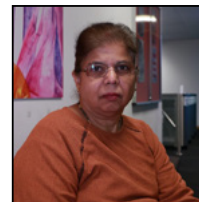


Dignity in care

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Abstract

Dignity and respect are fundamental aspects of person-centered care in any care setting. This is even more important for people who are elderly or are in vulnerable situations due to their physical and/or mental health condition. Dignity is also a human right and it is an essential duty of any care professional to ensure that care provided by them is of high quality, safe and maintains dignity at all times. Dignity is a complex concept and is often expressed through experiences where it was not met rather than its abstract definition. It includes a multitude of factors and can mean different things to different people. Being addressed appropriately, privacy, personal appearance, access to comfortable environment, autonomy and freedom to make informed choice are considered to be key aspects of dignity. Despite many policies relating to this area, it has been noted that there are often situations where dignity has been compromised and this has come under scrutiny and criticism. It is also important to note that dignity for staff is equally important. Evidence suggests that if staff is treated with dignity, they in turn will treat service users with dignity and respect. Management of care providing organizations has a significant role in enhancing dignity in care settings both for its service users and staff at work. A blame free culture, robust leadership, good communication and a supportive environment are key ingredients for enabling staff to provide dignified care. No care professional sets out to provide undignified care however; lack of resources and an unsupportive workplace environment can result in inadvertent lapses in dignity in care. This presentation will look at the concept of dignity, its impact on service users and care providers and some strategies to enhance dignity in care.

Biography

Rekha Elaswarapu is a Lecturer in Health and Social care at the University of Sunderland in London, UK. Her current positions include Associate Fellow at the International Longevity Centre UK and visiting faculty at the Policy Institute, Kings College London and Board Member of the National Dignity Council. She is an experienced professional passionate about quality improvement and better outcomes for service users in health and social care. Her specialist areas include older people, nutrition, dignity and privacy, long term conditions, user voice, age discrimination, workforce and patient and staff experience measurement. She has over twenty years of experience in health and social care sector both in government policy and regulation in UK as well as research. She has been a keynote speaker at many health and social care events and has presented widely both nationally and internationally. She is a published author and a reviewer for many journals.

Publications:

1. Experiences of the experienced – a mixed-method study on older people services, R Elaswarapu, D Klee. Presented at the International Conference on Mixed Methods 2005, Cambridge
2. Combining Qualitative and Quantitative methods in Real World Health Research, J Scully, R Elaswarapu. International Conference on Mixed Methods 2005, Cambridge
3. Role of qualitative information in regulation and assessment. R Elaswarapu, Presented at the International Conference on Mixed Methods 2007, Cambridge
4. Dignity in care for older people - a philosophy or a measurable concept, R Elaswarapu. Presented at International Conference on Mixed Methods 2008, Cambridge



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