INTELLIGENT KINDNESS:
REFORMING THE CULTURE OF HEALTHCARE

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An introduction to culture
Current perspectives.....
The ‘seed’ and its environment
What are we trying to grow?

- Kinship
- Kindness
- Attentiveness
- Attunement
- Trust
- Therapeutic Alliance
- Better Outcomes

Directs: Kinship → Attentiveness

Promotes: Kindness → Better Outcomes

Enables: Attentiveness → Attunement

Builds: Attunement → Trust

Produces: Therapeutic Alliance

Generates: Better Outcomes

Whole process reinforces conditions for kinship/kindness
Necessary challenges

• how to promote and sustain compassionate bearing of the patient/other in mind;
• how to generate imaginative understanding of the contribution a person’s tasks can make to others’ wellbeing;
• how to instill in people and support a confident belief in their own value and freedom to act
• how to ensure that they have the knowledge and repertoire skilfully and compassionately to act to fit the circumstances
Basics

- Healthcare is a relational practice, involving intellect, skill, awareness and feeling – not two sets of qualities, ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ etc.
- That goes for relationships between colleagues, between professions and across hierarchies – you can’t get ethical, humane, empathic practice ‘out’ if you don’t ‘put it in’
- We have an ethical responsibility to apply what we know about what influences the psychology and behaviour of humans and their groups to our work
Kinship in action
But..
The uncomfortable truth

- It’s hedonic cultures that are most vulnerable to this breakdown
- Chance thinks it was competition that provoked it
- Stiff, wary and hierarchical Baboons are much better defended against it
- They just don’t get down to much mutual caring, curiosity, creativity or intelligence
- Social psychology, and psychoanalytic thinking suggest humans are equally susceptible to group dynamics
Being ‘kin’ is hard work

- Maintaining awareness of oneself
- Acknowledging and managing anxiety
- Managing ambivalence, hatred and disgust
- Staying open and inclusive
- ‘Self-overcoming’ (Raymond Tallis)
- Managing the personal ‘cost’
- Managing the group and organisational processes that work against the virtuous circle
How do we nourish these factors?
‘Environmental factors’

- Societal anxiety and mistrust
- Commodification and ‘choice’
- Industrialisation and manualisation
- Marketisation
- Targets and their relatives
- Performance management
- Regulation
An ever-present danger

- Prof Susan Long - ‘The perverse organization and its deadly sins’
- People are used as a means to an end
- Individual gain and pleasure at the expense of the common good
- Turning a blind eye
‘Cultivation’ resources

- Individual reflective practice, mentoring, relational supervision
- Team/group reflective practice, intelligent leadership of team as group, and of inter-team relations
- Organisational reflection, open conversation, listening, learning
- The management, and containment of anxiety – especially in the deployment of industrialised, prescriptive, regulatory systems and processes
Everybody’s work

- Relationships in team
- Team dynamics
- Team in organisation
- Organisation in society
- Relationships in organisation
- Self in society

- MISTRUST
- ANXIETY
- REGULATION
- COMPETITION
- COMMODIFICATION/INDUSTRIALISATION
- (OVER) EXPECTATION
thanks for listening