

Relational Value (R^v)

Integrity, Respect, Fairness, Compassion and Trust

Context

Whether at home or at work we all strive to make the most of the available resources. In health and social care those resources are usually categorised as money, time and people. Only limited attention is paid to the quality of relationships that individuals or organisations have nurtured and developed. Keeping alert to the strength or weakness of these connections can bring real tangible benefits across a system.

Relational Value (R^v)

Whole Systems Partnership (WSP) have developed the concept of R^v to make this resource more visible. R^v is seen as the ‘the bit in the middle’ – the lubricant of an effective team, organisation or system and it can be assessed by exploring five key attributes:

- Integrity: ‘How things connect and run’
- Respect: ‘How we treat each other’
- Fairness: ‘How equity is achieved’
- Empathy: ‘How much we understand each other’
- Trust: ‘How much we put ourselves in other people’s ‘hands’

Backed up by research

WSP have been exploring and researching R^v in the context of health and social care settings, as the strength of relationships is so key to high quality care delivery. This research has been undertaken through a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with the School of Healthcare Studies at the University of Leeds, plus a case study with North East Lincolnshire CCG. This has resulted in two academic papers and a case study report:

- **Journal of Health Organization and Management** - *Building a system-wide approach to community relationships with the findings of a scoping review in health and social care.* Through an initial academic literature review this paper outlines the relational behaviours, processes and practices that support a healthy relational environment within an older people’s care community. A copy is available on the WSP website [here](#).
- **Health and Social Care in the Community** - *An extra care community’s perceived priorities for ‘whole system’ relationships: a Q-methodological study.* Health and social care settings worldwide need to sustainably improve the quality of relationships across communities or ‘whole systems’. The research carried out for this paper informs the development of a relational framework based on stakeholder perspectives. The article is available on the WSP website [here](#).
- **Housing Learning and Improvement Network** - The case study features Strand Court, the first of a number of planned extra care housing schemes to be built in North East Lincolnshire. It looks at the benefits of extra care housing from a residents’ perspective using a new measure of ‘relational value’ or R^v. The full article is available to read on the WSP website [here](#).

Uses

Thinking about the strength of the relationships within a system is good at any time but might be particularly important during a period of change, when new teams are formed or when multi-agency and multi-organisation working is important. WSP can now offer an on-line tool to enable the assessment of R^v in a given context and support to analyse and interpret the data that emerges in the context of growing database of examples.

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