

LECTURE 6: Collaborative Practice

Part 1



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Lecture 6: Collaborative Practice

- What do we understand by the term "Collaborative Practice"
- Why it is an important concept to Professional Processes
- What are the benefits of collaborative practice?
- Exploring potential barriers to collaboration
- Solution focussed engagement in collaborative practice

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Defining Terms: Collaboration

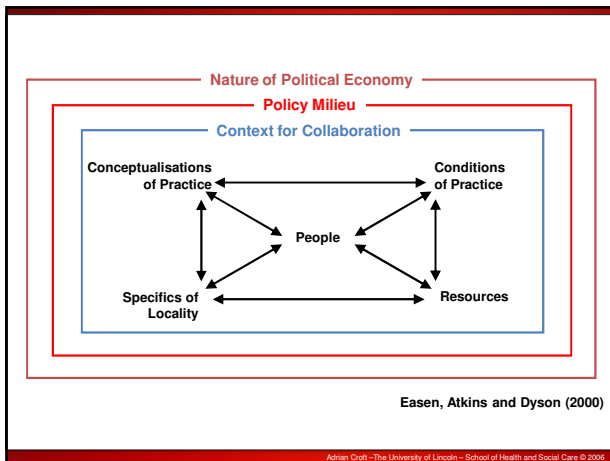
Any cooperative effort between professionals **working together** to achieve **common** goals.

The collaboration can range from **informal activity** to **planned, organised** and/or **contractual** ways of working together.

The collaborative partners strive toward **mutually agreed** outcomes.

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The Benefits of Collaboration

- Multi-dimensional assessment
- Provides checks and balances
- Avoids duplication
- “Attacks” the “problem” from a number of dimensions
- Adopts a “Whole Systems” approach
- Enables primary focus on “expertise” and limitations
- Makes the work manageable
- Supports and validates assessments
- Avoids isolated decision making

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Barriers to Effective Collaboration:

- Differences of view over the nature of the intervention required
- Differences of view over who was responsible for the intervention
- Poor communication or a breakdown in communication where the different services were prioritising liaison/collaboration itself differently
- Different timescales for action between agencies though this was seen mainly as a resourcing issue
- Differences in prioritising cases and in what constituted a ‘crisis’
- Differences in the way the services were organised. For example whether they were operating on a ‘list’ or ‘patch’ basis.

Easen, Atkins and Dyson (2000)

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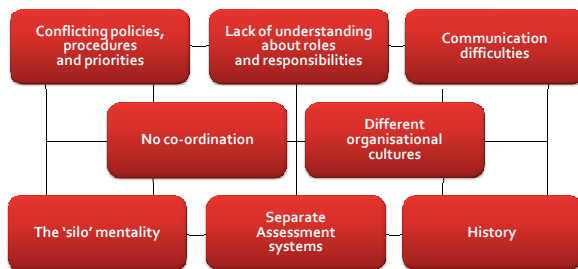
The Conditions of Professional Work

Accounts of problems were rarely couched purely in terms of 'culture differences' between professional groups leading to differences in conceptualisation. Interviewees also explained problems in terms of the different **conditions** under which professional groups operated and under which their **conceptualisations of role and purpose** were realised. Such conditions included their **statutory responsibilities**; the **availability of time, personnel** and other **resources**; the nature of agency **management structures**; and the **perceived status** of different professional groups.

Easen, Atkins and Dyson (2000)

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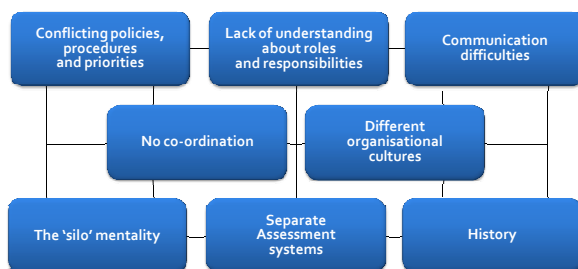
Barriers to Effective Multi-Agency Working



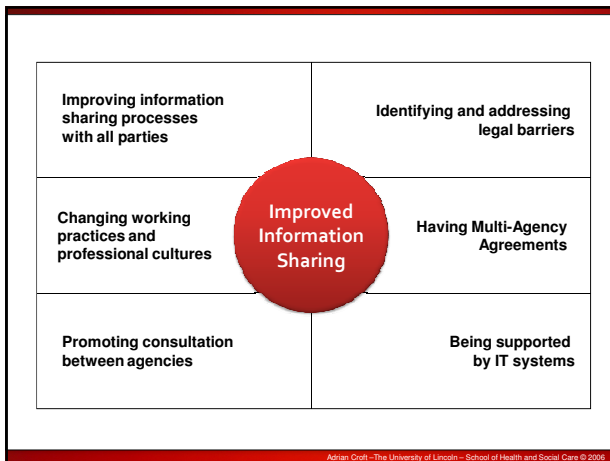
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FINDING SOLUTIONS

