Fit for purpose measures in youth mental health

Sebastian Rodriguez Duque (McGill University), Skye Barbic (Foundry, University of British Colubia), Eran Tal (McGill University)
Contact information: Sebastian Rodriguez Duque (he/him) sebastian.rodriguezduque@mail.mcgill.ca

McGill

Introduction

This project is an ongoing collaboration between philosophers of science at McGill University, health outcome researchers at the University of British Columbia, youth, and service providers working in mental healthcare with young people.

What were we were puzzling about?
- How should we integrate measurement into practice in a way that is meaningful and not merely administratively burdensome?
- Is the quality and utility of instruments addressed by commonly tested psychometric properties like validity or reliability, or are there other more helpful concepts?

What have we done?

- An 11-chapter guidebook for service providers, covering:
  - Intro to health outcome measures
  - Ethics of measurement
  - The purposes of measuring mental health
  - Selecting the right measures
  - Interpreting scores
  - Integrating measurement into clinical practice
- 11 short training videos summarizing key points
- 2-day live training course
- 1 day workshop delivered at IAYMH 2022

Mobilizing Measurement into Care — A Handbook for Service Providers Working with Young Adults Aged 12-24 Years
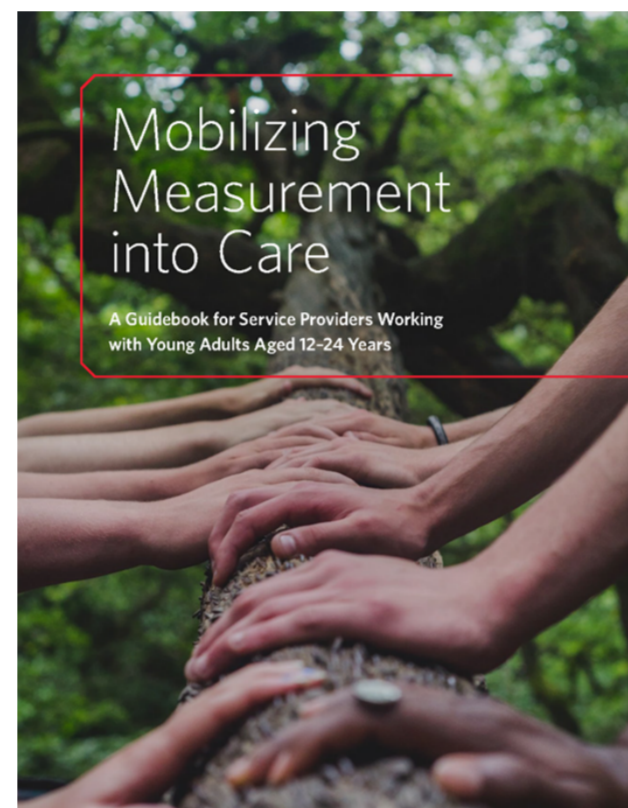
## What did we learn in the process?

Fitness for purpose matters!
Gaps in health measurement exist
Ethical data collection matters!
Values Matter!
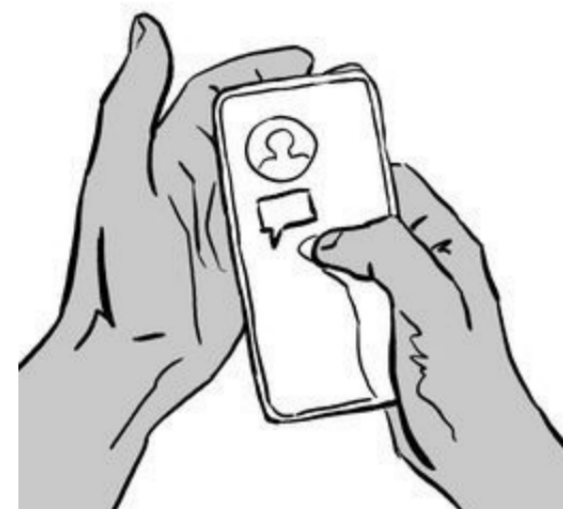
Fitness for purpose

- Fitness for purpose is a judgment about the alignment of three elements: <u>what, why and how</u>, in the instance of an instrument's use.

