

The Collective Victory



An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the experiences of people, with severe mental health conditions, participating in an Occupation Matters Programme.

Alison Newport

4 Research Participants

- Sally: 44 yrs
- Ann: 54 yrs
- Stephan: 38 yrs
- Andrew: 31 yrs



Themes:

1. Loss of connection to others
2. Closed, controlled, safe world
3. Ill, Abnormal Sense of Self



“I can’t share that with anyone. If I said I felt a certain way, they wouldn’t acknowledge it, they just don’t understand mental health at all” (Sally 1).

“It’s because you can’t touch it, you can’t feel it” (Stephan 1).



*“I feel the stress, but I feel stressed
that I shouldn’t look stressed,
inside I’m actually dying” (Anne 1).*



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“You can’t learn to surf on a flat lake, you can’t put yourself in a sterilised setting and expect yourself to deal with life after a period of time” (Andrew 1).



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“I have always wanted to be invisible, to run away and hide, probably why I got an eating disorder all those years ago.... It would be good to do it, as that’s what normal people do” (Sally 1).



Background

- Drivers inspired the development of the OMP:
 - Literature around the Well-Elderly studies and the Lifestyle Redesign© intervention
 - Occupation-centred practice by occupational therapists
 - Recovery-orientated practice within mental health services
 - Integration of physical and mental health
 - Public health drive for healthier lifestyles
- Small project group at SABP
 - Training for occupational therapists
 - Routine intervention in community teams



