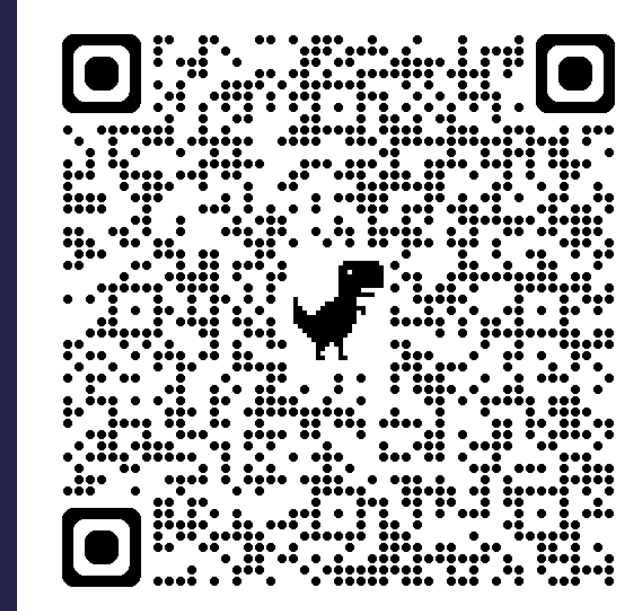




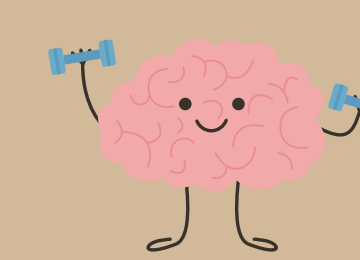
EXPLORING THE ENABLERS & BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATING IN A NATIONAL EXERCISE REFERRAL SCHEME (NERS) FOR STROKE SURVIVORS: USING THE COM-B FRAMEWORK



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BACKGROUND

According to NICE guidelines, it is recommended that stroke survivors should participate in exercise at levels consistent with those advised for the general population, as a preventative measure against secondary strokes and other vascular events. Despite this, there is evidence that minimum physical activity levels are not achieved in the stroke population.

There are widespread exercise referral schemes (NERS) that support people with conditions such as stroke to engage in exercise following discharge from rehabilitation services. However, there is limited evidence regarding the impact of these groups in the stroke population, and whether they improve uptake and adherence to exercise in the long term.

As such, it is important to understand the enablers and barriers for stroke survivors when taking part in such schemes.

AIMS AND METHODS

The aim of this study was to explore the thoughts and feelings of stroke survivors who have completed a 16-week NERS programme, with an emphasis on the enablers and barriers towards taking part in the NERS scheme.

Methods: Ten stroke survivors and two communication partners took part in a series of semi-structured interviews. The interview schedule was designed using a behaviour change framework known as COM-B (Michie et al., 2014).

The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and then analysed and coded through multiple iterative cycles using a theoretical thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke., 2013).

