

The role of Labour Market Activation in building a healthy workforce: enhancing well-being for the LTU through positive psychological interventions

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Outline

- Labour Market Policy
- Psychological impact of unemployment
- EEPIC study setting / design/ methodology
 - Findings: Baseline / RCT
- Study limitations
- Learning for policy/ practice

Unemployment

- ▶ **326,000** Jobs lost in the period 2008 – 2011
- ▶ Unemployment rose from **4.4%** (2008) to **15.1%** (2012)



Labour market policy regimes

Historically slow development of a full labour market policy in Ireland

- Ireland: Pathways to Work - considered a work first policy



Brodkin (2013) enabling, regulatory, and compensation policies

- Enabling: Human capital
- Compensation: In-work income supports
- Regulatory: Enforce participation (sanctions and withdrawal of welfare)
- Enabling aspects have been de-emphasised, regulatory and disciplinary aspects reinforced

Increasingly governments use activation approaches in LMP design

- benefit rules & employment/training services designed with a view to moving unemployed income benefit recipients into work
- Increased connection between Welfare and Job seeking

PES: IRELAND

Department of Social Protection: provides a range of welfare supports: pension, disability, unemployment, lone parents, etc.

INTREO is the PES of the Department of Social Protection



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí

Department of Social Protection

Helping you build a better life



Job Path: Contracted Private providers; two providers

Local Employment Services Network: Community based ; 24 providers

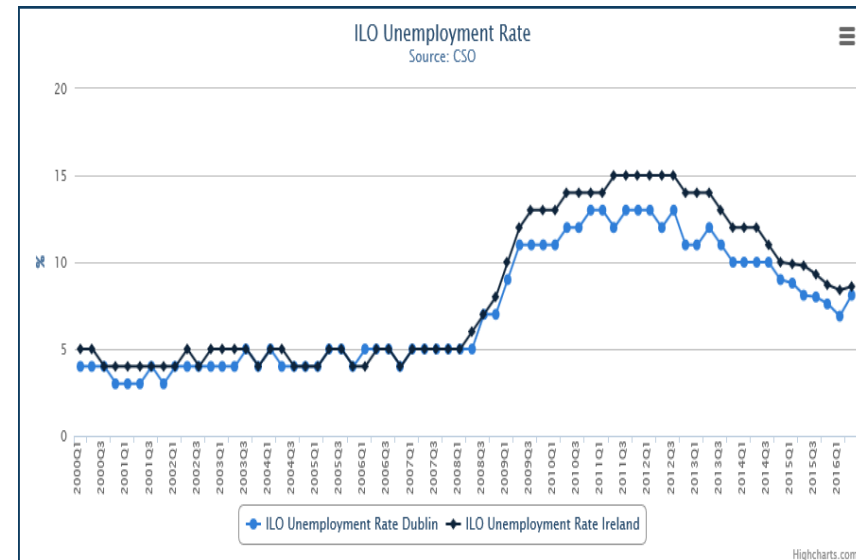


2018

- ▶ **2,375,200** Labour force
 - ▶ **2,231,000** Employed
 - ▶ **223,602** on Live Register (April 2018)
 - ▶ **140,300 (5.9%)** unemployment rate (April 2018)
 - ▶ **58,100** signing for 12+ months (2.5%) or 40.3% of total unemployment (QNHS Q4 2017)
 - ▶ **59,333** on activation programmes (Tús, Back to Work allowance, Jobbridge etc.) (March 2018)
 - ▶ Rate of unemployment 15-24yr olds (Youth Unemployment) **12%**
 - 6.2% in 2000 – 31.3% Feb 2012
- CSO, INOU, April 2018

National Context

Unemployment 2000 - 2016



<http://www.dublindashboard.ie/Economy/stats/container#tab3-tab>

Psychosocial impact of unemployment

- Extensive research on detrimental effects of unemployment on overall health and well-being, including psychological health (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Paul & Moser, 2009)
- Unemployment & Psychological health
 - Since 1930s psychologists have explored relationship b't psychological well-being & unemployment
 - Psychosocial development (Erikson, 1959)
 - Deprivation in relation to the benefits of work (Jahoda, 1979, 1981)
 - Helplessness due to perceive lack of control & agency (Fryer, 1986; Seligman, 1975)
- Employability & Psychological well-being = Psychological capital
- Interventions to improve well-being and employability

Explaining the deterioration of well being in the unemployed -

- Individual and situational moderators: individual response
 - Age, gender, length of unemployment, ethnic & racial origins, family unemployment, local levels of unemployment, social class, attribution cause of job loss, prevailing views of unemployment, nature of the welfare system, personality variables, values and beliefs (Creed & Bartrum, 2006)

“In some respects every unemployed is like every other unemployed (i.e. without a job): in some respects every unemployed is like some other unemployed (i.e. without similar previous jobs); and in some respects every unemployed is like no other unemployed (i.e. a unique individual)” (Jahoda, 1982).

