

DISCURSIVE POSITIONING IN THE CO-CREATION OF CARE

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OBJECTIVE

Focus: Encounters in daily care are studied from a social psychological perspective with a focus on interpersonal or social aspects from the professional's point of view.

Aim: To explore *how professionals navigate (ethical) challenges of shared agency in residential elder care.*

Study: The study is qualitative, drawing on Critical Discursive Psychology [CDP] with an abductive approach. It is the first study of three of a doctoral thesis on encounters in residential elder care.

ENCOUNTERS IN RESIDENTIAL ELDER CARE

Professionals conduct the daily care following administrative, organizational and occupational duties. These are often realized in encounters between the professional and the older person. In social situations like encounters, aspects such as *affects, wishes, values* and *intentions* are constructed and negotiated. They become "real" *in interaction with others*, and they have significance for social relationships.

Although care is given those who need assistance in their daily lives, these individuals are not merely passive objects of care. They are individuals with their own wishes, understanding, thoughts and affects. Thus, the idea of care as co-created, and agency as shared, are representing the interpersonal and *social processes* the professionals navigate in their daily work. Acknowledging differences in roles, responsibilities and capabilities, professionals aim to conduct care in a mutual understanding with the older persons.

Still, challenges in daily care exist. Moral distress among personnel in care is reported and expressions of aggressions, violence or resistance to care is a problem for both professionals and receivers of care. This study explores how professionals manage situations related to power relations, values and affects in encounters of care of today. A deeper understanding of this is valuable in both further research and in developing care.

CDP AND NAVIGATING CARE

According to Critical Discursive Psychology, language is

- related to the context within individuals are acting and
- a tool for performing social actions, negotiating meanings, as well as enacting or resisting power relations.

Highlighting the interplay between language, thought and action, CDP offers a method for analysing *action orientation* in daily care practices. Action orientation concerns the meaning making, implications and power dynamics in specific situations, and how the individual navigates these for managing events or social practices, either collectively shared or individually experienced.

How individuals *position* themselves and others through discourse is a part of the action orientation and analysis in this study. This is also related to how agency is managed - and shared, and what *implications* are related to these, considering the power dynamics embedded in social practices like everyday activities and routines of care.

DATA & ANALYSIS

The data consists of 20 semi-structured interviews with professionals participating in the daily care of older persons in a Finnish care home with round-the-clock services.

The analysis is in progress with identification of positioning of professionals and older persons in utterances of encounters in daily care.

TIME - TO HAVE IT OR NOT TO HAVE

In the following two examples of positionings. The professionals refers to time in both, but with different action orientation.

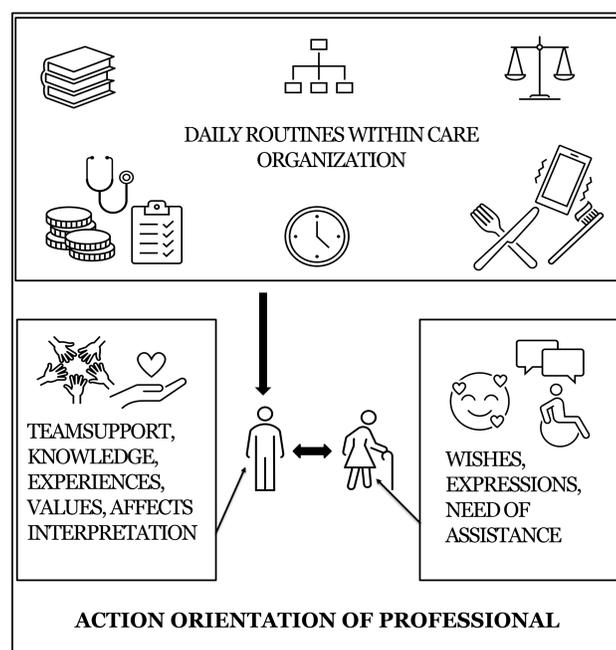
Agency as shared covers the ideal care situations, managed with a successful outcome for both parts. Although conflicts in these, professionals manage the situations by drawing on personal resources or situational aspects. Common in these are that both the professional and the older person are positioned as agents in the situation, for achieving a satisfying outcome for both. 1/7/1 is in such a situation referring to time:

1/7/1: "Well, generally it helps when you give them some time. Sit down somewhere to chat, try to speak at their level. And you don't necessarily always have to say something; just being present, looking into their eyes, listening. You can even hold their hand."

In the utterance, 1/7/1 "gives time" when attending to the older person in a situation of resistance to care. This is contrasting to what 1/2/1 says, when talking about daily routines in care:

1/2/1: "They should take more action themselves, do things, and be there to help. Right now, a lot has to be done for them because there isn't enough time."

Here, 1/2/1 performs activities in which the older person could participate. The professional cites a *lack of time*, blaming this for not involving the older person in certain activities. The professional manages the duties, referring to obligations and resources, which has implications for the agency of the older persons. In these two examples, the professionals position themselves differently in relation to the concept of time. This also has different implications for the agency of the older person.



Action orientation in encounters of daily care. The professional navigates cooperation when assisting the older person in daily routines. The way care is managed and supervised is part of the daily routines through resources, regulations and daily care practices.