PARTICIPANTS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

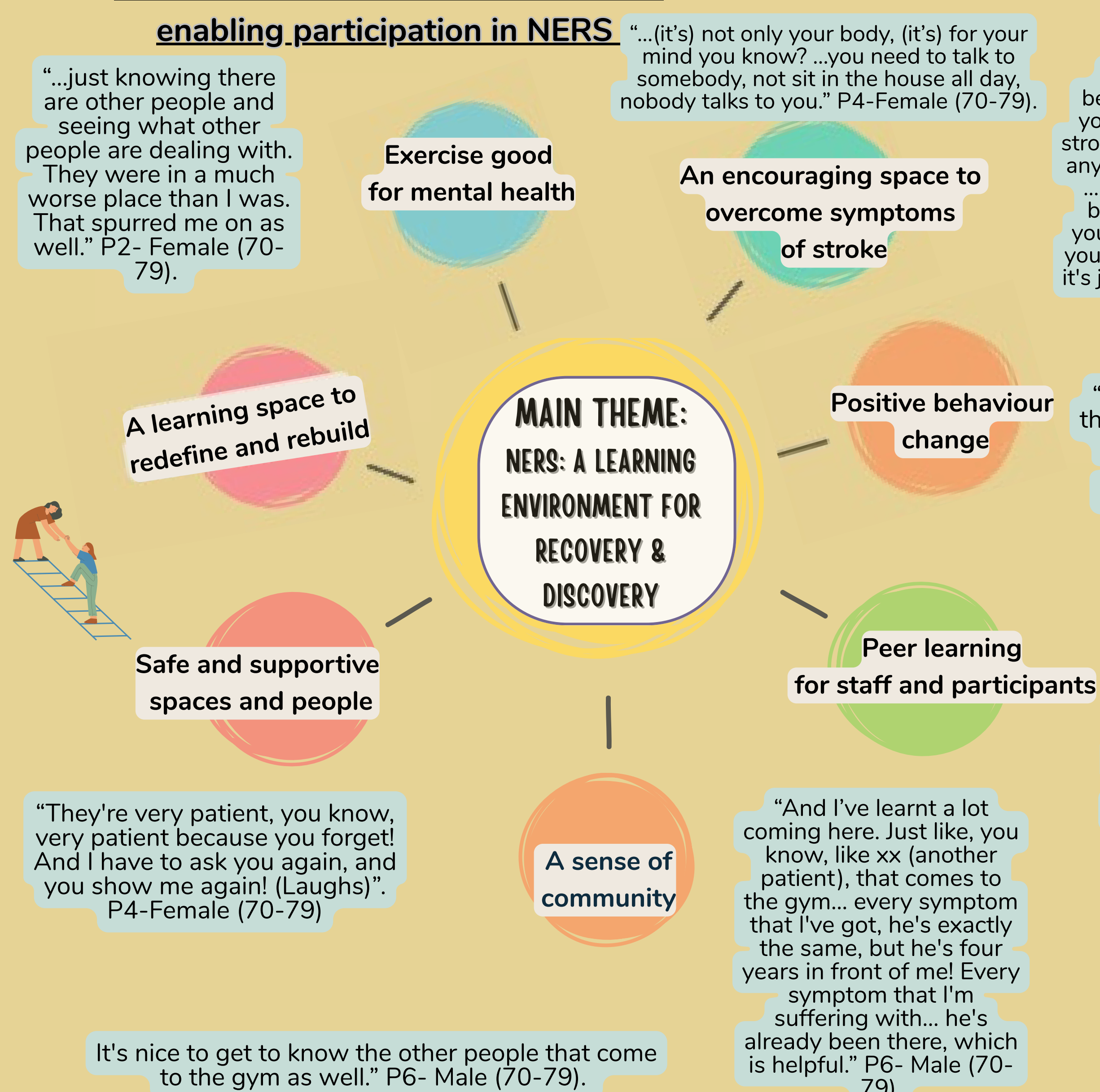
Participants were recruited from three "Neuro@NERS" exercise groups based in Gwent, South Wales: Cwmbran Stadium, Ebbw Vale Leisure centre and Newport Pool and tennis centre. These groups were established in collaboration with the Welsh National Exercise Referral Scheme, and the ABUHB Community Neuro Rehab service.

Participants (N= 10) plus Communication Partners (N=2)