Employability

- Long-term Unemployment
 - Moderating variable – consistent preoccupation of Governments since the 1970s (Clasen & Clegg, 2011)
 - Probability of finding a job decreases – decline in skills, reduced motivation, shrinking social networks, employer bias, lack of references, stigma
 - Joblessness impairs psychological well-being and LTU has significant effects on mental health (Koen et al., 2013), scarring effects
- Psychological capital significantly influences well-being and labour market status (Cole, 2006)
 - Psychological capital - a person's perception of self, attitudes towards work, ethical orientation, general outlook on life (Goldsmith et al., 1997), and redefined as
 - “an individual's positive psychological state of development” hope, optimism, efficacy, resilience (Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, & Avolio, 2015)
- Active labour market measures should be informed by this research

Gaps in our knowledge

- Nothing is known about the impact of PTWP on wider aspects of employability
- important knowledge gap in view of the extensive literature linking unemployment to poor mental health and well-being (McKee Ryan et al. 2005; Murphy & Athanasou, 1999; Paul & Moser, 2009) which impact on future employability
- Nothing is known about PTWP impact on employability and sustainable re-employment, and in particular with regard to LTU and progression into quality jobs.
- PTWP does not engage with issues of job quality – considers any jobs as better than unemployment (Murphy et al. forthcoming)

EEPIC: Enhancing Employability through Positive Interventions for improving Career potential

Aim:

- assess the implementation and effectiveness of Ireland's labour activation policy - the *Pathways to Work Programme* (PTWP) - with regard to promoting outcomes such as psychological and overall well-being, career efficacy and employment opportunities
- to develop, implement and evaluate a new high support intervention designed to assist the long term unemployed improve their employability through increasing levels of psychological well-being, hopefulness, self-esteem and career-efficacy.

Well-Being: GHQ12 (Goldberg & Williams, 1988)

Satisfaction with Life (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985)

