and work with them. That's what I've learned in lots of the sessions that I've attended. And also through the mentoring component. I've learned about how to really think about who a good industry partner would be. So that the, I guess the product that that you create, actually does what you want it to do. And so something that I've really, that has really changed my work is that I had started applying for grants to actually kind of bring this game to life and to test it out in a randomised control trial. Oh, and through the mentorship, part of the fellowship, I guess I started to realise that the industry partner that I'd made contact with and planned on working with wasn't quite right, that there needed to be an organisation that was more specialists are more focused on game development and had much more expertise, because it's really difficult to make a good game. And my mentor had worked on an app around cognition. And so it was able to kind of point me in the right direction, and put me in touch with some different industry partners, who might be more relevant, or might be a better match, really, in terms of this working partnership. And also really helped me to think about the intellectual property, and who holds each part of the intellectual property, like the actual coding of the game, versus the ideas that are co designed, and the actual sort of platform on which it's built. And so I learned a lot about that. And I haven't got my industry partner yet. But I have got some new contacts, and I have got a better idea of who and what they should be. So that's been incredibly helpful, because I think if I'd applied with the partner, and they're great organisation, I've worked with them before. I don't know if we would have been successful. And even if we were successful, I think it would have probably, I can anticipate would have been quite challenging. Because I think they would have had to bring in extra expertise from outside in order to bring to life, what I want to want to create. That's quite a turning point, actually, in this work that I've been kind of planning and working on. So I hosted two workshops online, and people just joined via a link and I had a series of questions. I asked the same questions and both of the workshops, and they were about if you were to play a game that would teach you how to make really great decisions around food and exercise. What might that look like? So who would the characters be? What would the sort of world or environment be what would be some of the scenarios that will be relevant to you? So what was really interesting about this was I've, I've conducted some thematic analyses on the data that I collected. And they're sort of four themes, I guess, that have emerged. And the first one is about who, so who would the characters be, and there was a really strong idea that they should be non human characters, that they should be, um, sort of otherworldly in a way. So people that characters or avatars that aren't actually human, which people thought would be a really good way of testing out and trying different options in a way that they wouldn't be tied to being human. So it would feel like they would be able to have more fun and be more playful, and test out different reactions, I suppose within the scenarios. So that was really interesting. And one of the things about these children that that joined the workshops was that a lots of them, were actually going, what they were all really into gaming. And some of them were going to do gaming and kind of cafes on the high street, and doing that with other people, or doing it with other people kind of online. And that was a really nice thing that they liked to do as part of their hobbies and sort of activities. So then the other bit was Where Where would the game be set up. They felt it should be locked, they gave lots of examples, but they felt the kind of scenario should be, should be based in kind of more real world. Examples, like they said sort of normal places like a school or shopping centre or restaurant or places where children of that age might be and might end up or you know, in the home as well as another example, they didn't feel that should be sort of otherworldly. But the character should be so that sort of gives this flexibility but also gives us familiarity.

They wanted their characters to be able to win points and people talked about kind of the character sort of building up tools building up knowledge, when they make an advantageous decision. So for example, perhaps when they resist doing something that might not be very useful for their health, then the character would actually win some points. And that would be a special power So they've kind of gained special powers that would allow them to, and they'd be able to build these up through the game. And they could even compete with others. So they wanted the game to be really interactive to be able to be played online, kind of against other players. And these characters could kind of win by getting more special powers. But they thought that the special powers were useful because if they were kind of weapons or coins or something like that, then it would feel that they weren't able to experiment as much with that sort of decisions. And they might not be able to take risks and try things out and see what the consequences might be. So just as an example, we talked about a character who maybe wanted to do a bit more exercise, and then might plan like a very rigid, rigorous regime involving hours of exercise every day, that was just really intrusive and not really able, they wouldn't be able to keep up that they, you know, they wouldn't want that one to sort of result in them losing all of their, their winnings. But actually, just to try it out, and maybe see the consequence of it, and then not get any extra special powers. But perhaps if they choose a different option for their character, the character could kind of grow and develop through these special powers. And the final thing was about kind of how, and they wanted it to be very humorous. So they really wanted to be able to kind of have fun. And for funny sort of messages to come up saying, oops, not the greatest option. These are the reasons why, you know, sorry about your, your character hasn't done so well here. And these are the reasons why try, try another option. So they kind of Yeah, one of the quotes was I want to play around with making some bad choices, it's fun to see what might happen. So I think these were the elements of the game that we co designed. And I think one of the things that people were saying was that they really enjoyed the kind of creative the creativity of it. And they were really able to think about what they knew about having troubles with, with eating, either, you know, under eating or losing control over eating or kind of feeling that they had to exercise really excessively. And then think about how they could teach others to make really wise advantageous choices around around these things. What really surprised me about the young people I worked with was that they were very expert in games. And they obviously did advertise, you know, and try to work with people that were interested in games, but they do Yeah, they knew a lot about games, they spent a lot of time playing them, but not just computer games or online games. Also, they really enjoyed board games. And yeah, sort of that was a real hobby for a lot of them, and then what they would do with their friends, you know, outside of school. So that was really interesting. I think the other thing that was very surprising about the fellowship in general was all the different ways that you can create an impact. And it's really started to make me think about what my sort of area would be. And I do think this sort of experience based code design, where you're kind of working with people with expertise through lived experience, is something that I think I'm really drawn towards as a clinician, as somebody that's interested in creating change. And I can sort of also see in the UCL promotions pathway, that that's something they're interested in. So I feel like this has really helped me with my, my career and thinking about what next is my work and how to kind of harness the skills and networks and relationships I've built up. I think a really fun memory was just the tracks that I've had with the other fellows. I haven't been able to attend all the sessions, but the ones I've attended, I've really enjoyed listening to others, what they do in their research and what they do in their work. And just Yeah, making making new contacts, hearing more about what people do in UCL. I think that's a really fond memory. And I really feel really lucky actually to have been part of part of the group. So I've been writing this grant for the ESRC now for quite a few years. And the actual grant itself is really nicely written and I've had feedback on it. And I've really developed the

ideas. But I've actually now managed to do part of what I was planning because I've had this money from further fellowship, to sort of pay, pay these young people to take part and to work together. So I think that's going to help me to rewrite that part of it, and strengthen the case for funding because I've already, you know, managed to make some headway on, you know what it would be, and I think that's gonna make the application a lot stronger. So I'm gonna do that. And I'm also going to keep pursuing the best match with an industry collaborator who can really make this game. And with the new knowledge that I've got, make sure that all contracts around IP are clear and work with the UCL team around that. Because I would like one thing I learned from my mentor was that you can then exploit these, these new products and these new things that you create and maybe do more spin offs. And, you know, this could be a game that might be relevant in addictions or relevant in other areas of mental health, not just eating disorders. And so, so that's something I'm definitely going to be thinking about. But I think the sort of more immediate steps is trying to get this this grant application to the funder. And yeah, actually testing, making the game and testing it out and seeing if it does, indeed, protect against eating disorder symptoms. Yeah, I think if a colleague was applying for the fellowship, I would say to them, be mindful of your time, because it was kind of extra in my work plan. And that, unfortunately, made it difficult for me to engage in absolutely everything on offer. And I probably missed out on some really good things. So maybe talk to your head of department and see if you can negotiate something. Because I think it's a prestigious and it's a brilliant thing to have. And I'm sure my department sailing was very proud and very pleased that I was able to do this. But I think probably in hindsight, yeah, I would have a top tip would be get it into a work plan.