

Exploring a strengths-based approach: Challenging the deficit narrative in rural health research

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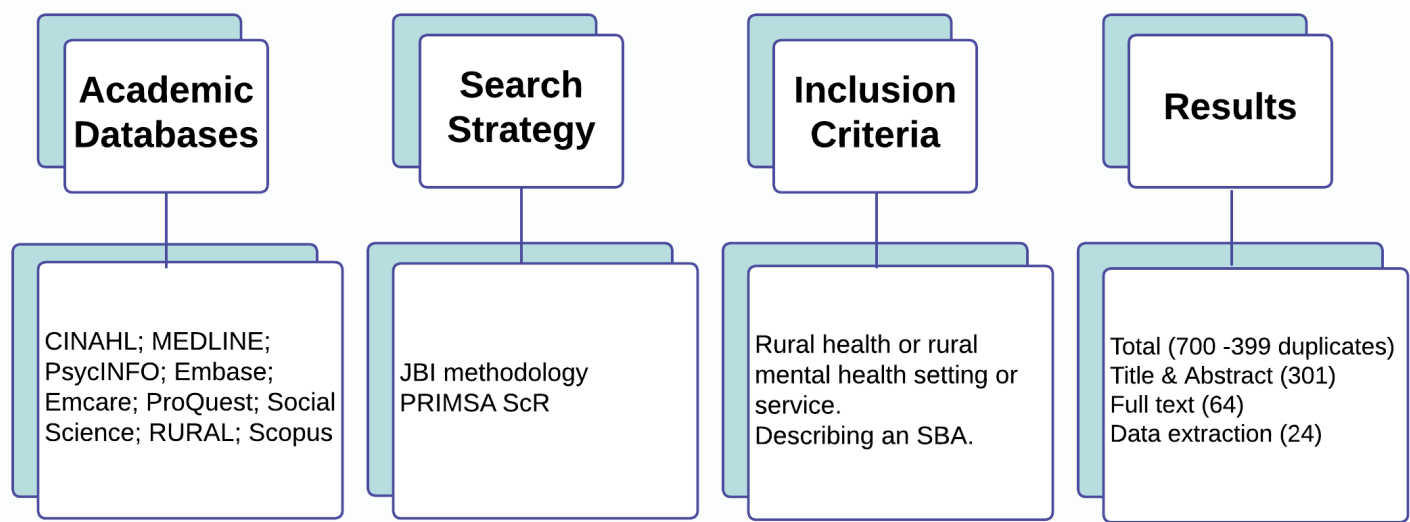


Background

Rural communities negotiate structural, attitudinal, and socio-economic challenges that limit their access to health and palliative care. These challenges are often described through a deficit narrative that assigns blame and implies a deficiency. There is a growing interest in applying **strengths-based approaches (SBAs)** in both research and practice, but their application to rural health research, is currently unclear.

This **research aims** to explore in what context, and for what purpose, SBAs have been applied in rural health research internationally. Further, this review identifies opportunities for future use of SBAs in rural health research to improve the provision of rural palliative care.

Scoping Review



Strengths-Based Approaches



Oppose a deficit approach



Recognise that communities are experts in their own experiences



Purposefully discover “what works well”

