

Person-centred Nursing Research: Methodology, Methods and Outcomes

Jan Dewing
Brendan McCormack
Tanya McCance
Editors



Springer

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ISBN 978-3-030-27867-0

ISBN 978-3-030-27868-7 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-27868-7>

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Introduction: Overview of the Book and the Focus of Each Chapter

The three of us have been involved in a variety of practice-based research and scholarship in nursing and healthcare, grounded in person-centredness. We have engaged with a wide range of persons receiving services and care, with practitioners (in the widest sense) and other stakeholders at micro, meso and macro levels in many countries. Certain ideas and values about persons and personhood have been and continue to be central to our approaches to nursing research, as are the frameworks and models we draw on and often develop from our own research. In particular, the Person-centred Nursing Framework [1] and the Person-centred Practice Framework [2] have been instrumental in much of our endeavours.

In this first book on person-centred research in nursing, McCormack and McCance present a revised version of the Person-centred Nursing Framework and it is core to much of the thinking underpinning the book and reflected in most chapters. It offers one theoretical foundation for shaping the being and doing of person-centred nursing research. Since its original development in 2006, the Person-centred Nursing Framework has evolved, as ideas about practice grew and developed, our collective understandings about personhood evolved, evidence from our and others research became known and as the many conversations we have had with others coalesced around certain ideas and concepts. When the opportunity arose to produce a book about person-centred nursing research, it presented a golden opportunity to present a revised version of the framework and make explicit our latest thinking about person-centredness in nursing research.

While we are fundamentally committed to developing person-centredness across the healthcare arena, involving other professions than ‘just’ nursing, we are all members of the United Kingdom and worldwide nursing profession and want to celebrate and share as widely as possible the contribution that nursing has made and is making to advancing more humanised care across health systems. Indeed, nursing, particularly in the countries of the United Kingdom, can claim to have made a significant leadership contribution to developing person-centred practice across many fields of nursing. Associated with this, UK nursing, along with international partners, is also contributing to developing person-centred curricula in professional education and in further developing methodological perspectives.

On this latter point, the emergence of person-centred research in nursing requires further attention. Clearly, person-centred nursing practice needs a rigorous and

flourishing evidence base, composed of a wide range of knowledge, to enable it to be effective and for both person-centredness and its primary outcome—a healthful or flourishing culture. This focus is especially timely, as we move into an era of ever more digitalised and protocolled healthcare.

Attention and effort need to go into growing the field of person-centred research and into growing a body of independent researchers in person-centred nursing research who will, in time, lead and influence others in this field. The Person-centred International Community of Practice (ICoP) hosted by The Centre for Person-centred Practice Research at QMU Edinburgh has been strategically engaged, with international partners in The ICoP (a Community of Practice) in doing just this. We encourage you to visit <https://www.cpcpr.org/icop> to read more about the work of the ICoP and the partners engaged in this work.

This book sets out to share some of the exciting work in progress that focuses on developing researchers and a body of knowledge and skills in person-centred nursing research. In doing this, we illustrate different ways in which such research can be carried out, the outcomes, learning gathered and some insights into the possible impact this research is and can have on the many stakeholders around the globe. Our explicit intention is to build capacity and capability in person-centred nursing research as a methodological perspective and authentic approach to the doing of research and the being of researchers. We are committed to the flourishing of all persons engaged in person-centred research, to our ongoing learning and to working in partnership with others in advancing knowledge in the field.

In this book, we explicitly draw on The UK Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) [3] in each of the nurse researcher authored chapters. The framework is a resource for doctoral candidates and early career researchers perusing their academic career or for other researchers who want to transfer their doctoral learning into a new field of practice or work. The RDF sets out a broad landscape of knowledge, activities and attributes (pre-requisites) to enable researchers to decide what their development priorities are, set against what is generally needed to be an effective independent researcher and how that can be progressively achieved. For example, the RDF [4] can help to:

- explore many aspects of being a researcher
- identify some of your strengths
- prioritise some areas for professional development
- be core to a development plan, then to monitor progress and success
- have productive discussions with others, e.g. your supervisors, PI, careers advisor or other professional development provider
- look for formal and informal development opportunities
- prepare for one-to-one progress reviews, appraisals or career development conversations with your research manager or mentor.

