



Charles Sturt  
University

# A Participatory Approach to Working with Older People

*THE INSIGHT EXCHANGE*

CATHOLIC HEALTHCARE

JUNE, 2021

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## Acknowledgement of country

Yindyamarra winhanganha –  
*The wisdom of respectfully knowing  
how to live well in a world worth living  
in.*

## Contents

- The evolution of my paradigm
- Connotations of *caring for*
- What is a participatory approach?
- Implementing the approach – clinical, teaching and research
- References and resources

# Evolution of the approach

## Evolves from:

- Clinical experience
- What older people have taught me through teaching and research projects

## Theorists:

Rosemary Parse <sup>(2010)</sup> – Human - Becoming - Health

Eric Berne <sup>(1968)</sup> – Transactional analysis

## Congruent with:

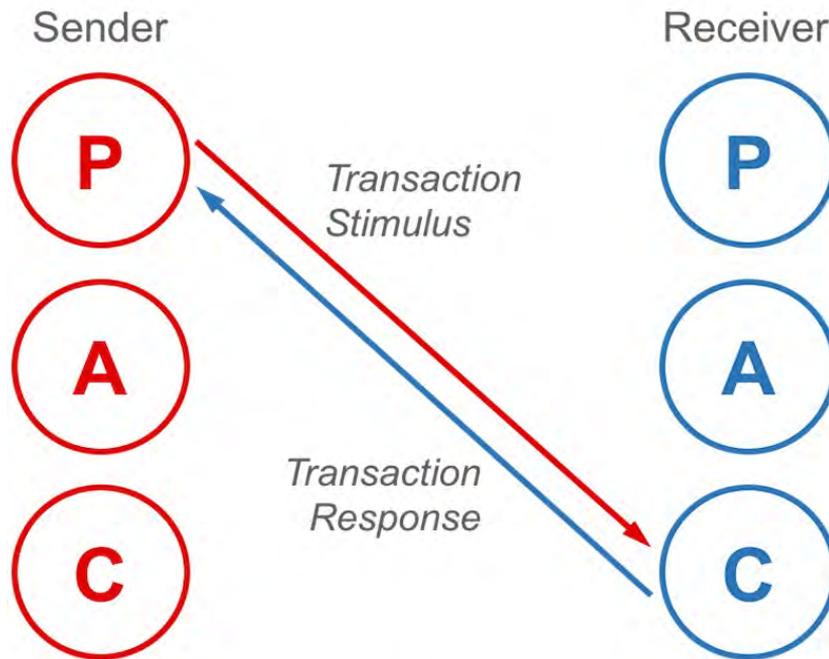
- Royal Commission – respect for the individual

## Connotations of *caring for*...

- Where do we learn about *care*?
- Deficit
- Power imbalance
- Infantilise
- Loss of autonomy, agency – “love, dearie, honey”
- Compliance (consequences)
- Expectation of gratitude (consequences)

