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## EDITORIAL

### The power of relationships

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The process of editing my first edition of the *IPDJ* and doing my 'day job' as Director of Public Engagement at the University of Nottingham has had far more moments of synergy than I could ever have predicted. I say this because, while the responsibilities associated with each role are significantly different, what has struck me is how the principles and core values are complementary.

As you read the articles in this issue, reporting on innovation, research and methods in practice development, you may notice that core to their approach is a focus on relationships. These are relationships fostered at all levels of an organisation as the emphasis is on co-creation of meaning, vision, commitment and learning. There is also attention paid to measuring outcomes that are of value to people receiving care.

I share the perspective of Kim Manley and Carrie Jackson, whose contribution articulates how prioritising relationships goes beyond the successful implementation of practice development initiatives. Effective relationships have the potential to build an organisational ethos that nourishes person-centred cultures. My perspective is that a commitment to relationships extends beyond even the organisation. It enables the organisation as a system to strengthen its relevance, responsiveness and accountability, and to build trust among the communities it serves. As such, relationships provide a vehicle for organisations to be answerable to their civic responsibility and to promote wider social good.

Given skilled facilitation, the power imbalances that exist within these relationships by virtue of social status and professional roles can be brought to a conscious level and openly addressed. Additionally, authentic engagement in relationships at all levels of an organisation can purposefully promote new ideas, critical challenge and curiosity. The consequence of this is a level of uncertainty that can place individuals and teams in uncomfortable spaces.

As I inhabit the world of public engagement and develop relationships that are animated by dialogue, partnership and co-production, I challenge myself to consider how I can capture ways of navigating these uncomfortable spaces. I wish to enter into conversations that are potentially disruptive to cultural norms and move beyond being content with customer satisfaction. I encourage us all to explore this issue as a community committed to a person-centred practice culture. For me, this is the hidden dialogue that is often absent from our public reports of quality improvement, research and innovation.

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