



Untold Stories: What do young people with cleft think about their appearance?

Julie Davies: Prof Doc in Health Psychology – Staffordshire University &

Senior Specialist Speech & Language Therapist – NWNW & IoM Network

Dr Amy Burton (Academic Supervisor) – Staffordshire University





My research journey as an old person!

- Senior Research Associate post – Dr Yvonne Wren
- Prof Nicola Rumsey - VTCTF
- Application to Staffordshire University
- Completed – Stage 1 MSc in Health Psychology
- 1 year into Stage 2 Professional Doctorate.

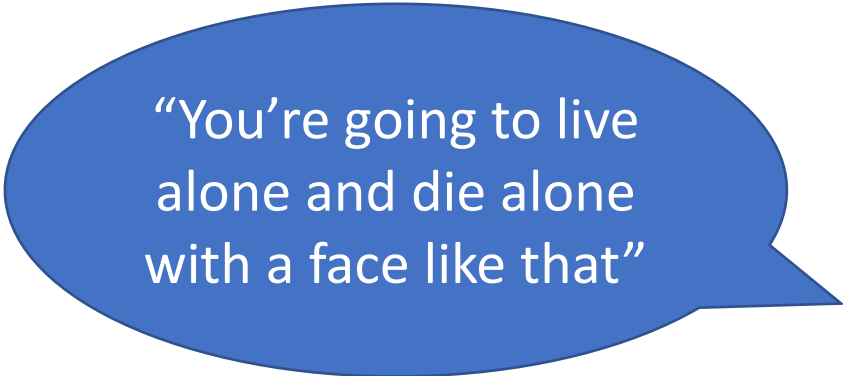
Introduction

The results of a focus group with young people aged 16-20 years found:

concerns about self-image

concerns about sharing images on social media

want to be like their non-cleft peers



“You’re going to live alone and die alone with a face like that”



“Physical appearance is a lot more scrutinised over social media”



Aim

To explore:

“What young people with cleft lip, with or without, palate think about their appearance”

Participants

- 13 YP aged 16-20 years
- 7 Regional cleft units
- 3 ♂ 10 ♀
- 2 BCLP, 9 UCLP & 2 CL





Method & Analysis

- National Recruitment via CLAPA – social media
- Virtual 1:1 semi-structured interviews on Microsoft Teams
- Photo-elicitation
- Data analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis
- In-person focus group to discuss findings with the young people

