Occupational identity, football and homelessness: a narrative inquiry of female experiences

1st Author. Chris Wood
2nd Author. Dr Angela Murphy
contact: c.wood6546@student.leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Why football and homelessness?

- I have been a football fan all my life

- I experienced homelessness for around 6 months at the age of about 20

- I became involved in the Homeless World Cup in 2013

- It provides a very unique example of how popular occupation can be used to connect to, engage and support individuals and populations on the margins

- It offers insight into an alternative narrative to dominant and socially constructed homeless identities

Rationale

Homelessness

- **In the United Kingdom there continues to be a rise in the number of homeless households (Shelter, 2016).**

- **Homelessness often restricts opportunities, choices, roles and routines**
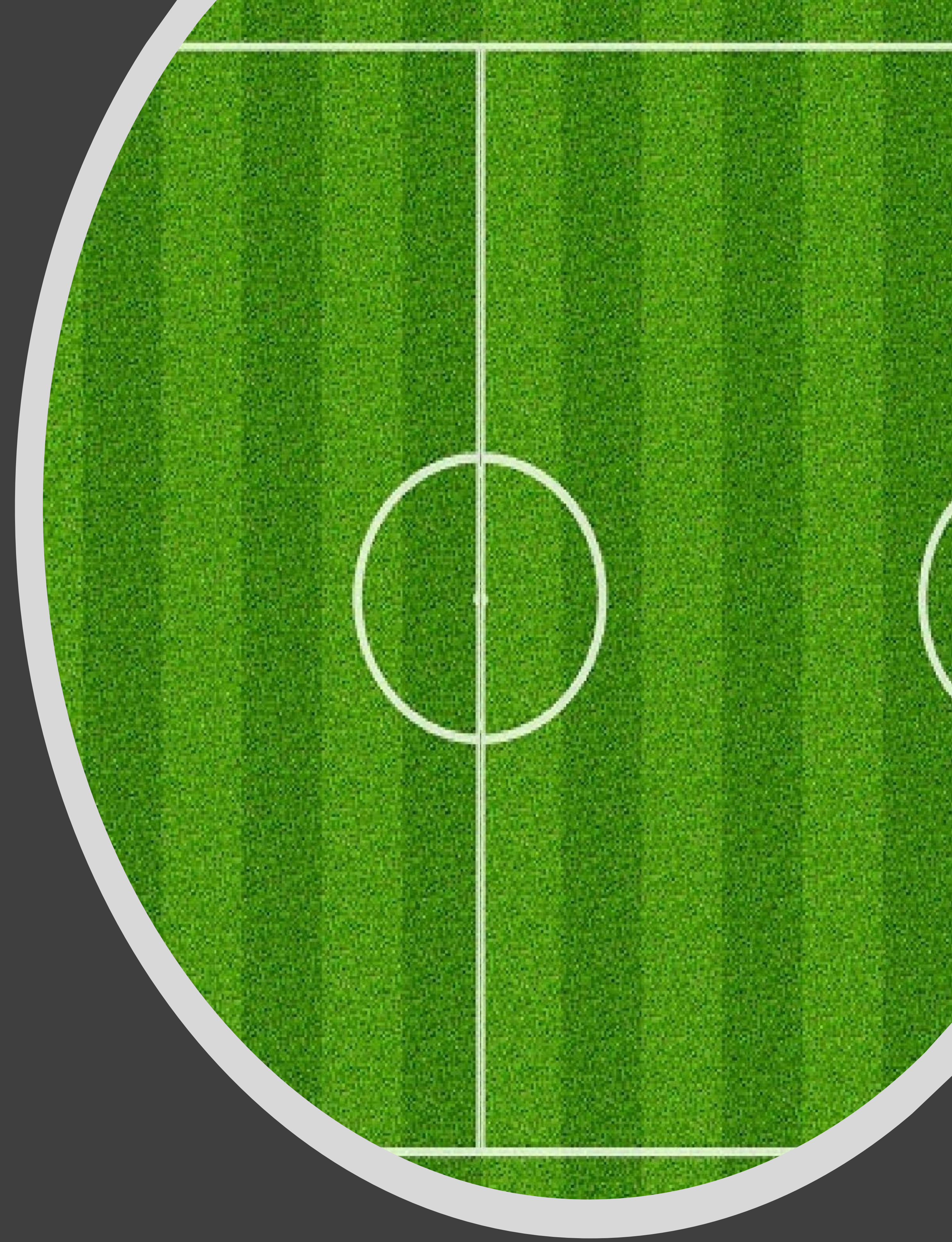
Occupational identity