(this list is adapted from <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework/researchers-how-you-can-use-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework>)

Person-centred nursing researchers, like any other researchers in nursing need to be intentional, systematic and effective across a wide range of criteria to build their researcher credibility and the credibility of their research. Central to this is impact building from research. While there are now multiple definitions of research impact, we take it to broadly mean to have an effect on, change or benefit the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia [5]. One of our aims is for person-centeredness to have to have a global impact. We hope this book will inspire others to join in that endeavour.

What Does This Book Have in Store for Users and Readers?

In Chap. 1, we as editors consider the foundations of person-centredness and the principles fundamentally inherent in person-centred research that make it person-centred nursing research. The ideas in this chapter—and some others we don't touch on, can be seen reflected and woven through the whole book in various ways. For example, in each chapter, the authors create and align their own conceptual and theoretical underpinnings to philosophical and theoretical ideas, including the new person-centred nursing framework.

Then in Chap. 2, Tanya and Brendan represent and discuss the original McCormack and McCance Person-centred Nursing Framework [1] as specifically applied to person-centred nursing research. Furthermore, the chapter offers an updated, revised version of the framework, highlighting the key changes and amendments. They particularly focus on the meta-paradigm of nursing, the most significant change made to the new framework, and why this is important in the context of nursing and nursing research.

All the authors in the subsequent chapters, excluding Chap. 14, are doctoral candidates or recently graduated researchers in the field of person-centred nursing. Further, they all share a connection with the Doctoral Community of the ICoP, known as the SICoP <https://www.cpcpr.org/sicop>. For doctoral candidates in the field of person-centred practice research, a starting point is a philosophical exploration of what a person is as viewed through their view of the world. Indeed, we are supportive of the notion that nursing is a practical philosophy. It has philosophical activity and is immersed in philosophical outlooks. Theodoridis [6] contends that as nursing involves (1) interaction between humans, (2) a theoretical outlook that aims to enclose both the subjectivity of lived experience and (3) the objectivity of physical fact, thus both the value dimension and the natural dimension of being in the world, makes nursing philosophical in its intention.

In this book, we have three chapters that directly explore philosophical and theoretical underpinnings (assumptions, values and core ideas) for person-centred nursing research. In Chap. 2, Ailsa Macmillan and Megan Dickson consider how philosophical ideas on personhood are a basis for person-centred nursing research and showcase the ideas they worked with in their doctoral research. In the following chapter, Kate Sanders, Kelly Marriott-Statham and Gemma Logan illustrate their own creative and iterative processes to developing their research frameworks and

show how ideas of personhood and person-centredness are the foundations for the frameworks. In Chap. 4, we focus on theoretical frameworks and their philosophical foundations. Here, the authors Camilla Anker-Hansen, Vibeke Narverud Nyborg and Donna Frost discuss the integration of person-centred values and principles into their research.

The middle section of this book focuses on person-centred methodologies for nursing research. There is a huge space for multiple methodologies within the person-centred approach to nursing research in general and we begin with Famke van Lieshout and Lorna Peelo-Kilroe in Chap. 6, who offer a broad overview of their methodologies and the principles within them. In Chap. 7, Michele Hardiman, Rosie Kelly and Maja Klancnik Gruden consider some of the ethical dimensions of participatory and action-oriented research through a person-centred lens. This is followed by Betty Ann Robinson, Brighide Lynch and Jill Murphy sharing an overview of their different approaches to action research. Also useful to person-centred approaches are phenomenological and hermeneutic principles and methods. Therefore, in Chap. 8, Karen Rennie, Elmira Saev-Petrova and Caroline Gibson each present an aspect of their research to illustrate how they crafted this from the general principles of person-centredness.

