

**Promoting Autonomous Motivations for Environmentally
Sustainable Activities**

*Investigating the Connection between Community Repair
Motivations and Self Determination Theory*

MSc Psychology of Economic Life

The London School of Economics and Political Science

Supervisor: Dr. Frédéric Basso

Abstract

Decreasing material consumption from current levels is critical to avoiding the large-scale environmental destruction and loss of life predicted by climate scientists. Repair Cafés (RC), volunteer-run events where local residents participate in free community repair of electronics, textiles, and other household goods, provide an example of how environmentally sustainable practices in a community context can promote decreased consumption, increased wellbeing, and connectedness amongst participants. However, there is little insight into what motivates volunteers to participate in RCs and other similar events, creating blind spots in knowledge that could help engage more members of the community and promote repair more broadly. To investigate this topic, qualitative data was collected from 12 participant interviews and ~16 hours of observation of Repair Cafés in Greater London. This analysis revealed that volunteers participate in RCs to develop, use, and share skills in a way that aligns with their values, in a community setting, for people who appreciate it, and with others who relate. Furthermore, the analysis highlights the fulfillment of Self Determination Theory's three basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness as contributing to volunteers' sustained, autonomous motivations for participation. This research emphasizes broader, non-environmental strengths of the RC model and highlights the opportunity to leverage Self Determination Theory in structuring and promoting community repair events so as to engage a broader set of participants.

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Introduction

For over a decade, scientists and scholars have warned that current consumption habits are paving a course towards large-scale loss of human life and environmental destruction (IPCC, 2023; Klein, 2015). To alter the current trajectory, change is needed across all facets of human life, engaging communities, governments, businesses, and other institutions around the world (Olhoff et al., 2024). While businesses and governments set targets, propose plans, and negotiate the path forward, these decisions are largely based on economic cost-benefit analyses. Community groups are also taking action, yet their activities cannot always be justified in purely economic terms. One example of this is *Repair Cafés* (RCs), voluntary events where community members bring broken items such as electronics, clothes, or other household goods to be repaired by volunteers. At these events, volunteers are often tasked with mending or fixing items which may have little to no monetary value, thereby creating a situation where the human labor cost to repair is far greater than the salvage or replacement value of the item. Despite being aware of this economically ‘irrational’ behaviour (Knox, 1999; Simon, 1986), volunteers still happily give their free time at Repair Cafés. Further, RC engages a broader range of individuals than are typically associated with environmental efforts, raising questions about participant motivations and the unique aspects of RC that enable it to capture such a wide audience (Schägg et al., 2022; Tyson et al., 2021).

Literature Review

Repair Activities

The concept of product repair generally refers to ‘the correction of specified faults,’ (King et al., 2006, p.259). Activities intended to repair take place across all aspects of society and have existed since early human history (Fletcher & Weinstein, 2002; Vindrola-Padrós & Vilde, 2024). However, today’s consumption-driven economic model has created a society in which items do not need to be repaired, as they can be easily and affordably replaced, driving a decline in the popularity of repair (Zakharova et al.,

2023). Further, to sustain this hyper-consumption, products must be designed to become obsolete (Guiltinan, 2009). This constant replacement has driven wide-reaching environmental challenges including excessive waste generation and detrimental greenhouse gas emissions. Repair, amongst other strategies, has been identified as one way to reduce environmental impacts by extending product lifetimes, thereby minimizing the need for product replacements (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013; King et al., 2006; Moalem & Masgaard, 2021). According to analyses by Russel & Nasr (2023) and Bovea et al. (2020), repair and other value-retaining processes are environmentally better than replacement in the majority of scenarios and drive notable reductions in material usage, emissions, energy usage, and waste.

In practice, repair can be performed in a variety of ways – ranging from do-it-yourself (DIY) at-home fixes to professional repairers. DIY activities for repair, maintenance, or improvement of houses or belongings are typically undertaken for less technically challenging projects and can be motivated by various reasons including leisure, learning, or necessity (Watson & Shrove, 2005; Davidson & Leather, 2010). In recent decades, DIY has become more accessible due to the availability of online resources like YouTube or iFixIt. The experience of DIY projects, however, is mediated by social status, with ‘high-cultural-capital’ individuals seeing the activities as more of an identity-defining hobby, as opposed to required work (Moisio, 2013). For ‘lower-cultural-capital’ individuals, DIY is often driven by necessity versus leisure or creativity. Furthermore, non-professional repair activities make up a major portion of the low-income, informal labor sector. Research from Korsunova et al. (2022) suggests that of the ~60% of the global employed population which work in the informal sector, a majority conduct value-preserving practices. For these individuals, repair is not just a way to decrease environmental impact or learn new skills, but forms the foundation of their livelihood.

Commercial repair ranges from small, family-run businesses to large corporate service networks. While the demand for commercial repair has decreased over the last 50 years, minimizing the prevalence of repair shops (McCollough, 2009), the emergence of ‘circular economy’ as an environmentally sustainable

solution has pushed repair to the forefront for many corporations and governments (Korhonen et al., 2018). *Circular economy* (CE) refers to an economic model whereby all resources are re-used to make a ‘loop’ instead of the current linear model, often referred to as the ‘take-make-waste’ system (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013; [See Figure 2](#)). Within this model, consumers and firms extend the lifetime of materials through practices like recycling, repairing, re-using, or remanufacturing. While a circular economy may theoretically slow the rate of resource usage compared to current levels, critics argue that implementation is uncertain and, in continuing to underpin growth-focused capitalism, environmental detriment will still be an inevitable part of the system, thereby negating CE as a sufficient solution to avoid impacts from climate change and other environmental issues (Corvellec et al., 2022; Korhonen et al., 2018).

Despite these critiques, CE is still a focus of business and government sustainability efforts (European Commission, 2020; Ellen MacArthur Foundation, n.d.). For businesses in particular, integrating repair into their CE business model requires that it achieve profitability levels competitive with other potential options, such as continuing planned obsolescence tactics. As the presence of informal repair could pose a threat to this profitability, companies leveraging repair as part of CE are incentivised to restrict repair to commercial operations via licensed repairers or accredited networks to ensure and retain profit potential (Montello, 2020; van der Velden et al., 2024). Some companies today restrict or de-incentivise repair, forcing products to become obsolete by designing products to be unopenable, requiring specialised tools, or refusing to sell spare parts (Cooper, 2004; Fillman, 2023). These practices have limited many types of repair activities, but most significantly DIY and informal repair, resulting in backlash from consumer groups who advocate for the ‘right-to-repair’ (Bradley & Persson, 2022).

The ‘right-to-repair’ (R2R) movement focuses on consumers’ right to repair the products that they buy, arguing that products should be designed with repairability in mind, and that spare parts and repair manuals should be broadly available (Bradley & Persson, 2022). However, even with manuals and spare parts, collective knowledge and physical infrastructure are necessary to make repair accessible for most

people (Graziano & Trogal, 2017; Schmid, 2019). Community repair is one way that this knowledge is generated and shared, and thus has become a focal point of the R2R movement.

Community Repair

Community repair is a form of non-commercial repair that takes place in a group setting (Cole & Gnanapragasam, 2017). Common styles of community repair include Repair Cafés, community workshops, men's sheds, or makerspaces (Charter & Keiller, 2014; Lange & Burkner, 2018; Ormsby et al., 2010). These efforts range from one-time or repeated events to standing repair hubs that act as a central meeting point for community members (Moalem & Masgaard, 2021; Ormsby et al. 2010). Repair networks such as The Restart Network, Repairers, and Repair Café facilitate the spread of community repair and often coordinate to promote broader R2R efforts.

Community Repair and Circular Economy

While some scholars see the emergence and growth of community repair as an example of consumer involvement in the circular economy (Cole & Gnanapragasam, 2017; Moalem & Mosgaard, 2021; Purvis et al., 2025), further investigation of the aims of CE and those of community repair highlight significant contradictions between the two. CE, while decreasing resource usage and waste generation, still supports current hyperconsumption (Corvellec et al., 2022). Alternatively, as discussed by Bradley & Persson (2022), 'the purpose of community repair is not only about repairing broken stuff and reducing waste, but about building social relations and practicing non-consumerist forms of citizenship,' (p.1). Niskanen et al. (2021) support this, adding that the motivations of repairers veer into a political dimension that opposes environmental degradation and commodification. Thus, neither the current linear nor potential circular economy align with the collective ethos that forms the foundation of community repair (Graziano & Trogal, 2017). Given these contrasting objectives and existing tension between communities and companies as evidenced by the R2R movement, community repair groups may reject being co-opted into corporate CE efforts (Jütte & Olson, 2022).

The discrepancy between community repair and more capitalist CE logic is further highlighted when considering that, in *economic* terms, the value generated at community repair events is often not particularly notable, as it is supportive work as opposed to productive work (Corwin & Gidwani, 2021). In many cases, the economic cost of using skilled human labour to repair low-quality items at an event like Repair Café is not worth the economic benefit, given the low-cost to replace many items today. As Purvis et al. (2025) highlight, ‘despite the possibility of a post-work and postcapitalist ethos, the superstructural conditions under which community repair operates place it at risk of creating a new stream of unpaid domestic and reproductive labour,’ (p.12). Within the CE model, this new stream of labour could serve as a way for businesses to tout environmental progress by offloading responsibility to communities as opposed to addressing the root causes of their negative environmental impacts.

Community Repair as Care

Community repair activities, however, push beyond CE narratives and offer a vision of what value creation can look like in a post-growth world (Froese et al., 2023). Contrary to heavily economic notions of ‘value,’ one can take a broader view and assess the ‘value of an activity and/or its implications by how much it is *valued* [emphasis added] (e.g., appreciated and paid for) in individual or cultural practice,’ (Froese et al., 2023, p. 2). When considered through this lens, the broader social and ecological value of community repair can be fully appreciated.

Furthermore, the value of repair can also be understood by examining repair activities as a form of care. As described by Tronto (1994), *care* refers to ‘everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our “world” so that we can live in it as well as possible,’ (p.103). Though they are critical enablers to a functioning society and economy, care activities are often undervalued within the context of capitalism and pushed into the private sphere (Corwin & Gidwani, 2021). The occurrence of repair activities in a more public, community space, therefore, pushes against the individualization and commodity fetishism promoted by modern capitalism, instead acknowledging the connection and interdependence of humans

and materials (Jackson, 2014). Viewing community repair as a form of value-creating care can help shed light on why community members opt to voluntarily spend their time contributing to these events.

Motivations for Community Repair

Existing research has investigated motivations for a variety of repair types, including commercial and non-commercial options. With regards to repair behaviours, Parajuly et al. (2024) highlight that while personal factors like attitude and beliefs play a role, social norms and practical repair abilities have a more significant impact in the overall picture. Similarly, Terzioğlu (2021) and Ackermann et al. (2018) note that technical, value, and emotional factors function as a motivation, an ability, or a trigger in driving repairs. These studies highlight the myriad physical, social, and economic barriers to repair, yet do not deeply investigate the surrounding psychological contexts of individuals' who perform repairs. Further, these findings may not directly connect to *community* repair, given that community repair offers additional social dimensions less common to other repair settings.

Conflicting findings have also brought into question the role of environmentalism in motivating repair activities and how it may differ by repair context. Luukkonen & van der Broek (2024) and Fachbach et al. (2022) found environmental concerns to be a main driver of general intentions to repair. However, a study of online repair communities noted that environmental conversations were almost non-existent (Zakharova et al., 2023). Furthermore, Purvis (2025) and Scott & Weaver (2014) support these findings, concluding that environmental concern may be less important to driving repair than literature suggests. Hielscher & Jaeger-Erben (2021) also find that the performance of repair work can be equally as important as fixing the object's function, suggesting that the activities are not always directly motivated by the outcomes.

While research on community repair is in early stages, a systemic literature review of Repair Cafés by Moalem & Mosgaard (2021) highlighted the complexity of volunteers' motivations, including factors like 'conservation of resources, waste prevention, appreciation of the apparatus, technical empowerment,

having fun repairing things, and economic pressure,’ (p.11). These findings, however, challenge previous research by Charter & Keiller (2014) which suggests a simpler explanation – that volunteers are driven by the desire to act altruistically.

These inconsistencies and the lack of community repair-focused research highlight the need for further investigation into psychological factors that underpin participants’ motivations. As such, this research addresses the following questions:

RQ1: How do volunteers understand their motivations for participation in community repair events? Can these motivations be explained by Self Determination Theory?

RQ2: What specific organizer activities help recruit and retain volunteers, given their motivational factors?

This research shifts the focus from functional motivations and barriers for repair to the psychological needs that can, when fulfilled, act as a motivator for repair behaviours. This research uses a case study of Repair Cafés to investigate the factors that motivate volunteers (here encompassing fixers, organizers, and other event support) to participate in community repair events, using Self Determination Theory (SDT) as a unifying framework to understand these motivations.

Self Determination Theory

Self Determination Theory ‘examines how biological, social, and cultural conditions either enhance or undermine the inherent human capacities for psychological growth, engagement, and wellness,’ (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p.3). Central to SDT is the differentiation of various types of motivation, which can be mapped onto the *autonomy-control continuum*. On one end of the continuum are fully external or ‘controlled’ motivations, where the individual feels specific external pressure to act. As motivations become more internalized, however, they progress along the spectrum towards autonomous or intrinsic motivations ([See Figure 3](#)). Three forms of more internalized extrinsic motivation are: *introjected*, where

the individual is not motivated by the actual behaviour, but by the impact to their self-esteem or ego; *identified*, where the person accepts and endorses the value of the behaviour; or *integrated*, where the external factors have been internalized and are therefore made congruent with one's values and beliefs. *Intrinsic* motivation, on the other hand, is characterized by interest and the natural enjoyment that accompanies the behaviour. While all forms of motivation can be effective at shaping behaviour, the more autonomous forms (i.e., integrated and intrinsic) promote higher persistence and performance compared to more controlled motivations and are associated with human flourishing. Further, according to SDT's subtheory, *Organismic Integration Theory* (OIT), internalization of motivations is more likely when individuals feel a strong sense of relatedness.

According to SDT, the more autonomous forms of motivation are underpinned by fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. *Competence* refers to feeling capable of undertaking tasks or experiences; *autonomy* refers to feeling that one's decisions are self-directed; and *relatedness* refers to feeling valued by and connected to others. When environments fulfill these three needs, they facilitate intrinsic motivation or identification and integration of extrinsic motivation, leading to development and well-being.

However, while some conditions can support fulfillment of these basic needs, others can act as a barrier to their fulfillment. Within SDT, the *Cognitive Evaluation Theory* (CET) examines the impacts of rewards, feedback, and other external events on intrinsic motivation. CET posits that 'events that negatively affect a person's experience of autonomy or competence will diminish intrinsic motivation, whereas events that support perceptions of autonomy and competence will enhance intrinsic motivation,' (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p.124). These impacts, however, are nuanced and vary with regard to type and framing of the event. CET also assesses the impact of interpersonal and intrapersonal processes on intrinsic motivation, highlighting how styles of both external regulation from managers, coaches, or parents and self-regulation can augment or diminish feelings of competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

Case Study: London Repair Cafés

Created in 2009, Repair Cafés (RCs) are free meeting places where people can repair things together, have tea, coffee, and snacks, or socialize (Repair Café Foundation International, n.d.). After early success in The Netherlands, the Repair Café International Foundation was created to promote ‘a worldwide movement that strives to preserve repair skills in society and promote more repairable products,’ (Repair Café Foundation International, n.d.). Since the initial launch, the RC movement has grown significantly, now claiming over 2,500 official cafés worldwide, with many other groups hosting similar events yet not in the official network.

This case study focuses on seven RC groups across Greater London. Eight groups were contacted regarding participation based on their connection to the Repair Café International Foundation and proximity to Central London. Of these, two did not respond. However, one additional group that is not affiliated with the Repair Café International Foundation, yet hosts RC events, was included on recommendation from RC volunteers, given similarity of event and willing participation by the organizer and group. The groups ranged in a variety of factors including event location, demographics of participants, and specific repairs offered, yet all offer free, recurring (monthly or quarterly) community repair events that are structured as a RC and run by volunteers.

