

**TALKING THE TALK BUT NOT WALKING THE
WALK: BARRIERS TO PERSON CENTRED CARE IN
DEMENTIA**

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

La Trobe University

TALKING THE TALK BUT NOT WALKING THE WALK: BARRIERS TO PERSON CENTRED CARE IN DEMENTIA

by Heather Hill

While the concept of person-centred care in dementia has been around for 15 years or more and has attracted much interest and enthusiasm, aged care facilities continue to have difficulty in actually implementing and maintaining person-centred practices. In this study I explore the experience of one aged care facility in order to identify the barriers to changing care practice.

The research took place in an ethno-specific (Jewish) aged care facility, Star of David, which was in the process of setting up a program for its residents with dementia based on person-centred principles. The methodology used in the research study was ethnographic, involving participant observation and interview, with a particular focus on a limited number of participants: four residents and their families, four senior staff, four personal care attendants and the executive director. Interviews were also conducted with staff members from three other aged care facilities.

The findings showed that Star of David was unable to bring about substantial change in its care practices, while the external interviews and the literature suggest that other facilities have similar difficulties. I identify three major types of barrier: procedural barriers within the institution itself; (government) policy; and barriers relating to hegemonic values and beliefs which underpin established health care practice. These three types of barrier interact with and reinforce one another. I conclude that if we are to change

care practice in institutions, we must address all of these barriers at the same time.

Finally, I suggest that person-centred care itself, which continues to place emphasis on professional service provision, may only be the beginning of necessary change. In order to be truly person-centred, we need to move towards a more community based or public health approach which recognizes the need of all persons to be treated both as significant individuals and accepted as part of a community.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in the thesis were approved by the Faculty Human Ethics Committee, Faculty of Health Sciences.

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