OCCUPATION MATTERS PROGRAMME

Project Team

Alison
Newport

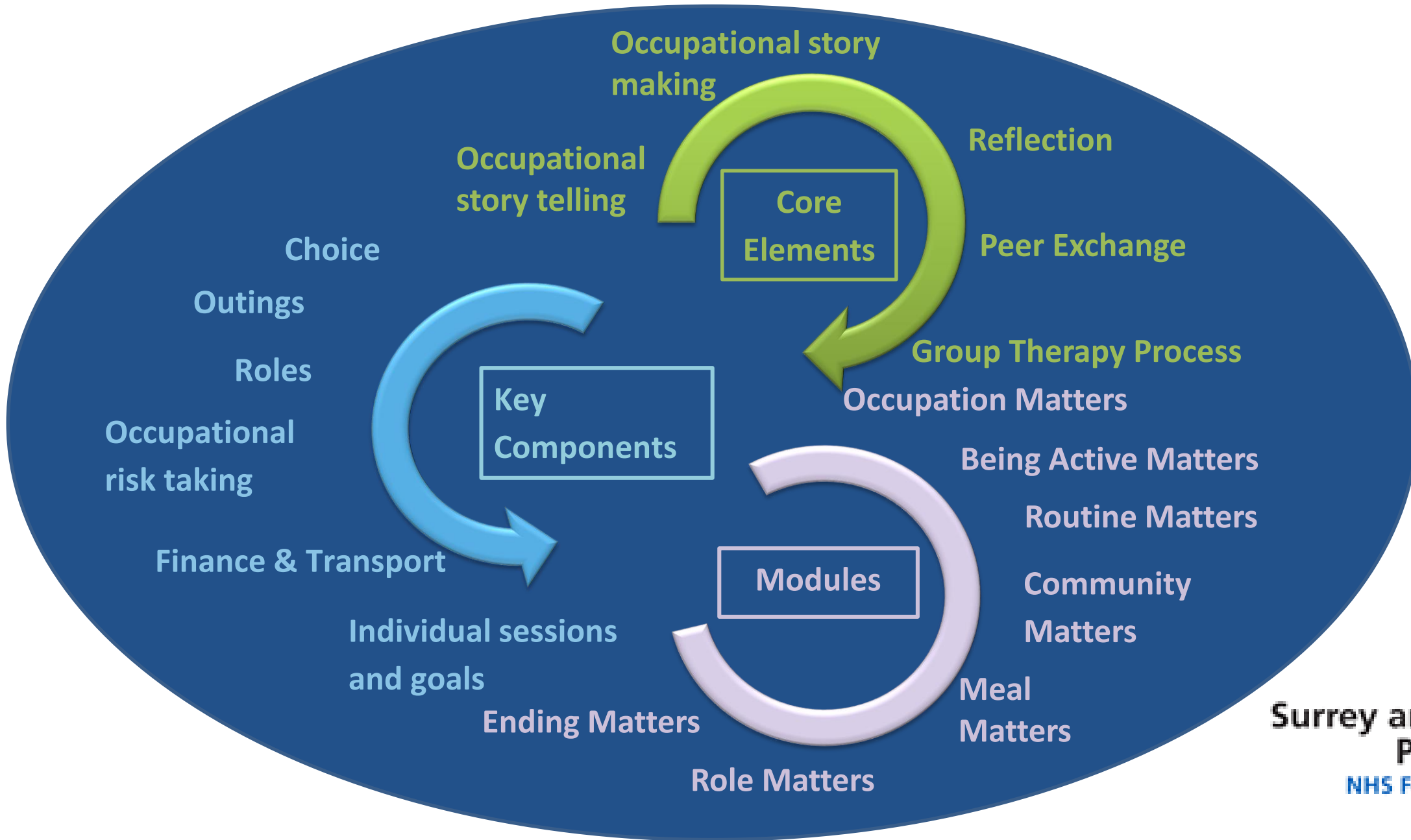
Louise