While not fully immersed person-centred research, we need to consider what contribution experimentation and quasi-experimentation can have in person-centred research, and to explore in what ways this research can be undertaken in person-centred ways. Sergej Kmetec and Pia Cecilie Bing-Jonsson explore the contribution of experimental designs in different health contexts and show how these designs serve to illuminate key challenges in person-centred practice. This chapter also demonstrates the power of numbers in making convincing arguments about the need for change, as well as the effectiveness of different interventions and outcome evaluation. Neal Cook, Donna McConnell and Sean Paul Teeling take a deep dive into the connections between multiple and mixed methods research that features elements of person-centredness. Sean-Paul, for example, shows how he drew on person-centred principles and threaded them through a realist evaluation approach.

In order to develop a workforce that is prepared to be person-centred, nursing education needs to be addressed. As person-centred values, principles and curricula become more common, research is needed to demonstrate the effectiveness of the person-centred curriculum for the nursing profession. In their chapter, Deidre O'Donnell, Maria Mackay and Ailsa Espie consider person-centred approaches in nursing education research.

Person-centred research cannot thrive in a vacuum, so the research supervision and macro culture need to be not only supportive to person-centred research in nursing, it also needs to be purposefully designed to aid the uptake and impact of person-centred nursing research [7]. In the chapter on research supervision, the three editors, each with a candidate (Karen Rennie, Camilla Anker-Hansen and Emma Radbrun) dialogue about some of the approaches and methods they have drawn on to ensure research supervision is also person-centred.

Finally, in the summary chapter, the three editors consider the key learning points from the research that is emerging within the community to date, and we discuss the

future evolution of person-centred research in nursing; what this research contributes to our knowledge, what it means for nursing and healthcare and what else needs to be done to secure the growth of more humanised care within our increasingly complex healthcare systems.

International
Contributing ever more
Humanisation

Challenging boundaries
Exploring un-tilled furrows
Seedling novelty

Creative capacity
Surfacing
Honouring persons

Summary

Nursing researchers looking to research in a way that contributes to this field of nursing may want to start by exploring the exhibits and the map they are creating here in this book. However, the exhibition and map are not fully formed, and it can't be until you make it your own by contributing to it with your own personal theory and experiences. Thus, it will be necessary for the user or reader to actively consider your own research and where it sits within what is set out and hinted at in this book. As the field of knowledge develops and thus the map develops, we will see specialist interests and break away methodologies/approaches and methods and the field will be refined and expanded. Whatever the shape of the future exhibition and our map we hope that you will stay steadfast with the core ideas around person and personhood as being our unifying strength in nursing.

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Principles for Person-Centred Nursing Research

1

Jan Dewing, Brendan McCormack, and Tanya McCance

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, and the following one, we set the scene for the book and hopefully, pave the way for the authors who follow, to share their research endeavours. All the authors in this book are doctoral candidates/students or recently graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy award, with whom we are working in some capacity, most often as research supervisors or mentors. Thus, the research, along with the enveloping theoretical ideas, shared in this book, in a way, offers an exhibition for others to come to their own view about the nature of person-centred research. We very much see what is offered here as being a useful resource for readers to build on, so that together, we are all collaborating in building a map for research that has at its heart persons, personhood and the continuity of humanising nursing care.

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes in this book are all mapped onto the UK Vitae Researcher Development Framework. This chapter can assist your learning with:

- Domain A: Knowledge and intellectual abilities: The knowledge, intellectual abilities and techniques to do research
- Domain B: Personal effectiveness: The personal qualities and approach to be an effective researcher

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J. Dewing et al. (eds.), *Person-centred Nursing Research: Methodology, Methods and Outcomes*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-27868-7_1

- Domain C: Research governance and organisation: Knowledge of the professional standards and requirements to do research
- Domain D: Engagement, influence and impact: The knowledge and skills to work with others to ensure the wider impact of research.