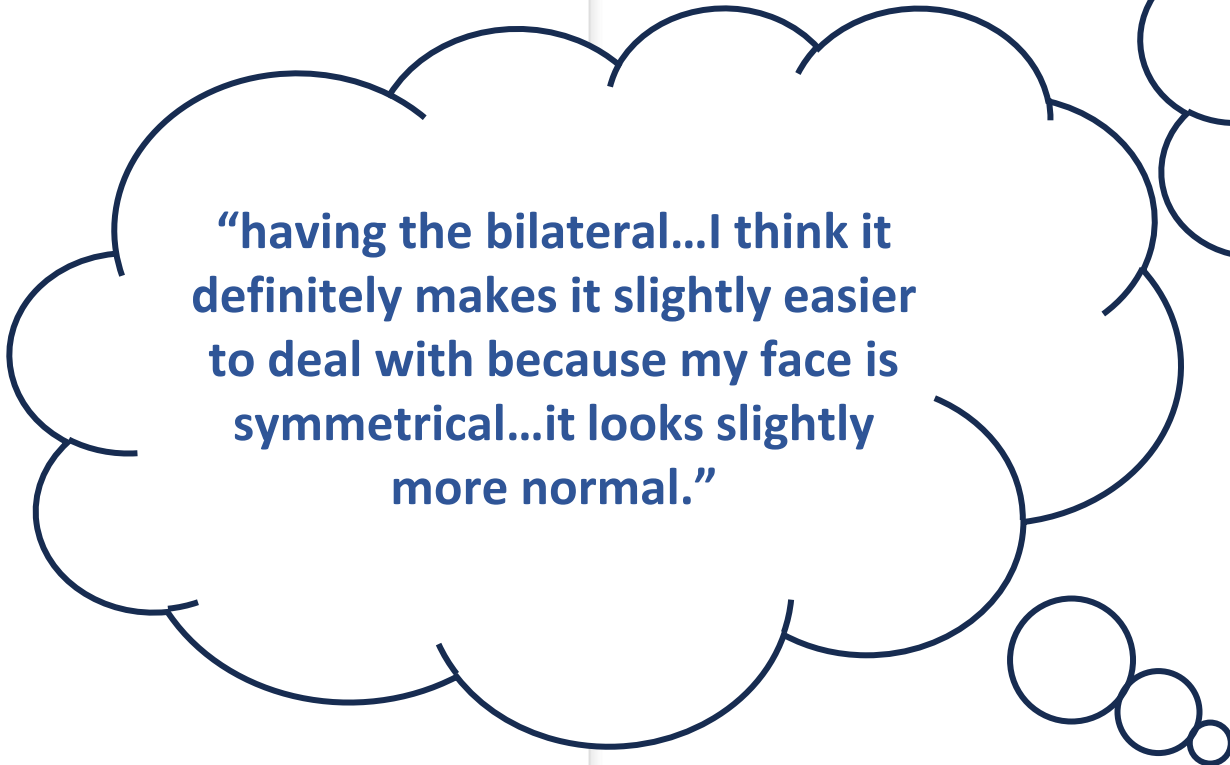


Four themes identified

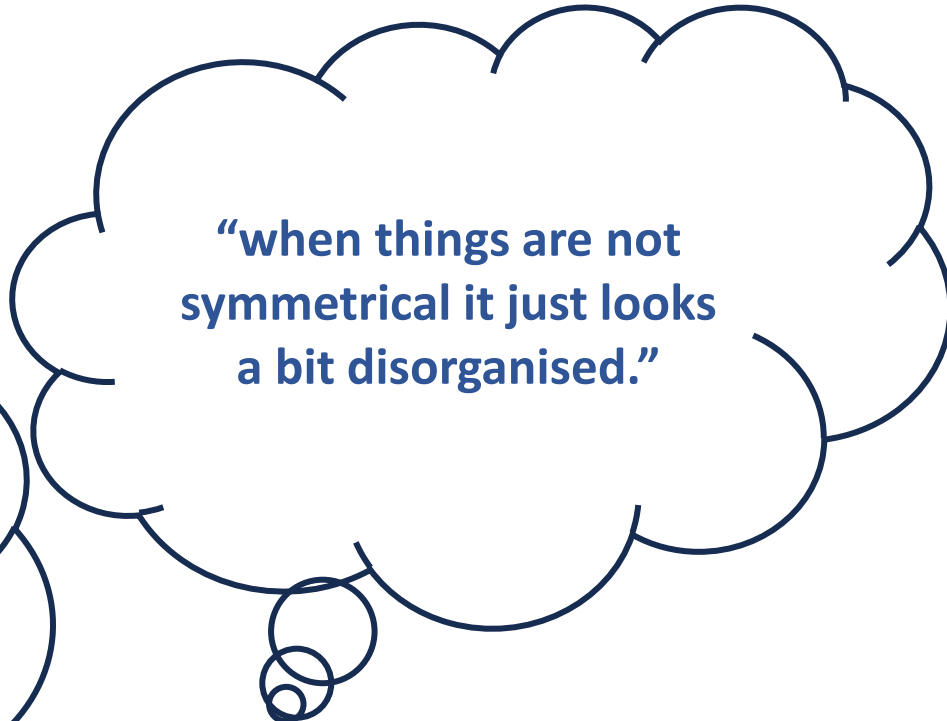
- Symmetry equals beauty
- Controlling & curating a positive self-image
- Acceptance with maturity
- Connections can promote empowerment



Theme 1 : Symmetry equals beauty



“having the bilateral...I think it definitely makes it slightly easier to deal with because my face is symmetrical...it looks slightly more normal.”



“when things are not symmetrical it just looks a bit disorganised.”

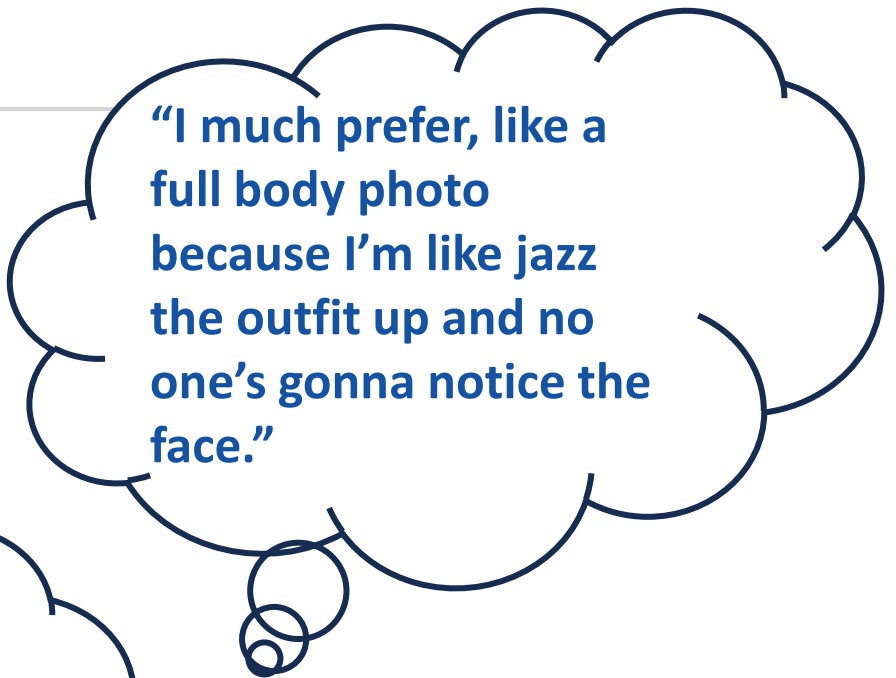
Theme 2: Controlling and curating a positive self-image



I like the angle...it makes my nose look better than usual."



"In a mirror photo you can hide your face quite well...you can't look straight at the mirror, you have to look at the phone."

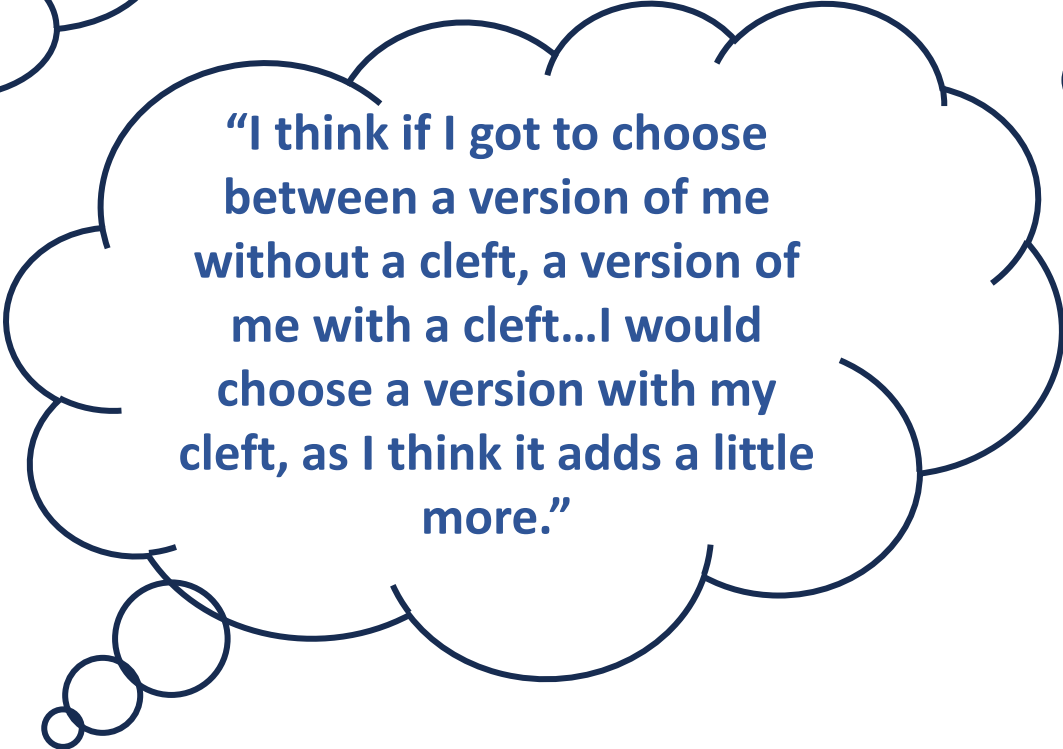


"I much prefer, like a full body photo because I'm like jazz the outfit up and no one's gonna notice the face."