- Such judgments happen in the clinical interaction. This is the central way of gathering evidence about whether a test is fit for its purpose.
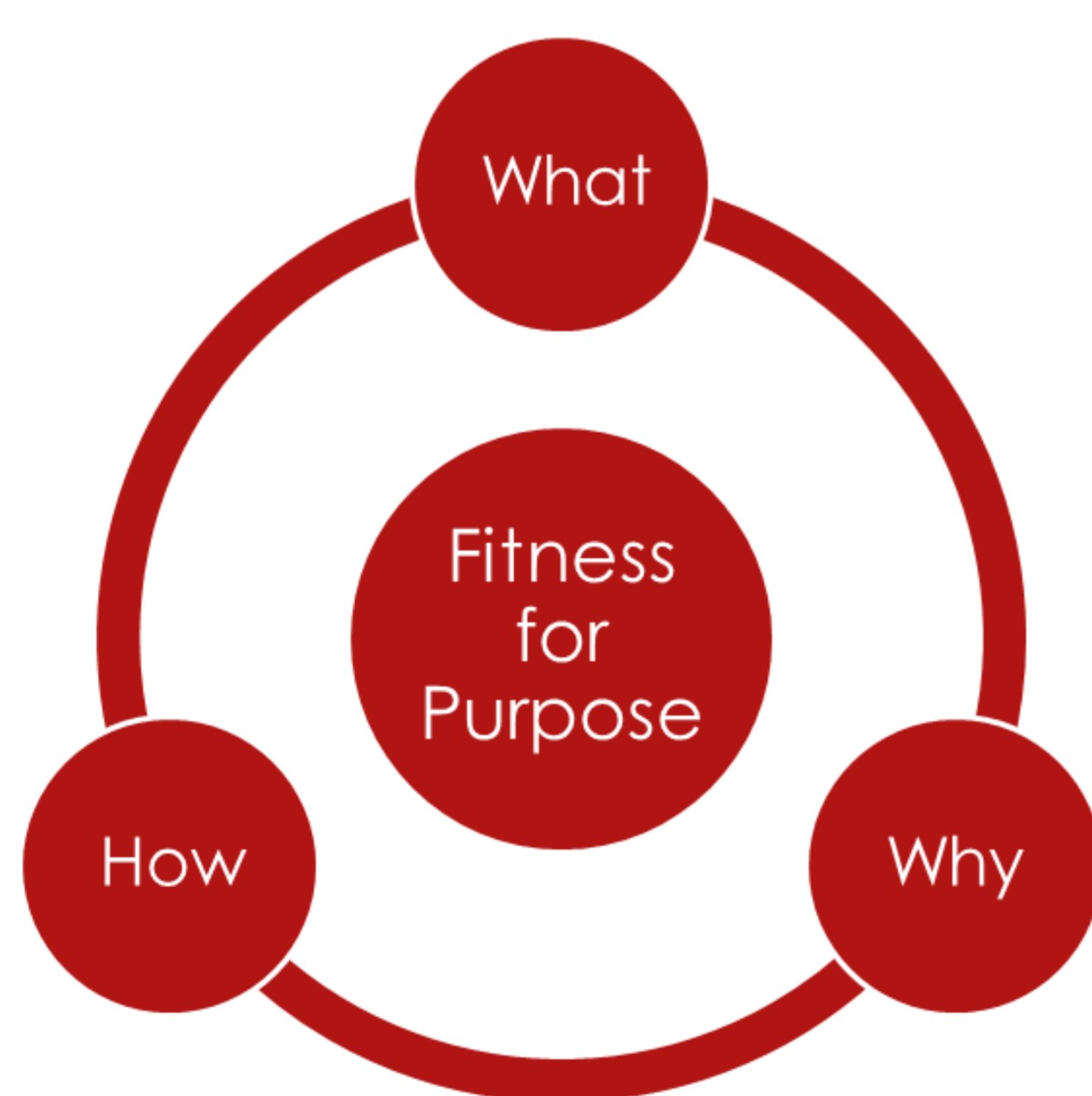
What: The health status of a client or patient

How: Through the right tool, with the right values

Why: To identify, track, or evaluate

Diagram: What, How, Why surrounding "Fitness for Purpose"

E.g. unfit for purpose: reification

- In the context of screening, the use of some measurement tools can have unintended effects such as reification, a harmful potential effect of measurement that might make the use of screeners unfit for purpose.

- Under what conditions is the use of a measure for screening ethically justified?

- **Potential answer: when the conversation surrounding the measurement promotes client autonomy and collaborative decision-making**

Three gaps in mental health measurement

1. Disconnect between psychometric literature and clinical practice
2. Tension between aims of data collection and patient-centred care
3. No systematic guide on the ethics of mental health measurement in a clinical context when working with young people

Ethical concerns in measurement

- Stigma and reification
- Clinician-client power imbalance
- Privacy and consent (esp. 12-18 year olds)
- Data access and ownership (eg. Indigenous youth)
- Misinterpreting scores
- Inclusivity (age, gender, sexual orientation, cultural background...)
- Burden of data collection on client
- Over-collection of data, ignoring client responses

Values-based measurement

- Important values in this context include:
  - Ethical: well-being, autonomy
  - Social: inclusion, empowerment, collaboration
  - Pragmatic: efficiency, scalability
  - Epistemic: accuracy

Take-away considerations for practice

- When deciding on common data sets and what to measure, diverse youth must be at the table.
- Simply being reliable and valid is not enough to be a good measurement tool– it must be fit for purpose.
- Ethical and youth-centred plans for using data must be in place.
- Value-based measurement is important for learning health systems in youth mental health spaces, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for youth, families, and service providers.

Central questions that you can take away to determine if a measure is fit for purpose for your practice:

- **Is measuring the ethical thing to do for a given context and purpose?**
- **How do we ethically justify measurement related actions?**
- **What should our measurement practice look like so that it is ethically justifiable?**
- **How should we integrate what matters to young people and their different communities into our measures and our measurement practice?**

McGill · HEALTHY BRAINS HEALTHY LIVES · UBC THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA · FOUNDRY · foundrybc.ca/iaymh2022