What promotes or inhibits altruism in healthcare?

Learning from Mid Staffs

Samantha Peters, University of Bath, School of Management

Purpose of the research

1. To identify factors which promote or inhibit altruism in organisations.

2. Using the case of Mid Staffs Hospital; drawing on material from the Francis Inquiry.

Altruism is:

'..behaviour intended to benefit another, even when doing so may risk or entail some sacrifice to the welfare of the actor.'

Think about the context

Overload

'a system's inability to process inputs from the environment because there are too many inputs for the system to cope with, or because successive inputs come so fast.'

How we adapt to busy cities

1. Reduce time: (i.e. walk faster)
2. Disregard low priorities (i.e. ignore drunks, homeless)
3. Change boundaries (i.e. change on the bus)
4. Block off reception (i.e. gates, unlisted numbers)
5. Adopt filtering devices (i.e. look at less)
6. Establish specialised institutions (i.e. welfare depts.)

)

Adaptions in Mid Staffs

1. Time (rushing around)
2. Disregarding (ignoring buzzers)
3. Changing (delivering food, not feeding)
4. Blocking (removing chairs, formalising complaints)
5. Filtering (avoiding eye contact)

)

Think about the people

How staff feel about themselves matters

1. I am more likely to help you if:
    ◦ *I feel positive about my situation, or*
    ◦ *I feel bad about your situation.*

2. I am less likely to help you if:
    ◦ *I feel negative about my situation, or*
    ◦ *I feel your situation is better than mine.*

How staff felt in Mid Staffs

1. A high level of fear and anxiety.

2. An underlying sense of pressure and threat.

3. Empathy and compassion but….

4. Directed at 'suffering' colleagues.

Think about the system

Social Traps and Fences

1. A trap is something I do, which benefits me at the expense of the group.
2. A fence, is something I don't do (i.e. avoid) which will be to the detriment of the group.

Possible fences in Mid Staffs

1. Record keeping.

2. Discharge arrangements.

3. Food and hydration routines.

4. Infection control.

Conclusions

- Overloaded contexts.
- Staff feeling fearful, pressured and threatened.
- And the evolution of avoidance systems.
- Leading staff to limit their interaction with patients, focus 'in' on themselves, and direct compassion towards colleagues.

Feel free to contact me:

Through Linked in:

By email at:

sampeters.home@gmail.com

Any Questions?