Practice research enabler

- What does it mean?
- What is a practice research enabler?
- Academic skills
- Works alongside practitioners
- Develop new knowledge in an organisation
Philosophical justification

• **Episteme** – theoretical knowledge (natural sciences, mathematics, philosophy)
• **Techne** – technical skill (engineering, architecture, town planning)
• **Phronesis** – judgement (social work, psychology, medicine, education)
• **Phronesis** involves a ‘complex model of judgement’ (Ellett, 2012); ‘deliberation based on values and reflection’ (Kinsella & Pitman, 2012)
Artificial division between research and practice

- Unnatural and unhealthy divide between research and practice
- From 1950s, increased professionalism
- Trainers sought recognition in academe
- Resultant differentiation between research and practice
Practice research

- Practitioners engage in good practice
- Practitioners can become actively involved in research
- Practice research develops a collaborative relationship between practitioner and researcher
- Practice research discussed for 20+ years
Practice research enabler

• Usually an academic
• Skills and expertise to conduct research
• Works alongside skilled practitioners to:
  1. Answer the questions they pose;
  2. Enable them to do the research.
• Academic facilitates practitioner knowledge into broader theoretical perspective
My experience

- Distress Study at Royal Adelaide Hospital conducted by six oncology social workers
- Research team met for 2+ years
- Project: identify levels of distress amongst cancer outpatients
- 626 outpatients completed a questionnaire during two week period in May 2015
RAH Study

- Team developed the literature review
- Together we developed methodology and methods of data collection
- Team took responsibility for project
- I took on role of advisor
- Project was envisioned by practitioners
- Report prepared and sent to hospital management
Challenges

• Despite enthusiasm of six practitioners, three factors were a challenge:

1. Time
2. Focus
3. Meeting attendance
4. Project completion
Reasons for success

• My role as enabler
• Practitioner input
• Project planning and implementation
• Drawing of conclusions
• Report
Conclusion

- By no means a perfect study
- Achieved some of intended goals of role of practice research enabler
- Focus remained on practice
- Practitioners took responsibility for research process