1.2 Key Endeavour of Person-Centred Researchers

Person-centred nursing research is fundamentally about nursing practice or practical philosophy. Nursing practice at its best is an integrated and complex phenomenon that engages persons in a shared human endeavour around health needs, in a range of ways. We appreciate that there are many challenges facing nurses when as researchers, we try to imagine, embody, design and carry out person-centred research in and about nursing practice. Just to be clear, by practice we mean any collection of philosophical principle-based and evidence-informed roles, functions and responsibilities a Registered Nurse undertakes in any context. We anticipate this chapter will contribute to answering some of the challenges about what person-centred research is and how to be a person-centred researcher. At the same time, it will also raise some ‘new’ questions that we encourage the readers of this book to grasp and grapple with, in a scholarly way.

The primary task of the person-centred researcher is to develop and embody (i.e. authentically live out through everyday feelings, thoughts and actions) a research paradigm that enables:

1. The values of the research and researcher (axiology) to be directly connected to person, personhood and person-centredness
2. The researcher to be and become more person-centred
3. The ultimate moral intention of the research to be connected to the processes and/or outcomes of person-centredness (i.e. human flourishing)
4. Crafting of research paradigms that are philosophically rigorous and fit for the purpose of person-centred nursing research
5. Advancement of the field of person-centred nursing research

As person-centred researchers, all our paradigm development begins with being clear on what a person is and what we mean by person-centred/person-centredness. This is not a ‘one-off’ activity and we need to remain constantly curious about and adding to our own understandings as we play with new ideas that we encounter. Currently, our starting point or beacon for understanding person-centredness is this definition:

... an approach to practice established through the formation and fostering of healthful relationships between all care providers, service users and others significant to them in their lives. It is underpinned by values of respect for persons (personhood), individual right to self-determination, mutual respect and understanding. It is enabled by cultures of empowerment that foster continuous approaches to practice development.

(McCormack and McCance [1])

This definition is often used as a ‘core definition’ of person-centredness and person-centred practice. However, it is also the case that it gets adapted according to the context in which it is being applied. We encourage such thought through adaptation as no definition is immutable, should always be tentative and open to debate and contestation.

Within our core definition there are other concepts, some of them also complex; healthful relationships, persons and personhood, self-determination, empowerment and practice development, that need to be examined and understood. It is only through doing this that we can develop an immersive expansive perspective of person-centredness and its potential. Furthermore, not contained in this definition there are other concepts that are fundamentally part of being a person, personhood and so on. Dewing [2], for example argues that learning and particularly active learning is essential to both being and becoming persons and to achieving person-centred cultures. Whilst McCormack and Titchen [3] have demonstrated how concepts and theories of human flourishing are central to a person-centred culture.

1.3 Persons and Personhood

The foundation of person-centredness is shaped by our philosophical understandings of what a human person is and what we believe and value personhood to be. While we acknowledge the centrality of both within the nursing meta-paradigms, we don’t have space in this chapter to offer a complete synthesis of our position on either of these two core concepts. As an example, McCormack and McCance outline their position regarding person and personhood in the context of the Person-centred Nursing Framework in Chap. 2 of this book. By way of a summary, we can say that we maintain it is vital to find an understanding of what a person is, that this is as open and inclusive as possible. Human persons span multiple dimensions and we could consider aspects such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age or life span, making us hugely diverse creatures. Furthermore, when we start to accommodate attributes such as values, preferences, intelligence and emotion, some considerations of what a person is, then lack inclusiveness and respect for human dignity. This is consequently problematic for nursing.

Scruton [4] (p. 2) suggests that science positions the noblest of human attributes as having a biological underpinning, which he regards as reductionist. Scruton goes on to argue that humans have an ‘apartness’ from animals and it is philosophy, art and religion that represent this apartness of humankind. Thus, humans are persons, a category Scruton suggests is more than being a human animal. Primarily, this is because human persons can identify in the first person (I and you). Secondly, we are in essential relations with other persons and bound to them based on rights and obligations. Thirdly, it is because human persons reach out to others who are not of our world and not of the flesh as we are (p. 46). Of course, many other philosophers touch on one or more of these conditions. For example, Locke (1689/1975: II.27.ix) considers a person is a thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, *and considers itself as itself*, the same thinking thing in different times and places. Definitions can become complex, for example, Smith [5] defines a person who has developed ‘normally’ as: