



# Multidisciplinary Risk Management Planning:

Impacts of group process on structured professional judgement.

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# Structured Professional Judgement (SPJ)

- ◆ SPJ models have gained momentum in the assessment, management and communication of violence risk.
- ◆ Numerous frameworks exist to guide the SPJ process (e.g., RSVP, HCR-20, PRISM, SAM, SARA).
- ◆ SPJ aims to combine individualised assessment with evidence-based risk factors (e.g., static, stable, dynamic, future).
- ◆ SPJ complements, but does not replace, professional opinion.



## Multidisciplinary SPJ

- ◆ Move toward using SPJ for multidisciplinary team (MDT) risk management in forensic mental health.
- ◆ Driven by the desire to capitalise on the strengths of group-based formats.
- ◆ Assumption that group formats will be superior.
- ◆ Minimal research investigating the utility of SPJ within MDT decision-making formats.
- ◆ Sparse research comparing MDT-based SPJ with those of single-assessor formats.



# Multidisciplinary SPJ

## - Dilemma -

- ◆ Principle consideration within group decision-making is deciding how to make decisions:
  - should an expert/leader make decisions?
  - should the leader delegate decisions to other members?
  - should the group make decisions through some form of majority rule?
  - should all decisions involving the group be made by consensus?



# Multidisciplinary SPJ

## - Attributes -

- ◆ Several general attributes should guide the choice of a decision-making format:
  - What is the desired quality/‘correctness’ of the decisions?
  - Do the decisions involve a high degree of expertise?
  - What time frames are available to make decisions?
  - What is the required level of commitment to the decisions by the group members?
  - What are the stakes involved in the ultimate decision?



# Multidisciplinary SPJ

## - Group Decision Making Styles -

- ◆ **Command:** leader makes decisions for group with little or no input from members. Members provide specific information on request, but do not contribute to final decisions. Leader ‘sells’ merits of decisions to the group.
- ◆ **Consultative:** leader seeks input and advice from the group before making a decision for the group; leader makes the final decision.
- ◆ **Consensus:** leader seeks input and advice from the group and works through the decision making process with the group, until every member of the group can ‘live with’ the final decision.



# Multidisciplinary SPJ

## - Assessment & Formulation -

	<u>Command Assessing</u>	<u>Consultative Assessing</u>	<u>Consensus Assessing</u>
<b>Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expertise models</li> <li>• Individual accountability – Expert</li> <li>• Sole responsibility – Decision-making faster – (crisis management)</li> <li>• Adherence to ethical/codes of conduct</li> <li>• Less resource intensive – formulation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership models</li> <li>• Individual accountability – RMO (usually)</li> <li>• Sole responsibility – Decision-making easier</li> <li>• Less resource intensive – data gathering &amp; formulation</li> <li>• Capitalise on MDT knowledge &amp; skills</li> <li>• More likely to meet the needs of MDT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group decision-making models</li> <li>• Joint accountability - MDT</li> <li>• Joint responsibility</li> <li>• Capitalise on MDT knowledge &amp; skills</li> <li>• Reduced information processing biases in data gathering &amp; formulation</li> <li>• Less resource intensive – data gathering</li> <li>• Most likely to meet the needs of MDT</li> </ul>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource intensive – data gathering</li> <li>• Difficulty acquiring relevant information</li> <li>• Conflict between professions – who is the expert?</li> <li>• Unresolved conflict/controversy among professionals about ultimate decision</li> <li>• Individual information processing biases in data gathering and formulation</li> <li>• Expertise of sole (albeit trained) assessor</li> <li>• Limited group commitment to decision or implementation of recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No personal accountability &amp;/or responsibility in data gathering process</li> <li>• Potential difficulties adhering to ethical/codes of conduct</li> <li>• Unresolved conflict/controversy among professionals about ultimate decisions</li> <li>• Compounded individual information processing biases in data gathering</li> <li>• Partial influence of group processes               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Leader/Authority influence</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Limited group commitment to decisions or implementation of recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint responsibility – Decision-making harder</li> <li>• Resource intensive – formulation</li> <li>• Prone to group dynamics in data gathering and decision making</li> <li>• Difficulty formalising joint accountability</li> <li>• Potential for false consensus</li> </ul>



# Faulty Decision-Making

## - Information Processing Biases -

Information is seldom received in an objective way. Numerous biases affect the degree of influence a piece of information has on our knowledge, beliefs, and decision-making (see Glossary).

