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SWSD 2014 Melbourne

Challenging Managerialism through Ethical Leadership

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Content of presentation

- Challenges to ethical leadership in social work organisations
- Origin and nature of those challenges
 - New public management and neo-liberal organisational thinking
 - ‘Scientific management’ (Taylorism)
 - Market philosophy ‘colonising’ state sector social workers (Carey, 2008)
- So, what is needed?

Content of presentation

- Apply ethical leadership to social work organisations drawn from
 - IFSW Statement of Ethical Principles
 - National Codes of Ethics
 - The literature
- Apply social justice as the profession's 'central organising value' to the organisational context (Ife, 2010; Marsh, 2005)
- Exercise leadership approaches which enable the expression of those values

The neo-liberal challenge

- An overriding focus on measuring outputs and outcomes
- Outputs as policy advice, administering legislation, and direct service delivery eg child safety
- Outcomes as societal results sought by government to which outputs contribute
- Applied to state sector and NGOs by virtue of the 'contract crunch'
(Boston, 1995; Lane, 2005; Tennant, 2007)

The neo-liberal challenge

- Quantitative measurement may marginalise the quality of practitioner-client interactions (Carey, 2008)
- Shift from social work values to organisational accountabilities enabled by ICT (Burton & van den Broek, 2009)
- Statistical reporting has moved the emphasis on process accountability to accountability for results (Boston et al., 1996; Webster, 2010)

A social work response to the neo-liberal challenge

Apply social justice as the
profession's 'central
organising value' to the
organisational context

(Ife, 2010; Marsh, 2005)

Act socially/
politically by
critiquing
inequalities

**Manage
programmes/
organisations
dedicated to
these purposes**

Enhance stable
harmonious
and respectful
societies

Promote
respect for ...
cultures,
ideologies and
religions

Encourage
advocacy for
pertinent
concerns

Advocate
policies
ethically
consistent with
the profession

Advocate for
change in
policies
maintaining
marginalisation

Work towards
protection of
people unable
to do so
themselves

Include
the
marginalised

Challenge
barriers/
injustices

Network/
mobilise:
advance
wellbeing

Educate to
access
services/
resources

Policies/
programmes
for people's
wellbeing

Core purposes of social work
(Sewpaul & Jones, 2005)

Human rights/social justice
(IFSW, 2012; lfe, 2010)

Leadership approaches to enable those values

Leadership in the context of the

context of the

- Māori renaissance
- Ethical, authentic and spiritual leadership

Ethical Leadership in the context of

- Authenticity
- Spirituality
- Servant leadership
 - Personal and professional integrity
- Indigenous approaches
 - Biological complexity thinking

Pauline Leonard's (2009) 'journey' towards personal and professional authenticity offers such an expression by capturing essential ethical properties with a vision of social justice:

'As a human being, I am responsible to the community for the creation of a *just, caring, equitable, democratic society*. Any aspects of my professional identity must be congruent with this aspect of my being ... I believe I tell the truth, as I know it, in striving for authenticity. *Becoming authentic is a process, a journey*, not an end in itself; it ... requires a continual examination of one's multiple identities within the context of the communities in which one lives, works and interacts (italics added).'

(Leonard, 2009, pp.253, 255)

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