Intelligent Kindness Website Summary

**Intelligent Kindness**

*Intelligent Kindness Reforming the Culture of Healthcare* is a book written by John Ballatt, an independent consultant advising on health and social care, and Penelope Campling, who is a consultant psychiatrist and psychotherapist. The book aims to understand the reasons behind some of the appalling behaviors seen in the NHS, (some of which have been outlined in reports such as the Francis report), and describe changes which are necessary for positive and lasting change in the NHS. It explains the importance of basing change on the human element of the health service, rather than protocols and procedures put in place by people who don’t even work in direct contact with patients and staff on the frontline.

The book is broadly split into three sections, the first part looks at the roots of the word kindness which is linked with kinship and recognizing that we are of the same kind, and why kindness used in an intelligent way is important for healthcare. The authors describe kindness as a ‘virtuous circle’, shown in Figure 1, this is a continuous cycle that relies on kinship at the start to generate a good therapeutic alliance, which produces better outcomes for patients and staff. The second part looks at reasons why people sometimes struggle to be kind, for example it discusses how constant exposure to death and illness can evoke a sense of hopelessness in healthcare staff, and lead to psychological defense mechanisms; which can in turn lower a person’s capability to be empathetic and therefore be ‘kind’. The final part looks at all of the changes and reforms implemented on the NHS in the past few years, and the effect of being pulled between the caring task and being judged against targets and protocols, has on staff working within the NHS.
Figure 1: Virtuous Circle of Kindness

References


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