CRUCIAL TIMES

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EDITORIAL

All people share a common need: the need to be in relationship with others who like and enjoy one another, and who have concern for, and interest in each other. Given this, there is still much to understand about the nature of human relationships and the nature of community. Communities consist of a diversity of people with diverse ways of coming together and living together by virtue of a shared human-ness and citizenship. While we hear much about the breakdown of community, it is still the place that most of us would prefer to be a part of, and while the term 'community' is hard to define, we know when we do not feel part of it.

The term 'community' is used in all sorts of ways, some of which disguise practices that are unhelpful to those who are marginalised. For example, services located in the community do not necessarily help people to be a part of the community, and we need to remember that human services have also been the vehicles and the receptacles for the removal of people with disabilities from our communities. Even today human services can act as a 'wall' between the community and someone with a disability.

Each article in this edition explores some element of what we mean by the word community or the place of human services within the community. The first article, by Pam Collins, reminds us of the importance of genuinely appreciating the qualities of a person if we are to help that person to be a vital member of their local community. This appreciation of personal qualities is in stark contrast to perceiving someone with a disability as a burden or as an object to be processed by impersonal systems that seem to favour processes and outcomes that are neat, linear, and replicable.

Guest writer Ingrid Burkett provides readers with a framework for community building that respects the ways communities operate. We are reminded that if the actions of human services are to support individual people to be members of their local community, these actions must involve processes that strengthen community. An article by Richard Warner provides some guidance to those who directly support a person to live in such a way that the person is likely to find fulfilment in their community.

Services must work in ways that support the deep and lasting involvement of people with disabilities in their communities. The service model that guides the organisation and the leadership qualities of the people who are managers, coordinators, or committee members will determine whether the interests of people with disabilities are served.

Many human services have embraced the managerial model with the result that the sector demonstrates a low consciousness of the impact that is made by bureaucratic and technocratic processes on those who deliver and on those who receive its services. Contributions by Keith Tully and Beverley Funnell help readers to understand some of the deficits in current models of management. In particular, the dominant professional-managerial model demonstrates a misplaced faith in formalisation, standardisation and in a belief that if we can just get the processes right, then everything will be right. This model inhibits the capacity of managers to recognise what are ethical issues, when serving the interests of people who are vulnerable. Management with leadership is essential if services are to respond to the needs of people with disabilities and their families in relevant and potent ways. This will go some way to equipping services to support individuals to be part of this wondrous thing we call community.■

Jane Sherwin

CRU's MISSION STATEMENT

- To challenge ideas and practices which limit the lives of people with disabilities.
- To inspire and encourage individuals and organisations to pursue better lives for people with disabilities.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mike Duggan

Community Resource Unit recently marked another year's work on the occasion of the Annual General Meeting of members. In my report, as the President of CRU, I spoke about some of those things that I believe are very important to the work of the organisation in its role as change-agent. I believe that one of the important roles of CRU is to raise the level of discourse about values and the importance of placing greater focus on values engagement. Dialogue, not rhetoric, is needed to actively promote positive values concerning people with disabilities.

One of our most important responsibilities is to better understand what it takes to deeply acknowledge the personhood and common humanity of our family members, friends and neighbours, and fellow employees, who live with disability. The importance of the principle of inclusion cannot be over-emphasised; those on the outskirts of society have to be brought into its centre. Unless there is a practice of inclusion, people with disabilities, along with other marginalized people, cannot hope to have a good life constructed for themselves or others. Such a 'good life' must include the following:

- The provision of appropriate support, whether it be physical, psychological, emotional and/or spiritual, when and where needed and determined by, and with, the person with a disability.
- The valuing of the person's close relationships and sense of belonging.
- The need for recognition and the valuing of a person's contribution to the greater good of society.
- The fostering of inter-dependence; not dependence or independence.
- The encouragement of the pursuit of personal goals and visions without hindrance from others who may themselves not approve of those goals.

The history of life for persons with a disability has been marked by too much indifference to their personhood and human dignity for such history to be reversed by the mere adoption of some new fad or technique. Our colleague Michael Kendrick says this well:

"Our shameful record of callousness and obliviousness to the ultimate worth of people with disabilities is not so trivial that we should think it can be reversed simply because we are momentarily paying it some attention. We have to be careful to not let the abundant talk of Individualization confuse us into thinking that such sentiments are going to automatically set things right!"

