

Abstract

Original Article

Leaders' and Caregivers' Views of Ethics and Responsibility for the Human Being in the Context of Meaning of Public Health Care

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Abstract

Background: Responsibility and ethics play a decisive role when it comes to the context of meaning of caring. The concept of responsibility has a multifaceted meaning, however, which can make it unclear and diffuse. Therefore, in order to attain a deeper understanding of it, it is meaningful to uncover responsibility in public health care from leaders' and caregivers' own understandings.

Aims: The aim of this study is to uncover a deeper understanding of responsibility and ethics in public health care seen from a caring science perspective. The research question is: What is the human being's responsibility in the context of meaning of caring according to the understandings of caring leaders and caregivers?

Methodology: The study uses a hermeneutical approach. The material consists of texts from interviews with caring leaders and caregivers in Finland concerning their understanding about responsibility in public health care and in the context of meaning of caring.

Results: The study shows that responsibility entails helping others through love and compassion. Responsibility means to create meaning and edify and to maintain dignity, it implies establishing trust, and encouraging participation. Responsibility involves selflessness and responsiveness in communion. In cases of absence of responsibility obstacles such as stress, meaninglessness, and exhaustion may result. Responsibility may mould the vulnerable human being in the context of meaning of caring to become more human through responsibility in love and compassion if this responsibility is fulfilled. Responsibility has the potential to develop all parties involved in the context of meaning of caring.

Conclusion: Responsibility in the context of meaning of caring may enable growth amongst all parties. Absence of responsibility is considered a potential threat for caring in an ethical manner in the context of meaning of caring. Further research in this field should focus on exploring the patients' views of responsibility in the context of meaning of caring.

Keywords: ethics, responsibility, caring, the context of meaning of caring, leaders, caregivers, interviews, hermeneutical reading