- **Who we are is greatly influenced by what we do (Christiansen, 2004)**

- **Realizing an identity acceptable to both self and society through engagement and competence in meaningful occupation, fosters coherence and wellbeing. (Christiansen, 1999)**

- **A sense of who one is and wishes to become is engendered from historical occupational participation (Kielhofner, 2002)**

Rationale

Temporal and narrative lives

- The temporal relationship between self and society, (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) underpins occupational identity.

- Narratives can highlight how people navigate occupational transitions and adapt to occupational and role change (Jonsson, Josephsson and Kielhofner, 2000).

There is a need to further explore what happens to occupational identity, when homelessness restricts occupational freedom and choice. (Whiteford, 2000).
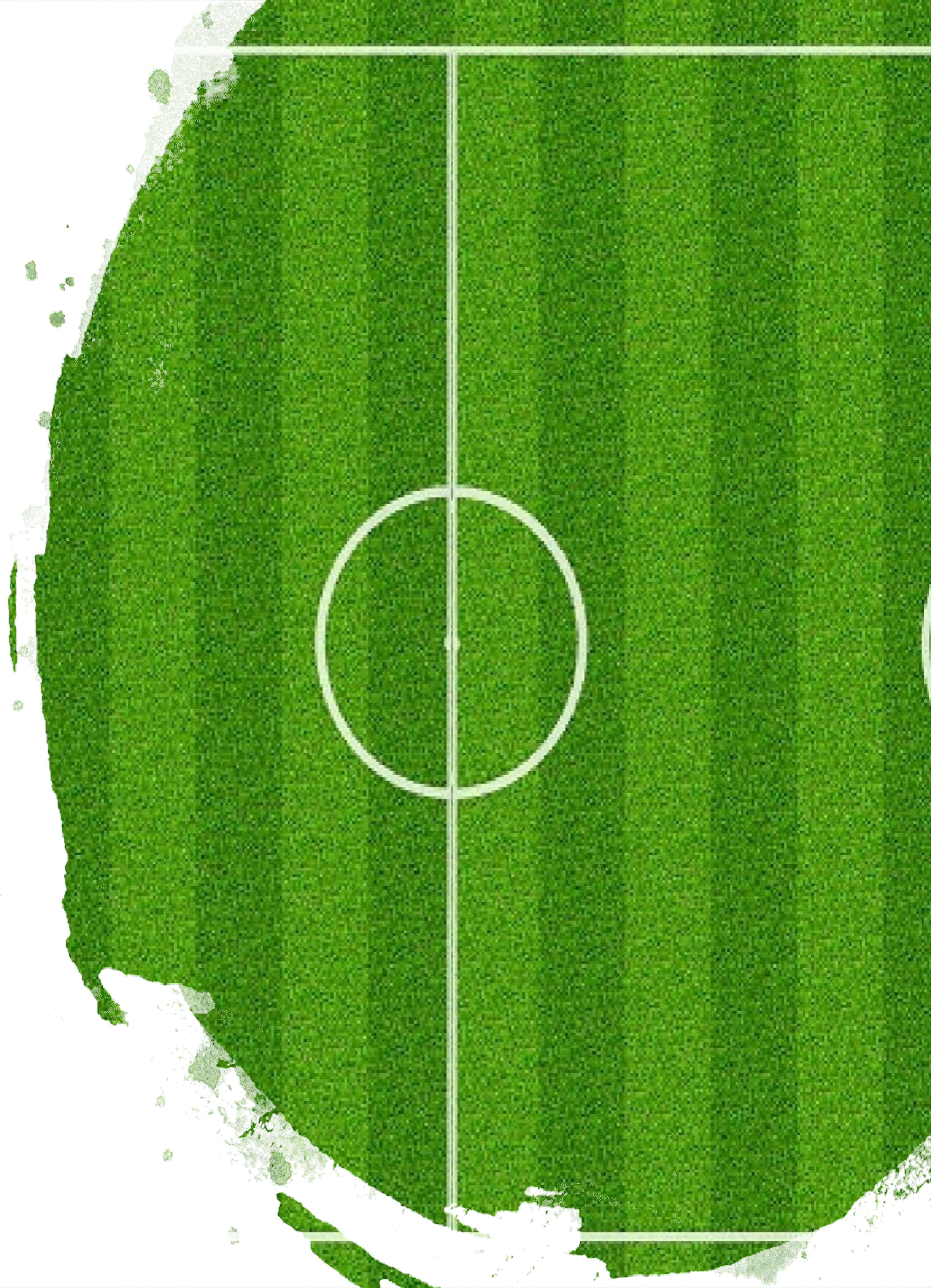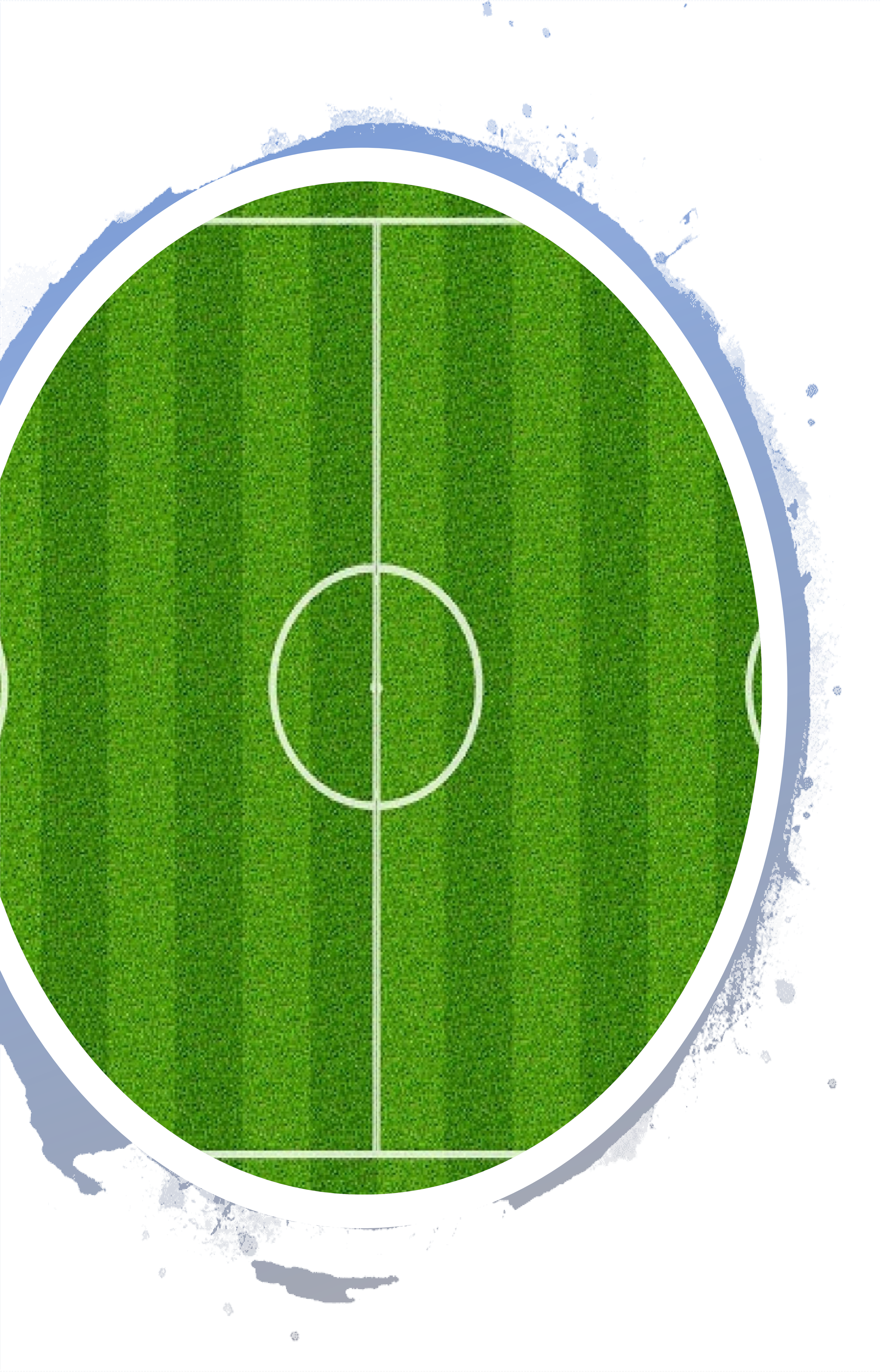
Methodology

Process

- Narrative inquiry was used as a method of data collection and analysis.

