‘The Boot on the Other Foot’

An Occupational Therapist’s Lived Experience of Cancer in their Leadership Journey

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#RCOT2019
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leadership lens
career overview

Cancer experience
What matters to me & my leadership

Recovery & Rehab
Its always about the Occupation

Leadership experience and styles
So what .....?

References, Acknowledgments & Questions
Leadership lens
Career overview

Qualification
Diploma 1981
Conversion cs ‘99
MSc 2012
NIDMAR 2012
[Horse riding & Pilates Instructor]

Clinical
Learning Disability
Older People
Physical Disability
Spinal Injuries
Stroke Rehab
Neuro Progressive
& Com Rehab

Current
Clinical & Professional Lead for Occupational Therapy
Falls lead & Healthy Working Lives lead

Research, Higher Ed & Managerial
Lead & Head OT Research Lecturer
OT Manager (& Arts Therapies)
OT & PT Manager
Cancer experience

Acute illness
Diagnosis
Treatment Plan

Chemotherapy
Waiting / scans
Radiotherapy

Getting my life back
All about the Occupation
Return to work

Narrative

Recovery & Rehab
Milestones
Legacy
‘Let me off!!’
What matters to me

Being alive & at home

Being healthy & cancer free

My family & friends & colleagues

Independence & choice

Freedom & spontaneity

My Quality of life

Thai Chi & Pilates

Cycling

Being outdoors

Gardening

Honesty

Kindness

Integrity

Returning to Work
### What it meant to my leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What matters when acutely ill?</th>
<th>What matters after the acute episode?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognising the impact on staff &amp; colleagues of my illness</td>
<td>Re-engagement in discussions &amp; work related issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My physical absence</td>
<td>As is often the case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical issues created</td>
<td>- No backfill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My emotional absence (safe place to be for staff)</td>
<td>Operational tasks – off loaded onto team leads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their concern for me (emotional burden)</td>
<td>Cover for my workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No soft landing on RTW</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Recovery & Rehab

Physical & Sensory
- Cardio respiratory
- Proprioception
- ‘Chemo body’
- Flexibility
- Strength
- Stamina
- Balance

Emotional
- Fear & uncertainty
- Anxiety & anger
- Confidence
- Self esteem
- Self image
- Self trust
- Sleep

Occupational
- Self care
- Leisure
- Productivity
- Roles & Routines
- Getting my life back

Cognitive
- Memory
- Processing
- Multi-tasking
- ‘Chemo brain’
- Concentration
Getting my life back

- **Milestones**
  - Avoiding sepsis
  - PICC line removed
  - No more transfusions
  - Temperature taking
  - Driving again
  - Stopping meds

- **Supports**
  - Husband family friends
  - Staff & colleagues
  - Social media & technology
  - Nutrition
  - Humour
  - Promise of HOPE

- **Fears & Frustrations**
  - Trauma of it all
  - The *not* knowing
  - Waiting for results
  - Impatience
  - Night demons

- **Legacy**
  - Finding the new normal
  - Side effects of chemo
    - Fatigue
    - Peripheral Neuropathy
  - Burden on family/friends
  - Insight
  - *Rudely interrupted!!*
  - *Reaffirmed my passion in all things occupational*
The centrality of occupation
- Routines & roles
- Identity
- Occupational balance
- Skill development
- Mastery of new tasks
- Achievement
- Self worth
- Adaptation & flexibility
- Motivation & Attitude

Disruption of former self
- Pursing a new normal
- Revise & create new meaning through occupations
- Supportive employer is critical
- Good work … is good for your health
- Return to Work – Not finished yet!!!

Medicine adds days to life
Occupational Therapy adds life to days
Leadership experience to date

1. Experiential
2. Learning & development
3. Professional supervision

Change Weavers
- Playing to your Strengths
- Myers Briggs TI
- *Managing Transitions
- *Courage to Manage

1. Knowing yourself first!
2. Adopting ‘Eclectic’ approach
3. Transformational leadership
Leadership styles

- Authentic
- Democratic
- Facilitative
- Collaborative
- Supportive
- Collective
- Effective
- Transformational
- Authoritarian
- Compassionate
- Charismatic
- Innovative
- Servant
Transformational leadership

- Intellectual stimulation
- Individualised consideration
- Inspirational motivation
- Idealised influence

Bass & Avolio 1990
So what ....? 

**Personal message:**
- Live for today
- Self care is vital
- Choose the way you respond to situation

**Leadership message:**
- Be bold, honest courageous and kind to yourself and others.
- Be transformational
- Speak up & out!

**Occupational Therapy message:**
- Amazing profession
- Embed OT into all cancer rehab
- Increase our visibility
Acknowledgements

- NHS & GP services
- Family & friends
- Staff & colleagues
- Comrades in arms
- Blood donors
- Twitter & Facebook
- SERGOT – Scottish Eastern RCOT
References

- Bridges W 2014 Transitions - Making Sense of Life’s Changes 2nd Ed Lifelong Books
- Cancer Research UK Available at: https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/risk/lifetime-risk accessed 07.06.19
Thank you for listening to my story

Any thing you would like to ask me or share?

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