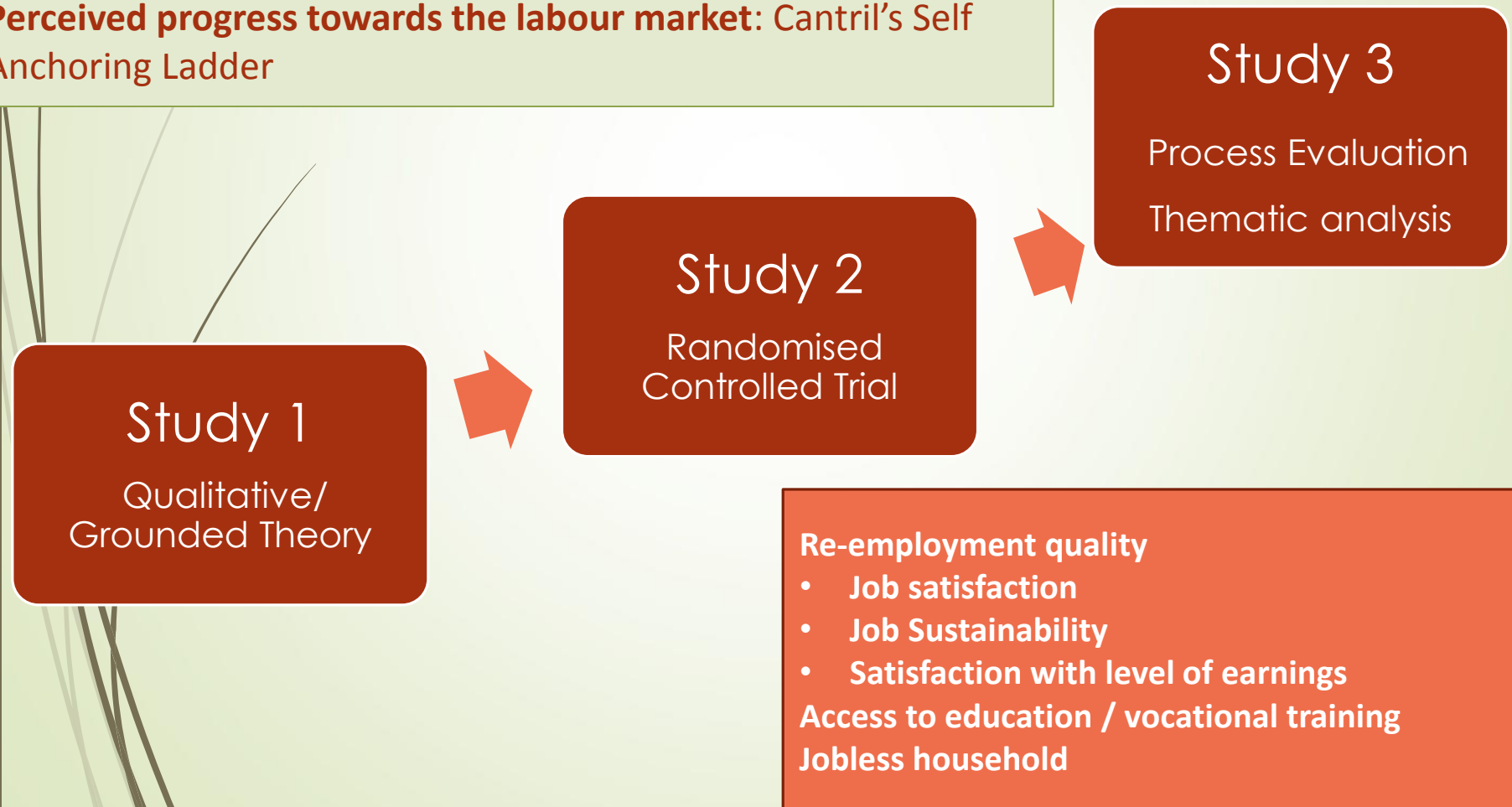
Rosenberg Self- Esteem Questionnaire (Rosenberg, 1965)

Career Self Efficacy Questionnaire (Kossek, Roberts & Demarr, 1998)

