



Australian
National
University

Transforming relationships for high performance in health services: a relational model of organisational change

Friday 17 February 2012 2 – 3pm

Professor Jody Hoffer Gittell Professor of Management, Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University

Acton Theatre Crawford School of Economics and Government, Building 132, Lennox Crossing, ANU



Health and human service organisations face a challenging economic environment in the U.S. and beyond, with increasing pressures to reduce their costs while improving the quality of their outcomes. Yet many of these organizations are structured as traditional bureaucracies with workers trapped in their silos, producing poor quality outcomes at high cost. Evidence suggests that connecting workers with each other, their customers and their managers through relationships of shared goals, shared knowledge and mutual respect has positive implications for quality, efficiency, and worker well-being. But existing relationship patterns are deeply engrained, inhibiting the ability to change.

In this seminar, Professor Gittell will draw upon case studies in the U.S. health and human service sectors to develop a relational model of organisational change. This model suggests that meaningful transformation requires changes in the worker-worker, worker-customer, and worker-manager relationships using three kinds of interventions

-- relational, work process, and structural. Relational interventions include mapping current relationship patterns, fostering psychological safety and coaching/role-modelling new relational dynamics. Work process interventions include mapping current work processes, clarifying roles, identifying goals, and engaging in problem solving. Structural interventions include redesigning rewards, performance measures, selection, training, conflict resolution, meetings, protocols and information systems to reinforce and sustain the new ways working together by embedding new relational patterns into roles.

Professor Gittell's model of organisational change is highly relevant to Australia's ongoing national health reforms, in which a major priority is the need to provide more integrated and connected care across the health system. As Australian health service providers can work in isolated groups where poor communication has a direct impact on patient outcomes, Professor Gittell's experience in U.S. health services will offer useful lessons for boosting the quality and efficiency of Australian health care organisations.

Professor Gittell's visit to Australia is sponsored by the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI) at the Australian National University, via a 2011 International Visiting Fellowship awarded to the Australian Health Workforce Institute (AHWI).

Presented by

Australian Primary Health
Care Research Institute
ANU College of
Medicine, Biology
& Environment

Registration required

E mier.chan@anu.edu.au T 02 6125 6803
This lecture is free and open to the public

For more information:
aphcri.anu.edu.au/fellowships/2011-international-visiting-fellows

P
U
B
L
I
C
L
E
C
T
U
R
E