

Appendix 1

How this article came about

On 23rd April 2019 one of the authors (MW) re-tweeted a link to a suggested measurement tool that had emojis instead of verbal descriptions for levels of happiness/distress (the original tweet has since been deleted so we cannot reproduce it below). MW asked for comments from others on twitter as to whether this might be a good way forward for measurement in mental health contexts. Various people responded and the debate got quite heated- in particular between those with lived experience of mental health problems (many of those who thought it might be a good way forward) and some leading professionals in the field who felt it was not a good idea. On 27th April MW wrote "I know many of those involved in this thread and really respect them all for their passionate commitment to youth mental health. I also know how hard it is for those without the status of academic or equivalent jobs to get their voices heard. I have a proposal would people be interested in writing a joint piece on this issue (best ways to discuss monitor and measure MH). I am happy to convene and coordinate and we could look to post or publish somewhere suitable. Could air different views in a coordinated way. If so do dm or email". The current authors (AH, MC, FM, MR, KR and LW) are those that emailed. AH, who comes from a position of lived experience of mental health difficulties and Aspergers, agreed to lead the piece and MW to support with the other authors agreeing to work as co-authors. The group were then approached by an editor of ADC (DH) who invited them to submit a piece once written for consideration by the journal. The rest is as you see below. AH agreed to lead the piece as through her experience of championing non-verbal communication she believes visual imagery is an under explored, but vital area to look into: "Sometimes it is really difficult to describe how you are feeling, not only to a clinician but also to family and friends. It is sometimes easier when you can pick out an image or an emoji to represent how you are feeling. There is less pressure to think of a way to verbalise your emotions or to explain it in a style that someone else will understand. From my particular experience, there is sometimes a struggle getting my point across when explaining my emotions through speech; but there is no problem

communicating my emotions to people around me with an emoji which is symbolic of an emotion - the problem is this is not a formal way for clinicians to capture how people are emotionally feeling. It is not a lazy substitution for verbal language, it is about putting people first, allowing and enabling people to express how they are feeling in a way that is effective for them" (AH).