Brief Resilience Scale (Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher & Bernard, 2008)

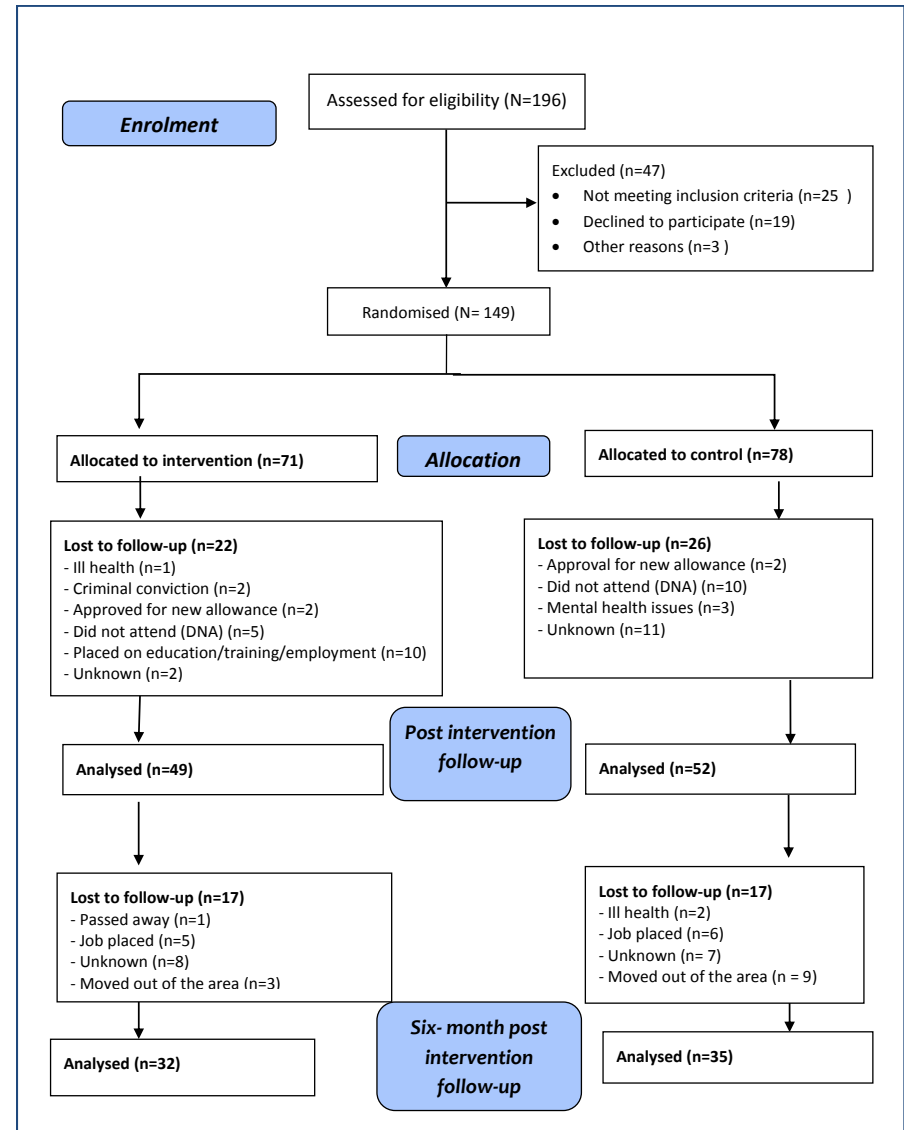
State Hope Scale (Snyder, Simpson, Ybasco, Borders, Babyak, & Higgins, 1996)