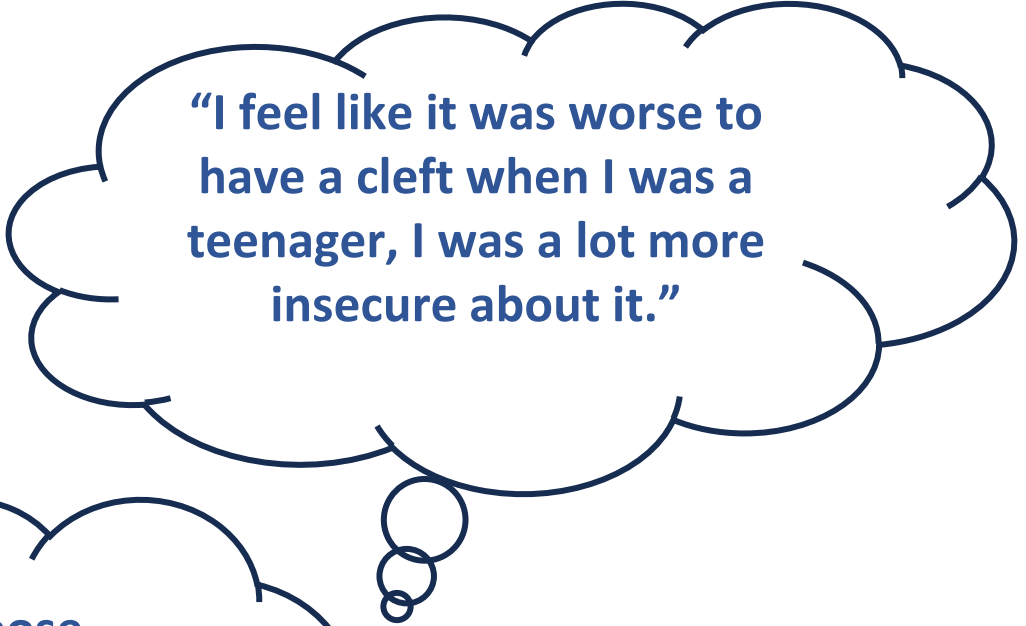
Theme 3: Acceptance with maturity



"I've gone through quite a journey of self-acceptance."