- Participants were invited to share storied experiences of specific events and situations.

- 5 stages of analysis (Molineux and Richard, 2003).

Principles and responsibilities

- Narrative inquiry is a form of 'active interviewing' (Holloway and Jefferson, 2000).

- Maintaining the voice of the participants.

Findings

Jenny's narrative

Jenny has always loved football and is a self-confessed "proper massive Evertonian" like her Mum, and she recalls the excitement of attending Everton FC games from as young as 7. Although it made her feel different to other girls, Jenny would rather play football than get drunk with them. But football also provided an escape from a home environment where "Mum and dad were constantly fighting and arguing". Football enabled Jenny to play and be a child, when at home she had to be mature beyond her teenage years and look after her sisters.
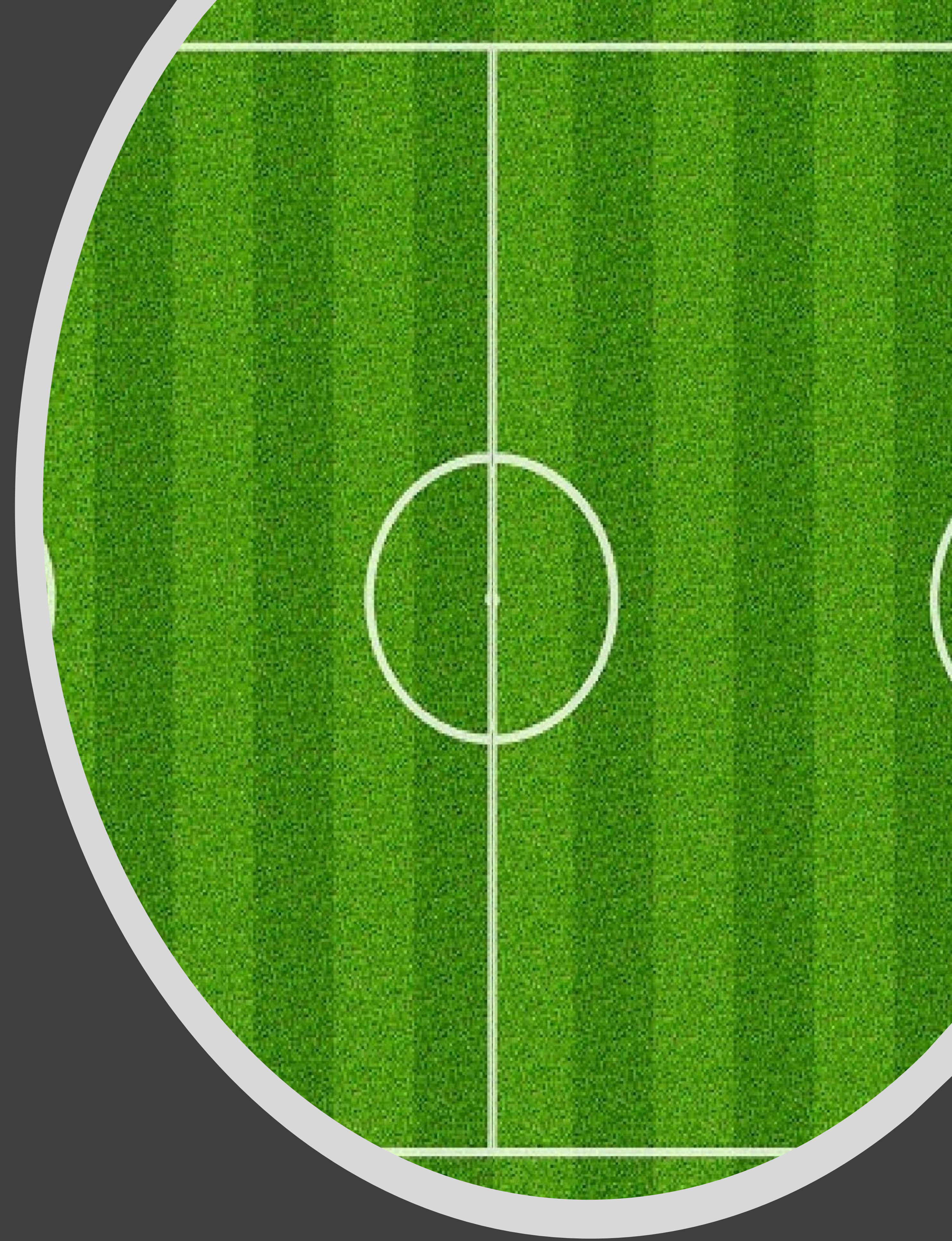
Discussion