Perceived progress towards the labour market: Cantril's Self Anchoring Ladder

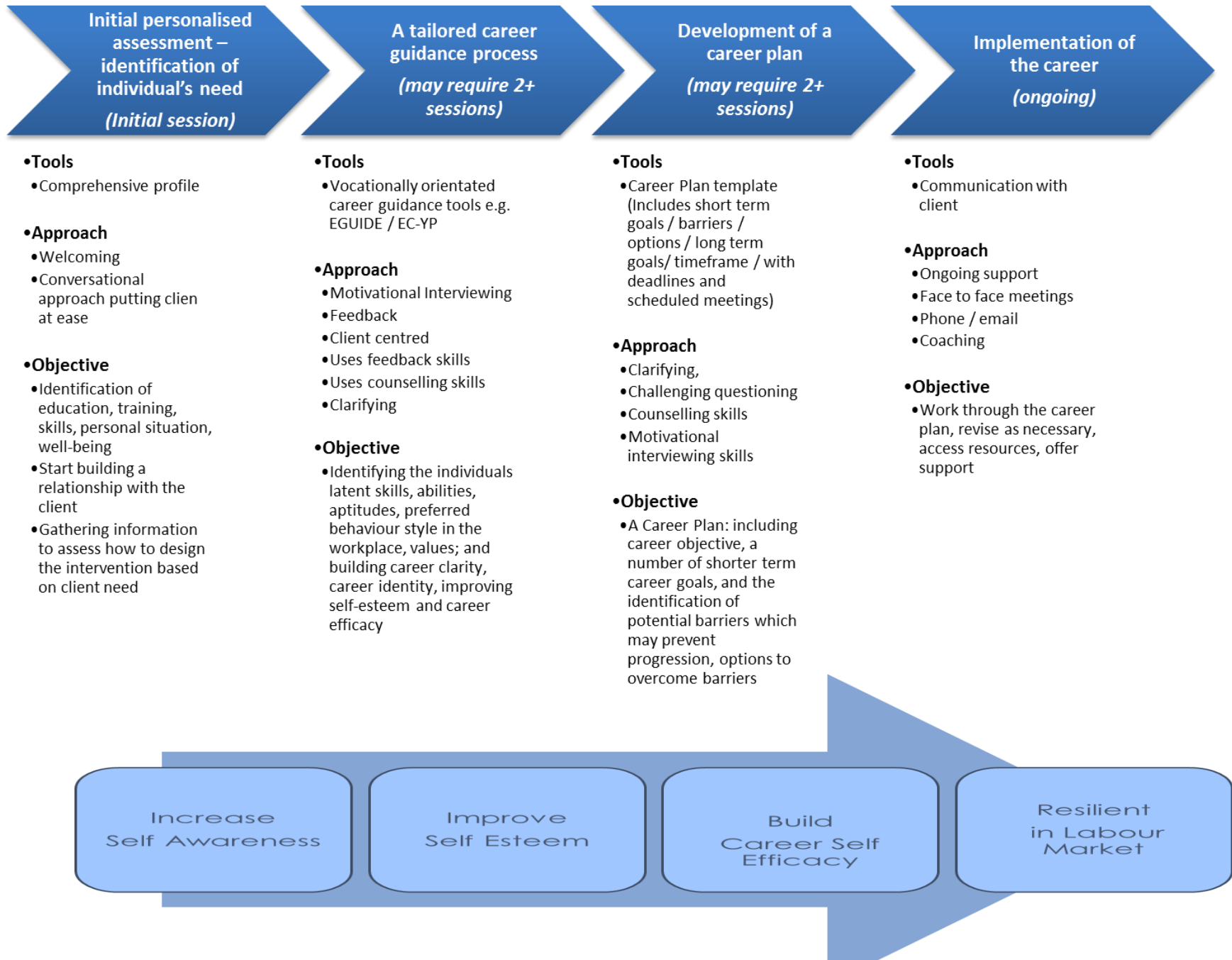


EEPIC RCT

- August 2015 to Feb 2017
- N=196 unemployed service users (18-65 years)
- Setting: Ballymun LES/DEASP area, randomly assigned to one of two groups (intervention or control).
- 25 deemed ineligible / 19 declined the intervention
- 32% attrition post intervention, 55% attrition overall
- 2/3rds reported JC as highest qualification
- average age 40
- 40% 5yrs + unemployed.
- Analysis: Mixed Model Repeated Measures (MMRM) within groups and between groups



The Intervention



Intervention is based on the BJC's approach:
adopts an **activation approach tailored** to meet the needs of
the individual



Baseline Findings

■ **Primary Outcome: Well-being (GHQ-12)**

- 73% scored at or above the clinical cut-off : reported mod-high levels of psychological distress
- Females small significant difference scoring higher than males (consistent with findings WHO 2002).
- below average life satisfaction (SWLS)

■ **Secondary Outcome: Employability**

- low average self esteem

■ **Education levels**

- 61% low educational attainment – more females than males - leading to low skill work, & ‘psychologically bad’ employment (Warr 1987– work first approach enables this)

Person as they present to the service

- high psychological distress
- below average life satisfaction
- low average self esteem
- average Hope
- average Resilience
- average Career Efficacy
- 61% below LC (JC/N)
- 35% 1-2yrs unemployed
- 26% 3-5yrs unemployed
- 39% over 5 years
- 69% no Post 2nd L
- 70% no/basic IT skills
- 45% no driving license
- 85% had worked for more than a year

Barriers

- Lack of Qual (23%)
- LTU (15%)
- Care (15%)
- Lack of experience (9%)
- Personal disposition (9%)

Self-rated competencies

- 84% understanding employers needs
- 61% high levels of self - belief
- 67% high levels of employment motivation