# Patronising, infantilising interaction

<https://www.pocketbook.co.uk/blog/2017/10/17/transactional-analysis>



**A Basic Parent-Child Interaction  
Transactional Analysis**  
Originated by Eric Berne

# The individual – who is this person?



Personhood and  
autonomy



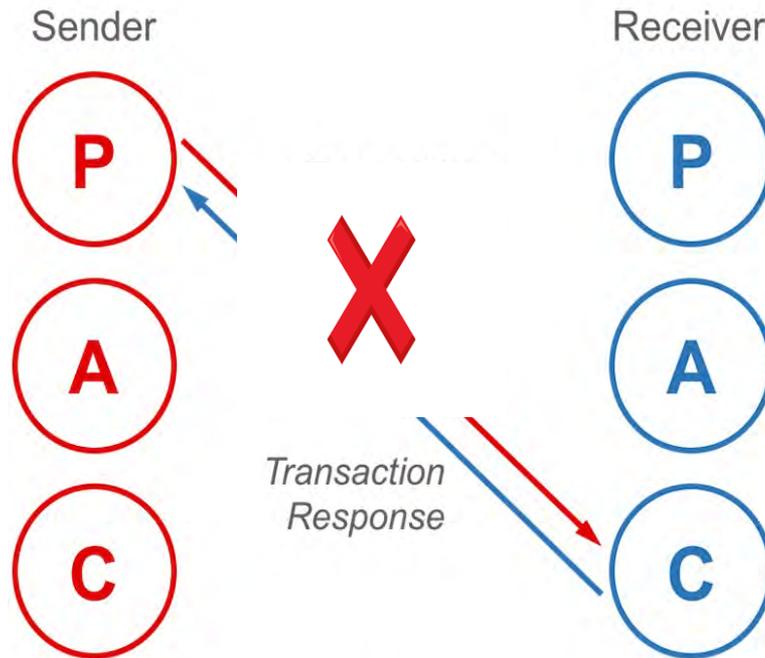
agency and respect



mutually beneficial  
interactions

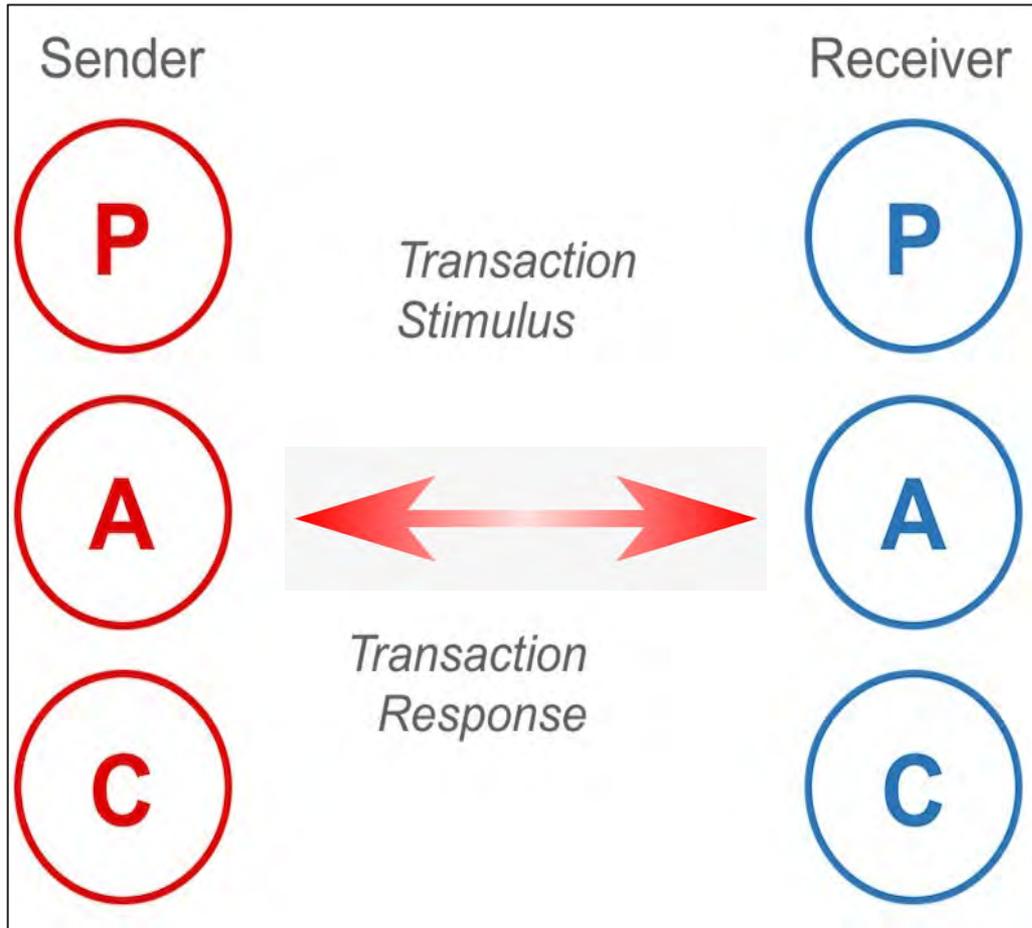
# Can we change the interaction?

<https://www.pocketbook.co.uk/blog/2017/10/17/transactional-analysis>



**A Basic Parent-Child Interaction**  
**Transactional Analysis**  
Originated by Eric Berne

# Participatory model



# Participatory approach

- Respecting personhood, agency, autonomy
- *Working with* rather than *caring for*
- Working together to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.
- Reciprocity and negotiation to achieve goals/well being/quality of life
- Authentically enacting the rights and responsibilities of all involved in the relationship

# Community - Dubbo Community Forum – Submission to the Royal Commission

(Maginnis,  
Lawrence, Green, & Bernoth, 2019)



## Community (another example)

**Hobart** - Participatory Care Model on Work Satisfaction of Care Workers and the Functionality, Connectedness, and Mental Health of Community-Dwelling Older People (Bernoth, Burmeister, Morrison, Islam, Onslow, & Cleary, 2016).



## Other Research Projects (more details in the reference list)

**Indigenous research** - Sharing and valuing older Aboriginal people's voices about social and emotional wellbeing services: a strength-based approach for service providers (Gibson, Crockett, Dudgeon, Bernoth, & Lincoln, 2020).

**Wagga Senior citizens** – Enhancing connectedness through peer training for community-dwelling older people (Burmeister, Dietsch, Bernoth, & Cleary, 2016).