Methodology

Building on existing research on motives, this research employs a qualitative approach to collect rich data from a limited sample (Ackermann et al., 2018; Dörnyei, 2001). Volunteers were recruited for semi-structured interviews via brief survey. Furthermore, ~16 hours of observation were used to supplement interview insights and for the researcher to see firsthand the dynamics of the RC events.

Participant Recruitment

Participants were recruited through in-person interaction with the researcher or connection through the community event organizer. To facilitate recruitment and gather initial insight to inform interviews, a [brief survey](#) was used to collect high level demographic data, details of participation, and general views on motivations from all types of participants (e.g., organizers, event support, fixers, community members). Surveys were administered either in-person by the researcher at RC events or online following distribution by RC organizers. Respondents were allowed to opt-in to interview participation by providing their contact information at the end of the survey. 75 survey responses were collected, with 67 of these respondents agreeing to take part in interviews. Collected survey data was used to inform the interview guide and is included in [Appendix C for reference](#).

Initially, research was intended to include interviewees from all four categories of participant, however engaging community members at repair events was challenging as they were often less open to engaging with the researcher in-person and less responsive to outreach following survey completion. This resulted in a re-focusing of the effort specifically on the volunteers (e.g., organizers, fixers, and event support). From the pool of survey respondents, 12 organizers and fixers were selected for interviews ensuring a diverse sample across age, gender, amount of time participating and location of participation (see [Table 1](#)). This approach was selected with the intention of gathering a broad sample of perspectives and data points to cover the range of volunteer motivations for participating.

Table 1. Interviewee Profiles

PARTICIPANT	AGE RANGE	GENDER	LENGTH OF PARTICIPATION	ROLE
1	55-64	Male	2+ years	Fixer
2	65+	Male	6-12 months	Event support
3	55-64	Male	2+ years	Fixer
4	65+	Female	6-12 months	Fixer
5	65+	Male	0-6 months	Fixer
6	25-34	Male	0-6 months	Fixer
7	65+	Male	2+ years	Organizer
8	45-54	Female	1-2 years	Event support
9	55-64	Female	2+ years	Fixer
10	35-44	Female	2+ years	Organizer
11	65+	Female	0-6 months	Fixer
12	55-64	Female	2+ years	Organizer

Interviews

The primary method of data collection was through 12 semi-structured interviews. These interviews took place virtually between May and June 2025. Individual interviews were utilized because of their ability to allow for deep exploration of more personal topics, such as motivations for behaviour (Braun & Clarke, 2013). They allow participants to narrate their experiences in their own words, naturally highlighting what is important to them (Reznickova & Zepeda, 2016). Additionally, taking a semi-structured approach offers the researcher flexibility to guide the conversation where relevant and probe into points of interest, generating more nuanced data (Brinkmann, 2013). Furthermore, existing research into motivations for participation in RCs has skewed towards a quantitative approach through surveys, resulting in limited investigation of nuances or complexities within findings (Moalem & Mosgaard, 2021). As such, this study offers a more limited but deep data format through which to explore participant motivations.

Participant Observation

The researcher also collected first-person observation data prior to and throughout the interview period to supplement interview insights. 16 hours of participant observation were conducted by the researcher at seven RC events, including six RC sessions and one ‘Mini-RC’ at a local school’s Earth Day celebration. This observation data provided three key benefits. Firstly, it allowed the researcher to meet potential interviewees and discuss the research with them, acting as a form of recruitment (see [Participant Recruitment](#)). Further, it improved the interviews, as it allowed the researcher to observe behaviours and experiences shared by interviewees and directly ask interviewees about these observations, helping to minimize any blind spots in questioning due to limitations of the interview guide. Lastly, the observation data served as a balance to the interview data, helping to neutralize any bias stemming from self-reported data (Cerri et al., 2019).

Ethical Considerations & Reflexivity

While the content of this research is not necessarily ethically sensitive, there are always unforeseen circumstances for the researcher to navigate. Throughout the data collection, the researcher had to make various decisions, especially related to how much to participate in the RC events, versus merely observing. For instance, the researcher was often encouraged to bring items for repair, offered food, coffee, and tea, or invited to participate in informal group events such as pub or lunch following the RC sessions. In these situations, the researcher accepted the item or opportunity if it allowed for further discussion with or observation of the participants. The researcher also participated by helping set up or take down tables and chairs for RC events, as this felt most appropriate given the community and collaborative ethos of the events. Outside of the observation data, various RC organizers offered additional data such as survey data, tracking data, or existing participant interviews. This data was not used in the analysis, given the lack of ability to get explicit respondent consent.

Prior to conducting the analysis, the researcher also had to decide how to use the various forms of data (e.g., interview and observation) and if either would be given ‘priority’ over the other. Despite various research highlighting the discrepancies between what people do and what people think they do (Webb & Sheeran, 2006), that was not the intended focus of this research. Furthermore, the researcher used a more contextualist approach to inform the research, prioritizing the interviewees’ views of their own motivations and acknowledging ways that they may be influenced by the contextual factors (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Madill et al., 2000). Given that motivations are highly personal and not always externally identifiable or driven, the observation data was not used to identify participant motivations, but instead to observe specific activities that help satisfy participants’ psychological needs and, therefore, link to their reported motivations.

When reflecting on the findings of this report, it is important to contextualize them with regards to the researcher’s background and identity. All participants and RC groups involved were extremely willing to and excited about participating in the research. Given the fact that the researcher was representing a well-known university and was an outsider to the groups, this may have influenced them to portray their experience as exclusively positive or as having more relatable or socially-acceptable motivations. Furthermore, as participants were recruited from RC groups and events, the collected data may be somewhat biased in favour of those who have a positive experience and continue returning to the events. The researcher did try to account for this by interviewing volunteers who had been involved for varying lengths of time. The researcher’s ties to the United States may have also resulted in participants ‘politicizing’ their motivations for participation more than they otherwise would have. Discussions at the RC events often shifted towards American political happenings of the day, potentially leading participants to draw links between their participation in RC and the discussed events or ideologies.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis techniques were used to structure and analyse the collected interview data. Thematic analysis is a flexible tool that can provide detailed and complex insights into data, however, requires indication of researcher choices throughout the analysis process to ensure methodological rigor (Braun & Clarke, 2006). One of the primary choices made was to use an inductive rather than deductive approach to coding the data. This approach derives codes from the data itself as opposed to imposing existing theoretical frameworks onto the dataset. This method was selected so that the overall research direction could evolve throughout the coding and analysis process and offer findings most aligned with participant experiences. As the analysis builds on the contextualist tradition, participants' responses were taken as reflective of their meaning and experience within the context in which they were studied (Madill et al., 2000). While the researcher interacted with some theoretical data regarding SDT prior to the coding process, outside research on repair and community repair motivations was not considered prior to coding so as to not bias the analysis towards prior findings.

The analysis process involved several steps. First, the researcher reviewed all interview recordings and transcripts to re-familiarize themselves. Following this, the researcher read transcripts in detail to generate initial codes that were closely connected to transcript text such as 'making repair simple and accessible' or 'sharing skills with others.' After initial codes were generated for all interview transcripts, the researcher reviewed all codes and defined a few general themes. These themes were revised and adjusted based on coherence of the codes in each theme and by review of the codes that did not fit into any theme. Following a few iterations of the themes, the researcher re-read all interview transcripts more holistically to test the broader framework of themes and ensure that no major themes were overlooked in the prior review.

After the thematic analysis of the interviews, the researcher reviewed participant observation data and mapped behaviours in-practice to the emergent motivational themes from interviews. The objective of this

phase was to identify what event design choices connected to volunteers' motivational factors, promoting their ongoing participation. Following this identification of activities that capitalize on volunteers' motivations to drive participation, SDT was tested for applicability to research results.

Results

This analysis resulted in the emergence of five main themes related to volunteers' motivations for participating in Repair Cafés – skills, values, appreciation, community, and relatability. Volunteers participate in RCs to develop, use, and share skills in a way that aligns with their values, in a community setting, for people who appreciate it, with others who relate. Each theme has various subthemes which are presented in [Figure 1](#) and discussed in the following section, supported by text from the interviews and observation data.

Thematic Analysis

Figure 1. Analysis Themes and Subthemes



1. Skills

The first major theme is the skills aspect of RCs. Volunteers continually problem solve, using skills that they already have or developing new skills by watching and working with others. Furthermore, volunteers get to share their skills with community members and each other, involving more people in the events. This range of skill-related activities makes Repair Cafés open to a broader population, as even volunteers with minimal prior experience fixing can seamlessly integrate and contribute to the event.

1.1 Problem Solving

Volunteers highlight their enjoyment of putting their existing skills to use for the benefit of the community. Various interviewees mentioned that their repair activities are much more hands-on than their professional careers are or were, making them particularly enjoyable as they utilize a ‘far more practical way of thinking,’ (P6). For many of the repairers, the enjoyment comes not just from the successful fixing of an item, but from the challenge or puzzle aspect that requires them to use their critical thinking skills.

P1: If you want to fix something, you look and you think, well, it didn't come out of the ground like that. So somebody's put it together. It's got to come apart somehow. And it's a challenge.

While many volunteers already have some repair skills, others get involved with RC to use their problem solving skills for new purposes. Volunteering at RC provides a clear opportunity for repairers to continue growing their skills, as it provides ‘an endless conveyor belt of things that need fixing,’ (P1). The wide range of items means that volunteers always have the opportunity to try fixing a new type of item.

P7: We must have done something like 200 different types of product... If you could look around something like John Lewis...we've really done all of them, which is great and very brave for the repairers, because they don't know if someone's going to bring in a foot bath or a broken lawn mower.

1.2 Sharing Skills

RCs also allow volunteers to share their skills with other volunteers and community members, as the typical RC format involves the participant sitting across the repair table throughout the repair process. As one volunteer reflected, 'I'm getting to use skills that I've acquired over my three quarters of a century, and it's good to be able to pass those on,' (P3). While participants are not always engaged in understanding the process, volunteers often find ways to include the item's owner in the repair.

P9: Recently I broke my collarbone, and that meant I couldn't undo screws... So people would bring in their things to fix...and I'd hand them my tools and tell them what to do. So, a lot more people were experiencing really what the Repair Café is about, which is having a go.

Many of the fixers' skills are competencies or interests that they have had since childhood and, therefore, can seldom imagine *not* knowing what they see as basic life skills. When conversing with a group of volunteer sewists, one commented that 'not knowing how to sew would be like being illiterate.'

Interacting with individuals who lack this knowledge acts as a catalyst for volunteers to share their skills through RC and other community activities, especially with younger generations. RCs offer a direct way to address this generational skills gap, as various RCs included in this study had children in attendance and engaged in the repair process. At one particular RC, there is a young boy who regularly acts as a volunteer fixer, shadowing an older volunteer for the day and helping with repairs. Some RC groups actively pursue skill-sharing as part of their mission and partner with local schools to run workshops and teach students basic skills like re-wiring a plug or sewing on a button.

2. Values

The second major theme is how volunteers experience RC as a way to actualize their values such as care for belongings and the material world, environmental stewardship, service to the community, community connectedness, or learning through failure. Interviewees highlighted that, while the value may not be new,

Repair Café offered a way to actively express the value which can be hard to do elsewhere. Additionally, volunteers' discussion of what triggered them to get involved was often values-based, either through an event that strengthened their values (e.g., seeing a documentary about environmentalism) or in entering a phase of life that changed their priorities (e.g., retirement).

2.1 Environmentalism and Care for Material Goods

For all types of volunteers, environmentalism and specifically keeping items out of landfill was frequently referenced as a motivating factor for participation. At multiple RC events, volunteers and participants alike lamented the frequency with which easily repairable items get thrown away. For interviewees, participating in RC was partially about minimizing the environmental burden caused by our 'throw away society,' but also about instilling care and value for the material resources and history that make up a particular item.

P12: [It is] not just about keeping things out of landfill, but this whole thing of keeping things that you love and therefore, and that goes back into sort of generational care and memories of people who are no longer with us... We repaired a lamp in our very first [Repair Café] which had been with this lady for about 15 years, not working. But prior to that, this had been her father in law's, and he'd had it for 30 years... So [it is about] the meaning behind the items as well, not only irons and kettles to keep them out of landfill.

More holistically, interviewees saw RC as a way to express and share their value for the environment in a socially appropriate way that avoids being too direct or making others uncomfortable.

P10: I was doing my bit [to address climate change], but... the first thing I learned was that you not only have to do these things, we have to kind of tell people. And I learned how awkward that was... especially things like... 'you shouldn't eat meat', or 'you shouldn't take a holiday', are

really hard... And so I was always like, what more can I do on my own? How do I go about telling people?

2.2 Service to and Care for the Community

Repair Café volunteers are also driven by the community aspects of the events, highlighting them as a unique feature of RC compared to other sustainability events. For the volunteers who see community as the value that resonates most with them, the repair aspect is merely a vehicle for community engagement. One organizer put it simply, saying ‘People just totally, totally underestimate that getting people together is a really nice thing,’ (P10).

The repairers, too, see both the fixing and the social connection as important parts of service to the community. When asked about why they participate, one volunteer commented, ‘If you have a skill, it seems like you have a responsibility to help others with it. Everyone is good at something.’ Other volunteers echoed their approval of this sentiment. Some volunteers, however, have fewer technical skills, yet still contribute to the community engagement aspect of the events.

P9: [For] some people, we might be the only people they connect with that week. So...that's an important relationship that you're having there for that person. And they might not be important to you because you've spoken to 150 people that week, but you might be the only person they're talking to....every time we connect with another human being is an important piece of time.

Other volunteers contextualized their participation as part of collective movements like R2R or climate action, which focus on taking action to improve the system by working to defend and promote the rights and perspectives of the local community. A common theme of discussion amongst interviewees and at RC events was frustration with companies intentionally making it harder to repair products. RC organizers often track the number of repairs at each event and report this data to national repair networks or more local policy groups who advocate for R2R. This aspect of RC makes it distinctly different from doing

individual DIY repairs, as it harnesses the power of these activities to drive broader political objectives and societal outcomes, and signal social norms. ‘Even if you fix four things, by fixing four things you are sending out a message that things can be fixed,’ (P10). Similarly with climate action, participants see RC as a way to affect change locally.

P12: I get so anxious about what's going on in the world and the climate and all these things. I thought...I can affect change here, if nothing more than raising awareness and giving people a nice time.

Within these movements, RCs help communities reclaim their power to self-determination and contribute to broader conversations about repair, environmentalism, and community care.

2.3 Give it a Go Mentality

Another pervasive value within the RC community is ‘give it a go,’ or the idea that even if you do not know exactly how to do something and might fail, you should still give it a try. For many of the volunteers, RC provides a setting where risk is limited, both because of the supportive group of volunteers and because the items are already broken when they are brought in. Although many volunteers may already have this mentality, the community setting allows it to flourish. ‘Because there's a camaraderie, if you get it apart, you don't know what to do next, there's going to be someone in the room who [says], “Oh, I did one of those last year.”...So you're not on your own sitting at home worried,’ (P7). As one volunteer explained, he arrived with few existing repair skills and quickly figured out that everyone there was just giving it a go.

P6: I was very transparent when I turned up, that I had confidence, but limited skills. And I think I was somewhat surprised at just the fact that they were willing to just dump me in with no kind of training per se...Obviously people are there to ask if you want to ask, but it's kind of, you know,

“Oh, do you want to have a go doing this?” And then you realize that everyone that is just having a go.

Many repairers saw this particular value as important to share through role-modeling, as it seems to be something that many people struggle with. ‘People are so scared of failure [in the United Kingdom], instead of going, what's the worst that could happen?... Well, if we fix it, we win. If we don't, we're no better or worse off,’ (P1). Various interviewees mentioned stories of a community member already having instructions for how to fix their item, either via YouTube or other resources, yet lacking the confidence to try it on their own. The opportunity to engage community members in repair activities, even if they are just watching, allows volunteers to share their give it a go mentality and build the community's confidence in taking on a repair. As one interviewee explained, ‘By just seeing it...just showing that things can be opened up and looked at, that's kind of the first step into repair,’ (P10).