Work-First Approach

Employment

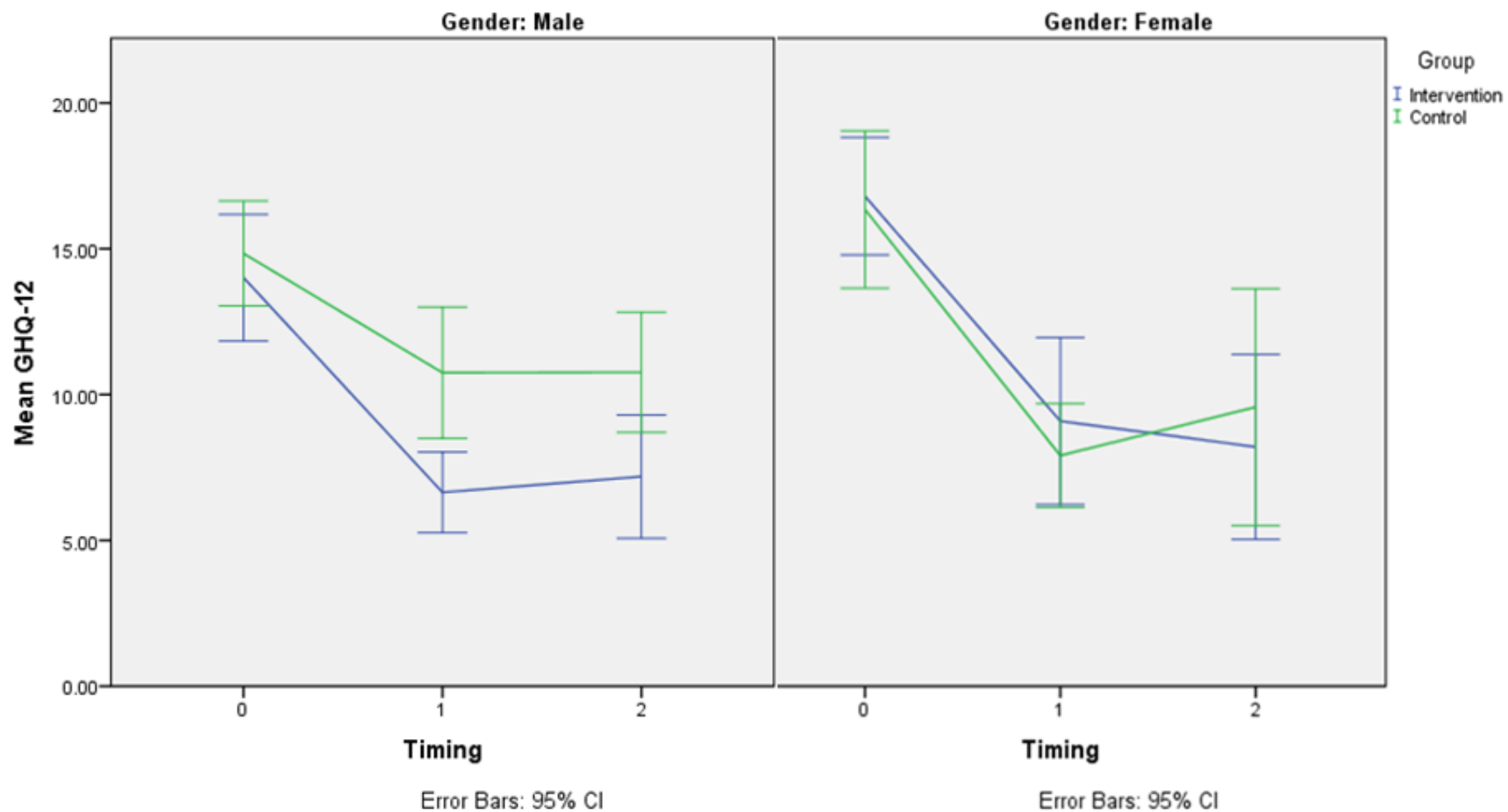
Person:
Sustainable, Career development opportunities, good pay

Employers:
good performance / workplace –fit / job satisfaction / positive approach

RCT Findings

- **Primary Outcome: Well-being (GHQ-12)**
 - Both intervention and SAU led to improvements in psych distress -both groups reporting **mean levels below clinical cut-off at 6 month follow up**
 - Some evidence to suggest the intervention was **more effective for males**
- Potential risk of psychological distress to the total LTU population (important implications provision of initial services –conditionality, sanctions, customer service)
- Lower well-being impacts job seeking and employment access (Malmberg-Heimonen & Vuori, 2005)
 - LTU vicious cycle of poor mental health and unemployment
 - LMP and activation opportunity to promote increased employability and address issues of well-being

