The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes in various shades, creating a modern and dynamic feel. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, some with gradients, set against a white background.

Professional Identity - Helping you Flourish in your Role

Dr Fiona Chatten

Who am I?

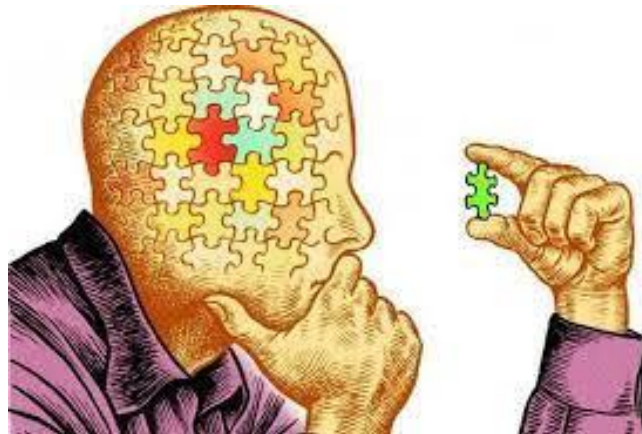


- ▶ Fiona Chatten
- ▶ Mum/ step mum of three teenagers
- ▶ Nurse - District Nursing
- ▶ Primary Care Development Lead - North-East & North Cumbria NHS ICB
- ▶ Freelance Trainer
- ▶ PhD: Professional identity in integration

Session Aims

- ▶ Overview of what professional identity is and why it is important
- ▶ Understanding of identifying in groups and what this means for professions
- ▶ Exploration of how integration/ mixed professional teams impacts on professional identity and the consequences
- ▶ Explore the practical things to help you have a positive professional identity

And remember...the more
you individually reflect, the
more you will gain from
this session



What is Identity?



- ❑ Our sense of self/ who we are
 - ❑ ‘Who am I?’
- ❑ Developmental process where we recognise what groups we belong to
- ❑ Deeply personal and individual

Psychologists: Focus on self in identity formation

Sociologists: Identity is sociable and variable

What is Professional Identity?

- ▶ How you define yourself within a work role
 - ▶ ‘who am I?’ in a professional setting
- ▶ Workplace cultures and professional socialisation
 - ▶ Knowledge and skills
 - ▶ Ethics, values, behaviours
- ▶ Accepted ‘ways of knowing’ within a profession
 - ▶ Learn to be part of a profession

Easier to identify when part of a recognised profession

How does Professional Identity Occur?

Professional training

- Learn to be part of the profession

Knowledge and Skills

- How to 'do' and 'be' that profession
- Undertaking the role
- Shared language and words

Highly Social

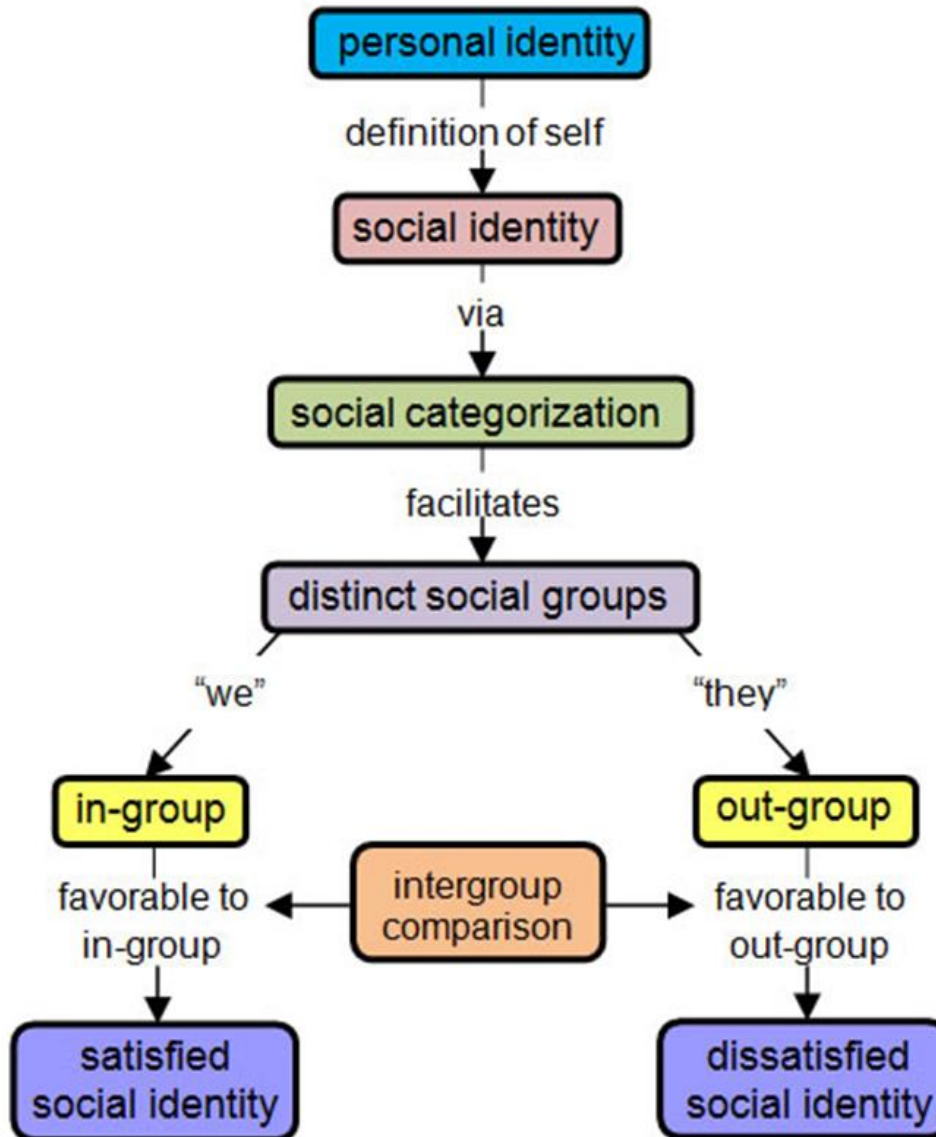
- Reflexivity
- Socialisation with peers
- Accepting and participating in professional culture
- Shared experiences
- **Feel a sense of belonging to the group**