3. Community

Volunteers enjoy the ‘buzz’ or energy generated by the community at RC and comment that it serves as a setting for connecting to others in their community who they would not otherwise know. The open, community setting makes the events enjoyable for volunteers and participants alike. Furthermore, RC offers distinct physical benefits that impact volunteers' experiences, such as the shared physical space to undertake repair projects and the influx of items to be repaired.

3.1 Facilitating Social Connections

While some volunteers see the social aspect of RC as connecting to their personal values and contributing to their initial motivation for involvement (see [Service to and Care for Community](#)), others see it as a nice by-product of the community setting. The community setting of RC shifts the events from being exclusively technical and outcome-driven to something enjoyable for attendees with any level of technical understanding and regardless of repair success. Interviewees repeatedly mentioned the social aspects of

the events such as connecting with people from their pasts, meeting new neighbours, or just enjoying the general fellowship of the events.

P2: Every month at the Repair Café, I've met somebody. Often I say, 'I know you from somewhere, but I don't know where it is.' One of the [volunteer's] wives came to a lunch that we had. I didn't speak to his wife, but I said, 'did your wife catch this particular train every day?' And he said, 'Yeah, she used to go up to the city.' So I said, 'Well, for 30 years, I've been sitting on the same carriage as your wife and never having spoken to her' ...So, yeah, remarkable connections.

Both the events themselves and the actual fixing helps create social connection, as it presents volunteers and participants with a common topic or experience as a starting point. This atmosphere helps connect a wide range of people that may not meet otherwise. As one interviewee put it, through RC 'you're seeing the world and you're seeing the people that inhabit the world, and that makes you more grounded and connected,' (P6). Furthermore, these connections extend beyond the RC events, with one volunteer mentioning how she often bumps into people whose items she has fixed. This experience highlights the broader impacts of RC in the community, even outside of the specified events.

3.2 Accessible, Open Community Hub

The fact that RC takes place in community spaces was highlighted as another thing that volunteers value, both because of the physical space provided, as well as the welcoming atmosphere that is open to all community members and therefore results in a near endless flow of wide ranging items to be repaired.

Given that the RCs included in this research were in and around Central London, it makes sense that various interviewees highlighted the lack of physical space for repairs within their homes. One interviewee explained that allocating space for repair equipment and activities is hard, especially given that extra rooms can be rented out to generate additional income. RC allowed him to gain repair skills without needing to take up some of the limited space at home. Furthermore, some RC groups invest in

specialized tools that likely would not make sense for an individual household to purchase, like specific clamps to fix a chair. By taking place in a setting that is shared by many people in the community, volunteers can enjoy more space and tools than if they were repairing by themselves.

RCs often take place in community centres or churches and, as one volunteer explained, ‘When you've got the queue outside, or you've got people going in and out, it reminds people that it's open...So you also sometimes get people just wandering in,’ (P8). This visibility and prominence of the RC locations, as well as friendly attitudes from organizers and volunteers, ensure that anyone who is curious and wanders in is welcomed, enabling this community setting to exist. At various RC sessions, volunteers commented about ‘regulars’ who attend nearly every event and always find some broken item to bring in. These community members are often elderly people who live alone – many RC organizers and volunteers suspect that they are mainly at the event for some company.

This open-door aspect of RC also drives the flow of items to be fixed that many volunteers love, supporting the opportunity for problem solving and skill development. The volunteer fixers, in particular, enjoyed this aspect of the RC events, explaining that while they can fix things at home, ‘there’s a limit to how many things break in your own house,’ (P6) and the range of items would not be anywhere near that of RC. Other volunteers who helped more with admin or the ‘café’ portion enjoyed seeing the items that get fixed, too, mentioning that ‘what comes in is absolutely fascinating...the range of stuff is unbelievable,’ (P8).

4. Appreciation

RC allows volunteers to engage with the community and fix things that may be sentimental in value, too expensive to fix otherwise or buy new, or environmentally damaging to throw away. These factors make participants appreciative of the service that RC provides, which is often communicated directly to volunteers, providing them with external validation for their efforts. Furthermore, volunteers feel

appreciation and respect from community members, especially when they are able to fix something novel or unexpected.

4.1 Value of Possessions

When interviewing volunteers, the value of community members' belongings was mentioned as both a driver of appreciation from attendees and a contributing factor to volunteers' motivation to fix the item. Especially for the volunteers who value care and service to the community, repairing items that are of particular importance or sentimental value to someone is an enabling factor for their motivation. In contrast, not many of the volunteers interviewed seemed likely to sign up to repair broken items that do not have an owner or that no one cares to maintain or keep using.

When asked about the favorite items that they have ever repaired, interviewees notably recounted stories of special items that someone loved, versus their most technically challenging fix.

P9: I've fixed very precious things, such as a clock that, while being the ugliest clock you've ever seen in your life, did belong to their mother. And so, you know...it's precious to them. Despite the fact that it's sat there on the mantelpiece not working for the last 20 years. Actually, it's worth giving a go. And even though clocks and watches aren't my thing, I did manage to get it going and so they were very pleased.

Given the effort required for someone to bring their item to a RC event, there is already a strong likelihood that they value the item, whether it be for sentimental, economic, or utility reasons. For instance, at one RC event, a community member brought in their scanner for repair. They explained that, while the scanner is somewhat old, it works well and is critical for their work as a comic strip writer, as they do all of their drawings by hand. This example highlights that, while some items are heirlooms or cherished toys, others are functionally very important for people and their livelihoods, making them grateful to have access to cost-effective repair.

4.2 Limited Repair Knowledge

The lack of repair knowledge amongst the general public today plays a role in the dynamic between repairers and community members who bring items for repair. While this skills gap strikes volunteers as notable and contributes to their desire to share their skills (see [1. Skills](#)), it also contributes to community members' appreciation of RC volunteers. As one volunteer explained, 'There's an aspect of affirmation that your skills are valued by the people who you're doing the repair for. But they don't really know. They're easily impressed,' (P5).

This differential in repair knowledge or ability creates situations where volunteers play the role of expert, offering skills or guidance on what to do. Even when repairs are not feasible, community members are often still appreciative of repairers' efforts and even relieved to be told that the item cannot be fixed. Volunteers recounted a variety of experiences where people were 'quite satisfied that [the volunteers] weren't able to fix it,' (P2) suggesting that it allows the person to have a clearer conscience when throwing something away. In these situations, the community members may not feel confident in their independent evaluation of the items' repairability, therefore, getting input from the volunteers relieves the cognitive load of the decision to throw an item away. As one interviewee commented, 'the destruction of anything is always uncomfortable,' (P9).

5. Relatability

Relatability amongst volunteers also serves as a key component of continued motivation to participate. There is camaraderie and connectedness amongst volunteers (particularly the repairers), as many feel similar natural inclinations towards fixing or tinkering, which may have been a tendency unique to them in other settings. This inclination, alongside the often-shared stories of repair being a part of their upbringing, acts as a common foundation for relationships between the volunteers, promoting mutual respect and ease of interaction amongst the group.

5.1 Early Exposure to Repair

Many of the volunteers and specifically the repairers spoke about being involved in repair, fixing, or tinkering from an early age. For some volunteers, exposure came from seeing parents or other family members take on repair projects. Various interviewees shared stories about cherished time helping their parents with repair projects, exposing them to problem solving and repair skills from a young age.

However, other volunteers' introduction to repair was more internally motivated, with one interviewee commenting, 'I've always done [repairs]. I couldn't stop myself. I've always wanted to know how things work. I've always wanted to take things apart. It's a personality type,' (P5). This sentiment was echoed by another interviewee who shared 'When I was young, I just broke things because I wanted to see how they worked, and then you either had to fix them or you, you'd suffer the consequences,' (P1).

Furthermore, multiple interviewees commented on the disapproval or 'consequences' that also come from the inclination to repair, often in the form of frustrated parents. This experience of being reprimanded or feeling socially isolated as a result of their interests serves to make RC even more enjoyable, as repairers know that they are around people who 'get it' and relate.

This relatability and somewhat assumed shared inclination or experience amongst those who volunteer serves as a base for strong mutual respect amongst volunteers. This respect and rapport is especially evident at RC events where, after finishing the day's repairs, volunteers will recount the items brought in and the steps taken to fix them. When reflecting on the volunteers and their abilities, one interviewee expressed his admiration, commenting 'bloody hell people really know what they're doing,' (P5). This mutual respect and shared experience (both at the RC and more generally with interest in repairing) also eases social tension, giving volunteers an easy conversation to connect with others in the group.

Supporting activities

While some of volunteers' motives are related to baseline aspects of RC events, they are often directly supported and enhanced by specific planning and administrative activities that organizers (and at times other volunteers) manage in the background. Each of the five prior themes highlighted are accompanied by specific, intentional actions taken by the organizers to ensure that volunteers have a positive experience.

Table 2. Activities that Support Volunteers' Motivations

Motivational theme	Supporting activities
Develop, use, and share skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inflow of items intentionally matched with volunteers based on their skill set or interest area• As available, tools are purchased by RC group to support additional repair capabilities• Additional repair-focused events and workshops planned within the community to teach others repair skills
In a way that aligns with their values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impact metrics such as number of items repaired, number of participants, and postcodes involved are tracked and reported• RCs and other repair activities, like workshops at nearby schools, are promoted and organised with the local community
In a community setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Snacks and beverages are available to create a welcoming environment for community members as they wait for repairs• RCs are promoted ongoingly to ensure community engagement• Other community groups are invited for joint RC events• Non-RC events like annual parties, barbeques, or post-RC pub help create and sustain connections amongst repairers
For people who appreciate it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appreciation and encouragement is given to volunteers through creation of celebratory milestones like "The 100 Club" for repairers who have fixed 100+ items• Donations and 'reviews' given by participants to express their gratitude for and recognition of volunteers' efforts
With others who can relate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions of new volunteers including their background and what made them join RC help facilitate connections amongst the group

While these activities link to the motivational factors identified through interviews and support volunteers doing things that they enjoy, it is also worth noting the role that organizers play in taking on some of the activities which might negatively impact volunteers' experiences. Various interviewees highlighted specific things that they particularly appreciate *not* having to do, such as administrative work like securing insurance or logistics with the community site, managing community members who may be unhappy with their experience, or asking community members for donations. The variety of tasks at RC events allows volunteers the opportunity to contribute how they most enjoy without having to take on undesired responsibilities.

Application of Self Determination Theory

Basic Psychological Needs

The three basic psychological needs within SDT can be clearly denoted within analysis results, suggesting that intentional application of SDT in planning for RCs and other community events could be effective at connecting to participants' core motivations. As RCs naturally focus on using and developing repair skills, competence is a need that many interviewees seem to have fulfilled. Volunteers with and without existing repair skills expressed the satisfaction of successfully repairing an item - an experience made even more likely due to the collaborative nature of RCs. Furthermore, the difference in knowledge or skill between the volunteers and community members allows the volunteers to play the role of expert, thereby affirming their competence. Non-repairing volunteers also receive validation for their skills, such as logistics planning, customer service, or cake baking. As a volunteer-run event, RC volunteers are highly likely to feel that their participation is autonomous. Beyond the voluntary format of the event, organizers and admin take a hands-off, yet responsive approach to management by letting repairers determine the best way to do their tasks but being willing to step in and address any important issues that volunteers face. These event and managerial factors protect volunteers from being pushed to engage in behaviours that are not aligned with their interests and values, thus preserving their sense of autonomy. Relatedness,

too, can be identified within interviewees' discussion of the community atmosphere and the mutual respect amongst volunteers. The strength of RCs in fulfilling relatedness needs is also evident through the presence of community members who are 'regulars' and are driven to attend for the social aspect.

Internalized Motivation

As explained within SDT, the fulfillment of these needs promotes internalization of motivations, thus shifting from controlled to more autonomous motivations which facilitate sustained behaviours. This fulfillment is further evidenced by the fact that, while the event is voluntary, organizers commented that volunteers are always enthusiastic and do not require much (if any) convincing to come to the events. While some volunteers, particularly those who love repairing for the sake of it, seem to have fully intrinsic motivations, others may be more driven by introjected or identified motivation.

Volunteers' internalized motivations are further highlighted by the fact that throughout the course of the research, one RC group not included in the research began recruiting volunteers and offering payment for participation. Multiple volunteers raised this with the researcher, expressing negative feelings of disbelief and offense about the offered payments and questioning how it would impact the success of the RC events. This response connects to CET, as volunteers' consideration of rewards or payment for their work (beyond verbal affirmation and cakes at the RC events, which almost all interviewees commented on as a nice part of their participation) sparked negative feelings and did not effectively motivate them to join the other RC group.

Discussion and Limitations

This research highlights the multi-factorial nature of RC volunteers' motivations, supporting various themes from previous research such as environmental factors, skill development, and social norms (Moalem & Masgaard, 2021; Parajuly et al., 2024). The case study, however, calls attention to the broader range of motivations for RC participation as compared to individual repair or non-repair social events.

Given that they offer the opportunity to develop skills, help others, act in accordance with one's values, and be in a social context, RC events support sustained motivation from a broader group of individuals than events with a more singular focus.

Environmentalism, while included as a theme in this research, is less a unique motivating factor for repair behaviour and more an example of how values-alignment motivates behaviour. Further, this research suggests that by not fixating on environmentalism as a driving factor, individuals with other priorities such as skill development or community engagement may participate in activities like repair, given that there are various other psychological needs that participation fulfills. As such, Repair Cafés can be an environmentally sustainable solution that avoids alienating individuals who are less environmentally-motivated (Fielding et al., 2008).

Despite many volunteers' concern for the environment and desire to live more sustainably, the Repair Cafés in this case study do not seem to be highly connected to the circular economy. Volunteers' expressed animosity towards companies who obstruct repair suggests that supporting businesses' CE aspirations without companies making a marked change in practices like planned obsolescence may not be well-received by volunteers. Furthermore, the notion of CE seems to reside within more technical spheres, as only two individuals across all observations and interviews mentioned the concept of 'circular economy.'

Volunteers do seem to identify with their participation in RC as a form of care, both for the community and for the environment. The role of the community setting in shaping volunteers' positive experiences may relate to the loneliness and disenfranchisement that comes from care as a primarily private activity (Corwin & Gidwani, 2021; Tronto, 1994). Furthermore, volunteers' identification of RC as a way to act on their values connects to the actualisation of values required by care, as 'one cannot simply "care" about something and remain disengaged from it,' (Corwin & Gidwani, 2021, p13).

The case of London RCs suggests that community events are uniquely positioned to engage a broader set of individuals in repair activities, as they can offer volunteers fulfillment of the basic needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Furthermore, this research paves the way for SDT to be used as a tool to identify opportunities to better engage individuals within RCs or other community events.

Developing promotional materials and planning event logistics with the basic psychological needs in mind can help attract and retain participants and volunteers, regardless of their specific motivations for involvement.