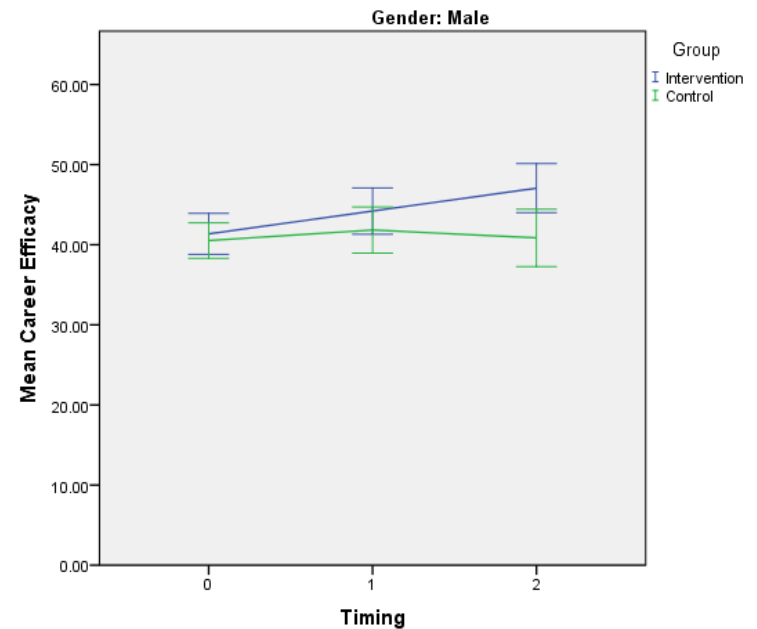
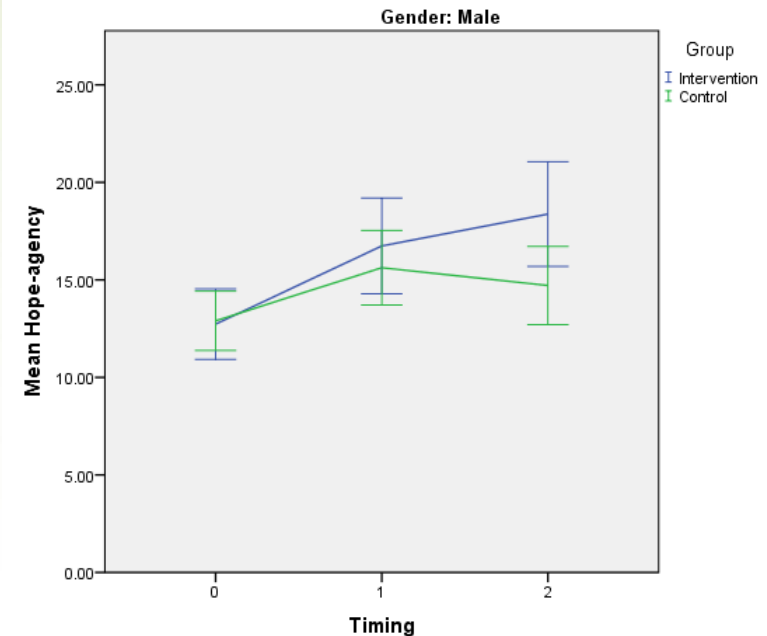
GHQ-12



