

AN ORAL HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHYSIOTHERAPY PROFESSION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM



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Introduction

- Physiotherapy in the United Kingdom celebrated a centenary in 1994
- The Retirement Association was invited by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy [CSP] in 2010 to record changes within the profession

Purpose

- To learn from people who had experienced development of the profession
- To provide a resource which demonstrates the continuing overt and subtle challenges to physiotherapy practice

Participants

- 15 volunteer retired members trained as interviewers
- 95 interviews with retired members, associates, CSP Officers

Methods

- Risk assessments, professional liability insurance cover and identity badges for interviewers provided by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
- Snowballing methodology: retired members identified potential interviewees
- Expertise matrix ensured perspectives from a range of practice areas across UK
- Interviews of 1-2 hours. Five strands of development:



- Track summaries and content guide to facilitate easy access

Results

Evolving profession



Leadership:

Lois Dyer

- "Do things which are seen to be crucial and worthwhile"
- "Never be afraid to go to the top to put your case"
- "Grab every opportunity a re-organisation gives you"



Sarah Bazin

- "Outcome of my letter .. A visit from the chief executive of the health authority"
- "I ran two meetings in our gym each year, thinking of leading edge areas to consider"



Clinical practice:

Mary Lynch-Ellerington

- "Dr. Bobath...different nervous system...soft-wired, plastic, adaptable"
- "...need to understand 24 hour approach...multidisciplinary team in stroke unit"



Rosemary Oddy

- "The way patients ..asked to move .. contributing to refusals"
- "Not much about dementia... imagined how I would feel...the chair was a safe haven"
- "Given a stimulus what was the response. What worked"



Teamwork:

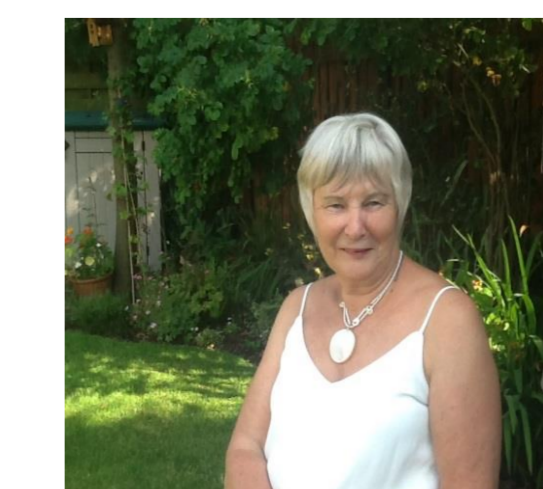
Gisela Creed

- ".. being a superintendent a lonely position.... decided to develop some work together. A drive to get AHPs working together - helped to see each others way of working"



Judith Saunders

- "We made sure assistants felt part of us. We had a lot of fun, any excuse for a party or lunch - that's the way you build your team"



Discussion & Conclusions

- Voices of physiotherapists give historical evidence of skills which have led to the physiotherapy profession remaining a dominant force in health care over many years
- They reveal the process of practice and response of physiotherapists to never-ending changes in health care services and other contexts of care
- An oral history of change facilitates an understanding of the realities of being a professional in a competitive health care market

Recommendations

The collection of interviews, permanently accessed through the British Library (Oral History Collection C1586) and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Library provides a resource for researchers, students, historians of health and social care and the general public

References

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