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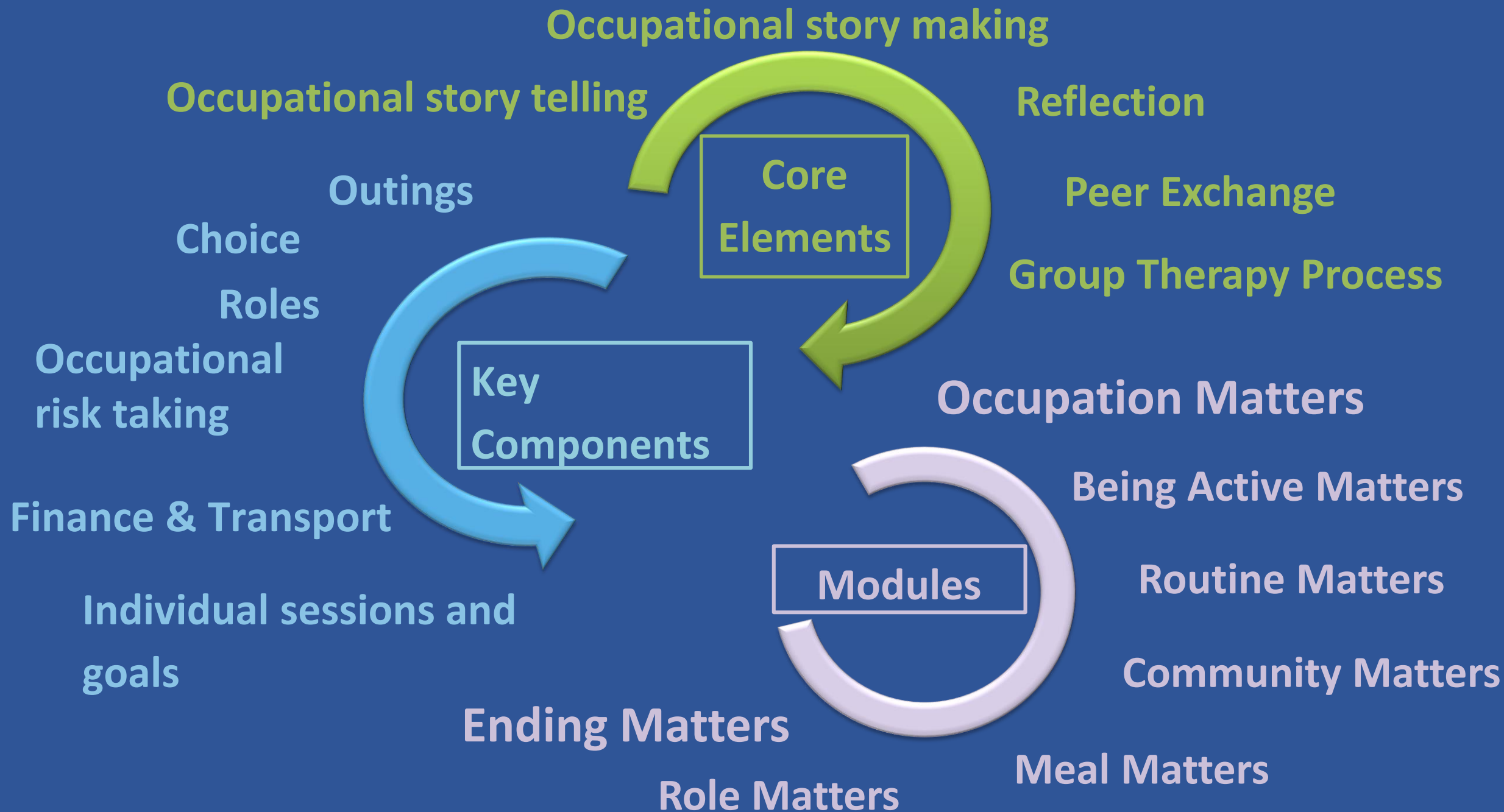
Rachel
Mitchell