RCT Findings

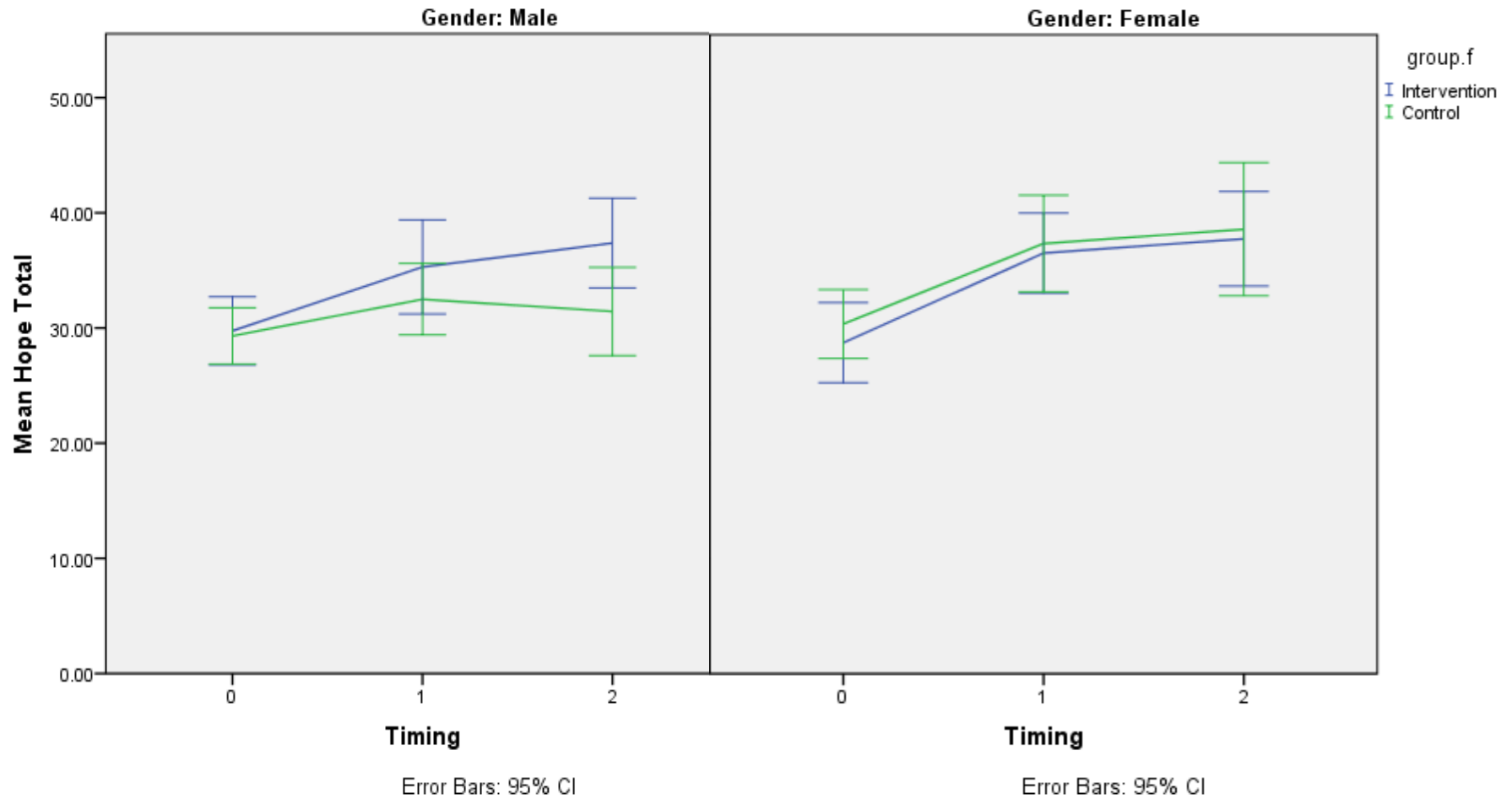
Secondary Outcome: Employability

- ➡ Hope, self-esteem, career efficacy, perceived employability – improvement across all variables
- ➡ Resilience
- ➡ Exploratory sub group analysis: indicates that the intervention was more effective for **males** with regard to **hope-agency** and **career-efficacy**



Error Bars: 95% CI

Mean 'Hope-Total' scores for Males & Females in the intervention and control groups across the three time points.





Employability outcomes

- Intervention participants twice as likely to be in training (20%) compared to 9% of SAU
- Twice as many intervention participants (24%) had started a supported employment ALMP compare to SAU (10%)
- 22% of SAU were job seeking compared to 4% of intervention group
- Numbers progressed into employment too small to examine between group differences (job satisfaction, sustainability, earnings)
- Intervention used more of a human capital approach than a work first approach of the SAU

Person as they present to the service

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- below average life satisfaction
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Work-First Approach

The missing how to

Strengths based guidance model

- identification of work interests/ work aptitudes/preferred work environment/personality characteristics /barriers/ realistic career planning / ongoing support

Psychological Capital

- Career Identify
- Self-belief
- Self-efficacy
- Hope – agency / pathways (career planning)
- Optimism
- Resilience

Employability

- Training (Human Capital)
- Networking (Social Capital - through Trng/Ed/ practitioner)

Employment

Person:
Sustainable, Career development opportunities, good pay

Employers:
good performance / workplace –fit / job satisfaction / positive approach

Approach

- (person centred / enabling / strengths based / positive)
- Practitioner skills** (counselling skills / knowledge/mentor)
- Environment** – open / non-threatening/friendly

Drivers of employability well-being / increased psychological capital (both decreased due to unemployment spell)



Study Limitations – small scale process evaluation

- Same organisation – NGO (ethos, social justice, LESN – atmosphere, mood, friendly, highly committed staff). Positive effects on both groups
- Staff equally as experienced and qualified – may have engendered a more guidance focused SAU
- Participation in the study itself:
 - Practitioners – demand characteristics, aware of being evaluated – wanted to do as good a job as possible
 - Repeated contact with all participants
 - Less likely if control from another site
- Mix of services Intreo / LESN / JobPath carry over effects



Policy/ practice lessons

- ALMP / well-being / employability
- Healthy Ireland framework (2013-2025) – role for non health sector disciplines
- Person-centred approaches and employability: fine tune PTWP – reframing policy to include meaningful outcomes – shift in culture towards more caring welfare state
- Gender implications for policy and ‘male breadwinner’ activation model
- Psych / Soc contribution to the study of unemployment and design of ALMP
- Building an evidence base / Knowledge transfer

Any Questions?

Thank you!

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