We know that history repeats itself and so we must find potent ways of safeguarding the dignity and worth of people who are vulnerable to the whims of human service systems. ■

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A CONVERSATION WITH PETER

*This article by **Pam Collins** shows how the community is likely to be immensely depleted unless it is able to enjoy the full participation of all its members. Pam is the editor of CRUcial Times.*

In the book "*Natural supports in School, at Work, and in the Community for People with Severe Disabilities*", a chapter by Jay Klein asks an important question: How can we support people to learn what they want to learn while assisting them to receive support for things that they need others to do for them? The writer goes on to say that many services place great focus on what a person can *not* do. However, some services focus on what a person *can* do and on the attributes that the person already has. Such services demonstrate greater success in assisting a person to enjoy an unfolding lifestyle that brings both satisfaction and enjoyment. They believe that when we focus on what a person *can* do, many of the things the person can not do will become less significant. The following conversation conveys an example of how such focused support has worked for a man that I feel privileged to know.

Recently I had the chance to have a conversation with a Brisbane man who I have known for the past year or so. Peter has a vitality and energy that I enjoy immensely. When Peter is around I feel good and when he phones me he always has something of interest to tell me. He always remembers if I have been unwell or troubled about something, no matter what may be happening to him. I am touched by his consistent concern for me. I know that many others find the same endearing qualities in Peter and benefit from their association with him, as I do. Peter's vibrant capacity to enjoy life astounds me because all of his life he has experienced brutality, neglect, devaluation, life-wasting boredom and frustration.

Born in regional Queensland and separated from his family very early in his life, Peter was moved from place to place and from family to family. His life-path is marked by special school, sheltered-workshops, hostels and institutions. Throughout his life-span Peter has been seriously failed by one service system after another, with the result that he was unable to gain education, employment, stable accommodation or relationships in which he was treated well. Peter's only role-models were other devalued people in the same situation as himself. He has suffered serious repeated abuses since he was young and for many years detained at a large psychiatric institution even though he does not have a psychiatric disability.

Peter's life has changed progressively over the past seven years. With support from people who are getting to know him well, Peter now spends about half of his time away from the institution where he resides, and is enjoying his life and those people who are a constant presence in his days. The firm plan is that when there is sufficient funding and support, Peter will leave the institution entirely. Along with support from advocates and a deep commitment from a small community-based service that now supports Peter in very practical ways, Peter has been able to develop a lifestyle that shows great signs of being satisfying and enjoyable. No longer subjected to the numbing boredom of institutional life for his entire week, Peter now spends half of each week in activities that give him joy, stimulation, and deepening personal relationships.

As Peter told me about some of the pleasures he finds in the Brisbane community I was struck by his capacity for enjoying life. Peter said:

I like to go to go on the City Cat. I go to Sarah's place for tea and to Fergal's. I go to bible study. I like that. I read there. I go to lots of things with people from the church. There was a church camp too, and I went to that. I like the singing at church. I like to chat with people and have coffee. I go to the botanical gardens and on bush walks. I go to concerts and shows and tell people about them. I like meeting people. I really liked the science centre where I could touch things and see them work. I enjoy woodwork too and fishing.

When I asked Peter how he decides what he would like to do, so that he and his support worker could make plans, Peter replied: *Sometimes I see things on the television and in the paper. I read the TV guide. I tell other people about things so they can go too. I took*

Richard to see the Olympics on the big screen the other night.

While Peter described what he likes to do on any day, I was struck by his capacity for enthusing other people and by his thoughtfulness for others. Peter is very gentle with other people and becomes agitated when he sees someone in distress, although it is clear that throughout his life others have caused him great distress and harm. As I chatted with Peter and a few of the people who know him well I learned that Peter consistently prays for those who are in need of help. I learned that Peter knew every detail of the recent sinking of a Russian nuclear submarine and prayed for the men who were aboard.

Peter is very good at making connections with others and at keeping those connections; he makes email contact with friends in Ireland, England, Kenya and France. His personal book of phone numbers has over forty entries and Peter keeps in touch with each person regularly.

Some weeks ago Peter was the guest of honour at a gathering of his friends and advocates. Over forty people joined him, and he has since written thank-you notes to each person. During the evening, guests wrote personal messages in a small, attractive book that Peter now carries with him. Peter showed me the book and invited me to read it. Some of the entries read: *Thank you for being so caring and thoughtful.....Thanks for your helpful ways.....You have been a wonderful friend to me.....I'm so thankful to have met you.....You're a great person who is welcoming of everyone.* I found the last entry particularly poignant because it had been written for a man who has suffered a lifetime of rejection.

It is obvious that people genuinely enjoy Peter. They benefit from his company. He is a good, gentle, thoughtful, entertaining, interested and interesting person. He cheers people. He is a loyal and generous friend. I saw clearly that not only does Peter need his community, but that the community needs Peter. ■

NAVIGATING FOR A COMMUNITY of RELATIONSHIPS

*We asked **Ingrid Burkett** the question: How does a service work with and in a community? What follows is a discussion about a journey that is full of questioning and self-reflection. Some helpful 'signposts' are suggested for those who wish to enhance the life of their community. