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Patterns of staff culture in Australian group homes.

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Background

- Repeated identification of significance of culture to quality of staff practice and quality of life outcomes in group homes – culture often blamed for abusive practice (Hastings et al., 1995; Stancliffe & Lakin, 1998)
- Culture is understood as ‘the way we do things around here’ (Deal & Kennedy, 1982)
- Wider organisational literature
 - in the absence of a strong culture staff determine for themselves what they do and how they behave without reference to the wider organisation (Emerson et al., 1994)
 - Culture characterised as
 - integrated - consistent and clear throughout organisation
 - differentiated - clarity and consensus among specific groups or sub cultures
 - fragmented -ambiguity, no clearly identifiable culture in organisation or in subcultures (Martin, 2002)
- Little research on the nature of culture in group home services or organisations that manage them
- Early ethnographic work – identified 5 dimensions of culture and that differences on these dimensions were related to staff performance contrasting underperforming and better group homes (Bigby et al., 2012, 2014; 2016)

Aims and Method

- Development of the 7 dimension Group Home Culture Scale (Humphreys, 2018) provides a means for investigating culture within and between services in the same organisation, and between organisations.

Aim

- identify patterns of culture in group homes
- develop a preliminary typology of group home culture.

Participants and measure

- 13 Australian organisations and 1 organisation from UK involved in pre-existing studies
- GHCS completed by front line staff and front line managers
- Total of 95 services - 3 to 23 in each organisation

Analysis

- Descriptive statistics for each subscale and correlations between subscales
- Data were recoded into quartiles - 1 to 1.99 very low, 2 to 2.99 low, 3 to 3.99 medium, 4.00 to 5.00 high as most scores fell into 2,3,4
- Matrix of scores compiled for each service to identify any patterns across the 7 items

Findings

descriptive statistics

- Highest mean scores
 - Valuing Residents – lowest variability
 - Social Distance
 - Effective Team Leadership
 - Supporting Wellbeing
- Lowest mean scores
 - Cohesion/Factional – largest variability
 - Collaboration

Similar pattern recoded into quartiles

	Mean	Min.	Max.	Std. Deviation
Valuing Residents	4.32	3.33	4.96	0.31
Social Distance	4.11	2.8	5	0.47
Effective Team Leadership	4.07	2.54	4.95	0.49
Supporting Well Being	4.01	3	5	0.4
Alignment	3.97	2.73	4.8	0.36
Cohesion/Factional	3.5	1.86	4.86	0.59
Collaboration	3.31	1.78	4.56	0.57

	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Valuing Residents	86	9	0	0
Social Distance	63	30	2	0
Effective Team Leadership	57	35	3	0
Supporting Well Being	52	43	0	0
Alignment	48	46	1	0
Cohesion/Factional	20	58	16	1
Collaboration	11	57	26	0

Findings – correlations between dimensions

- Strongest relationship SWB with other dimensions
- Weakest collaboration with valuing residents, and with cohesion/factional

Intercorrelations for Dimensions of the Group Home Culture Scale in a Sample of Australian Supported Accommodation Disability Support Staff

Group Home Culture Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Supporting Well-being	—						
2. Social Distance	.695**	—					
3. Valuing Residents	.512**	.491**	—				
4. Collaboration	.465**	.276**	.151	—			
5. Alignment	.663**	.492**	.470**	.572**	—		
6. Cohesion/Factional	.516**	.470**	.194	.437**	.543**	—	
7. Effective Team Leadership	.468**	.411**	.487**	.318**	.453**	.411**	—

Note. ** Correlation coefficients are significant at $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

Patterns across 7 dimensions indicative of different types of culture

- Significant variability between services
- 61 different combinations of scores across 95 services (of a possible 5,040 combinations)
- 15 patterns (more than one service sharing same combination of scores)
- Just over half of the services 49, 51.5% had a similar pattern to at least one other service
- Each of the other 46 services (48.4%) had a unique pattern not shared by any other service
- The most common pattern was shared by 13 services (13.7%)
- This pattern was indicative of strong values and a sense of purpose toward residents and organisational mission.
- Less strong was connection to organisation or team cohesion – Disconnected? Isolated? staff

Supporting Wellbeing	Social Distance	Valuing Residents	Alignment	Effective Team Leadership	Collaboration	Cohesion/Factional
H	H	H	H	H	M	M

Patterns across 49 services

Supporting Well Being	Social Distance	Valuing Residents	Alignment	Effective team leadership	Collaboration	Cohesion/ Factional	Total services this combination	
H	H	H	H	H	M	M	13	13.70%
H	H	H	H	H	H	H	4	4.21%
H	H	H	H	H	M	H	4	4.21%
H	H	H	H	H	H	M	3	3.16%
H	H	H	H	M	M	M	3	3.16%
H	H	H	M	M	M	M	3	3.16%
M	M	H	M	M	L	L	3	3.16%
H	H	H	H	M	M	H	2	2.10%
H	H	H	M	H	M	M	2	2.10%
H	H	H	M	M	L	L	2	2.10%
H	H	H	M	H	M	M	2	2.10%
M	H	H	H	H	M	M	2	2.10%
M	H	H	M	H	M	M	2	2.10%
M	M	M	M	M	H	M	2	2.10%
M	M	M	M	M	L	M	2	2.10%
Combination not shared with any other service							46	48.40%

- Suggests there are different types of culture in services
- Few services strong on all dimensions (4)
- Some have weak collaboration and cohesion common despite strong values and orientation to residents
- Services with weaker values or orientation to residents raise flags for concern

Collapsing groupings - most frequent combinations

SWB	S Dis	Val Res	Align	ETL	Collab	Cohesion /Factional		
H or M	H	H	H or M	H or M	H, M or L	H,M or L	62	65.2%
H	H	M	M	H or M	H,M or L	H, M or L	48	50.5%
H	H	H	M	H or M	H,M or L	H,M or L	46	48.4%
H	H	H	H	H or M	H,M or L	H or M	33	34.7%
H	H	H	H	H	H, M or L	H or M	27	28.4%
H or M	H or M	H or M	H or M	H	M	M	25	26.3%
H	H	H	H	H	M	M	13	13.7%
H	H	H	H	H	H	H or M	7	7.36%

- Clusters of high scores on the dimensions related to staff values and sense of purpose toward residents and alignment with the values of the organization and or effective leadership
- 62 (65.2%) scored high on social distance and valuing relationships and either high or medium on supporting wellbeing, alignment and effective leadership
- 48 services (50.5%) scored high on supporting wellbeing and social distance and less high on valuing residents and alignment – why some values and purpose and not others?
- There is less clustering of high scores on the dimensions associated with facilitating good practice such as effective team leadership, collaboration or cohesion/ factional
- High scores on the staff values and purpose not consistently associated with high or low scores on facilitating factors.

Patterns of culture in services in same organisations

	Number of houses	Similar patterns
Org 1	7	2
Org 2	3	0
Org 3	5	0
Org 4	5	0
Org 5	6	0
Org 6	4	0
Org 7	5	0
Org 8	23	6 & 2
Org 9	4	0
Org 10	3	0
Org 11	3	0
Org 12	7	0
Org 13	6	0
Org 14	14	2
Total	95	12

- In all organisations culture appears very differentiated - implications for staff moving between services
- 3/14 organisations 2 or more services with similar pattern of culture
- Org 8 least differentiated 35% similar culture one or more service

Organisation 8

SWB	Soc Dis	Val Res	Align	ETL	Collab	Cohesion/Factional
H	H	H	H	H	M	M
H	H	H	H	H	M	M
H	H	H	H	H	M	M
H	H	H	H	H	M	M
H	H	H	H	H	M	M
H	H	H	H	H	M	M
H	H	H	H	H	M	M
H	H	H	H	H	H	M
H	H	H	H	H	H	M
M	M	H	M	M	M	M
M	H	H	M	M	M	L
H	H	H	M	H	M	L
M	H	H	H	H	M	H
M	M	H	H	H	M	M
M	M	M	M	M	L	M
H	H	H	M	H	M	M
H	H	H	H	H	M	H
M	L	M	M	M	M	M
H	H	H	M	H	M	M
M	M	H	H	H	L	M
M	H	H	M	L	M	M
H	H	H	H	M	M	M
M	H	H	M	H	M	M
M	M	H	M	M	M	M

- Organisation 14
- Differentiated culture
- Only 2/14 houses with same pattern
- 86% different pattern
- Consistently weaker on cohesion, collaboration

SWB	Social Dist	Val Res	Align	ETL	Collab	Cohesion/ Factional
H	H	H	H	M	M	H
H	H	H	H	M	M	H
H	H	H	H	H	H	M
H	H	H	H	H	Low	M
H	H	H	H	H	M	M
H	H	H	M	H	L	M
H	H	H	M	H	M	H
H	H	M	H	M	M	H
M	H	H	H	H	M	M
M	H	H	H	M	M	M
M	M	H	H	H	M	M
M	M	H	H	M	M	M
M	M	H	M	M	H	M
M	M	H	M	M	M	M

Summary

- Unexpectedly few distinctive cultural patterns across all services and services within the same organisation
- Long way from a typology
- Suggest culture in service organisations is very differentiated – may be due to a low sense of connection between staff and collaboration between staff in services and middle and senior management of the organisation – limited organisational support for front line practice?
- The different combinations of high on valuing of residents and having a sense of purpose is puzzling
- Effective team leadership not necessarily reflected in cohesion of team but associated with shared values or sense of purpose vis a vis residents
- Many service cultures stronger on values and purpose than what might be considered facilitating factors of quality support such as collaboration and cohesion
- Use of GHCS potentially a useful diagnostic tool for organisations strengths and weaknesses of culture in different services
- Differentiated culture in an organisation alerts organisations to difficulties for staff moving between services
- Next steps - how do different combinations of cultural dimensions line up with quality of support and quality of life outcomes?

Thank You



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