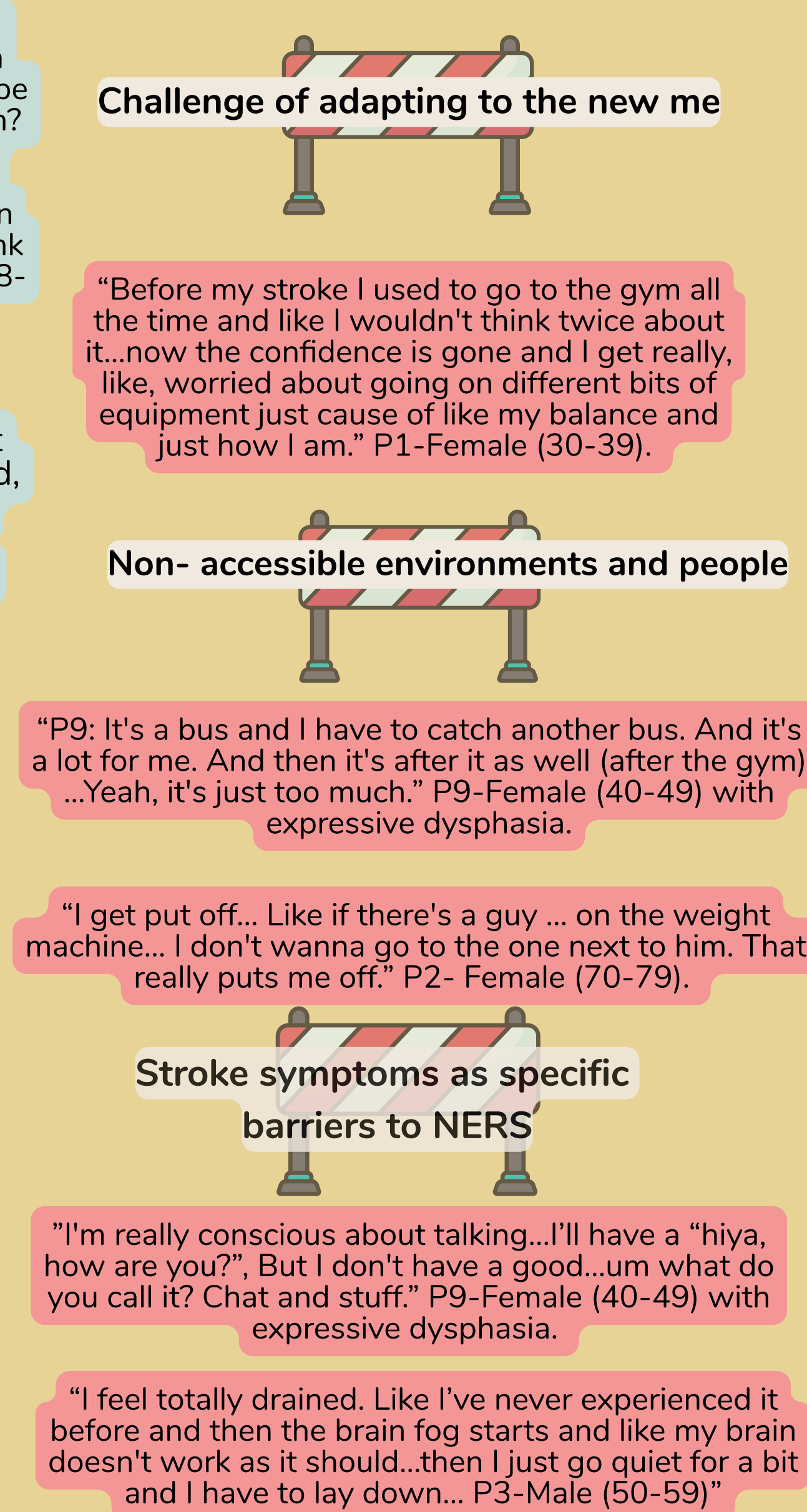
Id	Gender	Age range	What is your ethnic background?	When did you have your stroke?	Do you know what type of stroke you had? If so, please give details:
P1	Woman	30-39	White British	1/23/2021	Hemorrhagic stroke
P2	Woman	70-79	Welsh	May-23	Ischaemia stroke
P3	Man	50-59	Welsh	Jan-24	Ischaemic
P4	Woman	70-79	Chinese	Feb-23	Ischaemic
P5	Woman	60-69	White british	Jan 2023, Feb 2024	Ischaemic
P6	Man	70-79	Welsh	Mar-23	Ischaemic stroke
P7	Woman	70-79	Welsh	Mar-23	Cerebellar stroke
P8	Woman	50-59	Welsh	Mar-23	Ruptured aneurysm
P9	Woman	40-49	Welsh	Sep-17	Ischaemic stroke
P11	Man	60-69	White welsh	Dec-21	Thrombosis and aneurysm
CP10	communication partner				
CP12	communication partner				

FINDINGS...

