Shawshank Redemption and Unpalatable Messages: The Wellbeing of Feedback Professionals

Lilith Arevshatian & Dr. Rachel Lewis
Kingston Business School, UK

Abstract
The study presents an interpretative phenomenological analysis of the wellbeing of healthcare feedback professionals. Nine participants engaging with patient feedback were interviewed and explain that others just don’t get what their role entails. The vivid metaphor of Shawshank Redemption is used to describe their change agent role as changing a super tanker’s direction. Feeling undervalued, most have experienced a breaking point; yet in spite of the challenges, their passion for their work is evident—perhaps this is a vocation and I wanna do it.

Introduction

Context
- Political context has changed: coalition government
- New Department of Health policies
- NHS restructuring

Methodology

Aim
Gain in-depth understanding of participants’ lived experiences (Willig, 2008)

IPA Approach
Enter phenomenon experienced by participant
See it through their eyes
Aware that understanding based on own interpretations
Reflexivity

Sample
Purposive sample of nine FP in healthcare

Data Analysis
- Interviews transcribed
- Analysed according to Smith et al (2009)
- Iterative

Findings

Theme: “they just don’t get it”
“People come in and say ‘you killed my mother, you killed my mother’, ‘I’ve never seen your mother, but they put a photograph of somebody on the desk and say ‘and this is the person, so I don’t want you to forget who this person is’” (Julie:122)

Patrick refers to Shawshank Redemption and explains “I am the rock hammer, yeah it chips away, uses the rock hammer for 20 years to chip his way out. That’s what it feels like. It’s like chip, chip, chipping away all the time” (288).

“I do get stressed and it’s noticeable in my sick record” (Adam: 144)


Theme: “breaking point”
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Theme: “this is a vocation and I wanna do it”
Pauline forms strong relationships with some of the patients, she calls them “my little boys”, while Adam argues “they’re not just a complainant or you know a PALS issue”.

“it makes you more Machiavellian […] one becomes more adept at ticking boxes and putting a spin”.

Patrick “you do learn to play the game, who you need to say what to, to get what you want. Very Machiavellian isn’t it?” (Laura:497).

Reference: Laura:497.

Discussion
- FP are rich source of patient feedback on service quality & safety
- Findings show low levels of wellbeing
- Implications on organisation (e.g., absenteeism, ticking boxes) & individual (e.g., strain)
- Also important is passion - much more than customer service
- Transferability of findings to organisations with similar roles (e.g., complaints department, governing bodies such as O’Com)

References
doi: 10.1177/01492063990250305

Lilith Arevshatian: Larevshatian@kingston.ac.uk