Barriers to Effective Multi-Agency Working



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LECTURE 6:
Involving Service Users and Others

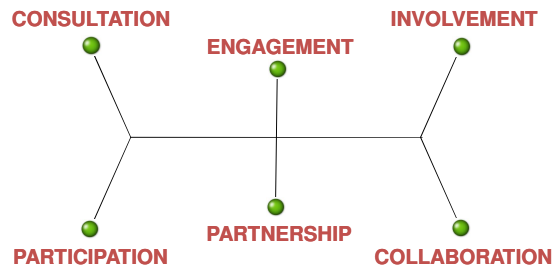


Part 2

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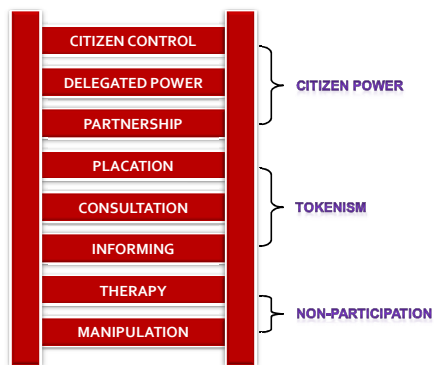


The Terminology of Participation:



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Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969)



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Service Users Want Social Workers to:

- See people as individuals
- See past the problem or symptoms
- Treat people with respect
- Acknowledge the validity of other experiences
- Provide them with accessible information
- Listen to what is said
- Recognise the need to meet people on their own ground, or wherever they might feel more comfortable.

Adapted from Levin, E. (2004) Resource Guide 2:
Involving Service Users and Carers in Social Work Education, London: SCIE

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You and Service User Participation – Some Questions:

- What does “Service User Participation” actually mean?
- Why are you committed to service user participation?
- How would an onlooker be able to evidence your commitment?
- Are you committed to realising participation in your practice?
- Can service users ever be a true partner with the social worker?
- What practical steps would you take to promote participation?

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Organisational Cultures of Participation?

A culture of participation describes how participation sits within an organisation. It reflects the values that underpin participatory practice and the reasons for involving young people, when and how participation is used, and the extent to which young people are listened to and appropriate action is taken.

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Some benefits of Service User Participation:

- Increased confidence and self-belief
- Developing group skills Promoting pro-social behaviour
- Future active involvement and greater responsibility
- Ownership and control of life changing decisions

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Why would we want to involve Service Users?

Citizenship and Social Inclusion factors:

- Seek to practice in a way that draws in those often excluded (e.g. children, carers, asylum seekers and disabled young people).
- Meet UNCRC expectations for the right of the child to participate in decisions affecting their lives.
- Empower through being inclusion to develop skills and knowledge to get heard and promote a deeper self-belief in their ability to create change.
- Enhance citizenship and political education, including knowledge of individual rights, structures, and services, etc.
- Increase independence & ownership of the consequences of actions.
- Develop more positive sense of community and belonging.

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Personal and Social Development

- Increase confidence and self-belief in specific areas.
- Increase knowledge, understanding and change attitudes.
- Increase skills.
- Heightened aspirations and plans.
- Increase opportunities to help their communities.

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Reducing Power Imbalances

To develop more positive and equitable relationships with service users social workers need to address **imbalances in power**. This does not mean **equal power** in all situations but it means moving away from structures and practices which seek to place all **decision making power** in the hands of the professional. The development of flexible environments in which service users feel safe and able to have a say.

This can be achieved by bringing down some of the barriers that symbolise power differentials.

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Examples of Bringing Down Traditional Barriers

- Attempt to see the world from the service user's perspective.
- Write all correspondence to them, even young children.
- Ensure service users, including, children and young people, give consent.
- Think about the physical location – is it accessible, comfortable etc.
- Contribute your views, but take care not to dominate conversations.
- Be attentive to the different ways the service user communicates verbally and non-verbally.
- Watch your language: be clear and age-appropriate, ask straight not leading questions.
- Check your understanding back with the service user.
- Think about body language: how you stand, sit, look and move can all be used to assert power.

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List of References:

Easen, P., Atkins, M. and Dyson, A. (2000) '**Inter-Professional Collaboration and Conceptualisations of Practice**', Children and Society 14: 335-367 .

Arnstein, Sherry R. **A Ladder of Citizen Participation**, JAIP, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224. Available online at:

<http://lithgow-schmidt.dk/sherry-arnstein/ladder-of-citizen-participation.pdf#search=%22Arnstein's%20Ladder%20of%20Citizen%20Participation%201969%22>

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