Then and now, me and us

- Early occupational identity formation can foster positive relationships with others (Laliberte Rudman, and Dennhardt, 2008) and self (Christiansen, 2004)

- However coherence can be difficult to maintain (Kielhofner, 2008).

- Sarah and Jenny demonstrate coherence, whereas Mary is somewhat detached from her youth

Escape and safety

- Significant aspects of the past can become embedded in the present through the influence and meaning they have on an overt sense of self (Cunningham's, 2017).

Football provided:

- Physical and emotional escape (Sarah and Jenny) .

- Temporal escape from the difficult present

Discussion

Who am I, where am I?

- All three women' had their occupational identities explicitly challenged by their social and cultural contexts.

- Sarah and Jenny rejected the socially constructed identities associated with their circumstance (Seal, 2007).
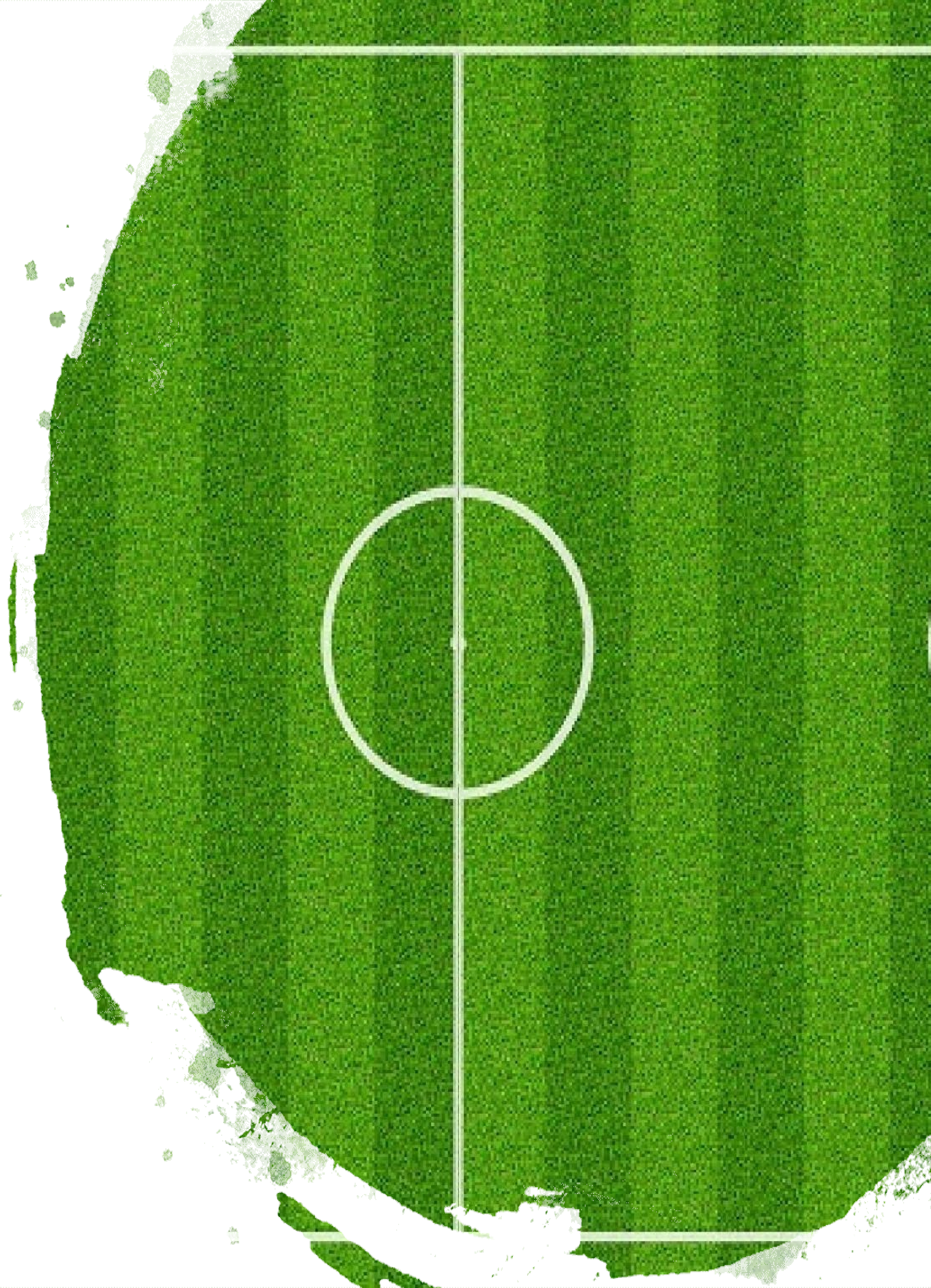
Reliable occupations, reliable identities

Football has provided:

- A reliable source of escape and hope in a time of adversity.

- A sense of coherence to threatened identities.

- connection with a positive version of self that was not bound by present circumstance (Kielhofner, 2008).
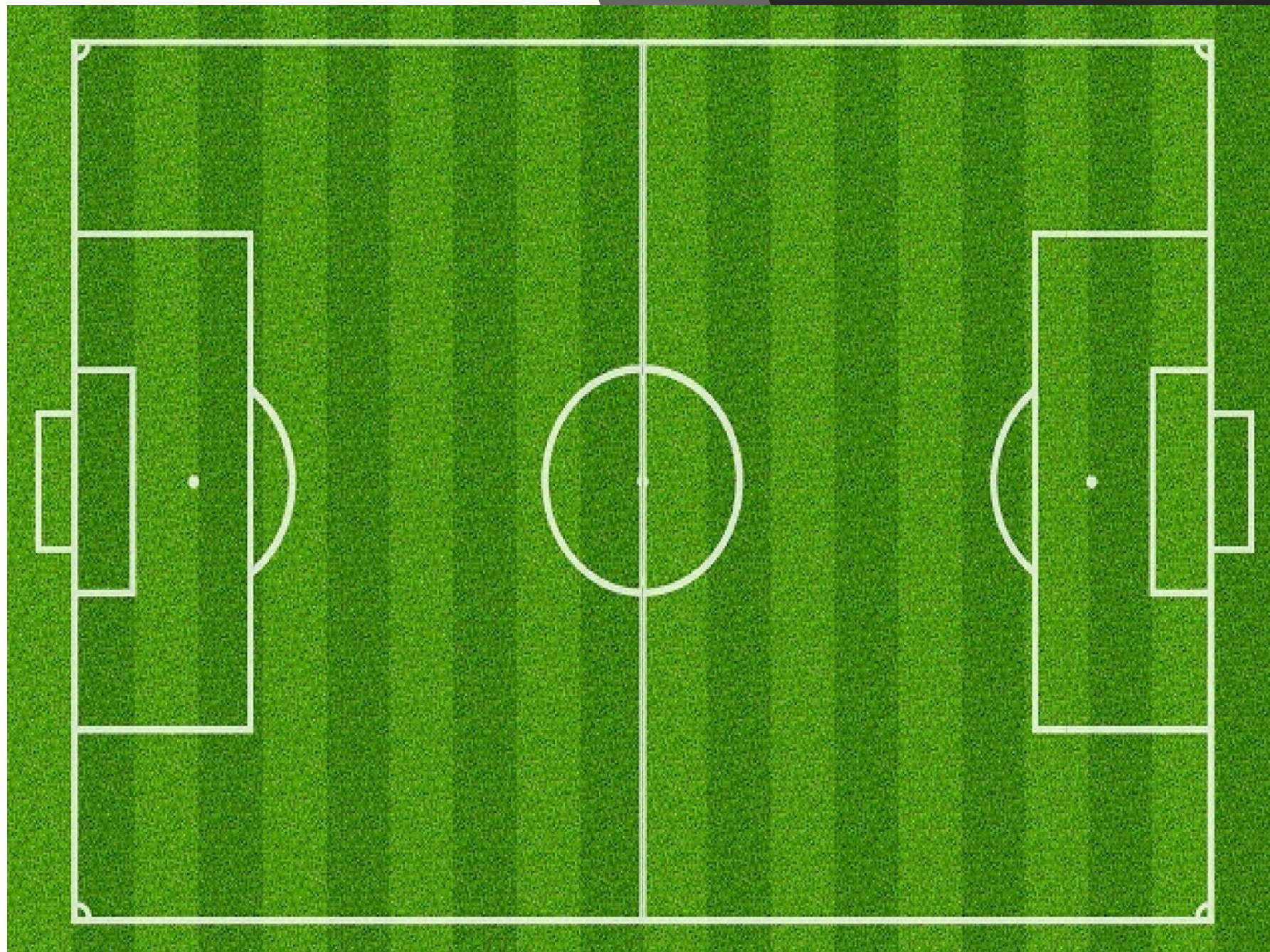
A sense of belonging