Nina
Nwaosu



**Surrey and Borders
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Findings

Themes

- 1. Transition from isolation to connecting with others**
- 2. Experiencing an opened up world of activities**
- 3. Finding a place in the world through a changing sense of self**

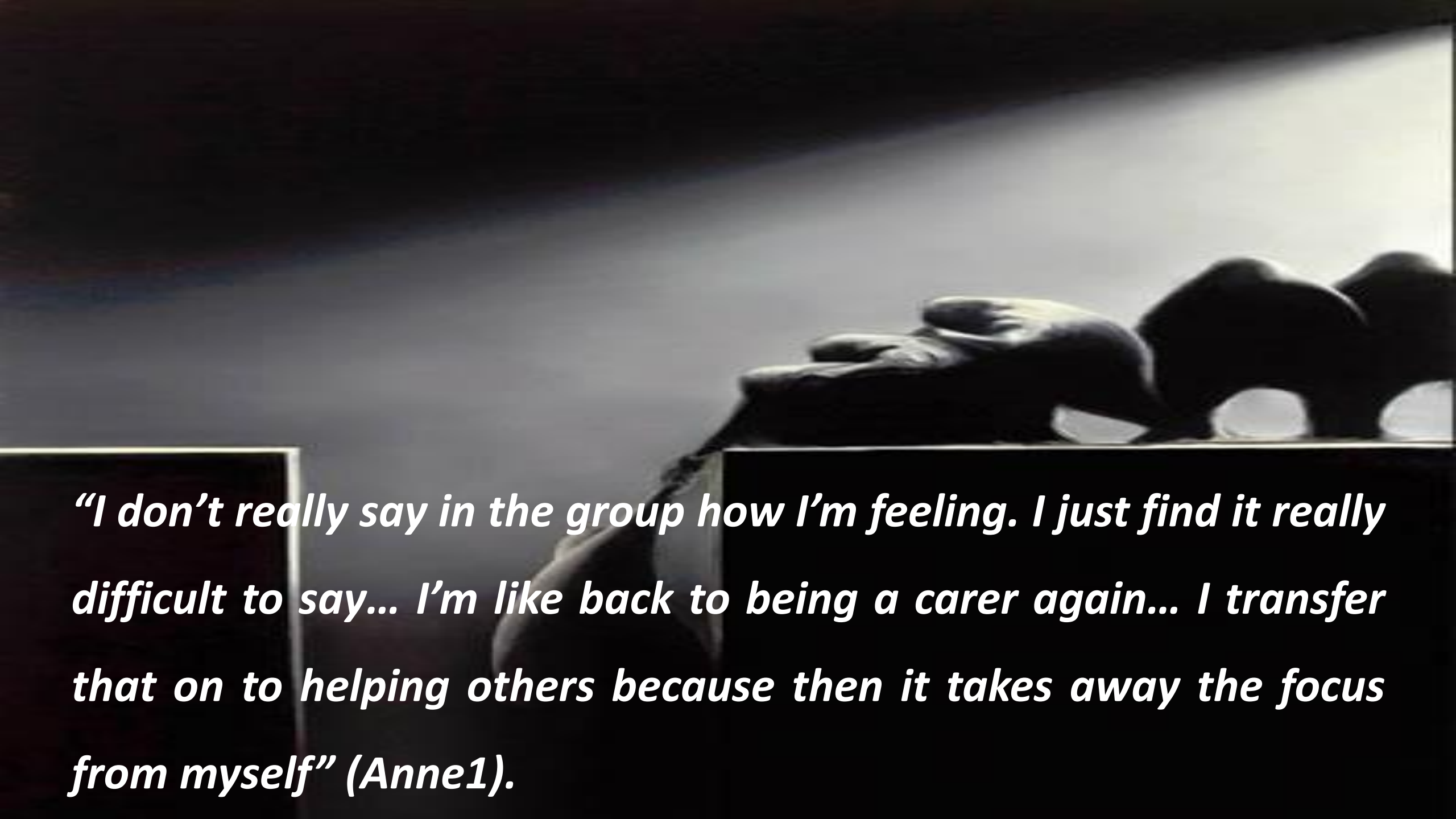
1. Connecting with others



“It’s nice to know that, when you’ve isolated yourself...knowing that you...can still be accepted by the group...There’s some form of deeper connection” (Andrew 1).

“I forced myself to be open...I didn’t want to hide anything...I gave it 100%...I surrendered” (Stephan 2).

“what I said in the group [having self-harmed], no one threw their hands up in the air and said how terrible ...no-one actually judges you for thinking in a certain way” (Sally 1).



“I don’t really say in the group how I’m feeling. I just find it really difficult to say... I’m like back to being a carer again... I transfer that on to helping others because then it takes away the focus from myself” (Anne1).

2. Experiencing an opened up world of activities



“It makes you less concerned of trying things because there is the support, where if stuff does go wrong, you know, there’s not so much of a worry” (Andrew1).

“I felt like I could trust the group by the end...it wasn’t easy...it was risky, it was a safe group to take a risk”(Sally2).



“I did it [going on a bus], and I did it on the way back as well. We all achieved it like a collective victory! The facts are that I hadn’t been on a bus for two years. It is a big achievement” (Sally 1).

“It is important to accomplish something...there’s always some reason we’re in this world, I’m a graphic designer, the programme has given me reason to go out” (Stephan 1).



*“I think it’s better when the focus is on the activity rather than yourself. I think it’s just best when we’re given a task to do because I feel we all flounder a bit if we don’t have something to focus on”
(Anne 2).*



