



Who Cares Now?

Gender and Care Professions

Brunel University London, Thursday 2 April 2020

The perception of care work as feminine has shaped the image and status of care professions such as nursing, social work, occupational therapy, teaching, psychology, psychotherapy etc, and they have traditionally attracted larger numbers of women. Men entering these professions tend to quickly move into management, the academe or other well-defined areas. In teaching, for example, male teachers are less likely to work with early years and primary school children and gravitate towards secondary schools and colleges; in social work, mental health is men's preferred area; in physiotherapy, men tend to prefer musculoskeletal related roles. These trends have many other implications on the recruitment of new trainees into care professions programmes, their progression within programmes and their degree completion. Once qualified, gender is still likely to have impact on pay, promotions, retention and well-being. Such gendered trends tell us about the continuous tensions between the western hegemonic model of masculinity and care work in its different forms. At the same time, large numbers of men are seeking and requiring the services of care professionals and it is commonly agreed that a more diverse work force would be better able to meet the needs of a diverse population. We should also consider the additional impact of the intersection between gender and other social categories including race, ethnicity, class, religion, sexuality and ability, and how all these come together to shape care professions at our particular time and place.

Should we indeed attempt to increase the number of men in care professions, and if so, how should we go about it? What are the main barriers facing men going into these professions? On the other hand, what are the obstacles faced by senior women working in the care sector where the number of men is often much greater and disproportional to their percentage across each of these professions? These and many other related questions will be at the centre of this one-day conference.

We invite presentation that address these and other related issues. Both oral and poster presentations are invited.

In addition to the topics mentioned above, other possible topics might include:

- Being a care professional in current times: contemporary gender related challenges and advantages for both men and women
- Masculine and feminine areas of practice within different care professions
- The impact of gender on recruitment of students, acceptance, progression and completion of degrees
- The impact of gender on promotion and retention of care professionals
- Caring at work and caring at home: implications for men and women
- The intersectional impact of class, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, age, sexuality and more on the constructions of care and carers

Please send a short abstract (300 words max) to: whocaresnow@brunel.ac.uk by the 1st of March.

Who Cares Now Academic Committee:

Dr. Pam Alldred, Reader in Social Work
Dr. Wendy Martin, Senior Lecturer in Public Health
Dr. Thomas Butcher, Lecturer in Physiotherapy
Dr. Ranbir Trawler, Lecturer in Physiotherapy
Dr. Michael Thomas, Senior Lecturer in Social Work
Dr. Kei Long Cheung, Lecturer in Public Health
Dr. David Aldrige, Reader in Education
Dr. Kate Hoskins, Reader in Education
Dr. Lora Adair, Lecturer in Psychology
Dr. David Schmitt, Professor in Psychology
Dr. Yohai Hakak, Senior Lecturer in Social Work