- LHFC provides an environment that challenges socially constructed ideals and possibilities (Cunningham, 2017).

- Positive identities within the context of homelessness and addiction.

- This increases the opportunity to identify future-selves (Murphy and Stephenson, 2018).
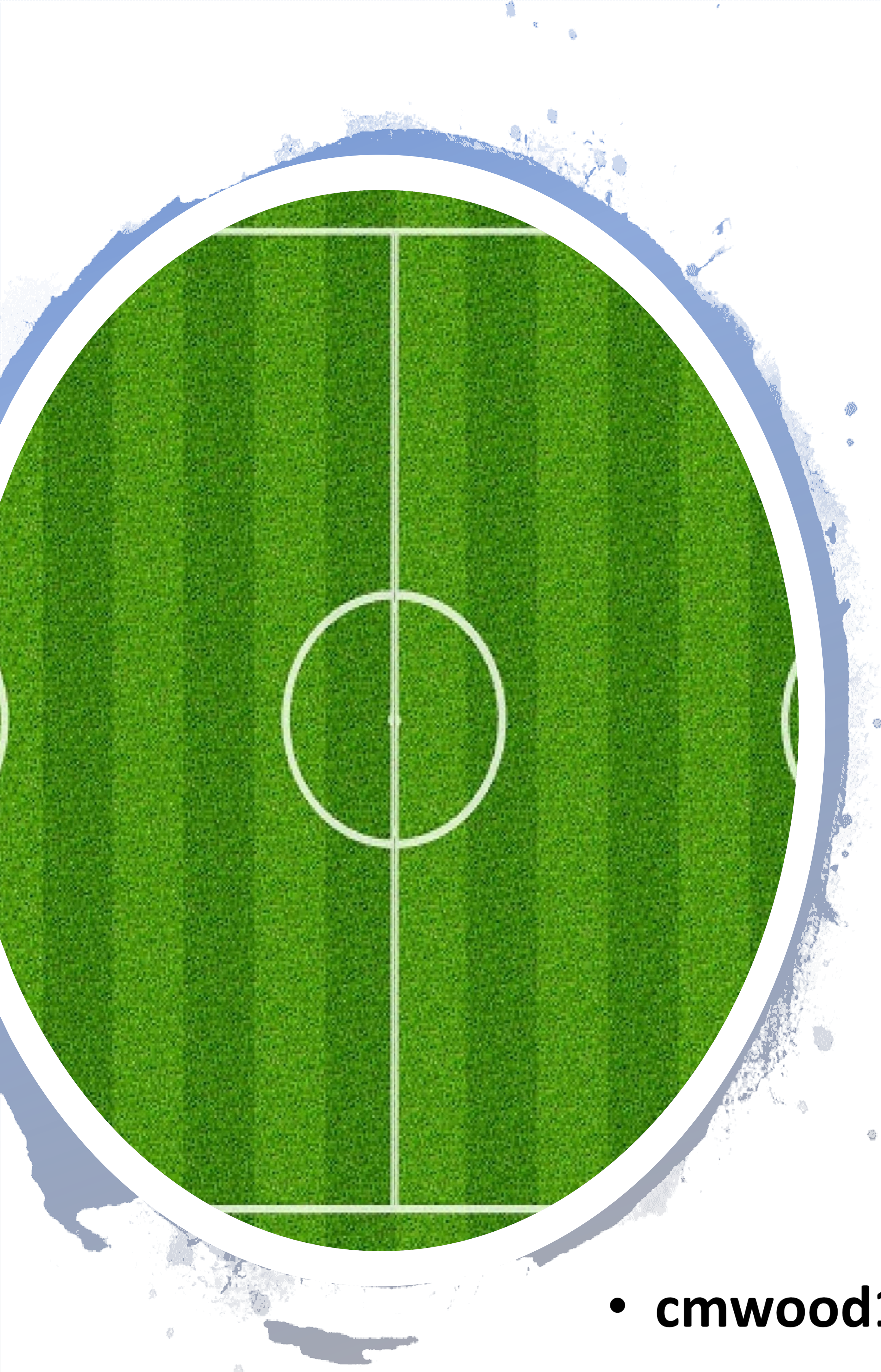
Conclusion