3. Finding their place through a changing sense of self



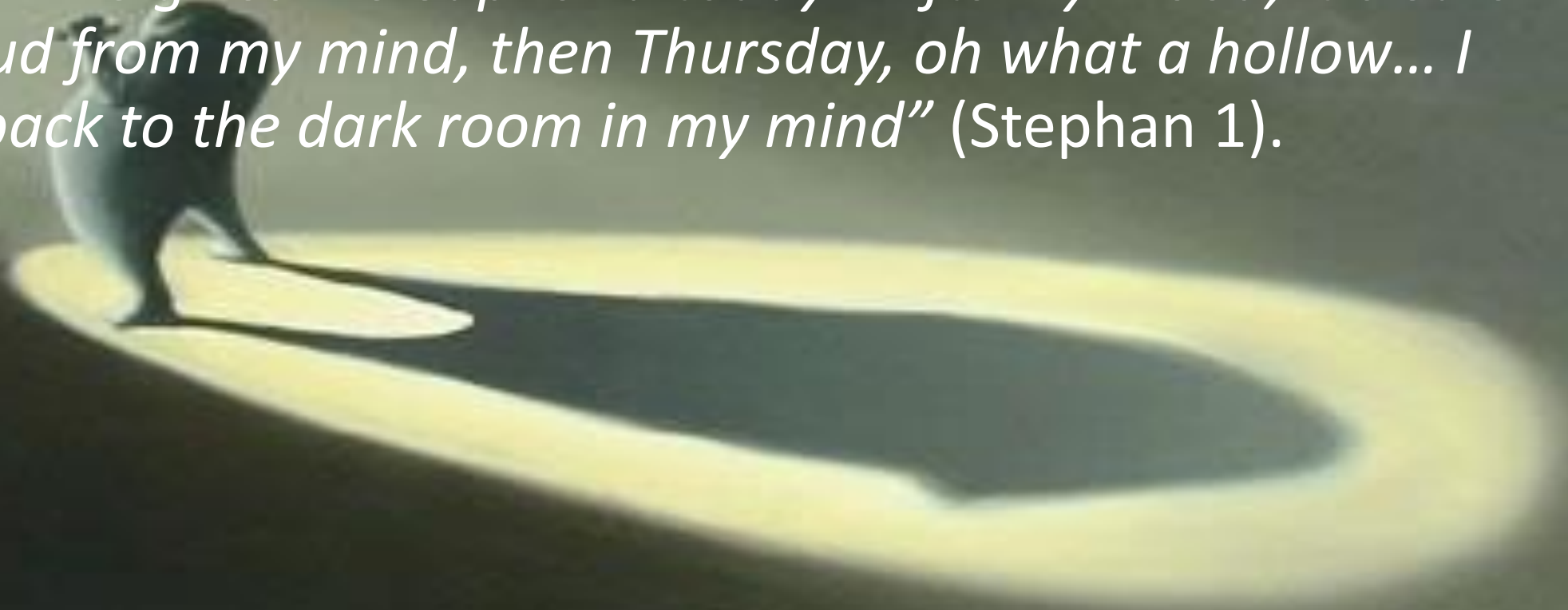
“I like the way it’s governed by what the group wants to do. I’ve been powerless in a lot of situations in my life, it feels like we are being encouraged to take a bit of that power back. I think it’s very healing being treated as an equal, I think maybe I’m not that abnormal” (Sally 2).



“We were just getting more like human beings again, rather than just ghosts or not there people” (Stephan 2).

*"I was talking to myself, giving me a command to end my life"
(Stephan 1).*

*"The programme gives me euphoria today... lifts my mood, it clears
the grey cloud from my mind, then Thursday, oh what a hollow... I
hate going back to the dark room in my mind" (Stephan 1).*