Given the limited scope of the case study presented, findings are likely not representative of all RC or community repair volunteer experiences. Geographic, economic, and cultural factors specific to the included RCs (such as taking place in a high cost of living city with a largely Western, individualistic culture) may play a unique role in shaping how effective RC events are at fulfilling volunteers' basic psychological needs. Furthermore, a selection bias may be at play, as participants who have all three basic needs fulfilled are likely to continue participating, whereas individuals who are unsatisfied self-select out. To address this, future research could focus instead on one RC, talking to every person who participates in the event, as opposed to repeat volunteers who self-select into the research. Additionally, an experimental approach can be used to test the efficacy of SDT-related framing of promotional messaging on recruiting and retaining volunteers. Through examination of Repair Cafes as a model of a community repair event, this paper highlights how contextual factors that fulfill one's psychological needs can support prolonged motivations for environmentally sustainable behaviours.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Figures

Figure 2. The Butterfly Diagram: Visualizing the Circular Economy
(Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2021)

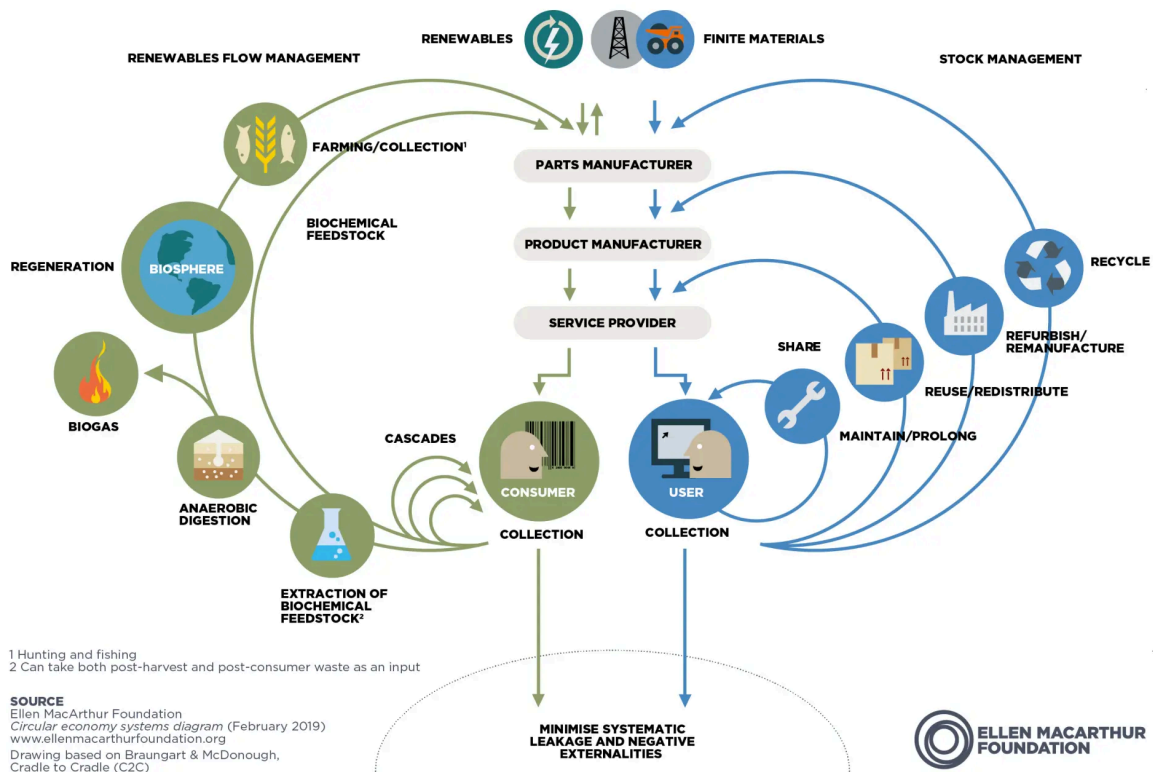
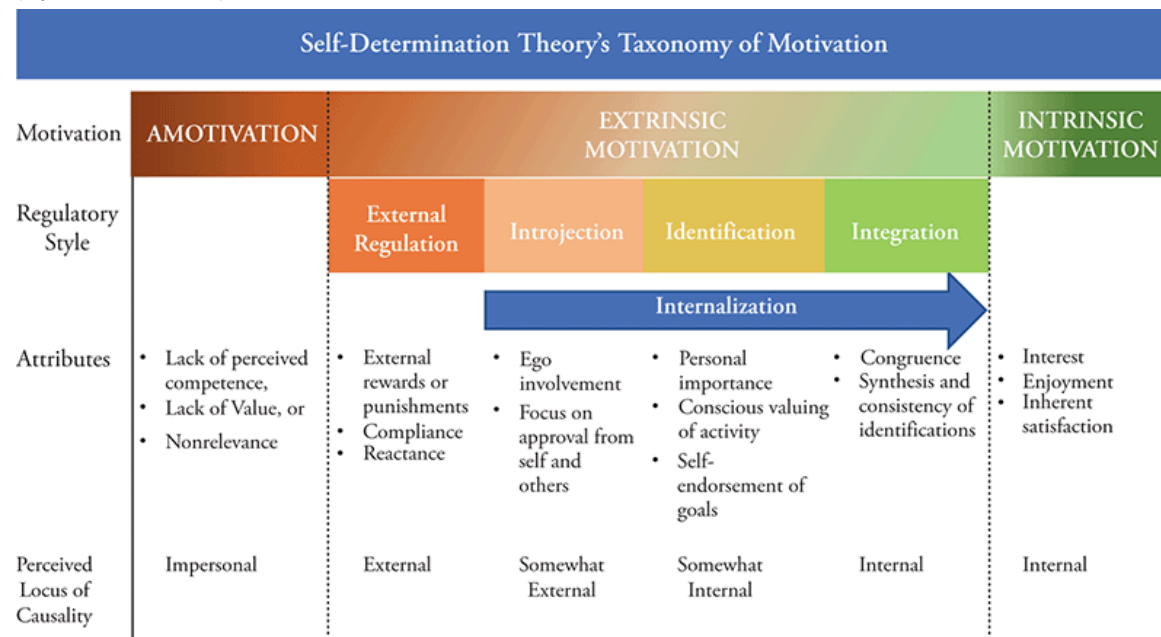


Figure 3. Self-Determination Theory's Taxonomy of Motivation
(Ryan et al., 2019)



Appendix B: Sample Survey

Repair Café Participation Survey

This survey is part of a research project run by [Researcher] as part of her Masters' dissertation. Please see Section 1 for further details. Thank you for your participation!

Section 1 - Project Overview and Consent

This survey is part of a qualitative research project to better understand individuals' motivations for participating in sustainable community efforts, such as Repair Cafés. The project focuses on understanding what type of people participate in Repair Cafés in Greater London and their motivations for involvement. The findings will be used to inform how Repair Café and other similar efforts are communicated about to encourage participation from community members.

If you have any questions about the objective of this project or what your participation entails, please contact [Researcher] at [email].

Any concerns or complaints about this study should be addressed to research.ethics@lse.ac.uk. The LSE Research Privacy Policy can be found here:

<https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Secretarys-Division/Assets/Documents/Information-Records-Management/Privacy-Notice-for-Research-v1.2.pdf>

Please tick the following boxes to confirm understanding and agreement

- ☐ I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and will not be reported to any Repair Café admin or organizers.
- ☐ I understand that my responses will be kept as confidential as possible, that my name will not be included in any reports or publications, and that my personal information will be kept securely and destroyed at the end of the study.
- ☐ I confirm that I am 18 or older.
- ☐ I have read this message and had the opportunity to ask questions.

Section 2 - Basic Information

2. Age
 - a. 18 – 25
 - b. 25 – 35
 - c. 35 – 45
 - d. 45 – 55
 - e. 55 – 65
 - f. 65+
3. Preferred Gender
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Prefer not to say
 - d. Other _____
4. What is your current employment status?
 - a. Part-time
 - b. Full-time
 - c. Student
 - d. Retired
 - e. Other

Section 3 - Repair Café Participation

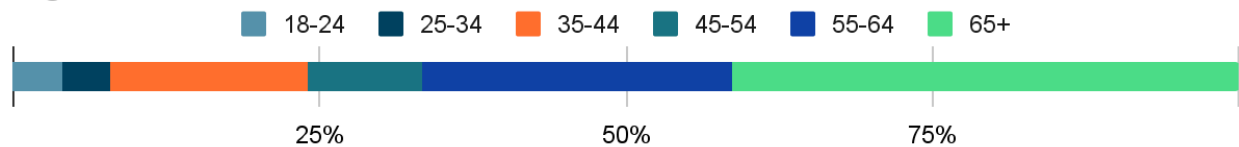
5. Which Repair Café(s) do you attend? (multiple select)
[Excluded for anonymity reasons]
6. What role(s) do you have at the Repair Café? (multiple select)
 - a. Volunteer fixer (I help fix things)
 - b. Participant (I bring my things to get fixed)
 - c. Organizer (I organize / help run the Repair Café)
7. Roughly how long have you been participating in the Repair Café?
 - a. 0-6 months
 - b. 6-12 months
 - c. 1-2 years
 - d. 2+ years
8. How did you find out about Repair Café?
 - a. Word of mouth
 - b. Community advertising
 - c. Global Repair Café Project

- d. Other _____
9. What is the main reason why you participate in the Repair Café? (multiple select)
- To get my things fixed
 - To use a skill set that I have to help others
 - To meet others in the community
 - Other _____
10. Do you participate in any other voluntary projects in your community such as community gardening, volunteering, etc.?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
11. Are you willing to participate in an interview to further discuss your participation in Repair Café?
- Yes
 - No
- If yes... please include your name and email address here:

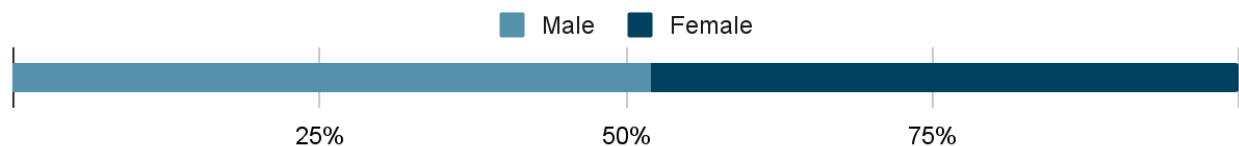
Appendix C: Select Survey Results

n=75

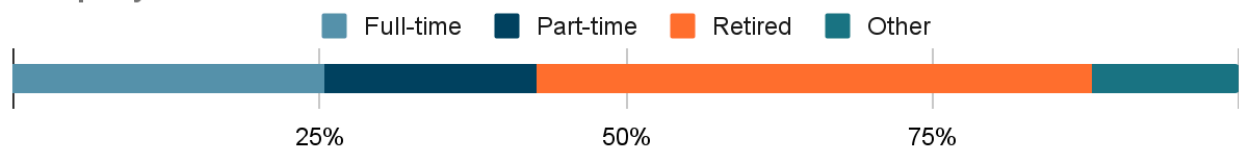
Age



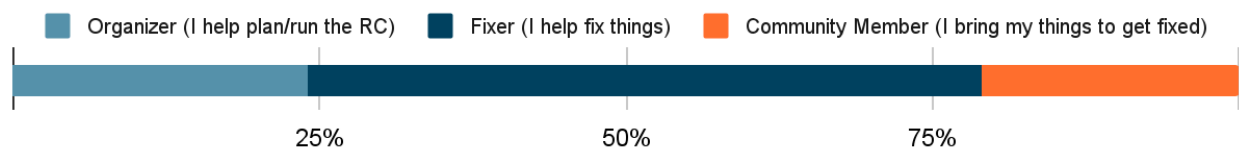
Gender



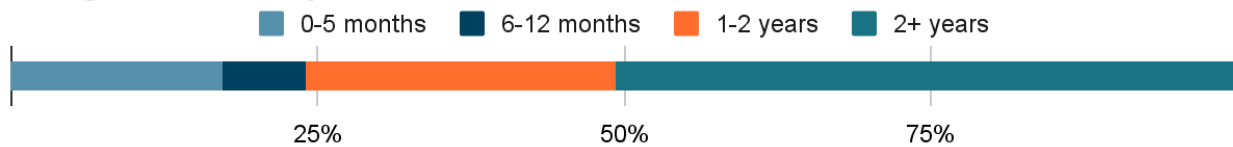
Employment Status



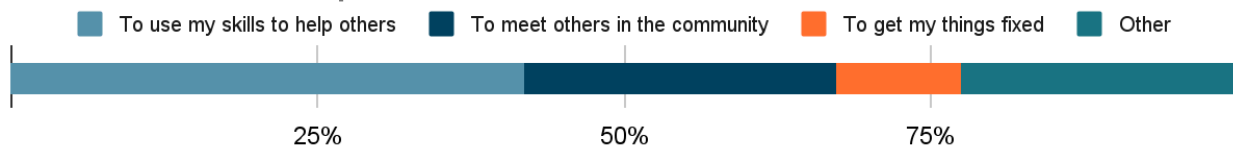
RC Role



Length of Participation



Reason for Participation



Other reasons given for participation:

- To be more sustainable by repairing things
- To prevent things going to landfill
- To contribute to something that I think is important
- To do more for the sustainability movement
- Dislike of capitalism and interest in new systems
- To save items from landfill by fixing them/ prolonging their life
- To make a larger positive difference to the environment and my community
- Save things that end up in landfills and can't break up
- Prevent items going to landfill
- Environment
- To reduce waste and upskill the local community in an informal and sociable setting
- Help in the church and local community
- Provide a friendly cafe for tea breaks , help others meet and be relaxed
- To use my passion of fixing things and being sustainable
- Because I believe in its ethos and want to promote it
- To help conserve resources!
- Because its good for my mental health
- To help out with a worthwhile project run in my community(church)
- Value recycling
- To keep repairable items out of the waste system
- To learn
- And provide a place where people can get things repaired rather than throwing them away!!

Appendix D: Interview Consent Form

Dear Repair Café Participant,

My name is [researcher] and I am a student researcher at the London School of Economics. Thank you for your interest in this project. Please find below the details of the research project and participant consent.

What is the study about?

This study is a qualitative research project to better understand individuals' motivations for participating in sustainable community efforts, such as Repair Cafés. The project will focus on understanding what type of people participate in Repair Cafés in Greater London and their motivations for involvement. The findings will be used to inform how Repair Café and other similar efforts are communicated about to encourage participation from community members.

What will my involvement be?

Your involvement will entail participation in a ~1 hour interview where we discuss topics like your experience at Repair Café, the reason why you started participating, and any impact that your participation has had on your life more broadly. The interviews will take place either virtually or in person, depending on your preference.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is **voluntary**. There are no negative consequences for you if you choose not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part but then later change your mind and wish to withdraw your data, you can let me know by June 30, 2025 - you will not have to give any explanation why. It is also absolutely fine if you don't want to answer any specific questions – you can just tell me, and we will move on.

What will my information be used for?

The information that you provide will be used as part of my Masters' dissertation project. As part of the data analysis, AI transcription tools will be used. As part of using these tools, an anonymized version of the data shared will be used to train the AI tool, however, will not be shared to any other third parties. If any personally identifying information is shared over the course of the interview, the researcher will manually transcribe the interview to ensure participant anonymity.

Will my information be anonymous?

Your participation will be anonymous - your name will not be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study.

If you agree, please reply to this email, stating your name and that you agree to the statements in the table below to give your consent. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to let me know!

Please read these statements to ensure understanding of participation.	
I have read this message and had the opportunity to ask questions.	
I agree to participate in the interview.	
I understand that my responses will be kept as confidential as possible, that my name will not be included in any reports or publications, and that my personal information will be kept securely and destroyed at the end of the study.	
I understand that third-party AI transcription tools may be used to process the information shared in the interview.	

Researcher name: [Excluded]

Email address: [Excluded]

Any concerns or complaints about this study should be addressed to research.ethics@lse.ac.uk

The LSE Research Privacy Policy can be found here:

<https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Secretarys-Division/Assets/Documents/Information-Records-Management/Privacy-Notice-for-Research-v1.2.pdf>

Appendix E: Interview Guide

Topic	Questions
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reiterate informed consent● Overview of the project objectives● Tell me a bit about yourself (age, job, etc.) and what brought you to Repair Café
Repair Café	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● How long have you been participating in the Repair Café?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Do you work as a volunteer, a participant, or both?○ What do you like most about your role?● How did you find out about it and what made you want to join?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What has kept you coming back for so long?○ Were there any specific events that occurred in your life that sparked your interest to join?○ What would you say were the barriers that kept you from getting involved earlier than you did?● What do you see as the main benefits of participating in the repair Café?● What aspects of RC do you find most enjoyable?● How is it different from taking on your own projects at home or getting some kit to build something?● Why were you interested in Repair Café over other forms of volunteering?
Repairing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Have you always been interested in repairing things?● Did your family commonly repair things when you were growing up?● Did you have any friends / family who repaired things prior to the RC?
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Has Repair Café made you feel more connected to your community? Has it helped you make friends?● How has Repair Café changed your relationship with the community?
Other areas of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Has joining the Repair Café made you approach other parts of your life differently? If so, what? And how?● Does the ability to fix things help build your confidence in other areas of your life?
Wrap up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● What's your favorite story or memory from Repair Café?● If you were speaking to someone who was considering joining or

Appendix F: Sample Transcript – Participant 9

Researcher 00:01

All right, so we should be recording now, amazing. So as you know, I'm working on this Repair Café research as part of my master's dissertation, and I'm working with the other repair Cafés around London, doing interviews like this with volunteers, organizers and participants as well. And so maybe, to just start out, would love to hear from you kind of a little bit about your background and what brought you to the repair cafe.

