

Ethics of care : Video 1

Transcript

Care is an important part of the way we relate to one another in everyday life. It is necessary for both individual and collective survival and thriving. Our interdependence is most obvious when we are young, ill, disabled or frail. Although all our lives we are in relationships where we depend on others to some degree. Even though care is hugely important, it is often taken for granted or even invisible. Care relationships are also relationships of power and can be experienced by any of the participants in the care relationship as oppressive.

The ethics of care is a useful set of tools for sorting out what is the right or good thing to do in everyday situations. Many questions facing people with disabilities, the elderly and those who assist them have no easy answers. But the ethics of care can provide a useful framework for solving difficult problems. Care ethics is grounded in the little details of everyday life.

The key principles of ethics of care are... Attentiveness, a recognition that we are all interdependent and that care is an opportunity for social and cultural connectedness. It is also about an awareness of the historical and political background that led to our role in this care situation. Responsibility, this principle acknowledges that we have a responsibility to act when someone needs care, but that responsibility exists in a hierarchy where for example, care for our own children would be prioritized over the care we owe to other people's children. Competence and responsiveness, both concern the consequences of care giving. Care must be delivered competently with the knowledge and skill that is needed for the particular situation. Some care may have unintended negative consequences. Such as that in institutions where care was intended but not actually delivered.

Care workers need to be responsive to how the care is being experienced by the recipient. To ensure that abuses of power are not occurring especially in the historical context of unethical care that may have been experienced. Trust is essential in caring relationships as the recipient is trusting that the care worker will be attentive, take responsibility and respond competently to their care needs. Respect for people requiring support means providing care in ways that do not degrade them or make them feel lesser because they cannot meet their own care needs. Actuality focuses on the practical needs that are presented rather than idealized notions such as proper childhood and normal family. Which can interfere with providing the support that is needed. Recognition of selfhood recognizes that people are capable of constructing their own identities if they are supported to do so. Recognition of loss asks those in support roles to understand that recipients of care may be grieving for loss of ability, loss of loved ones, loss of autonomy, and much more.

Especially as they come to terms with their need for support and that they may need time and sensitivity as they come to terms with these losses. When we take on a care role we should be mindful of how we can care well and fully even in the face of obstacles that can seem to make the situation less than ideal.