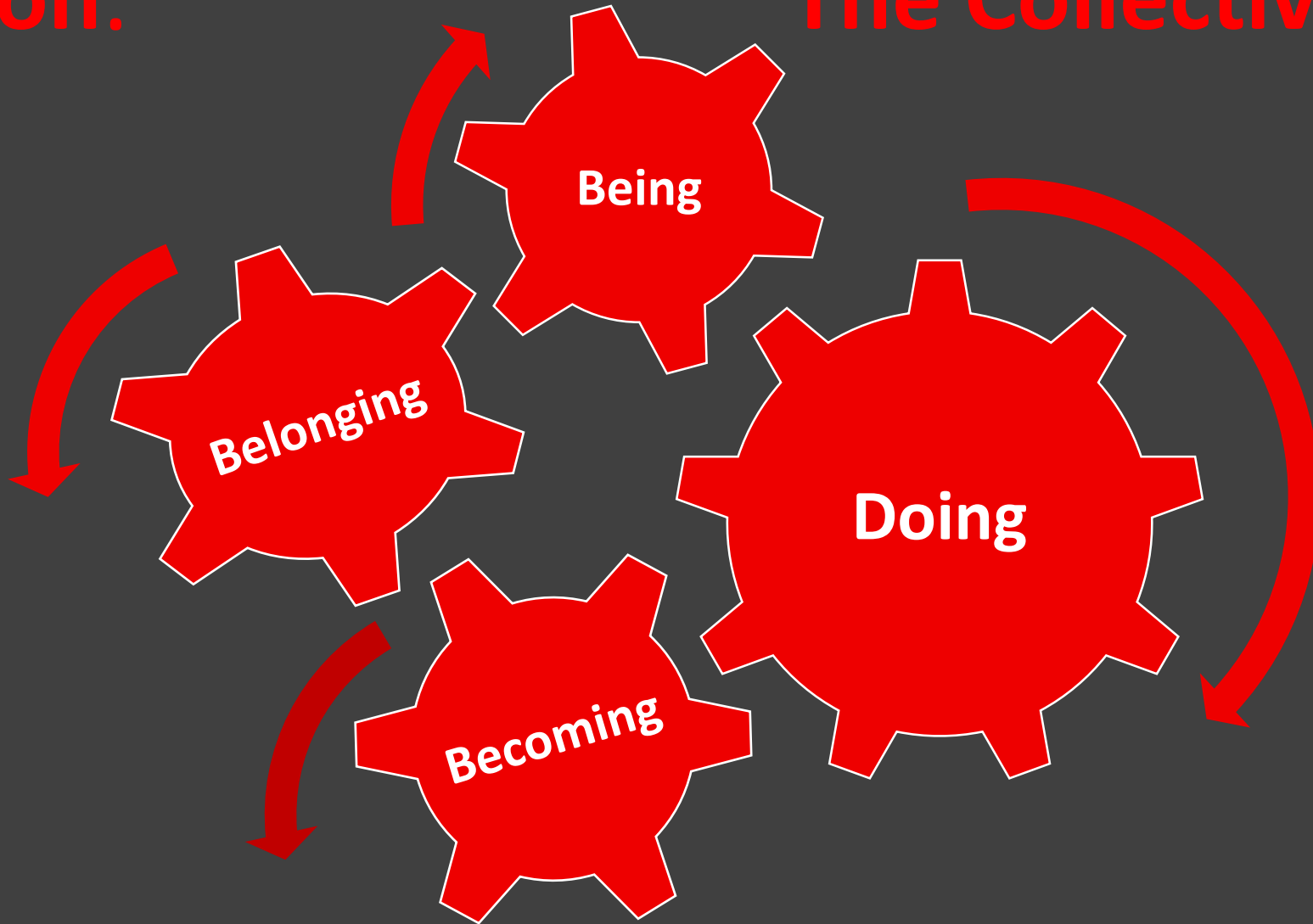
"The group, now I'm happy, I'm happy now all the time"(Stephan 2).

“I got a lot out of listening to other people’s coping strategies and what they were doing, but I don’t think at the end of it I’ve done anything different than I’d done at the beginning, I don’t think I am well” (Anne 2).



Discussion:

The Collective Victory



Anne Wilcock's Framework of Doing, Being, Belonging and Becoming (2015)

Discussion

• Difficulty 'Being'



Methodology & Methods

- Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)
- Sample: 4 participants
- Recruitment
- Ethical approval & considerations

Methodology & Methods

- Data Collection
- Data Analysis
 - IPA's Step-by-step analysis
 - Levels of interpretation
- Rigour: 3 guidelines

Summary: The Collective Victory

- a more authentic existence, improved their mental health and developed a sense of well-being
- The Doing created a temporary project, facilitating the Being, Belonging and Becoming
- The Being aspect instrumental in creating authenticity and well-being.

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- For more information: Newport.Alison@gmail.com

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