‘How hard can it be’ - managing conflict in an interprofessional discharge team in England

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‘How hard can it be’ - managing conflict in an interprofessional discharge team in England

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Background

- Interprofessional vs Multiprofessional team – both health (psychiatrists, mental health nurses, occupational therapists) and social care professionals (social workers, housing officers, welfare rights officers).
- Mental Health – schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, anxiety, psycho-affective disorder, personality disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder etc.
- Discharge Team – to discharge patients promptly but safely.
- Acute care – mostly required urgent mental health care, 95% of service users are under Mental Health Act 1983 (amended 2007), detention.
Nine Key Facts

- Cost £300 a day.
- Length of stay 90 days.
- Homeless.
- Unemployed.
- Under Debt.
- Lack of family support.
- Involved with wrong crowd.
- Misuse of drugs and substances.
- Involve with criminal activities.
Conflict

- Robbins et al. (2001; 489) • "A process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something that the first party cares about".

- Martin and Fellenz (2010; 300) • "Refers to a situation in which the interests of different parties are not aligned. This frequently emerges when the differences between two or more groups or individuals become apparent".

- Taylor (1999: 1) • "Conflict occurs when two or more parties believe that what each wants is incompatible with what the other wants. Conflict arises when differences cannot be satisfactorily dealt with".

- Dreu and Van de Vliert (1997; 1) • "Conflict occurs when an individual or group feels negatively affected by another individual or group".
Conflict is Inevitable

– Conflict is situational i.e. fluid in nature but a dynamic process.
– Different interests or incompatible interests or outcomes.
– Conflict is based on both real and perceived differences.
– In an interprofessional team – part and parcel of everyday life.

• Scare resources.
• Competing demands.
• Different strategic priorities.
• Different professional culture.
• Different professional values.
Research So far

– Dyad professional: mostly physicians and nurses.
– Physical health.
– Specific conflict management framework:

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Table 1: Conflict Management Strategies.
Research questions

– How the health and social care professionals confront and manage conflict in the inter-professional discharge team.
– Why health and social care professionals apply specific conflict management strategies to facilitate a safe and timely discharge from an acute mental health hospital.
– Focus: England
Research Methods

– Qualitative Approach.
– A Case Study.
– Purposive sampling strategy.
– Semi-structured Interviews (11 practitioners: 2 psychiatric consultants, 3 mental health nurses, 1 senior mental health nurse manager, 2 social workers, 1 social care worker, 1 housing officer, 1 welfare rights officer).
– Documentary analysis.
– Thematic Analysis.
Research Findings

- Different perceptions: what constitutes conflict.
- Different ways to manage the same conflict.
- Emotional spillover is the hallmark.
- Health professionals heavily relied on policies and procedures.
- Social workers starting point is collaboration.
- Both professionals use compromise and accommodating conflict management strategy.
- Unwritten rules - Reciprocal arrangement: I did it now it’s your turn....
Research Findings

– Confront first, and management next.
Research Findings

Emotional
- Flight
- Freeze
- Flight

Rational
- Avoid
- Policies
- Third party
- Accommodate
- Compromise
Any Questions