A Critical Discourse Analysis of Health Promotion in Community Occupational Therapy Integrated Teams

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1 Introduction

• In 2008, The (then) College of Occupational Therapists published: ‘Health Promotion in Occupational Therapy’
• Health promotion is a process of facilitation where an individual regains control over, and the knowledge to improve his/her health
• HOWEVER, the definition of health promotion is widely contested. Thus there is a need to explore the concept in relation to current policy and practice

2 Methodology

• Language is a form of social practice
• Language creates change and can be used to change behaviour

3 Initial Findings

"Integration is a political thing-it doesn’t happen in practice"
"Health promotion is everyone’s job"

• Clash of cultures between health and social care
• Health Promotion is no longer used in policy documents
• Power struggles exist between policy and practice
• Health promotion is NOT well understood

4 Analysis

• The purpose of this study is to critically explore the language of health promotion in a Scottish integrated community occupational therapy team as two well established cultures collide
• Ethical approval was obtained to carry out the study
• Data was collected from three health care policy documents and five semi-structured interviews with health and social care staff (n=5)

Example Modality analysis of Health Promotion in Occupational Therapy (2008)

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<th>Modality Type</th>
<th>Total Modality</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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• A Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodology was used to analyse texts and interview transcripts to explore the impact that health promotion language has on professional practice
• CDA explores how power and ideology are exercised through language
• Fairclough’s three-dimensional model is based on the principle that texts cannot be understood or analysed in isolation – they can only be understood in relation to the wider social context
• Fairclough (1992) views social reality as being dialectically related to the social structures and social events that created it

5 So What?

• Health and social care teams have, historically, had very different cultures and this has led to a disparity in the way that language is used and defined
• The formation of integrated Community Health and Social Care Partnerships in Scotland has radically changed the way that care in the community is provided

• CDA has no specific set method, but rather offers a set of guidelines
• Fairclough (1992) offers a ‘toolbox’ from which analysts can create their own method of analysis
• Tools currently being used for analysis are:
  • Modality - explores speaker/writer authority
  • Transitivity - explores agency - ‘who does what to whom’
  • Genre - explores ways of acting and interacting during social events
  • Pragmatics - explores meaning, interpretation, inferences and implications

• How language is used in an integrated team affects the way that services are provided
• Health and social care professionals need to ‘speak the same language’
• Further exploration of health promotion language in practice is ongoing

References


*Epistemic verbs explore possibility and probability **Deontic verbs explore obligation

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