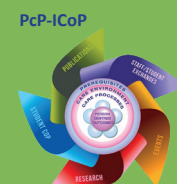


International Practice Development Journal

Online journal of FoNS in association with the IPDC and PcP-ICoP (ISSN 2046-9292)



EDITORIAL

Towards healthfulness and human flourishing – prioritising relationships

Caroline Dickson and Kate Sanders

Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, Scotland
Email: CDickson@qmu.ac.uk

Published: 25th May 2022
<https://doi.org/10.19043/ipdj.121.001>

In our [last editorial](#) in November 2021, we highlighted hope and positivity being generated by the power of collaboration from the perspective of learning and innovation. As we move through spring and head towards summer, it is a time of growth, colour and abundance. This is resonant with human flourishing, the ultimate outcome of person-centredness, which is nurtured within healthful cultures, defined by McCormack et al. (2021, p 29) as:

‘...one in which decision-making is shared, relationships are collaborative, leadership is transformational and innovative practices are supported.’

Further, Mackay (2020, p 232) suggests that healthful relationships enable persons to:

‘...experience a sense of “being” in practice together whilst supporting each other to seek their full potential.’

Central to healthful relationships are the ideas of McCormack (2004) and Dewing (2004) on personhood, – our uniqueness as persons, which influences our ‘being-in-the world’ (McCormack and McCance, 2010, p 15). They view personhood through the lens of five modes of being: being with self; being in relation; being in the social world; being in place; and being in time. This reflects what matters to us as individuals, shaping our values and beliefs.

Currently, tales from across practice and education convey a variable picture of healthfulness. On one hand there is a sense of emergence from the pandemic into a ‘new normal’, with the opportunity to take forward some of the innovative ways of working that have developed during these difficult times. On the other hand, the legacy of Covid-19 across health and social care sectors is increased workloads caused by rising demand and staff absence due to sickness, against the ever-problematic background of retention issues. If we are to emerge from the pandemic in a better place than we were before it began, if the ‘new normal’ is to be something to celebrate, then we believe attention needs to be turned to the formation of healthful relationships that enable human flourishing.

But how do we achieve this when face masks and other forms of protective equipment continue to hamper verbal and non-verbal communication, or there is a need to stay at home and socially distance? How do we establish healthful relationships when meetings are remote and learners are

forced to engage with virtual education, whether this is their preferred learning style or not? How do we avoid a tendency to focus on tasks at the cost of nurturing ourselves and our relationships?

In this issue, you will find many examples that we hope will stimulate your own thinking. For example, Shobhan Thakore and colleagues reflect on a way of working during the pandemic that enabled a continued focus on the humanity of healthcare through the fostering of new spaces where colleagues could work collaboratively. Key to the rapid implementation of change was the development of a multidisciplinary, person-centred care group in which listening to colleagues was fundamental, facilitating the sharing of emotions, identification of issues and co-creation of solutions. This resonates with the notion of 'attending', one of the core elements of compassionate leadership, as identified by Michael West (2021) and supports the importance of developing relational connectedness so that others 'feel acknowledged and respected as persons who are able to develop and grow' (Cardiff and van Lieshout, 2015, p 1).

Maria Mackay and Carley Jans have considered healthfulness in relationships between students and clinical supervisors. They offer a practical facilitation guide that creates spaces for 'checking in' and 'checking out' as well offering person-centred feedback and enabling critical conversations. Additionally, Martha Whitfield and colleagues reflect on the ways in which they worked together as peers to develop a community of practice that transformed their doctoral student experience during the pandemic by encouraging a participatory, person-centred approach that facilitated their flourishing as novice researchers.

The 'storybook' from Margaret Codd and Angie Titchen offers unique insights into their healthful relationship and how, over more than two years, working with critical creative mandalas has enabled human flourishing (Titchen and McCormack, 2020) and transformation for Margaret. Their article is invaluable for those seeking new ways of experiencing doing, knowing, being and becoming (Kearns and Hart, 2017) and how we might to walk alongside others in their development, in the role of critical companion (Titchen, 2001).

Danielle Macdonald highlights the importance of space in the context of discussing roles and collaborative practices. At times when services are stretched there may be a temptation for organisations to become even more focused on productivity and effectiveness (Clouston, 2019), which places increased responsibility and demand on individuals. However, when concerns about staff wellbeing are high (West et al., 2020), we argue for resisting this temptation.

We believe that creating spaces for 'being still' to check in with each other, reflect, listen to understand or have critical conversations can be integrated into daily practice. In these exceptional times we believe that relationships should be prioritised to promote the wellbeing of all. The results may just exceed our expectations!

References

- Cardiff, S. and van Lieshout, F. (2015) Reflections on being and becoming a person-centred facilitator. *International Practice Development Journal*. Vol. 5. Special Issue. Article 4. pp 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.19043/ipdj.5SP.006>.
- Clouston, T. (2019) Pearls of wisdom: using the single case study or 'gem' to identify strategies for mediating stress and work-life imbalance in healthcare staff. *Journal of Research in Nursing*. Vol. 24. Nos. 1-2. pp 61-72. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987118809506>.
- Dewing, J. (2004) Concerns relating to the application of frameworks to promote person-centredness in nursing with older people. *International Journal of Older People Nursing*. Vol. 13. No. 3a. pp 39-44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2702.2004.00925.x>.
- Kearns, S. and Hart, N. (2017) Narratives of 'doing, knowing, being and becoming': examining the impact of an attachment-informed approach within initial teacher education. *Teacher Development*. Vol. 21. No. 4. pp 511-527. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2017.1289976>.

- Mackay, M. (2020) *An Exploration of How Healthful Relationships between Students and Clinical Supervisors Influence Transformational Learning: A Person-centred Inquiry*. Doctoral thesis. Edinburgh: Queen Margaret University.
- McCormack, B. (2004) Person-centredness in gerontological nursing: an overview of the literature. *International Journal of Older People Nursing*. Vol. 13. No. 3a. pp 31-38. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2702.2004.00924.x>.
- McCormack, B. and McCance, T. (2010) *Person-centred Nursing: Theory and Practice*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- McCormack, B., McCance, T., Bulley, C., Brown, B., McMillan, A. and Martin, S. (2020) *Fundamentals of Person-centred Healthcare Practice*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell
- Titchen, A. (2001) Skilled companionship in professional practice. Chp 9 in Higgs, J. and Titchen, A. (Eds.) (2001) *Practice Knowledge and Expertise in the Health Professionals*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann. pp 69-79.
- West, M., Bailey, S. and Williams, E. (2020) *The Courage of Compassion: Supporting Nurses and Midwives to Deliver High-quality Care*. London: The King's Fund. Retrieved from: tinyurl.com/KF-West-courage. (Last accessed 15th January 2021).
- West, M. (2021) *Compassionate Leadership: Sustaining Wisdom, Humanity and Presence in Health and Social Care*. London: Swirling Leaf Press.

Caroline A.W. Dickson (Prof Doc, MSc, RN, DN, RNT), Senior Lecturer, Divisions of Nursing, Occupational Therapy and Arts Therapies; Associate Member Centre for Person-centred Practice Research, Chapter Officer, Omega XI Chapter, Sigma Global, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Kate Sanders (PhD, MSc, BSc Hons, HV Cert, RN), Practice Development Facilitator, Foundation of Nursing Studies, London, England.