Participant 9 00:23

Okay, so I retired prematurely due to ill health. So I finished a contract, I went traveling, and when I came back, I found breast cancer. So instead of taking a new contract or going traveling a bit further, I needed to deal with that. It also happened to coincide with COVID. And so it was quite a difficult time for pretty much everybody, I think, and so while everybody was going through that, I was going through my own little hell as well. I have to say, the first bout of COVID and lockdowns didn't really impact me, because I was receiving chemo and surgery and stuff. So when all of that was finished, I suddenly found myself incapable of going back to doing the work that I used to do, and I wasn't really sure what was next for me, so I started trying different things, and they didn't really... I wasn't coping very well with them, I suppose is the best way to say it. So I think I signed up to do telephone bookings for COVID tests. And I think I started at 24 hours but a week, and within a very short amount of time, it was apparent that even, you know, a maximum four hours three times a week was too much. So I didn't last very long at it. I did get them through one of their big rushes towards Christmas, so hopefully I added some value. And then, and then it was sort of, you know, well, how do I spend my time? How do I occupy my brain, and how do I give something back? And so I started... there's a furniture recycling scheme very close to where I live. So I started there, and I started painting. I had no idea how to paint furniture. I wouldn't say I'm brilliant at it, but I'm pretty good now. And so I started there. And while there, I came across the person who was saying, Oh, I think this repair café would be something you'd be really interested in. And actually, it kind of goes quite well with that whole, you know, not throwing furniture in the bin, but actually, how can we keep it going? And it's the same, really, that we're doing at the repair cafe, you know, how do we encourage people to not throw it away, but actually check and see if it can work, if it can be fixed, and if you can't use it anymore, would somebody else like to use it kind of thing. So that whole reuse, recycle ethos kind of fitted quite well with the furniture scheme for me.

Researcher 03:20

Yeah, absolutely. And so that was how many years ago now that you started participating in repair café?

Participant 9 03:25

So that was 2020 I was doing my treatment. So 2021 I got involved with furniture scheme. And I think it was the end of was it 22...23 Yeah. So it must have been 22 that I got involved with the repair cafe in [X].

Researcher 03:46

Okay, nice. And so in terms of some of the... you mentioned trying a few different things, and kind of, maybe it just wasn't the right fit. Didn't work out for the time. Like, can you tell me a little bit about, maybe, like, what made repair Cafe unique, and what's made you continue to keep coming back?

Participant 9 04:02

So, you know, we evolve in our life to be part of groups. So, you know, we start at school, you know, we start with family, then we start at school, and then we go to work. And each time we belong to a group of people who identify in delivering something, whether that be a piece of work or a piece of machinery and whatever. And I think we all need to be, Well, I certainly need to be part of a group. I like to work with other people. So I think all of those, but because it wasn't the only other...I did do other volunteering with another organization as well, and that was that was actually too much like work, because they were actually drawing on my skills from my when I was employed, as opposed to the repair cafe and the phone scheme, which actually are teaching me new things, if that makes sense. So for me, it was about being part of a group of people who identified in an objective that was good.

Researcher 05:15

So you mentioned something being too similar to your work? What did you do for your professional career prior?

Participant 9 05:21

I was, I was an accountant that used to deliver technology solutions, so if they were coming along with the new IT system, it was generally, I was there helping finance get through it.

Researcher 05:36

Okay, interesting. And so, I mean, I guess, I presume, that your background was not in any way, I guess, related to engineering or repair. Did you have any like, ingoing skills or maybe even things you were hoping to get out of repair café learning-wise?

Participant 9 05:49

Yeah. So my father was a motor mechanic, so as a young child, I liked nothing more than sitting beside my dad while he was working on a car or whatever. And so I, while I was allowed to, I would sit beside him and hand him the right tool. And, you know, we'd sit in a car, and he'd say, Okay, what's that noise? What do you think it is? And we'd identify problems with cars for fixing just by the noise as we drove past them. And so that interest in fixing things, if you like, was there from a very young age. And yeah, I suppose that's...that's part of my inquisitive nature to understand how something works. And what I lack is a huge amount of skill, so being part of the repair café is great, because actually, you know what, there's 10 other people in the room who've got more skills than you doing whatever it is that you're doing just at the moment. So there's always someone else to go and ask.

Researcher 06:56

Do you like to repair things around the house? Or do you do repairs in your life outside of their repair Cafe context?

Participant 9 07:02

I do do them at home. They just take an awful lot longer. They get postponed much easier.

Researcher 07:09

Oh yeah, sure. Do you do you feel like, since you've been participating in the repair cafe, you take on maybe more challenging repairs at home? Like, has your confidence grown?

Participant 9 07:17

Yes, definitely. Yes. Well, actually, is my confidence growing? You know, YouTube was an amazing thing, and even my father used to say to me, sometimes I've got this and I don't know how to do it. Can you have a look on YouTube for me? So even though technology wasn't really his thing, he understood what it could bring. And so, you know, I'd find the video for him and then let me go, oh, that's how it's done. You know, where he couldn't work out how to get a clip off or put a clip on. And someone out there has always done it before and is happy to share that experience. So YouTube has been a great resource for me.

Researcher 07:58

Yeah, definitely. So I've heard from a lot of people, kind of the combination of YouTube as a resource, but then repair Cafe is like a little bit of moral support and encouragement is like the perfect combination, I think, to spark people to try something out which is cool.

Participant 9 08:12

Yeah. And quite often, you can see when someone comes in, almost immediately, whether there'd be someone who'd like to be involved in the repair cafe. So that's also quite good, because recently I broke my collarbone, and that meant I couldn't undo screws. That was a very difficult movement for me. So people would bring in their things to fix, and after a couple of months, I got fed up being at home not doing this, so I just used to turn up and then I'd hand them my tools and tell them what to do. So a lot more people were experiencing really what the repair cafe is about, which is having a go.

Researcher 08:55

Yeah, that's fantastic. When you say, you can tell immediately if they are interested in being involved or would want to, what does that look like to you?

Participant 9 09:03

It's just that the more inquisitive, so they'll ask questions. Or what you're going to do, can I help you hold that? Can I, you know? And I go, Oh, look, here's, do you want to have a go and see if you can get those two screws out? I can't get them out or whatever. And so I think last time we did a repair cafe, the gentleman that brought the robotic hoovering and spent a lot of time undoing screws and holding clips and pushing, I mean, he, he was, he did most of the work, to be fair, but all I gave him was the confidence to do it. Yeah, and, you know. And the other day, I was somewhere else, and a lady brought two things in. So the first one was actually being fixed. And while we were doing that, she said, Oh, I've got my radio as well. And I asked what the make of it was. And I said, Okay, unfortunately, this particular radio is not really fixable. Once you've done the basic things like changing the fuse or changing the plug, it's actually a sealed unit inside, and you can't get into it. And I empowered her to throw it away, or not throw it away, dispose of it in the electrical recycling. So sometimes that that is our role as well, is actually empowering people to say, No, it's okay for this to go to get recycled because it's not fixable.

Researcher 10:27

I've also heard this recounted from other people as well, that there's sometimes when something can't be fixed. The person who brought it is like, oh gosh, thank you for saying so. You know, they feel a bit of relief to just have someone say it's okay. And, like, I guess, why do you see that happening? Like, what do you think kind of creates that tension or maybe preemptive guilt that they feel?

Participant 9 10:49

I think it's the destruction of anything is always uncomfortable. And if you've had something sitting in your house for... I saw a lady had a radio the other day that was from the 1950s and she had obviously held onto it. So it was incredibly old, 70 years. And while I could get it powered up, I couldn't get it to tune into anything, yeah. So I was like, Well, okay, you at some point you're gonna have to spend money on it. I said, is it... is it precious to you, as in a family heirloom? No, no, no. I said, you know, so it's not precious? When was the last time you used it? Oh, probably the 1950s and then you go, okay? So I said, Well, maybe the thing might be to do is to sell it to someone who likes to fix these things right? Because I said, if you don't really need it or want it, then maybe that might be a better place for it. They might be able to use some of it for spares or... or maybe even fix it. Might be able to change something. I said it's just beyond my experience. Of course. I said you could go to another, you know, bring it again and get somebody else who maybe knows something different. But equally, you know, it's, it's not precious. You know that there's been other things where I've fixed very precious things, and such as a clock that, while being the ugliest clock you've ever seen in your life, did belong to their mother. And so, you know, it's precious to them. And so the fact that it hasn't, it's sat there on the mantelpiece, not working for the last 20 years. Actually, it's worth giving a go. And even though clocks and watches aren't my thing, I did manage to get it going and so they were very pleased. I said, it probably won't go for very long, but I said what it needs is somebody to get in there and clean it properly and oil it. Who knows what they're doing with watches? I said, No, I don't. And so they were really, really pleased, and they walked away with something working again, and with a plan if it stopped working, which was to actually get it done properly by someone who does that for a living.

Researcher 13:14

Yeah, yeah, definitely. That's really interesting. Yeah. I think that the component of an heirloom or a very valuable item to me is, I don't know, I know that sometimes that isn't the case, that people bring things, which I find really interesting. You know, when you bring a toaster that's probably easily replaceable, but people still take the time to come bring it in, which I think speaks to what you're saying about the destruction, just being a little bit uncomfortable, and people not wanting to throw things away, which is definitely very important. I'm curious if you've seen any like generational differences of people that have come in and their attitudes towards maybe, like throwing things away as if they're not fixable, or even just like interest or inquisitiveness in the repair process.

Participant 9 13:55

So, um, so older people generally expect things to be fixed. Generally. And you know, a lot of the problem is that they're designed not to be fixed these days. But I've noticed younger people will turn up with their ear pods or, you know, some very, very small cable, you know, things that, actually, I can't even see. So how on earth am I ever going to weld it, you know? And they, they do turn up with the high price electrical things that are small and wanting them to be fixed. And a lot of the time, you know, it's a specialist requirement. None of my soldering iron is going to work. It's too big and heavy. Would melt the whole thing. So quite often, you're sort of suggesting to people that they actually go to specialist fixes for those. And so then you're left with the people who just expect it to be able to be fixed, which is the older generation. Generally. But you do, you do get people that have held on to something for a year or two, and they go, I just can't get it to work. And, you know, here I've taken all these screws out, and so they've, they've had a go, which is absolutely the right thing, and I'm so pleased. But actually, they need to bring it in together in one piece, and bring them in because if actually, I'm spending my first hour trying to work out how it all goes back together, it's quite Yeah, it's not good.

Researcher 15:28

Yeah, definitely. That's interesting for the younger people that bring in maybe something like electronics. Do you get the sense that maybe they're more driven by just trying to, like, save money on the repair before bringing it elsewhere, or is it more of the environmental component like I'm curious, what would bring them into the repair cafe for that specifically, if it's such a maybe more specialized item.

Participant 9 15:50

I think it's probably to save money, so not wanting to replace it, so they want to try and fix it, And they want to do it as cheaply as possible, yeah. And so sometimes, you know, I do say to them, there is the, you know, these five shops locally that you can go to and bring them in, and they will generally tell you, as soon as you walked in the door, exactly how much it's going to cost, because they know what the problem is. I said in there, you know, they, they will tell you whether it's worthwhile doing their normal you know. So if it's going to cost you 90 quid to fix something that's 110 pound new, you know, it's time to go and buy the new one. Right? Interesting. Hmm, gone. I was gonna say they replace it, and then they keep the old one in the hope that at some point they can still fix it.

Researcher 16:48

That's relatable. I'm curious. It sounds like you feel quite connected to the other volunteers. I know you expressed that to me whenever I was able to spend some time in person. I'm curious if repair café has made you feel more connected to the broader community as well through the people that come in. Like, have you gotten to meet interesting people? Do you feel differently about the community around you than you did before?

Participant 9 17:13

I feel more connected to the community. So we get a lot of people coming in, and, and, you know, sometimes they're sitting well, they're sitting across from you, waiting for you to fix their thing, and sometimes they're engaged with their hands, and sometimes they're just engaged with their mind. But I bump into people there all quite often. So I'll look at them and I go, didn't you bring in a blah blah blah from, you know, yes, quite often more they recognize me and I've got no idea who they are because I was and once they describe what it was I was working, I remember who they are then. But sometimes I meet them in different places. So they're sitting across from me in a repair cafe. But equally, I could walk into a coffee shop and they'll be sitting there having a coffee. And so you do generally feel more connected to your community because you started to meet all these additional people that you wouldn't normally come across.

Researcher 18:17

Yeah, that's really nice. I guess you're, you're going to be a repair cafe celebrity, then if people recognize you out on the streets,

Participant 9 18:24

well, I think that sometimes the thing is because they see me in two different places, so they'll see me at the furniture scheme or at the repair so

Researcher 18:35

That's fun. Well, I'm curious, like, more broadly speaking, I guess, what do you see as the main benefits of the repair cafe, both for yourself and for like, the broader community?

Participant 9 18:48

I think stopping things going into waste when they can be fixed, and really getting people to think about tackling and fixing rather than just throwing things away. But actually think about, how can I save my environment? Can I get, you know, I I changed my phone every year, for years, you know, because that was the damn thing, yeah, the batteries always started dying after a year. And the technology, you know, was changing so quick and so fast that the phones were always changing, and so I always had to have a new one. I don't feel the same anymore. You know, my phone is currently about a year old, but I will have that for at least two or three or maybe four years. So I tend to change them now, and they're always in a case, and they've always got screen cover on, and, you know, so I look after my phone, I'm going to keep it working for as long as possible, because they are expensive, yeah. And so, you know what I used to do,

and what I do now is change, very different. And. That wasn't so much about my lack of income and more about actually, how do I stop filling the environment full of waste materials and hard to recycle?

Researcher 20:15

Was there something specific that kind of triggered that, like environmental consciousness, or, I guess, made you more mindful of that?

Participant 9 20:22

Um, no, I think over the years, things have been going that way, haven't they, so education is there, and that whole whole idea of mountains of waste and, you know, things can get recycled, but actually the amount of chemicals that are used to recycle some stuff. It's not great. My father's my garage was full of every tool you could ever want and every piece of whatever you ever needed. So I'd say to him, I'm looking for a screw like this. And he'd go, oh, let's go and have a look. And, you know, throw out this big box full of old screws that he'd kept. People don't do that anymore, do they? They throw them away. They leave, you know, so quite often I strip down screws out of things, if something, if I know it's going to be recycled, I'll take the screws out and any handy little brackets that are in there, because they might be useful. So now I've just built my shed full of junk, really.

Researcher 21:28

But I'm sure it's extremely satisfying when you know you have just the right screw that'll fit exactly what you need, and you're like, oh yes, perfect. Oh, nice. That's good fun. And so in terms of repairing outside of your father having the mechanic shop, do other people in your family repair? Like, was it a common practice? I guess, growing up, even just with like, mending or anything like that?

Participant 9 21:52

No, my dad was probably the most practical out of the members of his family. So, and then we had a couple of builders in the family, so they weren't so much repairing as you know, replacing, if you like. So no, my dad was the fixer, and I suppose now I'm the fixer for the family. So they, they will ring me up and say, I've got blah, blah, blah, what do you think? And I go, have you tried this? Have you tried that? Okay, when I'll bring some tools over. So on my babysitting duties last night, the intercom with the baby's room, and the battery's gone. So I think I must bring my tools over, get the battery out of this and order new one, because, you know, there's a new baby coming soon, so it will be needed again, properly.

