

The Why

Collaborative working relationships between regulators and nursing home managers and staff, has been suggested to be a vital element of improvement work. This study used Appreciative Inquiry to bring together all those who participate in nursing home inspection (inspectors, inspection volunteers, care home managers and staff, residents and relatives), where the focus was on the shared capacity of all involved to enhance the experience of inspection. Drawing on relationship-centred care as the theoretical framework this study explored the relational processes that were being practiced during inspection. Knowledge of these positive relational practices was used by the research participants to inform experimentation of ways to develop these relationships further.

The How

Data were generated over 17 months through group discussions (n=25), interviews (n=22) and the researchers' non-participant observations of inspection visits in nursing homes (n=7). The methods used drew on experiential, practical and presentational ways of knowing in the co-construction of insights and knowledge. Creative techniques such as Visual Inquiry, collage work, and poetry were used to access tacit knowledge and stimulate generative and expansive thinking.

What Emerged

The metaphor 'Humans of Inspection' emerged as a key concept - seeing each individual involved in inspection as a valued person. Mapping the findings of the study to the principles of relationship-centred care¹ suggested that the incorporation of the following 'appreciations' can help to bring about a Relational Inspection in Care Home Culture (R.I.C.H. Culture). These 'appreciations' were We are All Human, Emotion and Softenings, Ways of Being Together, Our Agenda.

We are All Human

- Valuing the role of all those involved in inspection, and seeing that the person is more than their role
- Knowing that some professional boundaries are part of relationships in inspection, and being open to having new understandings of what these boundaries could look like, for example inspector sharing something of themselves
- Being open to letting to of unhelpful *Alternative Faces* e.g. inspector as robot and looking for the human faces in inspection
- Acknowledging the importance of really hearing what the other person has said, and conveying that you have heard their story/ perspective
- Creating opportunities to develop relationships through the inspector being a familiar face

Our Agenda

- Uniting all those involved in inspection is a shared purpose of wanting residents to be able to live the best lives possible
- Celebrating during inspection what is working well in the nursing home can be a source of motivation and inspiration
- Exploring ways to involve residents and relatives to a greater extent is valued, & more time together welcomed



Emotion and Softenings

- Valuing opportunities to recognise and discuss with others the 'softer stuff' of inspection i.e. emotion, reflection, intuition
- Appreciating that emotions such as anxiety, anger, feeling overwhelmed can be part of the inspection experience for both care home and inspection staff
- Being aware of other emotions that those involved might also be experiencing inc. feeling privileged, proud, delighted and included
- Using resources such as Visual Inquiry Cards² as an accessible way of helping people to share emotion e.g. in conversations with residents or at the beginning/end of inspection feedback conversation
- Creating safe spaces for inspectors to reflect on their role, particularly the emotional and intuitive aspects



Ways of Being Together

- Connecting with others in authentic and meaningful ways. Seeking ways to connect with those who may be considered the 'quiet or silent voices' e.g. residents living with dementia
- Engaging in ways which are respectful of one other, being mindful of tone and attitude, showing a willingness to be responsive to what each other is saying, giving ongoing feedback throughout the visit (not just at the end),
- Viewing successful working relationships between inspection staff and care home staff as a shared responsibility

Where to and What if...

An Appreciative Inquiry study integrates what is working well and is valued in the current system, with new possibilities and opportunities for the future. Conversations that took place within the study challenged some assumptions and opened out permission for new ways of being/doing and thinking in relation to the inspection experience. The appreciative methods used created an eagerness for new spaces to be opened up for the continuation of these types of conversations.

What else might be possible? What if the experience of inspection was celebrated as a place where all those who live, work, visit and inspect care homes felt seen, heard and valued? What if inspection was a collaborative inquiry into what helps nursing homes to be places of human flourishing?

¹Beach, M.C. and Inui, T. (2006) Relationship Centred-Care A Constructive Re-Framing. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. 21: S3-8. ² Visual Inquiry cards: myhomelife.uws.ac.uk/scotland/resources/