Social Identity Theory



- ▶ Self = socially constructed
 - ▶ Intergroup relationships and processes
- ▶ Categorisation
 - ▶ People who are similar = 'in-group'
 - ▶ People who are different = 'out-group'
- ▶ Self-esteem
 - ▶ Impacted by in-group 'fit'

Social Identity Theory



Identity and Professional Groups



- ▶ Our professions are often our ‘in-groups’
 - ▶ Our safe space
- ▶ For some people this will be your role, your team or people doing the same job
 - ▶ Particularly if you don’t have a known profession
- ▶ Professional identity needs to be maintained
 - ▶ We need connection with our ‘in group’
- ▶ Identity can change and flex
 - ▶ However....identity with a profession is likely to endure

Consider...

How would you describe your professional identity?

- 'Who am i?' in a work context
- Who is your 'in-group'?

Do you have time and space to connect with your 'in-group'?

Why does Professional Identity Matter?

Creates a sense of familiarity and security

Confidence in role


Supports a positive self esteem

Supports psychological safety at work

“A psychologically safe workplace begins with a feeling of belonging”

Centre for Creative Leadership

How can Multidisciplinary teams impact on professional identity?



Moving and potentially splitting up peer groups



Professionally isolated members



Impacts social connection and maintenance of identity

Multi-Professional Threats

- ▶ Lack of professional peers (or people doing the same role)
 - ▶ Lack of familiarity
 - ▶ Reduced security
- ▶ Feel like they are slowly being made into a generic profession and losing their professional individualism
 - ▶ ‘creeping genericism’



*“I just worry that you are going to end up
jack of all trades, master of none”*
Research participant

Reactions to Multi-Professional Team Threats

Defensiveness

- Professional groups often feel like other groups don't fully understand them
- Feeling a need to protect their role

“Everyone is precious about their own domain”

Insecurity

- Made worse by smaller peer groups
- Changes in dynamics
 - Too much change
 - Change they didn't choose
- Feeling like their role will change or might be lost altogether

“I truly believe that in the next 5 years, the district nurse will disappear”

Tactics to Preserve Professional Identity



- In order to preserve their professional identity, staff might use tactics – i.e.
 - Showing how their profession is different and unique
 - Emphasising their skills and specialisms
 - Proving how busy they are

Consider...

What has been your experience of working in mixed professional/ integrated teams?

- Have you experienced any of the threats, reactions or tactics?
- Have you seen this in others?