Seven sub-themes were identified as enabling participation in NERS

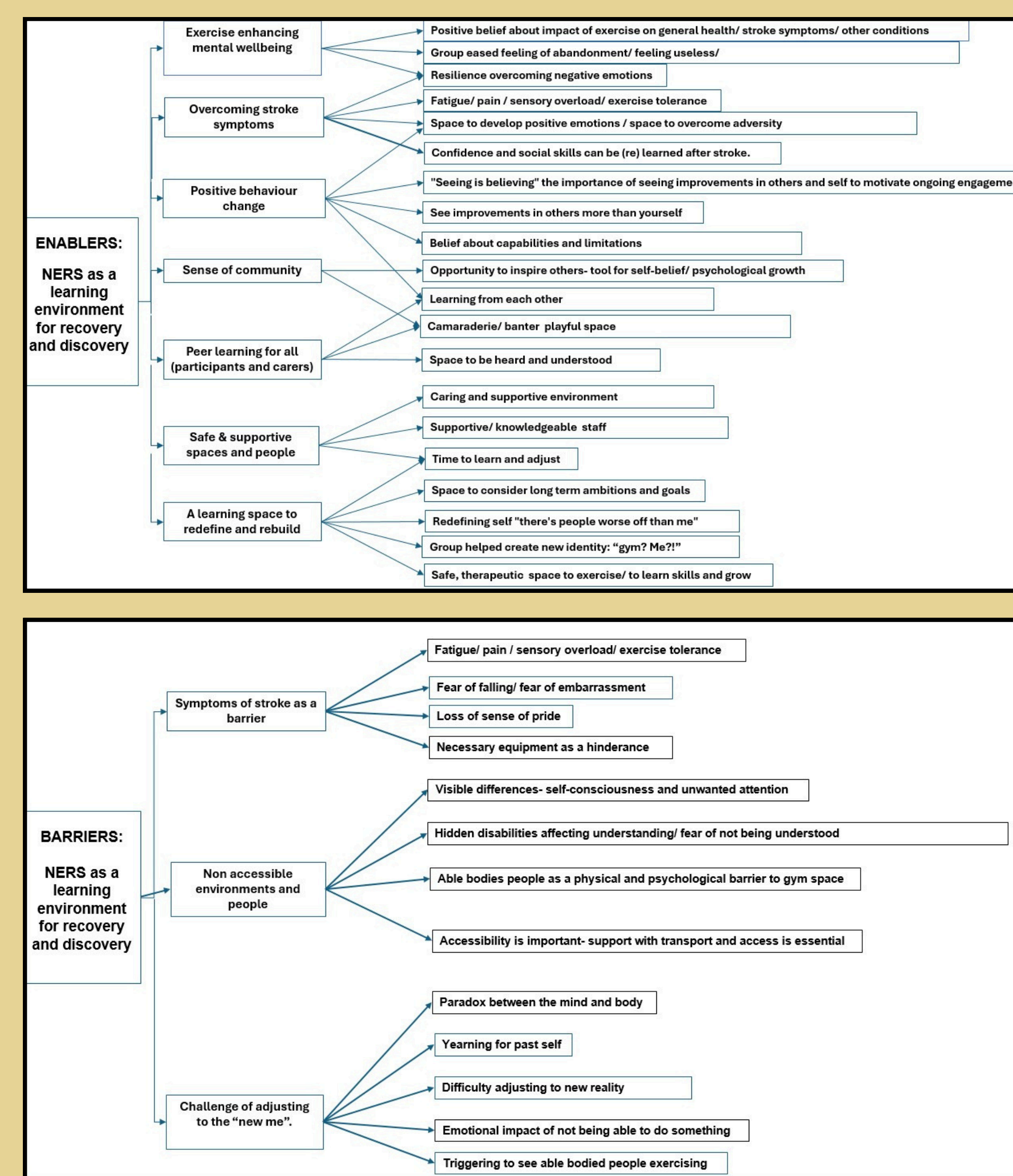


Three sub-themes were identified as barriers to participation in NERS



Coding tree:

Main themes, sub-themes and participant narratives



CONCLUSION/ "SO WHAT?"

The insights offered in this research highlight the value that exercise referral schemes can offer as a rich learning environment for recovery and discovery after stroke, and not just as an exit strategy from rehabilitation services.

Exercise referral teams and health care providers could look for opportunities to collaborate and explore the elements of their interventions that encourage optimum learning and positive, long-term behaviour change.

Future research should seek to explore the experience of participants who do not attend or who disengage with NERS opportunities in order to co-produce alternative solutions in order to improve accessibility to places and spaces for ongoing recovery after rehabilitation ends.

REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). Successful qualitative research : a practical guide for beginners. SAGE.

Michie, S., Atkins, L., & West, R. (2014). The behaviour change wheel : a guide to designing interventions. Silverback Publishing.

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Torfaen Leisure trust& Torfaen NERS team,
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