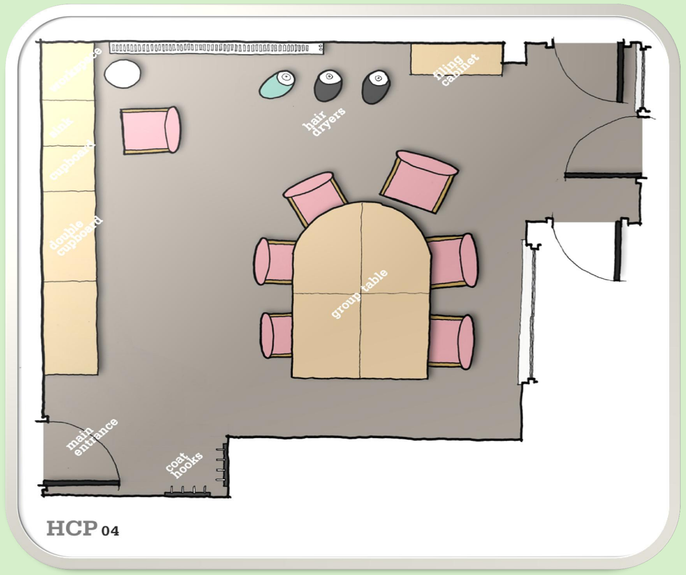
THE HAIR AND CARE PROJECT

Introduction – Developing a 'full-bodied' approach to dementia care

The Hair and Care project is a 28 month ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) funded ethnographic research project. Our study has sought to explore the role of appearance-related care and support in dementia care settings. It has looked in particular at the role that hairdressing services contribute to the lives of people with dementia. This poster has a focus upon the salon space that exists, often only on a time-limited basis in care homes, hospitals, day centres and the like.

The Care-based Hair Salon in focus

The challenge for this study has been to explore how to make sense of the salon space and the activities that take place within it.



Making sense of these often makeshift spaces

- Temporary spaces
- Marginalised spaces
- Spaces for renewal
- Spaces for non-discursive encounters: bodywork, touch and sensation

Mirror Mirror on the wall

It has been important to connect with the materiality of the spaces, the design, aesthetics and the tools that are used within them. Mirrors have proved to be an interesting aspect of the work in the salon and can generate negative and positive responses. Participants have remarked on family resemblances; feelings about their appearance; and uttered surprise at their hair colour which is now often grey or white.

Using our own bodies as research tools; A Shampoo and Set

To explore and try to understand these spaces and the experiences that occurred within them we chose to use creative methods as sensory ethnographers and we engaged in activities and experiences ourselves. We used film to capture this and the experiences of the people with dementia and the hairdressers, using:

- Real-time bodywork
- Process filming – of the hairdressing activities
- 'in-situ' interviews an inclusive way to engage people with dementia in the moment
- 'in-situ' interviews with hairdressers to enable description of processes as they are performing it.

Conclusion: A 'Full-bodied' Approach to Dementia Care

- Facilitates greater inclusion and participation
- Opens up opportunities for research in overlooked dimensions of care
- Helps to understand the significance of an embodied place in the world
- It is able to show the centrality of embodied relationships in care.

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