



Learning under pressure

How healthcare professionals in youth care learn to deal with the tension between system pressure and professional autonomy

Objectives

- The Dutch youth care sector is under significant pressure due to staff shortages, increasing service demands, and financial constraints. As waiting times grow, the well-being of children and families deteriorates.
- Meanwhile, professionals work hard to deliver the best possible care. Guidelines, rules, and laws are essential in helping these professionals provide care, however, professionals also perceive the system's regulations, guidelines, and laws as restrictive.
- In this ongoing research project, we explore how youth care professionals can navigate the tension between professional autonomy and system /pressure. Furthermore, it explores how organizations can cultivate a culture of continuous learning on this tension.

Methodology

- This research involves four Dutch youth care organizations, each forming a Community of Practice (CoP) with professionals, patients, parents, organizational stakeholders, and researchers.
- CoP's allows organizations to co-create actionable strategies while embedding reflective learning processes into their culture.
 - In six facilitated sessions per CoP, participants collaboratively explore specific tensions between professional autonomy and systemic demands.
 - Research methods include participatory observations, interviews with professionals, organizational actors, patients, etc. and document analyses.
- Insights are synthesized into organizational learning histories, which serve as case studies for theory building.

(Expected) Results

- The CoPs identified specific manifestations of tension between professional autonomy and systemic demands, revealing how these dynamics play out in practice. Four different CoP's means four different questions: e.g.
 - How to properly deal with feedback (& evaluations)
 - How to combine exploration and exploitation in services
- Further results will show how the specific issues manifest itself in practice and aims to uncover practical strategies for addressing—not resolving—the tensions, as they are inherent to the system.
- Further focus is on what organizations can do to facilitate learning among professionals on this topic.



THANK YOU

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