Researcher 22:50

Yeah, yeah. I think it's interesting, because with repair cafe, like there is this environmental angle, which is obviously massive, and a huge benefit of repair cafe, generally speaking. And I do think it's a driver for some people to participate, but it's been really cool to me to speak to some of the volunteers who like for them. I mean, the environmental aspect is nice, but actually they just love repairing things and fixing things, and feel like it's a skill set that they have and want to use and are excited to share with other people. I like I've been really impressed by [Repair Café X], especially given the other kind of events that the repair cafe volunteers do, like in schools and some of the things that [organizer] organizes. And I'm

curious, like, how, how much is that a factor for you? I mean, I guess, how do you feel about those things compared to, like, the normal repair cafe, just standard Saturday events?

Participant 9 23:42

So the normal Cafe environment is huge, and there's a great deal of energy in that room, whether it's someone who's making you a cup of tea and serving you a cake, or if it's someone that's taken 150 screws out of your Dyson Hoover, you know that that energy is there, and it's great to be part of it, but equally, it's not as accessible to everybody. Yeah, so we did some work with carers recently, and actually the furniture scheme also does stuff with carers. So the furniture scheme also does stuff with children, you know, young adults and stuff, where we make things. And so we'll have lots of leftover wood from an old bed, and we'll make that into a flower box or whatever. So those sort of reach out days are quite important, and you get to mix with very different people. They would be people that wouldn't really turn up to a repair cafe. It wouldn't enter their head to go there, you know? And actually, all of a sudden, you've opened up this idea that things don't just... when they stop working, you don't just chuck them in the bin.

Researcher 25:04

Yeah, yeah, from the like, school aged children. I don't know if you've been to any of the events with, like, in schools that I know, [organizer] has told me about. How have those been and how do you feel like the kind of kids have responded or received the material that you all shared with them?

Participant 9 25:22

So it's very different audience, isn't it? So I've done carers in two different in the two different environments. So when we had the carers come along, we're teaching them how to put together flat pack furniture and actually what was quite interesting was nearly all of their questions were about, how do I fix a ring on my coffee table? You know, where I put down a hot drink? Yeah. And actually that was more important to them than knowing how to screw something together so and when we did with the kids, I was helping out on sewing. Well, sewing isn't really my thing, if I'm honest, I can do it, and I was taught to do it at school. And you know, there's a lot of with sort of 16 to 18 year olds. We're really pushing back, or I don't think I can do this. I don't know if I want to do this. And actually, all of them achieved it at the end. Now, good or bad, you know how tidy it was. It's kind of irrelevant. I was saying to them, actually, does it pull it? Does it come off? And they were like, No, it stays there. And I go, Well, that's what it's about. You have sewn on the button. It's staying there. You can use it now. So, you know, there was quite a bit of hesitation from them, but every single one of them got on board, and every single one achieved it. And that was what it was about, you know. And some of them were so, you know, one, one young lady had very limited sight, and yet she managed to sew on a button. So she was really pleased.

Researcher 27:13

Yeah, yeah. I wonder if there's almost like a, I don't know, life experience makes you care more about functionality than esthetics. I'm not sure if that's if there's any meat on that, but I can understand maybe, you know, younger kids, or I think about, like, visible mending, maybe kids in school feel a little more sensitive about it, versus someone who's a little older and just wants a shirt that works.

Through this conversation and our previous ones, I've definitely noticed that, like, you, seem to have a very, I think, open and just like, can do attitude, like, I'll give it a go. You know, I'm not a specialist, but I'll give it a shot. Where do you think this, this comes from?

Participant 9 27:54

I think I've always been incredibly confident. No, I know there are places in my life where I don't have confidence. So I know my limitations, if you like, but I was always... I was brought up to believe that you should have a go. Yeah, give it a go. And then when I was at work, I truly believed that I could learn to do anything if you showed me what the rules were, and then I would. So I was more of an improver in my job, if you like, you show me what the rules were, and I'll show you how to make it better. So I was always looking for the shortest way to do something, the easiest way to do something, the best way to explain it to people, so that it was a very basic explanation. And so that's where my confidence comes from. And the fact that if I can't do it, I can go on YouTube, you know, or when I'm sitting in a repair cafe and go to one of the other 20 repairers and find the answer, you know or not, or you know, find the answer is, actually it's end of life.

Researcher 29:09

Yeah, yeah, definitely. I think it's such a such an amazing skill and confidence to have, and I think the trust of like, you know, I have a brain, I can use it to go through a problem solving process and and figure out a reasonable solution is, I mean, amazing, but unfortunately, like so many people, don't have that. And I wonder, like, I mean, from what you're describing, maybe growing up with your dad, like, do you think those interactions were a big part of it? I imagine if you got to help out there, that can instill some confidence in at a young age?

Participant 9 29:40

Yeah, I think so. I had two younger brothers, but I was probably the child he should have taken to work with him, because I would have got the most out of it, and whereas the other two didn't really, they weren't interested in, you know, jacking up a car and changing the tire or. Or, yeah, or taking the brake pads off or whatever, whereas I was fascinated by it. So yeah, I suppose, luckily for me, my mum said no and I wasn't allowed to go. So in that respect, it meant I had to go and forge my own way in life. So which, you know, again, is confidence building, isn't it?

Researcher 30:26

Yeah, definitely. I think it's nice to... especially with repair specifically, I think being such a skill that, like, at the end of the day, you know that I can figure this out on my own. The resources are there, but you can utilize them and do something with your hands like there's so many components right that I think make it such a satisfying skill to get to use.

Participant 9 30:48

I honestly believe if you look at something in the right way, you will see the right answer. So I've had sewing machines here, which I've struggled to take apart, and just by looking at it from the side or upside

down, I've suddenly seen the way to take it apart and get to the problem. So, yeah, I honestly believe that that is how you do things. You just keep looking at it until you find the right way.

Researcher 31:15

Yeah, in terms of your like, I guess enjoyment with repair cafe. How much of that comes from, I guess, the person on the other side of the table being appreciative and kind of, you know, getting to serve them or help them in some way, versus just the joy of fixing something, having the camaraderie of the volunteers, etc.?

Participant 9 31:38

I think connecting with people is so important. And some, you know, some people, we might be the only people they connect with that week. So that's an important relationship that you're having there for that person. And they might not be important to you because you've spoken to 150 people that week, but you might be the only person they're talking to, and I think every time we connect with another human being is an important piece of time. Now, you know, when you're busy and you're running around, it's not always nice because you don't have the time to give to that person, but I think when you have you should, you should always make that connection a special one, even if it's only for the 15 minutes you're talking to them.

Researcher 32:27

Yeah, yeah. Have there been people at repair cafe that you've seen multiple times now who have brought multiple items, like any kind of regulars or anything?

Participant 9 32:35

Yeah, serial, serial repairs come in, and sometimes you see the same thing coming where you've gone. I've done this twice already, and it wasn't fixed. I, you know, exceeded my abilities. Because that's the other thing is, you know, there is always someone somewhere who can fix it. The reality is, can you afford to fix it? Yeah, and is it the right thing to do? And sometimes it becomes too dangerous. You know, that's when I'm saying, is it the right thing to do, actually, by fixing it, is it now so risky that actually it's quite dangerous for someone to use...so that's, that's kind of where I'm coming from so, yeah, we do. You do get people come in with the same item, and you see them at different repair cafes with the same item because they exhausted the people at the first one, you know, exhausted as in their knowledge and experience, able to go to the next stage. And then they, you know, they've exhausted YouTube, and so then they're on to either go into a shop to see if there's a shop that can fix it, you know somebody who does it every day, or is there, you know a different person in a different repair cafe who will look at the problem differently, right, and find another answer. So yes, you get lots of people coming back for various reasons, and not always the same equipment, yeah. And sometimes it's, you know, someone's lost their life partner, and they suddenly now have to mow the lawn, and they don't know how to get the lawn mower up and running. And sometimes you see those and you know, they quite often quite embarrassed. And I go, why? Why? Well, this, this is exactly what we want. We want people to come in when they're struggling with something that we can help them, you know, otherwise, the alternative was probably to throw away the lawn mower, and because they didn't know what the cable looked like, that it had to be

plugged into. And then you just find it on YouTube, you know, on eBay, and you say that this is cable, go and have a look and see if you've got it. If you haven't, it's 16 pound 99... Off you go, you'll be up and running kind of thing. Yeah, yeah. So, so those, you know, people come in, like I said, for various reasons, and sometimes it's lacking knowledge. Sometimes I look at the ingenious ways they've got something working, and you just think, wow, would I have even come up with that?

Researcher 35:25

I'm sure there's no shortage of like, ingenuity happening at every repair cafe with some because there's never, you know a specific right way to fix something, yes, yeah, yeah. Well, I'm curious. I have two more questions for you. One, is there any specific items or like stories that you have from a repair cafe, either that you're like, most proud of fixing, or that have really stuck with you over the years.

Participant 9 35:47

So one of the most proud of fixing was not that long ago, and it was a Phillips sonic toothbrush. Okay? They're a sealed unit, so you can't really open them and the head was just flopping all over the place. It wasn't really, you know, just goes sideways or whatever. And I must have spent about half an hour and I kept saying that I'm probably going to break it by trying to get into it, and they're going, but it doesn't work, so you might as well. And I'm like, Yeah, still will probably break it. I'm sure there must be someone somewhere that can open these anyway, YouTube, and a pair of mole grips, I got it open, and it was a 30 second fix once I had it open. I was very pleased. And I was like, it works. It probably won't work if you leave it standing in water. So, you know, think about it. I put some sealant on the bottom to try and keep water out, but that was the key...that they didn't leave it sitting in water, you know, standing up in water, and that it would work for some time to come, hopefully. All right, so, yeah, I managed to get something done that I didn't think I could.

Researcher 37:09

Yeah, that's very impressive, to be honest. I'm going to remember that one because I definitely would have assumed those toothbrushes were when they're done, they're done.

Participant 9 37:16

Yeah, I managed to get it open, and it was a very simple fix.

Researcher 37:22

Well, last question then is, if you were speaking to someone who was interested in volunteering with or joining the repair cafe, like, what would you tell them? What would your pitch be?

Participant 9 37:33

I'd say, come along and try it. So if you have something to fix, come bring it along and see what we do. And if not, if you don't have anything you want to fix, or you don't want to be, you know, um, too much attention on you just come and sit with us. Come and join in. Yeah, there is, as you said, 20 ways to do

everything. And so moving around with the different repairers. You know, it becomes very quick to work out who specializes in that. So you can go and ask them for some support when you're trying to fix something, or you can go and sit with them because they're they've got, they haven't got many people there today, so they need somebody else on furniture. And because I come from the furniture scheme anyway, I kind of can always sort of step in there, but I will literally have a go at anything. So I think everything is worthy of, at least looking at to see if it can be fixed. And then, you know, does it need more specialist care than me? Quite possibly.

Researcher 38:45

Some delicate balance of confidence but humility.

Participant 9 38:54

I don't know everything, but I know a little. I know enough to try, but I can pass it along to someone else too. And you know, I quite often...if I can't repair something, and you know, other people have said, No, it's not, it's not actually repairable. And then, you know, I invite them to put it in the electrical recycling and so that at least it's not wasted.

Researcher 39:15

Do you guys have that on site at the repair cafe?

Participant 9 39:18

No, we don't. But the local libraries, where we where we are, and they'll take the items. And I think at various points around the borough there are recycling, you know, those big sort of bins that they have, yeah.

Researcher 39:34

Amazing. Well, that's all from my end. So unless there's anything else on your mind, thank you so much for the time. I'll actually be joining you guys on the 21st

Participant 9 39:45

Oh, good, good. Are you? What are you going to repair?

Researcher 39:50

Good question. I actually, I have a hair dryer that needs to be repaired, but I also need to do a little chatting with a bunch of participants, bringing things in, so I may just be doing a little bit more loitering and chatting, but we'll see.

Participant 9 40:03

Good. Just bring it along anyway. I'm sure someone will have a look at it.

Researcher 40:07

Yeah, that sounds great. Well, thank you again for the time.

Participant 9 40:11

You're welcome and sorry I wasn't quite as organized as I had planned. Hopefully, if you have any other questions, you can always drop me an email.

Researcher 40:15

No gosh, no worries at all. It worked out great. Take care.

Participant 9 40:18

See ya. Have fun.

Appendix G: Thematic Analysis Codebook

	Theme: Develop, use, and share skills
	Description: Volunteers are able to use skills they already have, develop new skills by watching and working with others, and share those skills with community members
	Subtheme 1: Problem Solving
	<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interview 1: Repairing things is no different to people picking up their newspaper, phone, whatever, and doing puzzles. All right, it's a problem. You've got to solve it. You don't know the solution. You've got to think your way around it. So, so it's the same thing. Now, what's nice is when you know, you go in and you go, Well, okay, let's have a look. And you actually find something, and you go, Ah, there we are. That's the problem. ● Interview 1: And you know, you can look at it if you want to fix something, you look and you think, well, it didn't come out of the ground like that. So somebody's put it together. It's got to come apart somehow. And it's a challenge, like a challenge, ● Interview 4: Like the puzzle solving aspects of it. I mean, you're given some it's like being given a jigsaw without the picture. Basically, here's a thing that doesn't work. Can you fix it? And you've got to work out why it doesn't work. You've got to work out how to take it apart, because most things these days, it's not obvious where the screws are. They're all hidden under various covers and clips and various things. And then, yeah, it's quite satisfying when you solve the puzzle and give somebody back a working thing that they had brought in as a broken thing. ● Interview 5: I have learned from the repair cafe. There are certainly things I've learned that and it's and the flow of repairs. I repair more at the repair cafe than I do at home once a week or whatever. And you have three or four repairs, four repairs each time. That's a lot of experience that you're getting through. And you learn by doing. You learn from your colleagues, but you learn by doing ● Interview 5: I actually quite like the repair aspect. So although I like the human interaction, I also find it quite interesting the actual thing itself. So I've had a number of ones where they've done that, and I've not minded, because it enables me to concentrate on what I'm what I'm doing, but it's, it's better with the interaction that makes sense ● Interview 6: I quite like to kind of, you know, learn the ability to fix things. You know, in an environment where there's other people to support. There's more tools that are available, and there's just more examples to see, so that then when my own stuff breaks, I can fix it. Yeah, it's just selfishness, to be honest.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interview 6: Although I like doing DIY, I might not be the best at it, you know, so kind of a chance to do some, chance to practice, chance to learn from other people ● Interview 6: My work is incredibly paper based, right? You know, city professional work. You sit at a desk and you type, and you try not to get an RSI. So it's quite nice to kind of do something that's very handsy to be honest. I think it is just using that element of one's brain, because it is a slightly different way of thinking. It's a far more practical way of thinking. It's working out what someone else has done, especially when you're doing these like, quite basic repairs. It's working out what someone else has done and, like, the clues that they have left for you to go and repair it, ● Interview 7: I um, I think lots of things, actually, the range of things we do, you know, we must have done something like 200 different types of product. So, if you know, if you could look around something like John Lewis, you know, we repaired everything, every type of, you know, unusual product and and day to day things. So we've, we've really done all of them, which is, which is great, and, you know, very brave for the repairers, because they don't know if someone's going to bring in a a foot bath or, Oh yeah, broken lawn mower. It could be anything. ● Interview 2: There's definitely an element in the satisfaction of solving a problem. It might mean ordering a part or going. Out and getting a part to fix something and continuing to use it. There's definitely an element of all, how does this work? What? What does it...How does it work, and if it went wrong, what would I need to do?
	Subtheme 2: Sharing Skills
	<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interview 3: I'm getting to use skills that I've acquired, you know, my three quarters of a century, and it's good to be able to pass those on ● Interview 3: I kind of went along and they were having a sustainability week at school, and I thought, that's just brilliant, you know, teaching sort of kids about waste and reusing and recycling. So I prepared this sort of dissertation about the fashion industry and blah de bla, de bla, thinking that in the time slot that I had, we'd sew on the button, and then I couldn't get it was just utterly bizarre. It was a real eye opener to me, because this it was all girls that came to my table. The boys had to rewire a plug and do bicycle breaks and and and so I said, so who's sewn on a button? Before it was a table of eight and a couple of hands no, who has Yeah, who's sewn on a button? No. Hands went up. Okay, so who knows how to thread a needle? And two hands went up. I thought, Oh my goodness. And so half the time was actually spend showing them how to thread a needle and put a knot in it. And I was just so taken a bag, I was completely back that, yeah, they didn't. So they all ended up being able to sew a button on but the, you know, my stack of handouts, I just gave to the teacher and said, You can do what you like, and it was absolutely exhausting, because you've got eight and they're all at different stages. So yeah, it was a real eye opener