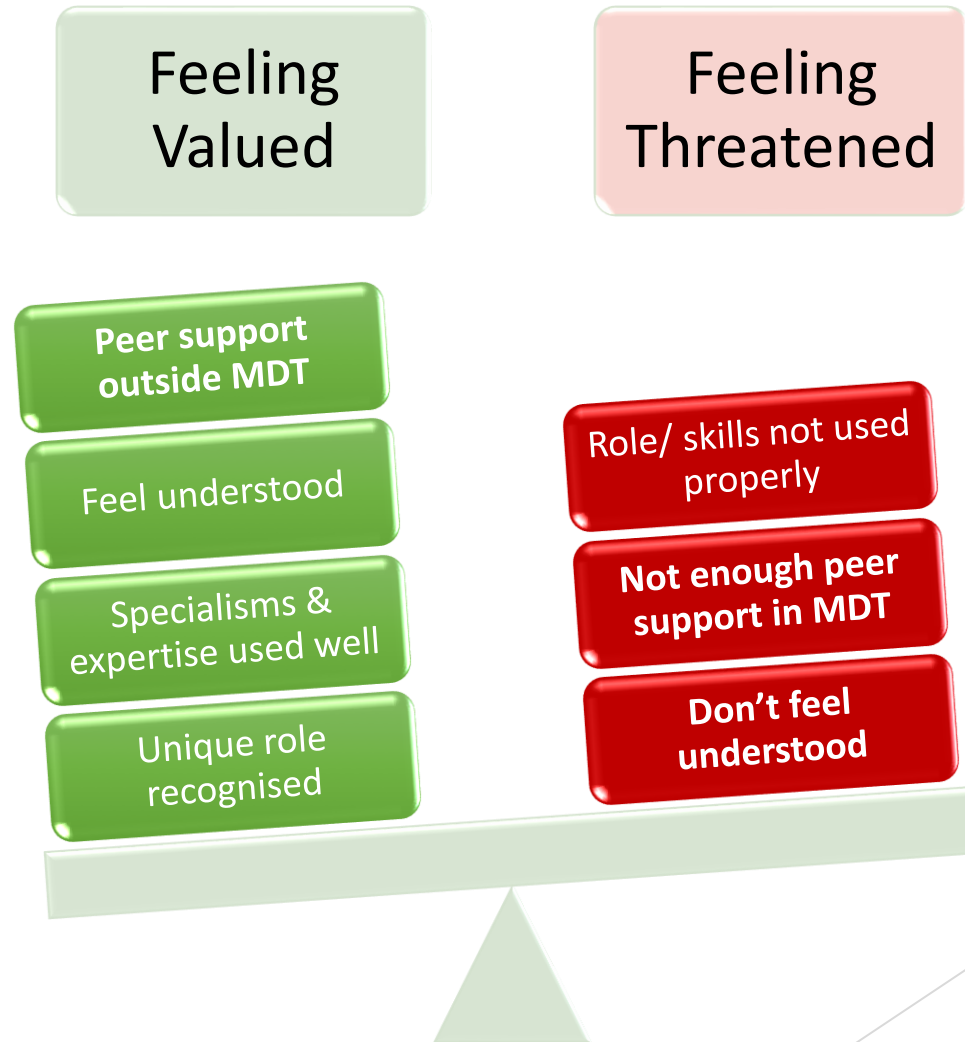
How do we support individuals
and teams to move forward
together?



Positive Professional Identity



Professional Identity Balance



Ongoing Identity

- ▶ Professional identity is not static
 - ▶ Needs to be nurtured and sustained
- ▶ Can be broadened to respond to different circumstances
 - ▶ Change in career/ work circumstances
- ▶ Impacted by groups and influences





Professional Identity in Integration

- ▶ Professionals will most likely identify with their own professional group/ team first and foremost
- ▶ If they feel secure, they can also identify with a multi-professional group - their integrated team
 - ▶ THIS IS WHEN TRUE INTEGRATION OCCURS
 - ▶ But....it will only occur if:
 - ▶ They feel secure
 - ▶ Their own professional identity is recognised and nurtured



Flourishing in your role



A positive professional identity is where we feel safe, connected and a sense of belonging

- ▶ Acknowledge and celebrate our differences
- ▶ Facilitate understanding of our own and others' roles
- ▶ Find opportunities for professional peer support
 - ▶ Time when we feel understood and can share experiences

Key Points to Remember

- ▶ Professional identity is important for our wellbeing at work
- ▶ Professional peer support is critical to support our professional identity
 - ▶ We need our safe space where we feel a sense of belonging
- ▶ Acknowledging difference doesn't stop us forming new team identities
 - ▶ It helps us appreciate the unique qualities each profession brings

Consider...

What will you take away from this session?

What changes do you need to make:

- To support your own Professional identity
- To support the professional identity of your colleagues/ team

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Any Questions?

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