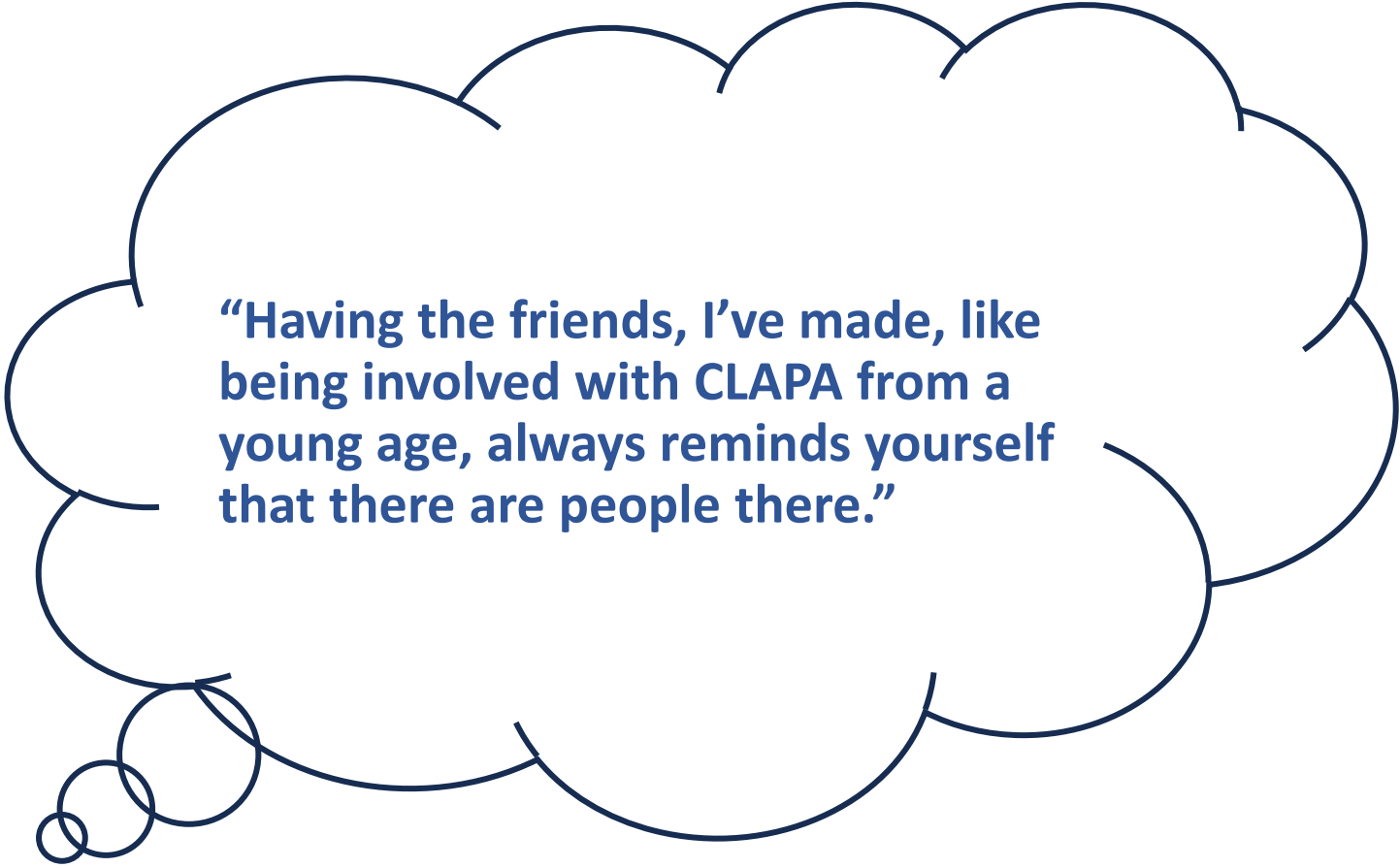


"I think if I got to choose between a version of me without a cleft, a version of me with a cleft...I would choose a version with my cleft, as I think it adds a little more."



"I feel like it was worse to have a cleft when I was a teenager, I was a lot more insecure about it."

Theme 4: Connections can promote empowerment



“Having the friends, I’ve made, like being involved with CLAPA from a young age, always reminds yourself that there are people there.”



Conclusion

- This study highlighted 4 main themes
- Main message: We just want to be like our peers

What's next...



- Young people will be co-researchers
- Photography workshop
- Work with a videographer
- We hope to be able to present the preliminary findings in Newcastle

Photographer

iPhone Photography Course

Paul Wolfgang-Webster





Videographer

Reels-In-Motion

"It's a very important project that touches my heart having my personal experience of the stigma and hurt that can be caused by one person to another.

Anything that helps inspire people who should not feel that way, is really important"

PRODUCTION _____

DIRECTOR _____

CAMERA _____

Celebrating Our Big Win at the EVCOM Clarion Awards 2024

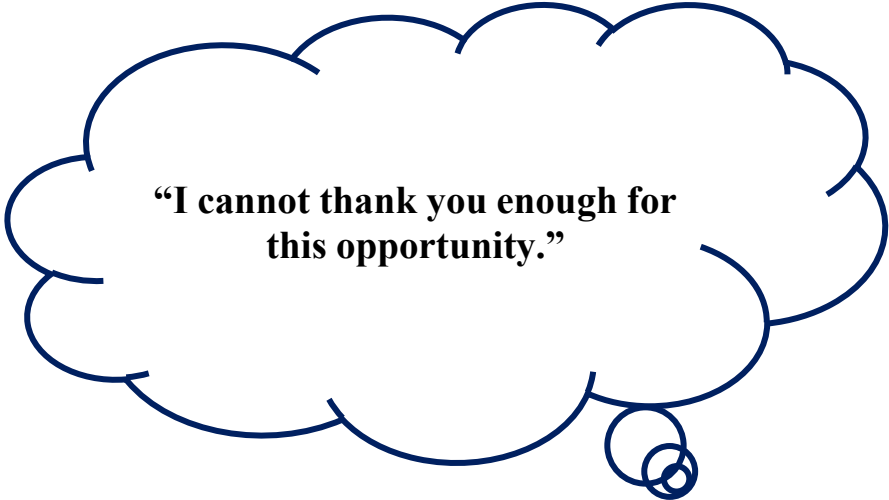
Reels in Motion are thrilled to announce that we have won a hat-trick of awards in the 2024 [EVCOM Clarion Awards](#). The prestigious awards celebrate excellence in corporate film, live events and video marketing.

We were awarded for our impactful video collaboration with [Slicker Recycling](#). The award-winning video was created to inspire audiences to become sustainability champions by recycling their waste oil. We are over the moon to secure the win for a video that is spreading such an important message.