- Interview 9: Recently I broke my collarbone, and that meant I couldn't undo screws. That was a very difficult movement for me. So people would bring in their things to fix, and after a couple of months, I got fed up being at home not doing this, so I just used to turn up and then I'd hand them my tools and tell them what to do. So a lot more people were experiencing really what the repair Cafe is about, which is having a go.
- Interview 9: When we did [RC] with the kids, I was helping out on sewing. Well, sewing isn't really my thing, if I'm honest, I can do it, and I was taught to do it at school. And you know, there's a lot of with sort of 16 to 18 year olds. We're really pushing back, or I don't think I can do this. I don't know if I want to do this. And actually, all of them achieved it at the end. Now, good or bad, you know how tidy it was. It's kind of irrelevant. I was saying to them, actually, does it pull it? Does it come off? And they were like, No, it stays there. And I go, Well, that's what it's about. You have sewn on the button. It's staying there. You can use it now. So, you know, there was quite a bit of hesitation from them, but every single one of them got on board, and every single one achieved it. And that was what it was about, you know. And some of them were so, you know, one, one young lady had very limited sight, and yet she managed to sew on a button. So she was really pleased
- Interview 7: He's called [Johnny], and he came from our scout group. Okay, he was one of the 10, and he's there, and he's this older guy, [Frank], and you'll, you'll meet them when you come. And [Frank] is just like the perfect granddad. He's very patient, but he's very skilled. And [Johnny] is really part of our gang. So we give him a tshirt... whenever he had his birthday a few months ago, and we gave him an adult little screwdriver kit. You know, it was a proper one. It was one that [Frank] would have liked to have. And he, it's quite touching, because your mum comes with him and she sits behind him... You'll meet her... She sits reading her book and things... And he was doing this thing at school where you drew a flower with the main parts of your life, and he put mum, dad, family, and repair cafe. Very powerful.
- Interview 4: If you're working on something and you can't fix it, at least one or two other people will come over and start giving you advice. Sometimes you don't want it but, but you can't get rid of it. And some of the people there have very different skills to me, so if I'm struggling with something, I sort of know there's one or two people there that are more knowledgeable than me in certain areas, like, if I open up a box and it's full of high tech electronics, you know, like, I'm expecting it to be fairly basic, because it's a toaster, and then suddenly you open it up and there's three printed circuit boards with hundreds of silver. And chips. I'm like, Well, okay, that's, that's not my skill search. There's someone else here that's got more chance of fixing this than me. Yeah, nice to have that sort of group of people with different backgrounds.
- Observation: Sewer mentioning "not knowing how to sew would be like being illiterate"
- Observation: Dad (repairer) brought daughter with him to repair cafes sessions and she's learned how to do some basic laptop repairs

	Theme: In a way that aligns with their values
	Description: Volunteers feel like RC is a way to actualize a variety of values such as care for belongings and the material world, environmental stewardship, service/care to the community, or community connectedness
	Subtheme 1: Environmentalism & care for material goods
	<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview 4: things today are not designed to be fixed. Right? When I was very small, my dad or my granddad, both of them, would open up the back of the TV or the radio, and they would change the valves because it had bits that you could buy from the local electronics shop. You know, when the TV didn't work, you could go to a local shop and buy a bit for it, and open up the back of the telly and swap a bit over, and it would start working again. Now you can't do that anymore. So it's, it's a lot, it's a lot different environment at home • Interview 8: They get send out newsletters that will say, like, Oh, we've saved so many items going into landfill. And then they've obviously got some calculator that can say how many tons of carbon we've saved, or something like that. I don't really, I don't really look into it that much, but they, they can definitely work that out. So, I mean, I guess it's just, it's, it's completely counter culture to the kind of sheen Primark by where it chuck it, and then once it once it's left you, it's not your problem anymore. But then when you see where some of this stuff ends up, and you think a lot of it doesn't compost, how can we continue to throw this stuff away like I it drives my husband absolutely insane. But when we declutter, I try and find new homes for stuff. So he just got rid of all the kids, like small toys. But there's a lady on the road who runs who is, like, head teacher of a school. So I contacted her and was like, she's like, Oh my gosh, that's amazing. They love all the cars. So my husband is like, get a skip. We'll just dump it all. And I'm like, one because some of like, it's expensive, and I'm very fortunate. I don't need to sell it, but I think it's just waste. If it's good, somebody will use it. That's what I think. So I'm always on like, Facebook pages giving stuff away. The stuff I've given away is, like, hilarious, but people always come and take it because you don't want it or you're finished with it, other people will definitely need it and can use it. So I think repair Cafe falls into that as well, because it's much more. You know, just want to keep the if you've got it and you can fix it, then you don't have to buy a new one. Also, you can keep the one you've got rather than throw • Interview 9: How do I spend my time? How do I occupy my brain, and how do I give something back? And so I started there's a furniture recycling scheme very close to where I live. So I started there, and I started painting. I had no idea how to paint furniture. I wouldn't say I'm brilliant at it, but I'm pretty good now. And so I started there. And while there, I came across the person who was saying, Oh, I think this repair Cafe would be something you'd be really interested in. And actually, it kind of goes quite well with that whole, you know, not throwing furniture in the bin, but actually, how can we keep it going? And it's the same, really, that

we're doing at the repair cafe, you know, how do we encourage people to not throw it away, but actually check and see if it can work, if it can be fixed, and if you can't use it anymore, would somebody else like to use it kind of thing. So that whole reuse, recycle ethos kind of fitted quite well with the furniture scheme for me.

- Interview 9: I think it's the destruction of anything is always uncomfortable.
- Interview 10: And that made me feel like, you know, I was doing my bit, but I always wanted to, kind of the first thing I learned was that you not only have to do these things, we have to kind of tell people, and I learned how awkward that was in telling people, because I was kind of like, oh, it's quite hard to kind of preach, and it's quite hard to say, No, you shouldn't do that, and especially things like, you know, no, you know, you shouldn't eat meat, or you shouldn't take a holiday, or really hard, very delicate, it's really hard. And so what I kind of, so I was always like, what more can I do on my own? How do I go about telling people? But I always wanted to kind of increase my impact. And so it was like finding my way forward and learning about that. So this, this is just so incredibly satisfying, because not only have we done this thing in that in our little local area, but we track everything that we do, and also loads of repair cafes don't track what they do, but we track what we do, and we put it in a global database, which is a pain...And lots of people go that pain is...I'm prepared to go up to there, but I'm not going any further. We, luckily have found now we have a young man who's kind of doing it for us, but so we know what our impact is. We know that our impact is measured on a global scale. And we know that that is part of a global campaign to have, you know, to be for right to repair, for you know, for things to be improved. So it was always, for me, it was about, kind of constantly aiming to increase my impact?
- Interview 10: People think [recycling is] a magic silver bullet. It's not. In fact, it needs to be reined in. Because definitely, I happen to listen to a webinar, yes, I joined in on a web and a waste recycling webinar. I can't remember who ran it, but, you know, everyone thinks recycling is the answer, but actually, you know, there was restart. Always talk about this very small study they did, which you might know about, but they did this very small study at West London waste center, so funnily enough, near to me, and they took a week, and they looked at all the electrical goods that came in, and over 50% of them, or maybe it was 48 I can't quite remember, but that they were either working or had were would be easily fixed, like a plug or new fuse, yeah, and those things, people are like, Oh, I just, I don't need two toasters, and the house is too cluttered. I'm just going to get rid of this toaster. And in that is just so much material, so much stuff, and you have to break it up, and then there's a lot of landfill, by definition, and so that whole recycling that was kind of fixed that problem, that's just not a problem at all. That not a solution at all. Yeah, and so we need to kind of, so yeah, I just is a huge problem. It needs solving.
- Interview 12: I get so anxious about what's going on in the world and the climate and all these things. I thought, well, you know, I can do something on my back garden, as it were, you know. And also you read about you just do. You can actually affect where you can affect change. And I think I can affect change here, if nothing that nothing more than raising awareness and giving people a nice time and, you know, giving repairers something to do that they enjoy doing, and a community activity that's well thought of

- Interview 12: not just about keeping things out of landfill, but this whole thing of keeping things that you love and therefore, and that goes back into sort of generational, you know, care and thoughtroom memories of people who are no longer with us. And, you know, we repaired a lamp in our very first little one, about which had been with this lady for about 15 years, not working. But prior to that, this had been her father in law's, and he'd had it for 30 years. And you know, so the meaning behind the items as well, and that's very evidence, not only irons and kettles to keep them out of landfill.

Subtheme 2: Service to and care for the community

Evidence:

- Interview 1: These are things I just think of everybody just did a little bit at home. A lot of problems in society might just to get to get fixed suddenly
- Interview 9: we evolve in our life to be part of groups. So, you know, we start at school, you know, we start with family, then we start at school, and then we go to work. And each time we belong to a group of people who identify in delivering something, whether that be a piece of work or a piece of machinery and whatever. And I think we all need to be, Well, I certainly need to be part of a group. I like to work with other people. So I think all of those, but because it wasn't the only other I did do other volunteering with another organization as well, and and that was that was actually too much like work, because they were actually drawing on my, my skills from my when I was employed, as opposed to the the the repair cafe and the phone. Scheme that actually are teaching me new things, if that makes sense. So for me, it was about being part of a group of people who identified in an objective that was good.
- Interview 10: I've realized that community, you know, kind of family, community, my local area, people that's all like part of my values. Doing the repair Cafe has been a wonderful thing, because I've got to know my area and more people and more my community. And, you know, we won an outstanding contribution to the community from, you know, from our mayor nominated by our local councilor. That is all just lovely because it is chimes with what I really care about. And it's kind of like shiny, sparkly thing for something that I really love doing
- Interview 10: People just totally, totally underestimate that getting people together is a really nice thing.
- Interview 11: I would normally do something else every Saturday, but I just thought it was such a lovely setup. I don't do very much sewing at home anymore, except sometimes I get machine out to mend something, but not very creatively and and also, my fingers are a bit stiffer, so I don't do this much, but it was just, I suppose, being asked, and everybody else is so enthusiastic. And I felt that, yeah, why not? They mended my kettle. Why shouldn't I go and contribute?

- Interview 12: But the my main aim is not only about keeping things out of landfill, and I don't know if you looked at my display by you know, it's the restart thing, and all the importance of sustainability, circular economy, keeping things out of landfill, putting pressure on manufacturers to get rid of designed obsolescence and all of that kind of thing
- Interview 12: I get so anxious about what's going on in the world and the climate and all these things. I thought, well, you know, I can do something on my back garden, as it were, you know. And also you read about...you just do. You can actually affect where you can affect change. And I think I can affect change here, if nothing more than raising awareness and giving people a nice time and, you know, giving repairers something to do that they enjoy doing, and a community activity that's well thought of.
- Interview 12: I really push the community thing, getting to know more local people. Yeah, and, you know, it's so many things, like toys, children's toys is a great thing to go on. So getting things mended so you don't have to throw them away, looking after the planet more at our local level, having a really nice few hours. It's fun, meeting new friends, having some lovely tasty cakes. What's not to love?

Subtheme 3: Give it a go mentality

Evidence:

- Interview 1: People are so scared of failure here, instead of going, what's the worst that could happen? You know? Yeah, and you know, it's like, well, if we fix it, we win. If we don't, we're no better or worse off.
- Interview 4: I think, you know, my education was engineering, even though it was more high tech, it was like software engineering and electronics. But problem solving is something that can be applied to any part of your life, yeah, and, you know, I think it gives you a sort of logical way of thinking that that you can apply to your whole life. If something isn't working, what do I do to fix it? Now? That can be a toaster or it can be a relationship. It's, it's, it's quite a transferable skill, and I think, I think it does give you more confidence that, yeah, you know, you're stuck in the you're stuck somewhere that you don't know where you are, and you've missed the last bus home. So you've got a sort of logical thing of, okay, well, I've got my phone. I could do this, I could do that. I think it helps to sort of train your brain that every problem has a solution. You just need to find it. Don't give up. Don't give up, don't panic. Just you know, logically think through the steps of what, what are the options, and what can I try next?
- Interview 6: I think I was very transparent when I turned up, that I I had confidence, but limited skills. And I think I was somewhat surprised at just the fact that they were willing to just dump me in with no kind of training per se, who that may need to be rude to them. You know, obviously people are there to ask. If you want to ask, but it's kind of, you know, Oh, do you want to have a go doing this? And then you realize that everyone that is just having a go, and they've just kind of built up their ability to negotiate new challenges, and that's that you're really trading on, in a way,

- Interview 7: You're absolutely right there. They have confidence to, yeah, have a go at it, and not be, you know, not be frightened of it and and people are absolutely, you know, sort of customers are absolutely fine with that. And then, because there's a camaraderie, if you get it apart, you don't know what to do next, there's going to be someone in the room who said, Oh, I did one of those last year. And, you know, and so you're not on your own sitting at home worried?
- Interview 9: You know, it's precious to them. And so the fact that it hasn't, it's sat there on the mantelpiece, not working for the last 20 years. Actually, it's worth giving a go. And even though clocks and watches aren't my thing, I did manage to get it going and so they were very pleased.
- Interview 9: It's just that the more inquisitive, so they'll ask questions. Or what you're going to do, can I help you hold that? Can I, you know? And I go, Oh, look, here's, do you want to have a go and see if you can get those two screws out? I can't get them out or whatever. And so I think last time we did a repair cafe, the gentleman that brought the robotic hoovering and spent a lot of time undoing screws and holding clips and pushing, I mean, he, he was, he did most of the work, to be fair, but all I gave him was the confidence to Do it. Yeah, and, you know. And the other day, I was somewhere else, and a lady brought two things in. So the first one was actually being fixed. And while we were doing that, she said, Oh, I've got my radio as well. And I asked what the make of it was. And I said, Okay, unfortunately, this is this particular. The radio is not really fixable. Once you've done the basic things like changing the fuse or changing the plug, it's actually a sealed unit inside, and you can't get into it. And I empowered her to throw it away, or not throw it away, dispose of it in the electrical recycling. So sometimes that that is our role as well, is actually empowering people to say, No, it's okay for this to go to get recycled because it's not fixable.
- Interview 9: I was always brought up to believe that you should have a go. Yeah, give it a go
- Interview 10: I think by just seeing it, and even by I mean, I think I've been told that, you know, just showing that things can be taken, opened up, and looked at, that's kind of the first step into repair starts to unlock then.

Theme: In a community setting

Description: Volunteers enjoy the "buzz" or energy associated with repair café and comment that it serves as a setting for connection to others in their community who they wouldn't otherwise know. This setting makes the events enjoyable for volunteers and participants alike.

Subtheme 1: Facilitating social connections

Evidence:

- Interview 2: every month at the repair cafe. I've met somebody. Often I say, I know you from somewhere. I don't know where it

is, but it could be most of the connections are, you must have kids the same age as mine, because I must have seen you at school or a PTA thing or something like that, or the one of the helpers wives came to a lunch that we had. I didn't speak to his wife, but I said, did your wife catch this particular train every day? And he said, Yeah, she used to go up to the city. So I said, well, for 30 years, I've been sitting on the same carriage as your wife and never having spoken to her, because you don't speak to people on the train. Yeah. So, yeah, remarkable connections and very positive.