- ◆ Anchoring
- ◆ Availability Heuristic
- ◆ Contrast
- ◆ Déformation Professionnelle
- ◆ Dis/Conformation Bias
- ◆ Familiarity
- ◆ Focusing Effect
- ◆ Hasty Generalization
- ◆ Inconsistency
- ◆ Memorability
- ◆ Mental Effort
- ◆ Neglect of Base Rate Bias
- ◆ Omission Bias
- ◆ Preconception
- ◆ Pressure
- ◆ Primacy
- ◆ Privilege
- ◆ Recency
- ◆ Self-fulfilling Prophecy
- ◆ Sequence
- ◆ Sparkle
- ◆ Visual Presentation





# Faulty Decision-Making

## - Individual Group Member Biases -

- ◆ **Conformity:** A change in behaviour or belief as a result of real or imagined group influence.
  - Normative: Stemming from desire to fulfil others expectations.
  - Informational: Based on acceptance of another's evidence.
    - Moderators: group size; unanimity; cohesion; status; public response; no prior commitment
  
- ◆ **Compliance:** Overt behaviour change, without a change in actual belief, in response to a direct request from another.
  - The ability to influence another's actions/beliefs is dependant on one's 'social power' (i.e., reward, coercive, authority, expertise, attraction).
  
- ◆ **Obedience:** A change in behaviour in response to a direct order from an authority.
  - Moderated by the perceived degree of legitimacy of the authority.



# Faulty Decision-Making

## - Group Process Biases -

- ◆ **Social Facilitation:** Strengthening of the dominant, likely, or prevailing position/opinion owing to the presence of others.
  - Moderators: evaluation apprehension; driven by distraction; mere presence.
- ◆ **Social Loafing:** Individuals exert less effort when they pool their efforts towards a common goal than when individually accountable.
- ◆ **De-individuation:** Loss of self-awareness and evaluation apprehension in situations that foster anonymity and draw attention away from individuals.
  - Moderators: group size; physical anonymity; arousal; distraction.
- ◆ **Group Polarisation:** Group-produced enhancement of a members' pre-existing tendencies, or strengthening of 'average' tendencies.
- ◆ **Groupthink:** When concurrence-seeking becomes so dominant in cohesive groups that it overrides realistic appraisals of alternatives.



# Faulty Decision-Making

## - Symptoms of Group Think -

- ◆ **Illusion of invulnerability:** Overly optimistic, taking excessive risks.
- ◆ **Belief in inherent morality of the group:** Failure to consider ethical consequences of decisions.
- ◆ **Collective rationalizations:** Ignoring information that points to the need to rethink the wisdom of a decision.
- ◆ **Stereotypes of other groups:** Other groups with opposing views are seen as incompetent.
- ◆ **Self-censorship:** Failure to mention personal doubts to the group.
- ◆ **Illusion of unanimity:** Mistaken belief that group is in total agreement.
- ◆ **Direct pressure on dissenters:** Members who disagree with the group's decision are urged to change their views.
- ◆ **Emergence of self-appointed 'mind guards':** Members shield the group from information that suggests the need to reconsider a decision.



## **Multidisciplinary SPJ**

### **- Guidelines for Implementation -**

- ◆ Only adopt a decision-making approach after member consultation and MDT agreement.
- ◆ Document the strengths and weaknesses of the adopted decision-making approach in a transparent manner.
- ◆ Agree a minimum standard that conforms to best-practice guidelines (i.e., as per relevant SPJ frameworks).
- ◆ Devise clear procedures to communicate disagreement and document/manage dissent among MDT members.
- ◆ MDT's need to adopt procedures that minimise information processing biases and limit undue leader influence.
- ◆ Adopt procedures to minimise group process biases (e.g., assign rotating devils advocate, utilise external experts).



## Parting Thoughts

- ◆ No current evidence to support one best-practise approach to multidisciplinary SPJ risk management planning.
- ◆ What is best-practise currently appears context dependant.
- ◆ Multidisciplinary SPJ can be undermined when group-process variables are not effectively managed.
- ◆ Prior to implementing an MDT SPJ risk-management framework, consultation around group process variables is required.
- ◆ The impact of information processing & group decision-making on SPJ needs integrating into existing training programs.

**When considering what is at stake, all attempts need to be made to enhance the utility of risk-management planning.**

**Thank You**