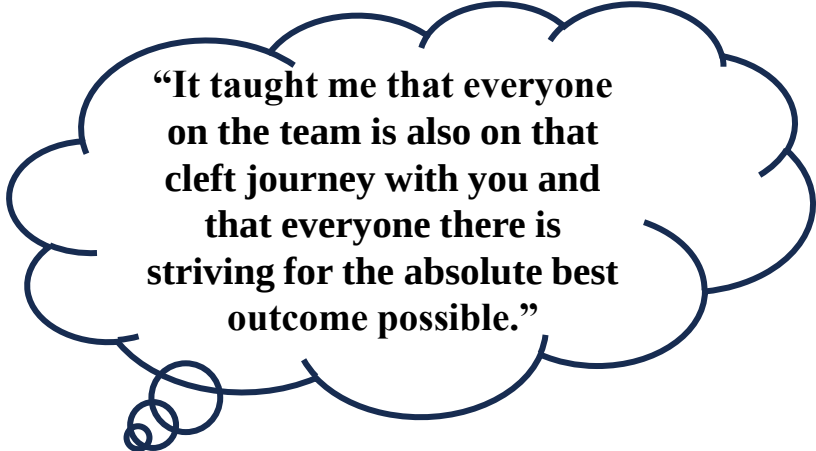


Co-Researchers

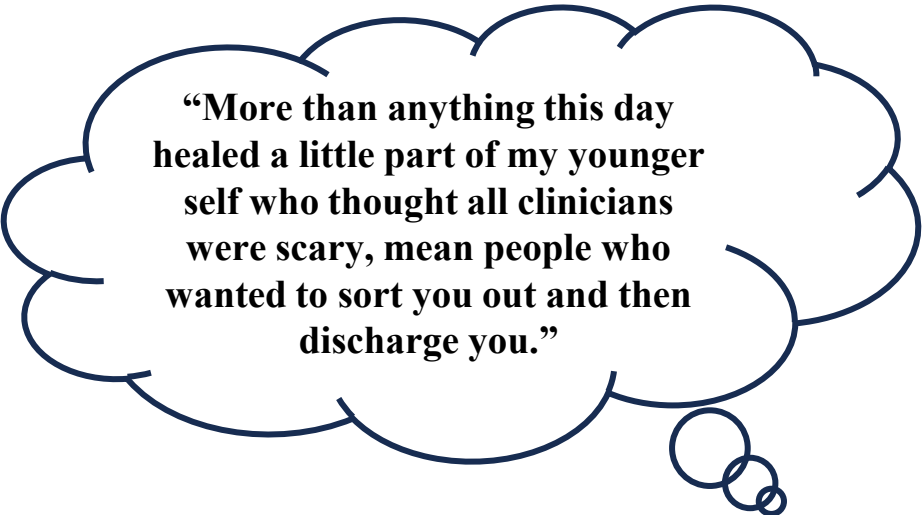
Participant involvement ...



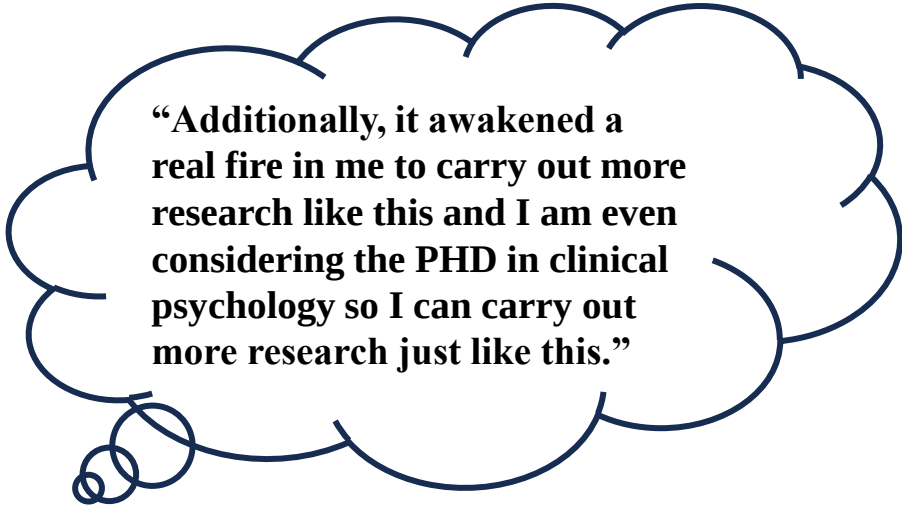
"I cannot thank you enough for this opportunity."



"It taught me that everyone on the team is also on that cleft journey with you and that everyone there is striving for the absolute best outcome possible."



"More than anything this day healed a little part of my younger self who thought all clinicians were scary, mean people who wanted to sort you out and then discharge you."



"Additionally, it awakened a real fire in me to carry out more research like this and I am even considering the PHD in clinical psychology so I can carry out more research just like this."

Thank you for listening!

Email: julie.davies@mft.nhs.uk
