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## EDITORIAL

### The place of person-centred care in an international response to the Covid-19 pandemic

Gemma Stacey

Florence Nightingale Foundation, London  
Email: [Gemma@florence-nightingale-foundation.org.uk](mailto:Gemma@florence-nightingale-foundation.org.uk)

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As the world grapples with the immediate need to respond to the impact and effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, health and care workers globally are faced with extraordinary challenges on a day-to-day basis. The context and conditions within which they are delivering and leading care are unparalleled. We know from the vast number of mainstream and social media reports that they are hugely concerned for the health and wellbeing of their patients, their families and themselves. This burden has the potential to have a significant impact on their welfare.

Ordinarily we would assume that these conditions would place health and care practitioners in a mindset defined by threat and fear, both of which have been shown to have a detrimental effect on their ability to offer compassionate and person-centred care to their patients (Coetzee and Klopper, 2010). In these circumstances, we typically see high levels of conflict within teams and instances of workplace adversity, leading to a working environment perceived as hostile, abusive and unrewarding (McDonald et al., 2016). This has been empirically observed as leading to emotional blunting, with indifference towards the profession and poor responsiveness to patients' needs (Najjar et al., 2009). As a consequence, workplace adversity is correlated with decreased quality of care, higher mortality and failure to rescue (Cheung et al., 2008).

The description above could not be further from the reaction health and care professionals are displaying in the current circumstances. What we actually see is commitment, pride and personal sacrifice to enable a collective fight to overcome the global pandemic. Division between professional groups appears to have been replaced by a collaborative endeavour, where each group demonstrates significant respect for the contribution of the others. There has been public recognition and gratitude for the work of health and care practitioners, which is having a positive impact on the social value placed on the provision of care. Significantly, governing bodies, political and healthcare leaders have publicly protected and championed their professions to enable frontline practitioners to feel supported in their endeavours to offer the best care possible in the most challenging circumstances. In England, a threat to this support has come in the form of limited access to personal protective equipment and Covid-19 testing for staff. This has the potential to undermine the collective message if not addressed in a responsive and meaningful manner. The global nature of the situation would suggest that these threats are being experienced internationally.

This issue of the *IPDJ* offers an international and critical perspective on the factors that support and promote person-centred care in specific practice settings and in education. What is integral to

each of these perspectives is collaborative, democratised and compassionate leadership. This offers practitioners a level of psychological safety that enables them to consistently hold and respond to the distress of their patients. Indeed, it is this type of leadership that Bailey and West (2020) are calling for in response to the pandemic, and through the media we are seeing examples of the effect when this type of leadership is enacted on a global scale. In these conditions, practitioners can survive the challenges and emerge from the pandemic as a different type of practitioner.

Our attention and compassion must be extended to all health and care professionals in the aftermath of the pandemic, when a phase of recovery will be required. For some this will involve emotional and psychological support to enable them to process their experience. However, some will discover or develop strengths and abilities they did not previously have the opportunity to enact and will have an alternative narrative to tell. The principles of person-centredness are therefore equally relevant to understanding health and care professionals' unique and exceptional response to Covid-19 and subsequently their preferred personal and professional future.

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**Gemma Stacey** (MN, RN Mental Health, PGCHE, PFHEA), Director of the Florence Nightingale Foundation Academy, Florence Nightingale Foundation, London, England.