

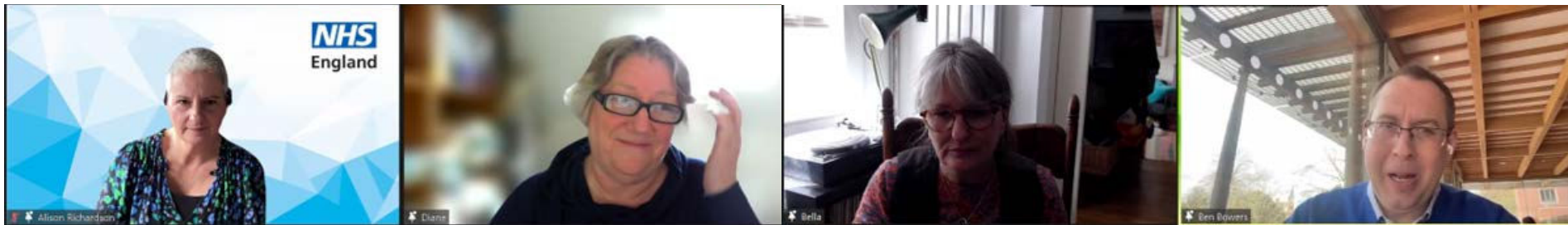
Masterclass:

Developing Research Questions

SUMMARY

Monday 4 March

1pm - 2pm, via Zoom



Dr Ben Bowers QN, Community Nursing Research Consultant, The QNI, ben.bowers@qni.org.uk, [@Ben_Bowers__](#)

- Welcome to everyone - this forum is for nurses who are undertaking or considering carrying out research in the community and those keen to be more research aware. It aims to strengthen the capacity of community-based nursing research through peer support, mentorship, and supporting personal development and research opportunities. There are currently 859 members across the UK. We offer monthly newsletters about research and research activities, webinars, masterclasses.
- We have a new private Facebook group, join it here:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/qnicommunitynursingresearchforum>
- This is the first masterclass of 2024. The next one will be on 15 May and will be on 'Choosing appropriate research methods.'
- To sign up and/or find out more, go to:
<https://qni.org.uk/nursing-in-the-community/community-nursing-research-forum/> or scan the QR code below:



Formulating 'good' research questions

Alison Richardson, Clinical Professor of Cancer Nursing & End of Life; Director of NIHR ARC Wessex Director; Head of Nursing Research (Academic Leadership and Strategy, NHS England)

- *'The art and science of asking questions is the source of all knowledge.'* Thomas Berger, American Novelist
- How many times in a working day do you question the value of an established healthcare practice? What kinds of questions do you and your colleagues of new technology or innovation?
- These questions are part of being a healthcare professional. Research questions are our way of grappling our curiosity
- I'm often working with PhD students and supporting others to articulate those and take research forward.
- It's the fuel that drives scientific research
- Where do 'good' research questions come from? *'When curiosity turns to serious matters, it's called research.'* Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach
- This is very much only partially taught in text books.
- Sources of new ideas: review existing practice; challenge accepted ideas; look for conflicting views; investigate geographical variation; identify Cinderella topics; let loose the imagination
- Build on your own experience, 'apprentice' yourself to a more experienced nurse researcher.
- Be alert to new ideas!



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- Underlying the discovery process are often two emotions:
 1. Surprise: intellectual emotion when we see something happening against expectation
 2. Indignation: moral emotion when we see something that is wrong
- Do not underestimate keeping hold of that passion.
- Types of questions from practice:
 - prediction questions, eg a cohort study
 - intervention questions, eg a randomised control trial
 - exploration questions, eg use qualitative methods
- Types of research question
 - descriptive
 - relational
 - causal
- Is it a what, how, or why question? Is about cause and effect?

What makes a good Research Question

- Details the problem statement
- Further describes and refines the issue under study
- Adds focus to the problem statement
- Guides data collection and analysis
- Sets context of the research

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- There often isn't a 'shazam' moment - it's about setting out on a path and moving from a broad area to a specific question (see below)
- It's very important to prioritise and filter as you go through - what are the implied questions and the explicit questions.
- Continually narrowing down the scope will finally formulate the research question.
- It's not linear though! I've never been able to approach it that way. You often have to go backwards and forwards: you identify gaps, it spins you off, you go round a few times and finally you get the question
- FINER: a research framework. An acronym for Feasible, Interesting, Novel, Ethical and Relevant find out more here: <https://scientific-publishing.webshop.elsevier.com/research-process/finer-research-framework/>
- *'A good question should pass the 'so what' test. Getting the answer should contribute usefully to our state of knowledge.'* Hulley et al 2007
- Ideas are worth sharing! Curiosity = bad for cats, but good for researchers!
- NIHR currently In Practice Fellowships open for applications, for all health and care professions within primary care setting, find out more here: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding/in-practice-fellowship-ipf-round-18/35451>



Being a lay partner in research development

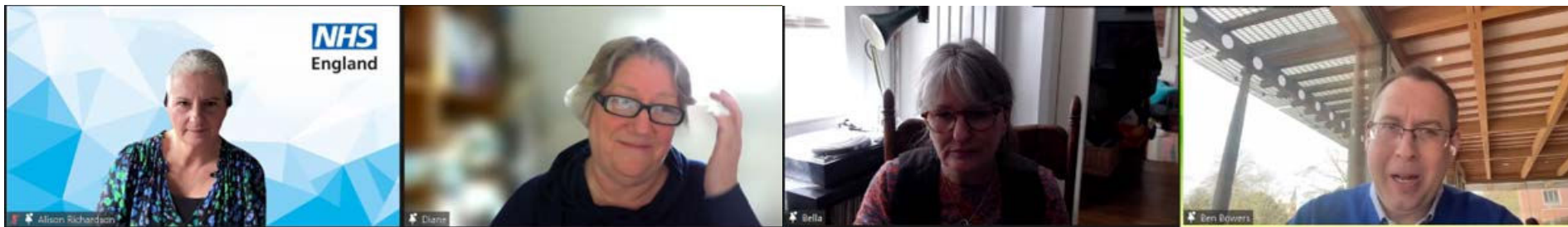
Isobelle Madden, Public Contributor with lived experience

- I've been a public contributor for the last 10 years with end of life and palliative care researchers through Cambridge university
- I bring my experience from caring for family members at end of life
- It's a real privilege to be asked your opinion about a research project - from the question, to the methodology to data collection.
- I may get sent to me rough ideas about research that researchers want to do and I will read them and see what my response to them are from my own perspective.
- Never forget that being a researcher - whatever type of research you're doing - is an act of care.
- It's also a very creative process.
- I know that ethical guidelines are vital, they can also be very intimidating. It might be the research you're wanting to undertake is dancing at the edges of some of those guidelines, particularly if dealing with issues of mental capacity and others.
- Having public contributors as a part of this process can help embolden you and give you the courage to go ahead with the real issues of care. It can deepen your research and help you keep that meaningfulness that many people start off with, which can get watered down over time.
- Go for it without fear: let loose the imagination!



Questions

- Q: how do you fit your research questions into grant calls? Fellowships can take so long to prepare.
- A: Do your homework. Develop an understanding with more experienced researchers, what is that particular funder most likely to respond to. My starting point is that you shouldn't be trying to shoe horn anything, you should be trying to find the fit. It can be overwhelming as there are so many different funding calls right now. The art and the science of developing the right question at the right time is fundamental. Think of this: why would someone give you £500,000 to study this?
- A: Managing tension between your own interest, the patients', your place of work and being able to navigate that is very important. Being able to rehearse the importance of the topic from a variety of angles, you'll need support from variety of different camps .



Thank you to all 84 delegates who attended the Masterclass.

The next masterclasses:

- 15 May - [Choosing appropriate research methods](#), with Professor Clare Jinks.
- 25 September - [Conducting systematic reviews and critical literature reviews](#), with Dr Diane Bunn.



To join the forum or book your free place on a masterclass, scan the QR code or go to www.qni.org.uk/news-and-events/events/



Join our private Facebook group:

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COMMENTS

A selection from delegates:

Thank you so much!
This hour was definitely worth spending with you all

Thank you everyone! Really interesting

Very useful and interesting - many thanks :)

Thank you so much to the speakers - very inspirational

Thank you all, very informative

I appreciate let me to participate at this valuable presentation

Thank you really helpful and I am now thinking about how I can use Lay people in my Prof Doc

Thank you - very helpful & inspiring

Thank you for both presentation, very informative.

