

# International Practice Development Journal

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## EDITORIAL

### We are creative – are you?

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When thinking about this editorial, we knew we wanted to say something about creativity. Working creatively is a valuable means of accessing embodied knowledge and new insights about ourselves, our practice and our workplace cultures that can be used to inform development and transformation. However, being new to writing editorials, we first decided to have a look back through the journal's editorial archives and seek the wisdom of previous authors. In doing so, it was interesting to see that our first Academic Editor, Professor Jan Dewing, had written [an editorial](#) about being creative back in May 2012; we encourage you to have a look.

Jan began: 'Yet again I recently heard someone saying they weren't a creative person...' and this is something we both experience when working with others. Is this because the word creativity is perceived to refer to the arts – for example, crafting, painting, movement and music – rather than a broader understanding, as suggested by the dictionary definition below:

*'The ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc.; originality, progressiveness, or imagination' (dictionary.com).*

Taking this more expansive perspective opens up the possibility for us all to perceive ourselves as inherently creative. It could be argued that this creativity has come to the fore as we have adapted to new ways of living and working during the Covid-19 pandemic. While this crisis has brought huge uncertainty and challenge right across the complex mix of health and social care services, what has been remarkable is the ability people have shown to change their ways of working, to seek solutions – and to do so at pace. We believe this reflects the creative nature of human beings/persons.

Oliver (2009) argues that creativity is everywhere, as humans and the world are constantly engaged in a process of making. He contends that we should view creativity as 'openness', which is person-oriented (Massey and Munt, 2009). In this way, we create the possibility for participatory exploration of the social, cultural and embodied context, and for improvisation and transformation, by engaging in people's 'interests, curiosities and passions' (Massey and Munt, 2009, p 305).

The aim and scope of the *International Practice Development Journal* relate to deepening our understanding of person-centred cultures and practices. Our interest in using participatory ways of working, learning and researching is as a means of challenging, developing and expanding knowledge about ourselves; the way we work as individuals and with others, and the cultures and contexts within which care is provided. This helps decisions to be made about future actions. These ways of working, learning and researching have the hallmark of creativity and are illustrated throughout this issue.

Openness (Oliver, 2009) is achieved by McCormack and colleagues, who use Collaborative Critical Creative Inquiry methodology as a means to understand the experiences of being part of the Queen's Nurse Development Programme in Scotland. The participatory methods they use include encouraging creative expression through reflective diaries, artwork, poetry and storytelling, with the aim of enabling embedded, embodied and authentic knowing to emerge. Similarly, storytelling is used to share experiences by Waddington and Erbmam through the selection and sharing of music. Roddy and colleagues also work with storytelling, through the Learning and Innovating from Everyday Excellence (LIFE) session method, which has the explicit intention of transforming cultures and contexts in care homes. In their study, Teeling and colleagues bring creative methods to bear in data analysis, rather than data collection, exploring service redesign to encourage timely hospital discharge for older people.

Nearly a decade on from Jan's editorial, we ask whether we (practitioners, educators, researchers, policymakers) have made progress in terms of recognising the inherently creative nature of persons and the possibilities it holds for transformation? Despite continuing to hear 'I'm not creative' in 2021, practice developers, researchers and leaders show growing confidence and commitment in creative methods, and in encouraging others to recognise creativity in themselves and actively to use these methods. We hope this issue of the *IPDJ* will offer you further insights into the facilitation of, and potential outcomes from, creativity in terms of expression of personhood and the transformation of persons, person-centred practice and culture. We challenge you to open a dialogue with yourself and others, starting with: 'I am creative, we are creative and it makes a difference...'

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