# Clinical setting

## Organisation one:

- Teaching separate to the clinical
- Insufficient onsite mentoring
- Responsibility on those least able to effect change
- Lack of congruence throughout the organisation
- Discord

## Organisation two

- No alert of a “new approach”
- Working with the staff
- Mirroring approach
- Initial uncertainty leading to acceptance
- Organisation wide – congruence, consistency, support

# Teaching

- Older people in the tutorials



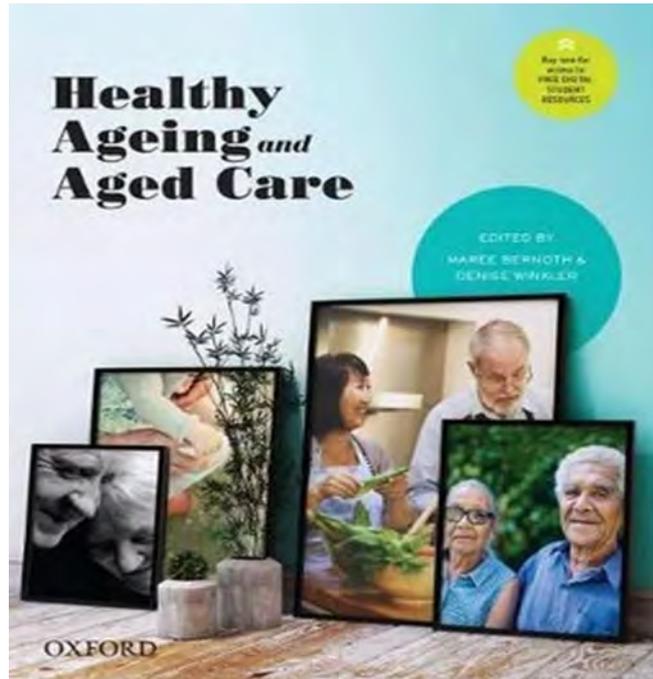
Web site OPTTEACH:

<http://www.optteach.com.au/>

Gwen (Example 1 @ 5mns)

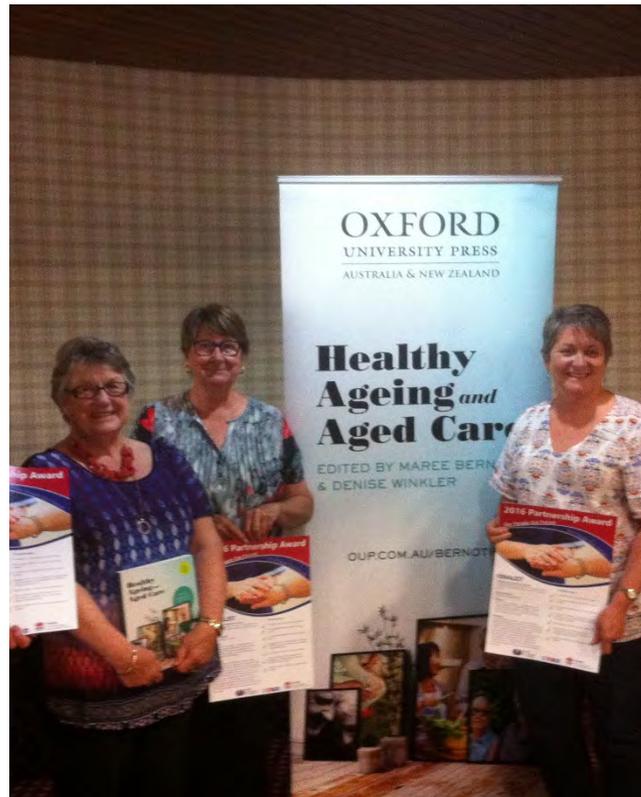
- Collaboration between Charles Sturt and Holy Spirit Dubbo

# Teaching



Australian Educational Publishing Award winner, 2017

Australasian Association of Gerontology Highly Commended, 2017.



Local clinicians and older people contributed to the text and attended award celebrations

# Organisational impacts of TA

Lucia Wuersch (2020) focused on the impact of the use of TA principles on the organisation.

The long-term impacts of TA:

- 1) a person-centred approach to organisational strategy;
- 2) shared skills and attitudes implemented in workplace practices;
- 3) increased organisational trust through co-constructed internal learning experiences.

TA was found to create a mutually beneficial work environment for both the employees and the organisation.

## Conclusion

- I've shared an approach I use to interact with older people
- Changing attitudes from *caring for* to *working with* older people addresses infantilisation
- When TA is used in clinical settings, there needs to be a whole of organisation approach
- I continue to reflect on my interactions with students and older people to further champion attitudes and approaches that value and respect the individual

# References and Resources

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Bernoth, M., Lawless, A., Croxon, L., & Anderson, J. (2015). Enabling Community Partnerships for Learning and Mentoring in Aged Care. *Wagga: Charles Sturt University*.

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Effective Coaching Concepts

<https://executivecoachingconcepts.com/transactional-analysis-a-model-for-effective-communications/>

# References and Resources

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Management Pocket Books

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