- Interview 2: And as I say, there's 25 of them, often, usually eight or 10 of us go go for a drink afterwards on a Saturday, sort of one o'clock, half past one two o'clock, and go through the repairs of the day or the politics of the day or the football of the day. So that's an additional connection, too.
- Interview 4: I just think people with jobs aren't looking to volunteer as much as people that are retired. Yes, the same happened with my wife. When she retired, she started volunteering for things to begin with, it was mostly she was looking for she was an accountant, so she was looking for charities that she could do accountancy work for on a voluntary basis. But now she's doing a broader range of voluntary work. And I think it's just because if you don't, you know, you haven't got that social interaction with people that you have at work, you haven't got things to occupy your brain that you have while you're at work. So I think the transition from working to retirement isn't just about having more spare time. I think it's about you've got a gap in your life that used to be filled with work, which was meeting people, having problems to solve things in your diary that you're looking forward to, you know, it's, there's a whole there's a whole life that you've sort of lost. And if, unless you're just gonna watch daytime TV every afternoon and wait till it's your turn to fall off the edge of the conveyor belt, then you know, you need something to do.
- Interview 5: [RC] gives me a sense of purpose. It gives gets me out of the house. It gets me in with a group of people other than my family, which is very healthy. It forces me to use my social skills and to be amiable with people rather than a grumpy old man. And I think all of that's very healthy.
- Interview 6: I mean, I come from an incredibly privileged background, and I exist in this world of city professionals, where everyone is, you know, Henry, high earner, not rich yet, so, you know, and half of them went to the same three bloody universities. So it's definitely good to, like, actually do something, to meet other people, and even if you will get a kind of three hour diatribe on politics, that's kind of useful as well, right? Because you're seeing the world and you're seeing the people that inhabit the world, and that makes you more grounded and connected
- Interview 7: And that's one of the wonderful things from our going to pub afterwards. Yes, we we try and get a big table or sit around, and then we sort of exchange war stories, yeah, debrief. What was the worst thing you repaired today, or what was and one guy says, said, Oh, I couldn't repair anything today. Everything went wrong, but just so much joy in that, yeah, so you'll get experience that, that, you know, they sort of come along, and that's useful for the person who's signing, getting people to sign the forms, to actually understand a bit about the lady sewing and the clothes were dirty, and understand the sort of the process going through definitely.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interview 9: we get a lot of people coming in, and, and, you know, sometimes they're sitting well, they're sitting across from you, waiting for you to fix their thing, and sometimes they're engaged with their hands, and sometimes they're just engaged with their mind. But I bump into people there all quite often. So I'll look at them and I go, didn't you bring in a blah blah blah from, you know, yes, quite often more they recognize me and I've got no idea who they are because I was and once they describe what it was I was working, I remember who they are then. But sometimes I meet them in different places. So they're sitting across from me in a repair cafe. But equally, I could walk into a coffee shop and they'll be sitting there having a coffee. And so you do generally feel more connected to your community because you started to meet all these additional people that you wouldn't normally come across ● Interview 9: I think connecting with people is so important. And some, you know, some people, we might be the only people they connect with that week. So they...that's an important relationship that you're having there for that person. And they might not be important to you because you've spoken to 150 people that week, but you might be the only person they're talking to, and I think every time we connect with another human being is an important piece of time. Now, you know, when you're busy and you're running around, it's not always nice because you don't have the time to give to that person, but I think when you have you should, you should always make that connection a special one, even if it's only for the 15 minutes you're talking to them.
	<p>Subtheme 2: Accessible, open community hub</p>
	<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interview 1: I like fixing things, and they're going to provide an endless conveyor belt of of things that need fixing ● Interview 6: Part of the reason that my partner's so anti me doing DIY is there isn't a spare room to have a project and just kind of hide it, right? Like you've got to keep tidy. And that means that, you know, if you imagine trying to just have a sewing machine, am I going to store that? You won't use it at the time, even if you're a routine seller, yeah, where does it? Could you have a lodger in that room instead so you can make some damage, you know? Like, yeah. ● Interview 6: I have a very low level of knowledge now, yeah, in a while, could it be that I kind of am on the other side of that and say, Well, I know enough, and I can't be bothered to deal with people possibly, but then you also wouldn't get the problems coming in and this kind of new thing, right? Because there's a limit to how many things break in your own house. Yeah, you'd probably just end up doing woodworking or something, making little figurines ● Interview 6: I mean, I come from an incredibly privileged background, and I exist in this world of city professionals, where everyone is, you know, Henry, high earner, not rich yet, so, you know, and half of them went to the same three bloody universities. So it's definitely good to, like, actually do something, to meet other people, and even if you will get a kind of three hour diatribe

on politics, that's kind of useful as well, right? Because you're seeing the world and you're seeing the people that inhabit the world, and that makes you more grounded and connected

- Interview 7: I think the buzz, the buzz in the room, when we you know, we go into the room at eight o'clock and there's nothing there, and we start setting tables up, and we work like fury for about an hour. But the joy, the fun, the joking, the, you know, all of that, no one's serious about it. No one. There's no hierarchy. It just everyone gets on and does it, and then the people start teaming in. And so the whole process, and then you finish it with a pint at the pub. It's a perfect day for me.
- Interview 7: You know, you might have a clamp at home, but if you're trying to do a chair and you don't have a clamp, it's, you know, it's a really awkward thing. So, yeah, so we spend 100 pounds on clamps and but we've got, we've got enough money to be able to do that.
- Interview 8: What comes in is absolutely fascinating, I think so. I always ask, you know, what have you brought in today? Or if they're finishing, how did you get on or whatever? And just the range of stuff is unbelievable.
- Interview 8: The church is in the middle of a green so it's quite visible. But obviously, when you've got the queue outside, or you've got people going in and out, it reminds people that it's open. And I don't think it is open unless, like, they have a lot going on there, but I don't think it's open unless there's something going on. So you also sometimes get people just wandering in.
- Interview 11: I think people enjoy coming along because of the cafe aspect as well. You know, you can cook coffee while your thing is being mended.
- Interview 11: I think about people getting older and maybe being lonely, I think is something, and which is the cakes and the having a community little mind display of what else is on. So a little hub. I wanted it to be a bit of a hub as well, or for actually, quite a lot of all the other groups that are around.
- Interview 12: But it's also about community. And for me, I know that people come just to have a cake and to chat, and it's just done really nice every couple of months event. So I do also like to do things with other like minded groups... Sometimes the police neighborhood team come along and have all the cake and tea and give out advice on bicycles and sheds and, you know, so that it's this really nice kind of community hub
- Interview 12: I think about people getting older and maybe being lonely, I think is something, and which is the cakes and the having a community little mind display of what else is on. So a little hub. I wanted it to be bit of a hub as well, or for actually, quite a lot of all the other groups that are around.
- Observation: older woman who is a "regular" coming in every week with something to fix, mostly just to chat and have company
- Observation: [Repairer] talking about his first repair being a fluffy electronic cat, which he thought was a prank/joke from the organizer who is his long time friend
- Observation: Sewers saying after a long discussion about sewing skills "...we're also here for the chats"

	Theme: For those who appreciate it
	<p>Description: Volunteers feel particularly drawn to RC as it allows them to engage with the community and fix things that may be sentimental in value, too expensive to fix otherwise or buy new, or the community member might not want to throw away for environmental reasons. Furthermore, volunteers feel appreciation and respect from community members, especially when they are able to fix something novel or unexpected.</p>
	Subtheme 1: Value of possessions
	<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview 3: We get so many backpacks that come in and, you know, the straps gone and, yeah, and people sort of talk about the sometimes, you know, like their old friends, oh, this is, you know, we've been done, bagged a few Monroes, and done lots of walks and hikes and what have you. They're just very attached to that. It seems that backpacks in particular seem to have a kind of personal quality. • Interview 3: Well, sentimental value certainly, because we've had some, what can only be described as ancient garments sort of come in. They're obviously dear to someone's heart. And you have to, you know, it's almost like preserving them, repairing them, yeah. • Interview 7: And it's interesting, when they talk about the repair shop, I say, Well, we're actually far superior to them. Firstly, we do relevant items, you know, we'll do a kitchen, you know, a kitchen mixer, or something so relevant and useful. And secondly, most important, the people are with us in repairing it's, you know, someone goes, takes away for three months, comes back, the great reveal. We don't have that because they're of the reveal. So they they understand what's, you know, how it comes apart. And one of the reasons they're so appreciative because they think, Oh, it's just the fuse gone. And, you know, someone spends 40 minutes taking 50 screws out of something to get to, yeah • Interview 9: You know that there's been other things where I've fixed very precious things, and such as a clock that, while being the ugliest clock you've ever seen in your life, did belong to their mother. And so, you know, you they it's precious to them. And so the fact that it hasn't, it's sat there on the mantelpiece, not working for the last 20 years. Actually, it's worth giving a go. And even though clocks and watches aren't my thing, I did manage to get it going and so they were very pleased. I said, it probably won't go for very long, but I said what it needs is somebody to get in there and clean it properly and oil it. Who knows what they're doing with watches? I said, No, I don't. And so they were really, really pleased, and they walked away with something working again • Observation: Repairers fixing two very large stuffed animals that had come open and the stuffing had come out.
	Subtheme 2: Limited repair knowledge

Evidence:

- Interview 1: To be fair, most the you know, the members of the public are generally embarrassed. That's all it turns out to be. They're like, Oh, I could have done that. And and that's part of, I don't know if it's part of the repair Cafe ethos, but we certainly, you know, we will always do the repair in front of people, so we can talk to them, and hopefully they then go, I can do that
- Interview 2: Others, oddly enough, are quite satisfied that they weren't able to fix it and the experts weren't able to fix it. And yes, it now can be recycled in the bin in the library. So there's also a satisfaction in it not being able to fixed
- Interview 3: And one chap bought in, I think it was three or four jumpers that moths had been feasting on. And he said, on a, you know, and I sort of fixed a few. We're only supposed to do one thing. But it wasn't. It was a slow day. And so I think I did about two or three. And then he said, and what about this? And I said, You know what, that would make wonderful polishing cloths. We're not going there.
- Interview 3: I mean, a lot of them just keep saying, Oh, you're amazing, or, you know, and you're not, you're just sort of sewing, but yeah, it's, it's kind of weird. I used to think when people said, Oh, I can't even sew on a button. That was a throwaway line. But there are three people who can't sew on a button, and I just find that staggering.
- Interview 5: Um, there's an aspect of affirmation that your skills are valued by the people who you're doing the repair for. But they don't really know. They're easily impressed. But I mean, maybe it's my vanity. I really like the fact that I get respect from the other people
- Interview 7: You know, the joy of the people, even when you say to them, it's completely broken, is nothing you can do. Just take it down to recycling. They say, thanks very much. You know, here's 10 pounds. And I've had a lovely morning, because I think the thing is, you're giving them permission to throw it away. Yeah, they don't, sort of say, Oh, should I, you know, spend money, and am I doing the right thing? And you say, Here's permission throw it away
- Interview 9: It's just that the more inquisitive, so they'll ask questions. Or what you're going to do, can I help you hold that? Can I, you know? And I go, Oh, look, here's, do you want to have a go and see if you can get those two screws out? I can't get them out or whatever. And so I think last time we did a repair cafe, the gentleman that brought the robotic hoovering and spent a lot of time undoing screws and holding clips and pushing, I mean, he, he was, he did most of the work, to be fair, but all I gave him was the confidence to Do it. Yeah, and, you know. And the other day, I was somewhere else, and a lady brought two things in. So the first one was actually being fixed. And while we were doing that, she said, Oh, I've got my radio as well. And I asked what the make of it was. And I said, Okay, unfortunately, this particular radio is not really fixable. Once you've done the basic things like changing the fuse or changing the plug, it's actually a sealed unit inside, and you can't get into it. And I empowered her to throw it away, or not throw it away, dispose of it in the electrical recycling. So sometimes that that is our role as well, is actually empowering people to say, No, it's okay for this to go to get recycled because it's not fixable.

- Interview 9: I quite often if I can't repair something, and you know, other people have said, No, it's not, it's not actually repairable. And then, you know, I invite them to put it in the electrical recycling and so that at least it's not wasted.
- Interview 11: There's been such a variety of sewing to do. And as I say, people are just kind of astonished that we have the skills.

Theme: With others who can relate

Description: Amongst the volunteers, there is a camaraderie and connectedness, as many feel similar natural inclinations towards fixing or tinkering, which may have been a tendency unique to them in other settings. Volunteers comment on their respect for other volunteers' skills and enjoy hearing repair stories from their fellow repairers.

Subtheme 1: Early exposure to repair

Evidence:

- Interview 1: When I was young, I just I broke things because I wanted to see how they worked, and then you either had to fix them or you, you've suffered the consequences, yeah.
- Interview 4: And I quite enjoy fixing things. I've been I guess, from childhood. I think you'll probably hear this story quite a lot if you're brought up in a house where somebody fixes things, whether it's you know, your dad, your granddad, your mother, whoever it is, if there's someone that you grow up with that likes taking things apart and seeing if they can throw, not throw them away and actually get them working again. You sort of get it into your behavior quite early on, that if something's broken you, you can see if you can fix it first
- Interview 5: I was always the one whenever I came home, I was fixing things. So No, no, it's...I was born with it. Ancestors of mine, my grandfather was a very, very good engineer, but he died when my mom was six. So I never met him.
- Interview 5: I've talked to the others, you know, how did you learn about repair? And they will, a lot of them will say the same thing, which was, I've always done it. I couldn't stop myself. I've always wanted to know how things work. I've always wanted to take things apart. It's, it's a personality type, interesting compulsion.
- Interview 5: [RC] has a lunch, a sandwich lunch you attended. I think that's great. It is a chance to chat to people. It's a really easy conversation, because it's, you know, what did you have? And you want to get it off your chest anyway. And it's fascinating talking to the sewers and the woodworkers and and there's some people who've got some skills I haven't got, which is really interesting. I mean, I remember last week, I think I was talking about how you get rid of moths. I've never worked out how to do that. And lady said, Well, this is what you do. You put them in a plastic bag and you put them in a deep freeze, or you put them out

in the sun. Job done. I mean, it's just, you try doing that on the internet. It's not as easy, because you get lots of old wives tales and whatever.

- Interview 5: There's lots of electronics, woodwork, whatever. And I answer some of them because I know about them, but some of the other ones, I think, bloody hell people really know what they're doing. They've got the experience. It's quite and I think that, I that does create a sense of community
- Interview 6: You know, my mum has always been quite good at fixing things and doing up hems and, you know, and that sort of stuff. And, like, basic sewing, she doesn't have a machine or anything, but just like, she's happy with a needle and thread, yeah. And she did kind of impart that to me as a kid as well, you know, I need toy. I made my own toys with. They were very ugly, but I made my own toys with a needle and thread and that sort of stuff. And always enjoyed that as a kid.
- Interview 7: All my life I've been mending things. You know, from a little boy, a five year old, I had a toolkit, and I was making carpentry things. And so I've just always enjoyed, you know, taking things apart and putting them together and mending things and making carpentry things. So I've always made things. I've always got sort of involved in things. And I could just see it as, you know, I could just completely understand the concept. And I mean, a lot of my friends can't mend anything. They can't mend a fuse.
- Interview 7: Where did you learn these skills? And nearly all of them said, you know, from home, I was, you know, I was born creative, if you like, I've always liked to be, always been curious how things work. Always wanted to to be making things and handling things. But interestingly, with the repairers, none of them have done it for a job.
- Interview 8: Well, my dad was known as Mr. Fix it. He was an engineer. He could repair and do loads of stuff, but he, unfortunately, now has dementia, so can't he's like, my go to even with the kids, like ask get granddad to do it, but he can't fix anything anymore, which is a real shame, but he would, would definitely have given anything a go like that
- Interview 9: So my father was a motor mechanic, so as a young child, I liked nothing more than sitting beside my dad while he was working on a car or whatever. And so I, while I was allowed to, I would sit beside him and hand him the right tool. And, you know, we'd sit in a car, and he'd say, Okay, what's that noise? What do you think it is? And we'd identify problems with cars for fixing just by the noise as we drove past them.
- Interview 9: that interest in fixing things, if you like, was there from a very young age. And yeah, I suppose that's part of my inquisitive nature to understand how something works. Is there. And what I lack is a huge amount of skill. And so being part of the repair Cafe is great, because actually, you know what, there's 10 other people in the room who've got more skills than you doing whatever it is that you're doing just at the moment. So there's always someone else to go and ask.
- Observation: 'Mastery is the antidote to shame' as his parents/teachers were hard on him growing up, so mastering repairing helped build confidence