➢ **Occupational identity has fluidity enough to adjust to social, cultural and physiological interferences and demands (Aldrich and Rudman, 2016)**

➢ **Yet is constructed through a coherence that brings past, present and future selves together (Kielhofner, 2002).**

• **It is suggested then that to survive the potential disruptions and deprivations that occupation's context can present, who we are and our fundamental sense of self, built on the foundations of our identity, is greatly influential in determining current and future possibilities**

• **Thereby, what we do and can do is significantly influenced by who we are.**

Future research

- **Further research is required to understand the extent to which occupational roles, routines and identities in childhood and adolescence can contribute to maintaining a coherent sense of occupational identity in adulthood.**

- **Achieve publication in Journal of Occupational Science**

- **Further explore Mary's narrative about occupational identity, addiction and football**

- **cmwood1985@gmail.com / chris.wood8@nhs.net**

Questions?

References

• Aldrich, R.M., & Laliberte Rudman, D. (2016) Situational analysis: A visual analytical approach that unpacks the complexity of occupation. Journal of Occupational Science, 23(1), 51-66. Christiansen, C. (1999) Defining lives: Occupation as identity: An essay on competence, coherence and the creation of meaning. American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 53(6), 547-548. Christiansen, C. (2004) Occupational identity: becoming who we are through what we do. In C.H. Christiansen & E.A. Townsend (Eds.) Introduction to occupation: The art and science of living (pp. 121-139). New Jersey: Prentice Hall. Clandinin, D., & Connelly, M. (2000) Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research. San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass. Coalter, F. (2013) Sport for Development: What game are we playing? London: Routledge. Cunningham, M. (2017) Broadening understandings of occupational identity: illustrations from a research study of homeless adults. In D. Sakellariou & N. Pollard (Eds.) Occupational therapies without borders (2nd ed.) London: Elsevier. DePoy, E., & Gitlin, L.N. (1998) Introduction to Research: Understanding and applying multiple strategies. (2nd ed.) St Louis, MO: Mosby. Jonsson, H., Josephsson, S., & Kielhofner, G. (2000) Evolving narratives in the course of retirement: A longitudinal study. American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 54(4), 49-56. Kielhofner, G. (2002) Model of Human Occupation: Theory and Application. 3rd ed. Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins. Kielhofner, G (2008). Doing and becoming: occupational change and development. In G. Kielhofner (Ed.) Model of Human Occupation: Theory and Application (4th Ed., pp. 126-140), Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins. Laliberte Rudman, D., & Dennhardt, S. (2008) Shaping knowledge regarding occupation: Examining the cultural underpinnings of the evolving concept of occupational identity. Australian Occupational Therapy Journal. 55(3), 153-162. Magee, J., & Jeanes, R. (2011) Football's coming home: A critical evaluation of the Homeless World Cup as an intervention to combat social exclusion. International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 48(1), 3-19. Molineux, M., & Richard, W. (2003) Storied approaches to understanding occupation. Journal of Occupational Science, 10(1), 52-60. Murphy, A., & Stevenson, J. (2018) Occupational potential and possible selves of master's level healthcare students with dyslexia: A narrative inquiry. Journal of Occupational Science, https://doiorg.ezproxy.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/10.1080/14427591.2018.1517387. Phelan, S.K., & Kinsella, E.A. (2009) Occupational identity: engaging in socio-cultural perspectives. Journal of Occupational Science. 16(2), 85-91. Seal, M. (2007) Understanding and Responding to Homeless Experiences, Identities and Cultures. Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing. Sherry, E. (2010) (Re)engaging marginalized groups through sport: The Homeless World Cup. International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 45(1), 59-7