**Visual Storytelling Rationale**

**The use of visual storytelling supports the research process in three key ways: co-production, knowledge translation, and routes to impact.**

Visual storytelling - using images to evoke emotional and strategic narratives - is an invaluable part of research co-production through ‘live scribing’. Live scribing - sometimes known as graphic facilitation - is the live illustration of ideas, processes, and stories by a ‘scribe’ in collaboration with research participants to facilitate group understanding. Using reflective mirroring, a live scribe deepens and democratises the relationship between researchers and service-users to improve the provision of services in a truly collaborative way (Bird, 2018; Blackstock et al., 2015). Qualitative evidence from healthcare research demonstrates that when live scribing is used in co-production, it improves patient ownership, idea generation and satisfaction with re-designed services, from adolescent diabetes clinics (Blackstock et al., 2015) and oncology services (Del Mas et al., 2020), to local climate change effects on health (Staffer, 2014).

Visual storytelling is also a catalyst for knowledge translation beyond academia and forging routes to impact. Visual stories are more accessible and easily understood than traditional research papers due to three key factors:

* Visuals are **FAST** – visuals are processed in 13 milliseconds versus six seconds for a sentence of text (Endress & Potter, 2014)
* Visuals are **MEMORABLE** – we are 65% more likely to recall visual information after three days than we are text (Medina, 2009)
* Visuals drive **ACTION** – research articles with a visual abstract benefitted from 170% more views that those without (Ibrahim et al., 2017), and research articles with an animated abstract benefitted from 88% more views (Springer Nature, 2020)

Therefore, traditional research reports and text-based outputs alone are poorly positioned to translate knowledge into usable outputs outside of academia. Using visual storytelling enables more stakeholders outside of academia to engage with research, understand its value and put its recommendations into action, increasing the potential for research impact.

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