Results

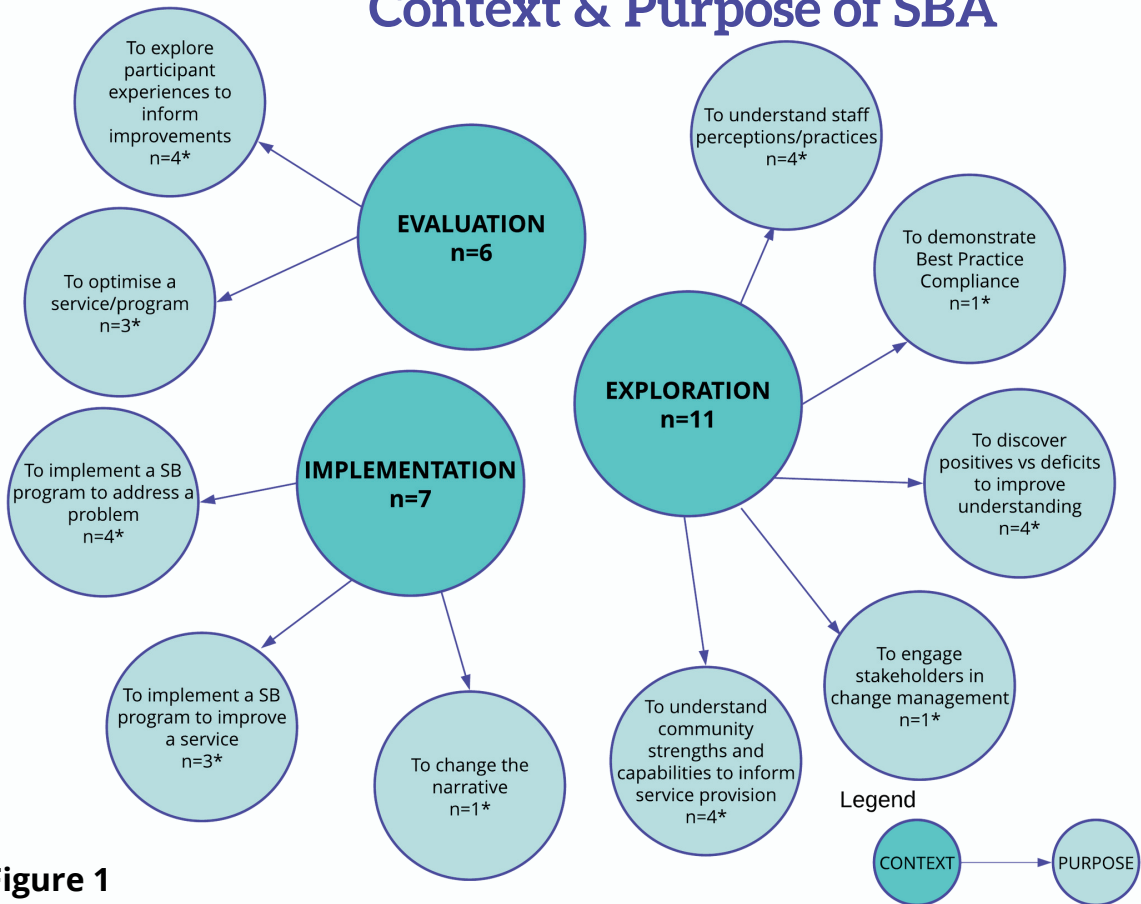


Figure 1

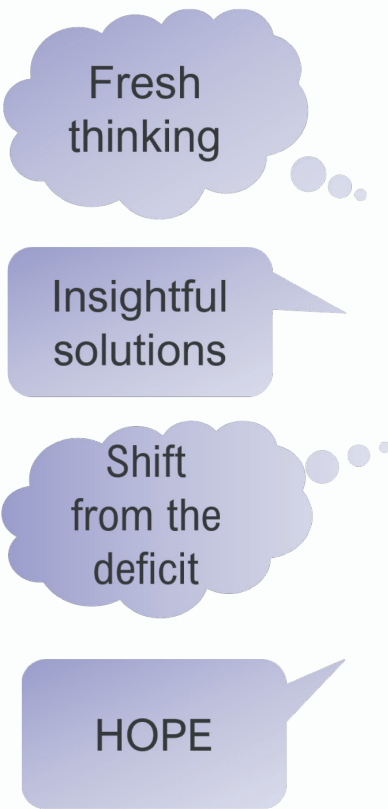
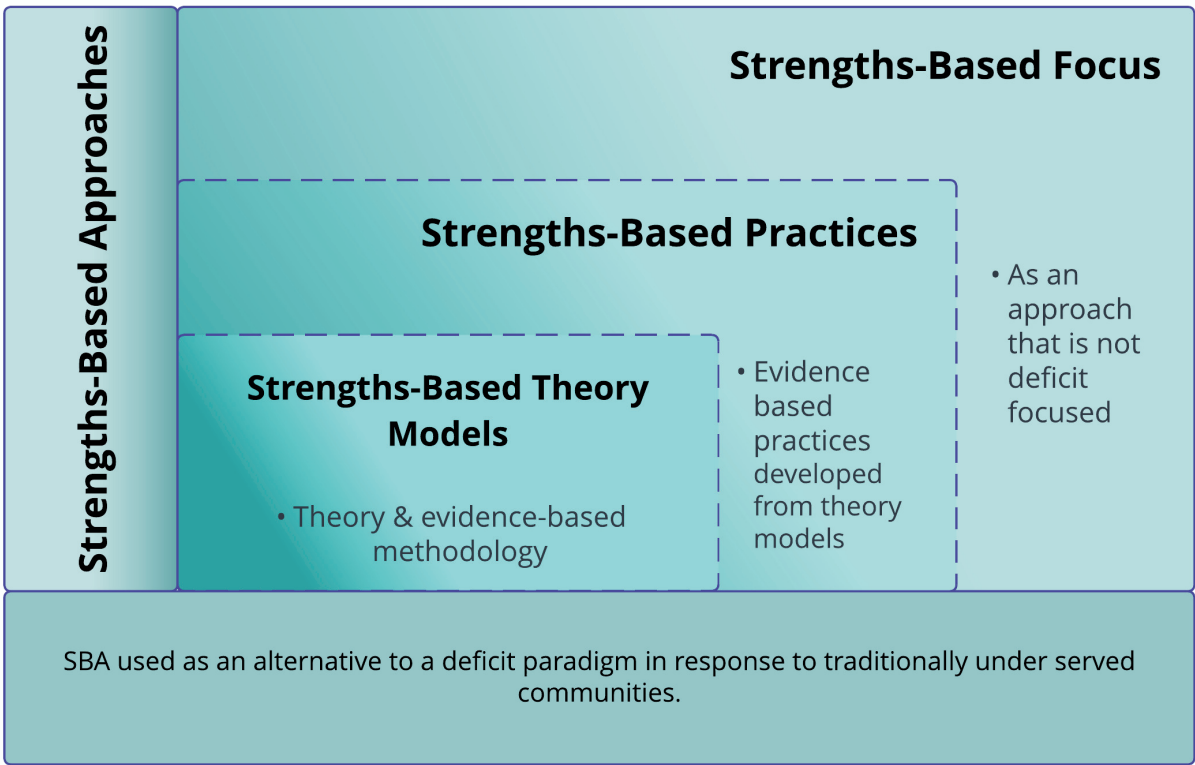


Figure 2

Conceptual Framework



Discussion

Figure 1
The use of SBAs in rural health research aims to **challenge the traditional deficit paradigm**. Three categories were identified to understand the context for which SBAs informed the research methodology with various themes linked to the intended purpose.

Figure 2
The application of SBAs in rural health research is complex, with studies showing complete, partial, or informed use stemming from theoretical models. Despite variances from theory, SBAs effectively engage communities in **fresh thinking, provide insightful solutions, and shift from the deficit narrative by highlighting strengths, capabilities, and hope for the future.**

Recommendations

This research provides insights from the current use of SBAs, to enhanced outcomes for rural populations. There is a pressing need to find innovative high-quality solutions for palliative care in rural communities. Community participation and action have been pivotal in achieving sustainable palliative care models. The development of SBA for rural palliative research has significant potential to inform new models of care to address the gaps by understanding “what works well”.

SBAs have significant potential to **change the narrative** and promote positive conversations about palliative care.

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*Papers could be classified as fitting multiple themes therefore numbers add to >24.