Relationship-Based Care, Austerity and Aged Care

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Permanent austerity (Pierson, 2010; Albo and Evans, 2010)

Exhort practitioners to return to the true basis of care

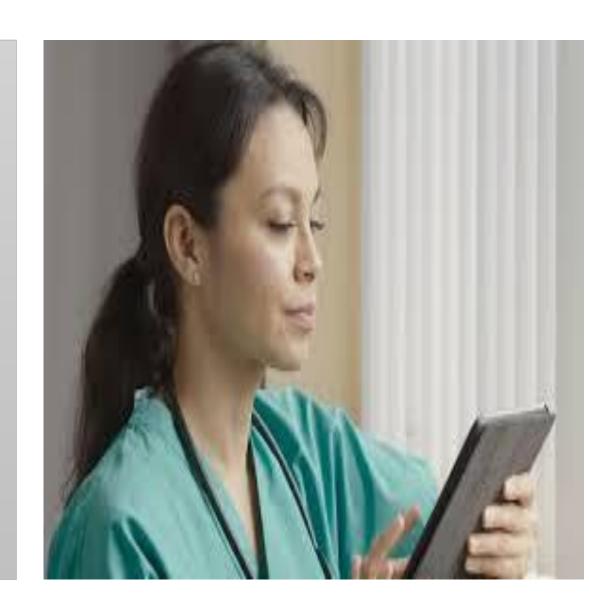
Target individual behaviors, emotions and attitudinal change

Not system-wide reform (masks need for system-wide reform)

- Aged-care organisations adopt a revolving door of patient care models
 - Patient-centered care
 - Person-centered care
 - Family-centered care
 - Client-centered care
 - Relationship-based care
 - Also, emotion-based care & the butterfly model
 - (Cropley, 2012; Koloroutis, 2004; Montague et al., 2017)

Contexts

- Austerity and neoliberalism
- Care Work Managerialised and Gendered
- Funding Aged Care in Australia
- Models of Care Work



Rapid Ethnography



- 2 large aged-care organisations (home care and residential)
- In-depth, semi-structured interviews (28)
 - 12 managers (3 female, 9 male)
 - 16 staff (12 female, 4 male)
- **\$hadowed** 9 home care staff (all female) average of 4.5 hours each
 - 40 hours of shadowing
- Participant observations (24 sessions)
 - 3 hours average
- Review of policy documents
- Team research (5 researchers)
- Data analysed thematically (Kirby et al. 2010)

Bolton (2009, 2004)

Types of Workplace Emotion Management

- 1) pecuniary (emotional management for profit or to reduce costs)
- 2) prescriptive (organisational and/or professional rules of conduct)
- 3) presentational (general social rules)
- **4) philanthropic** (a gift, without strings attached, to the organisation, colleagues or service users)

Emotional management under austerity and RBC

- 1) austerity-linked sacrifice (like pecuniary but with aspects of philanthropic)
- **2) official discourse** (like prescriptive; specific to RBC)
- 3) faux control
- 4) compulsory time philanthropy (like philanthropic)

1) Austerity-Linked Sacrifice (like pecuniary but specific to late neoliberalism)

Pay and conditions

'they all make it clear that they feel they do not receive sufficient income for the effort they put into the work. Comparisons are made with their grown-up children on triple or double the wages.'

'make more at McDonalds'

Workplace safety

'aggression can happen very often',

'we don't teach de-escalation techniques like you would in a mental health service because that's not what we're doing'

'carers not bodyguards'

2) Official Discourse of Relationship-Based Care (like prescriptive; but specific to RBC)

- RBC 'is about that relatability, about being that real person'
- No time to do RBC: disrupts tight routines
- E.G. Some workers had trouble in 'setting up the routine of the relationship-based care, where we let the clients sleep in, get up at their time'
- Inconclusive findings: At the level of everyday work, RBC is not significantly different than other models of care



3) Faux Control

• 'We give them [the staff] permission to leave and to call their manager and talk through with their manager what's going on'

Not possible to leave aggressive situations

• 'He had Delores and someone else bailed up in his room. It was very scary. It's also happened to Heather on more than one occasion.'

Carry their own phones and call each other for help

- **Verbal abuse** rescheduling home care: 'Some of them swear, some of them are just angry but.. you just have to take it as they're just venting.'
- Excuse and normalize abuse: 'you knew it wasn't at you. It was just at his situation...then he would kiss my hand...and apologise'.

4) Compulsory Time Philanthropy

(1) It's a choice

'That's a choice and it's my choice... I'm sitting at home doing nothing anyway. I might as well be at work being productive.'

'I just sort of break it up over the week and do a couple of hours each night.'

(2) Organisational philosophy of altruism – formalizing unpaid work

'voluntary activities are not entirely voluntary' but were 'a condition and expectation of working here and getting sufficient hours'



Conclusions

- In the context of austerity, emotions and emotion management were shaped by underfunding, under staffing and inadequate resources
- Leaned-out, fast pace and routinization of care work conflicts with RBC
- RBC operates as an extra-local, emotional management dynamic that redistributes some responsibility to workers (faux control) while workplace control remains with management and managerial models that remain viable due to the unpaid work and austerity-linked sacrifices of care workers