Film 6:   Working together with older people

Marian Barnes:	it's not just about thinking how can we enable individual older people to reach difficult decisions about their lives, it's how can we enable groups of older people to come together to share their experience, share their knowledge to shape services. What we were trying to do was to apply the ethic of care principles to the way in which we worked with older people. We were aware of our responsibility to enable the team as a whole to produce a competent outcome from the research and we were also needing to be aware of how older people were responding.
Lizzie Ward:	Given that we are asking them to go out and research aspects of well-being and later life and some of those things might relate very personally to their own lives, they might be facing very similar issues. How then are they responding to that?

Research team discussion

Marian:	Not everybody who started with us is still with us. For one person, she actually found some of the stories that the people were telling were quite upsetting.
Liz:	I think it made one much more aware of other people's dilemmas.
Bunty:	Some of the stories made me feel you know a little bit sad and a little bit humble. Whoever you are there are stories when you are lying in bed at night that come back a little to haunt you. And then you think well maybe we could make it change or help that not to happen again to other people.
Marian:	But you can't do that when you are doing research, you are not there to make a change.
Bunty:	That was my hardest problem.
Marian:	That was the hard thing.
Diana:	I just felt rather consoled in a way that other people, I wasn't alone in the way I was feeling. It gave me an insight how it might help me to deal with the same problem and this is what I found out through the whole process of this well-being is that how many people suffer with the same problem

and the different ways they deal with it.

Commentary *Lizzie Ward:*	*One of our responsibilities is making sure that we are doing it competently, to the best of our ability so it is very practical things like making sure that you have got the resources to support people in the work that you want them to do.*
Marian Barnes:	*Keeping in regular telephone contact with people, making sure that they knew when and where meetings were taking place, if they needed to get a taxi then that was organised, that attention to those practical details is part of what it's all about.*
Lizzie:	Working out how we were going to code as a team was quite challenging.
Liz:	I found that process fascinating; it was something I had never done before I thought it was very interesting to do.
Lizzie:	And it was quite hard work wasn't it?
Liz:	Hard work, yes, I felt very proud of myself.
Diana:	I did learn thematic analysis.
Marian:	You learnt how to do thematic analysis yes.
Diana:	And having done it I thought how clever I was at my age I was learning how to do it and I mean I'd done a lot of research but I've done it on my own.
Jack:	All of us came already with a background and interests and involvement with older people either professionally or through our voluntary activities and so on and this I think probably made for ease of communication and cooperation from the beginning.
Commentary *Marian Barnes:*	*They talked about skills that they'd learnt, skills that they'd used, new understandings that they'd developed. There was really a sense of their development, their recognition of what they had to offer and it was fun.*
Bunty:	I think as a generation we've had to adapt more to technology than any other generation before … the, the wheel was just invented when we were young.

Commentary *Marian Barnes*	*They didn't always agree with each other which was great because that meant that there were interesting conversations and that dialogue was incredibly creative.*
Liz:	I think you have to be careful not to be judgemental because people will broach things in their own way which may, may not be right for oneself but may be right for them.
Diana:	I think it is important to have an open mind to respect people's views where you might not agree with them but try to understand them.
Commentary *Marian Barnes:*	*We've produced a research report but we also wanted to make sure the older people who were a part of the team could produce an output that worked for them. They decided to produce something specifically for other older people and they produced a document called "As Time Goes By" which is designed to provide a guide for older people written by older people based on what we learnt from the research so that's a really important output.*
Bea:	When we were presenting "As Time Goes By" that was a very positive message I think that you gave out that somehow in addressing some of the difficulties and the painful bits of ageing people might develop confidence and hope in terms of their own personal resources and the resources of other people.
Marian Barnes:	The overall message is that working together collectively as well as individually with older people is a way of actually enabling wellbeing to develop. It is important and necessary and possible to create those sorts of spaces where older people are working with younger people to come up with new ideas, new ways of thinking about things. One of the things that has made it possible has been we've been working with institutions who have been prepared to commit resources. We have been if you like allowed to try things out and that opportunity has felt really important
Lizzie Ward:	What this project has enabled me to do is learn about doing research that really enables non-academics to bring their knowledge into the process. It's almost like a more democratic way of doing research.

Beatrice Gahagan: The fact that we were able to give new insight into our person-centred practice and being able to take that language and that awareness out into other areas of practice in order to influence them that's been really empowering and really important.