



Prifysgol Cymru

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

University of Wales

Trinity Saint David

Trawsnewid Addysg, Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education, Transforming Lives

ECAY6007

Professional Practice in Advocacy: Tensions and Opportunities



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Aims:

To identify legislation, codes, conducts and values associated with professional standards in advocacy work.





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Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to:

- demonstrate a critical understanding of how management of personal behaviour/ interaction with others is influenced by legislation, codes, conducts and values associated with professional standards in advocacy work;
- identify and critically engage with appropriate standards relating to specific interest groups;
- explore interventions which support the voice of the individual;
- demonstrate a critical understanding of how current legislation establishes a framework of measures designed to maintain professional boundaries, professional practices and in the provision of effective advocacy services.



Positionality, Agency and Choice



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Human Behaviour

- Is caused by, and also causes events outside individuals, however;
 - Thought
 - Desire
 - Voluntary action all play their part in gaining...
- Agency- refers to the thoughts and actions taken by people that express their individual power

Agency

- Studying Human Actions allows us to gain an insight
- To understanding Human Action
- To understand Human Action means to examine
 - Influences of outside events
 - The process of making choices
 - The change that this affects on Humans/Human Action (or inaction)

Structure and Agency

- Structure
 - refers to the complex and interconnected set of social forces, relationships, institutions, and elements of social structure that work together to shape the thought, behaviour, experiences, choices, and overall life courses of people
- Agency
 - is the power people have to think for themselves and act in ways that shape their experiences and life trajectories
- Agency can take individual or collective forms
- There is an ever-evolving relationship between structure and agency...

Structure and Agency

- Dialectical relationship- each has the ability to influence the other
- The creation and maintenance of social order is dependent on the co-operation and connected social relationships of individuals and groups
- The lives of individuals are shaped by the social structure that exists in their lives
- However... they have the ability of effecting this, expressing their views in their behaviour or by making decisions
- This is Agency...

(Cole, 2019)

Structure and Agency

- The debate about the relationship between structure and agency often comes up when sociologists study the lives of vulnerable, disenfranchised and oppressed people
- Because of structural elements such as the class and economic systems, systemic racism and patriarchy, it is often assumed that some people, for example, those in poverty, disabled, lack agency completely and are oppressed by these systems
- But this is not always the case...

(Cole, 2019)

Change

- The process of making choices changes us
- And are changed by us!
- Standpoint
- Question: Can we empower people to agency?
- Influences include:
 - Attitude of people or organisations towards something (important to them)

Consequences

- Consequences in action and interaction
- Question: Are events therefore undetermined and unpredictable?
- Where do we find answers? Consider that:
 - Events as described in vocabulary used describe are...
 - Both Thoughts and Actions (indicators)
 - Outside a closed and deterministic system (of social control – imagined or real)

Human Relationships

- Desire
- Belief
- Goals
- Intention
- Meaning
- All need consideration with becoming an Agentic Human Being

Systems (of social control)

- A system of concepts
- Determined by structures
- Beliefs
- Desires
- Of the Agent themselves (and not 'others')

Agentic Paradox

- The phenomena of the agentic paradox:
 - ‘Most of us unconsciously or consciously see ourselves as agents...but when we conduct our work (as advocates) we strip those we wish to (study and) help of the very properties that we see as most essential to our persona namely
 - Intentionality, Forethought, Self-reactiveness and Self-reflection
 - i.e. Agency
 - Why would we do this?

Evaluations

- Questions:
 - Are we trying to see the person that we wish to find?
 - The ones we need to 'study' in order to help?
 - Our history plays a role in the way in which we see ourselves as enquirers
 - i.e. Advocates in...
 - Human Relationships (professional) valuing Objectivity

Lens of Enquiry

- The view of others based on previous:
 - Problems
 - Experiences
 - Agents (known)
- Solving Problems then becomes a matter of..
 - What we know, think we know and provided knowledge

In Combination

- A focus on...
- Action
- Agency and
- Meaning within the relational context of advocacy provision
- i.e. Problem Identification

Solution

- Once a/the problem is identified then...
- The solution is a matter of combining a number of elements...
- Understanding Actions in Context
- Understanding Relationships both
- Among Actors and Between 'actors'
- Understanding how agents engage with each other and the world!

Perspective

- Question:
- How do conceptualise agency in terms of what our client might achieve?
- Rethinking Empowerment (and what this means for our client)
- Are we seeking ‘harmony’ with our clients wishes (or another agenda?)
- Is Unity possible aligning you with client needs and wishes preferences?
- Within...
- Multiple realities, and can we distil this into a single reality (Truth Perspective)

Flat Earth Narratives

- Ordinary ‘lived experiences’ balanced against...
 - New Narratives
 - New concepts, beliefs and motivations
- How do we deal with ‘Unspoken Assumptions’
- IN order to achieve ‘Embodied, harmony or to seek Harmony from Divergent Positions...Grounded in ‘Lived Experinces’

Asomatic Relationships

- Definition....
‘Relating to the body, especially distinct from the mind’
- Opposite definition...
‘Not relating singularly to just the mind’

Behaviours

- Understanding them...
 - Inter-personal behaviour(s) between
 - Intra-personal behaviour(s) within
- Our contribution to (according to this modelling) then,
 - ‘interpersonal behaviour refers to a persons contribution to doing something with/for other people’

Subjectivity

- Our Understanding of behaviour begins with the person doing the behaviour.
- ‘Dovetailing’ i.e. capturing ideas of...
- Feelings, cognitions and behaviours in the lived world of...
- Meaningful, organised activities i.e. embedded in the real world
- Within the context of an exchange within which the behaviour occurs

Key Features of Agency

- Four Key Features:
 - Intentionality
 - Forethought
 - Self-reactiveness and
 - Self-reflectiveness

Intentionality

- Franz Brentano (1984) defines as...
- ‘the relationship between mental acts and the external world’
- A phenomenon that is about something
- Linked to Bandura’s use of intentionality Brentano asserts that...
- An intention is a representation of a future course of action (to be performed)
- A pro-active commitment to bring it about (Bandura, 2001, p. 6)

Intentions

- The point here being that...
 - Being an agent is to have:
 - intentions, mental representations of
 - desires, hopes, fears and beliefs.

(Bandura, 2001, p. 6)

Dewey and Agency

- Forethought is of particular importance, claiming
- Forethought is learned behaviour
- Natural tendency to 'do something at once'
- Tendency is checked by 'thinking'
- i.e. 'deferred action'

Dewey (1988, p 178)

Dewey

- A stopping of action is therefore...
- ‘thinking about an event or action without putting it into practice/actions’
- Thoughts then are revocable
- Replay mental act (not physical)
- Deferred action is present exploratory action
- E.g writing

PCP

- PCP and Empowerment through Agency then is the
- ‘anticipation of future events’
- A Part of an Agentic Stance with
- ‘Reflective temperament’
- Deferred action is then (by advocate or client) is (in a professional sense) a form of forethought

Positionality, Agency and Choice

- Critique the often voiced paradigm that practitioners can ‘**empower** their **client**’; through critically reflecting upon the **positionality**, **agency** and **power** of both ‘**client**’ and ‘**expert**’.
- Critique the potential client **benefits** and **challenges** associated with undertaking a (hypothetical) **PCP ‘This is Me’ activity** with a **client** of your choice.

Positionality

- Positionality is the social and political context that creates your identity in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability status. Positionality also describes how your identity influences, and potentially biases, your understanding of and outlook on the world.

Positionality

- The many facets that make up our social identities affects the way that we see and interpret the world and the way the world sees and interprets us
- Involves many complex layers
- May change over time

(Jacobson and Mustafa, 2019)

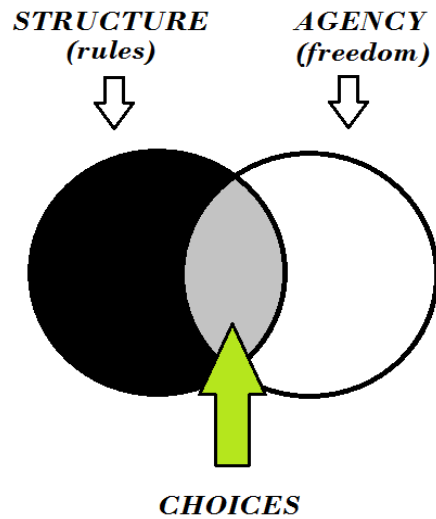
- ‘What do the terms ‘Agency’ and ‘Empowerment’ mean in a Health and Social Care Context?’

What is Agency?

- An individual's capacity to determine and make meaning from their environment through purposive consciousness and reflective and creative action (Houston, 2010)
- The ability of individuals and groups to exercise free will and to make social changes on a small or large scale
- 'Agency implies the ability of individuals or groups to act on their situations, to behave as subjects rather than objects in their own lives, to shape their own circumstances and ultimately achieve change'
- Individual, proxy and collective

Agency and Structure

- ‘The distinctive, stable arrangement of institutions whereby human beings in a society interact and live together’
(Wilterdink, 2018)



(Velikovsky, 2015)

- Two sides of the same coin – influence each other
- Structures from micro to macro
- Choices differ dependent on environmental structures

Empowerment

- Enabling individuals, groups and/or communities to have the **power** to gain control of their circumstances and achieve their own goals, thereby being able to work towards helping themselves and others to maximise the quality of their lives.



(Sutton-Kerchner, 2017)

Concepts of power . . .

- Power to - Having the potential to achieve ones ends
- Power over - How power can be used to dominate
- Power with – Collective and collaborative

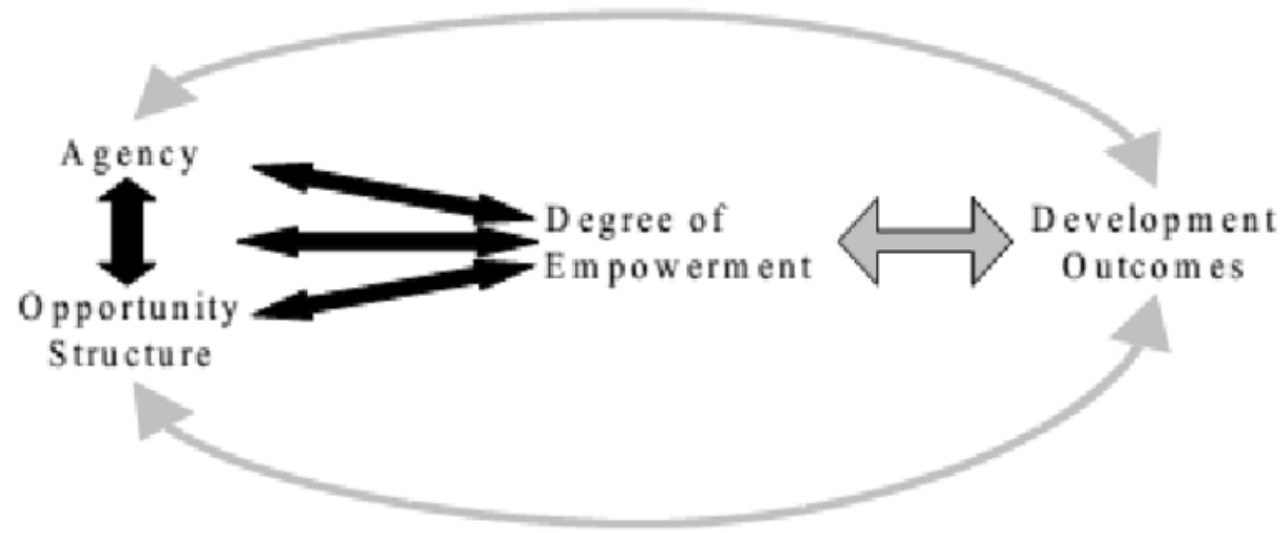
(Thompson, 2007)

Defining Empowerment

- Empowerment is helping people to gain a greater control over their own lives and circumstances
- Enabling to affect change
- Giving those who are marginalised a voice
- Fighting social exclusion

Agency and Empowerment

- Agency may be seen as a sense of personal empowerment
- Empowerment may be seen as an expansion of Agency
- Both are necessary to effect social change



(Lerch *et al*, 2016)

Health and Social Care

UK Government, NHS and Health and Social Care organisations

- Embrace and promote the increase of Agency and use of Empowerment in policies and acts
- Introduction of Direct Payments
- Promote Advocacy, Person Centred Practice and User Participation
- Giving service users and workers a voice
- Transparency and access to information
- Partnership and bottom up working



Health and Social Care: Frontline



(Owen, 2015)



(Moreton, 2012)



(Keeling, 2017)



(Secemsky, 2012)



(Allen, 2017)

Health and Social Care Users in the Community: Lack of Agency

- Socially excluded through disability or location
- Cultural barriers through age or disability
- Very few or no advocacy services
- Not aware of benefits they are entitled to
- Budget cuts lead to loss of agency and independence

(Milne, 2017)

Health and Social Care Users in Residential Care: Lack of Agency

- Medical Control
- Institutionalisation/ Fear of reprisals
- Unaware of rights
- Socially excluded perhaps through inability to communicate
- Loneliness/ Depression

(JRF, 2009)

Health and Social Care Practitioners: Lack of Agency

- Bound by rules and regulations
- Negative workplace culture
- Low income
- Low self esteem
- Lack of knowledge, education and training

Not only lowers personal agency but can impede
empowering and increasing agency in service users

(JRF, 2015, CHOICE, 2013)

Barriers to Agency and Empowerment

- Lack of funding
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of resources
- Need to comply with council and government regulations and laws
- Lack of training and education
- An individual may not want to be empowered!

Increasing Agency: Empowerment

- Person centred care planning
- Consultation with individuals in all aspects of their care
- Transparency in all dealings
- Providing a safe and confidential complaints process
- Promoting and using advocacy
- GIVING THEM A VOICE

(MyHomelife, 2016)

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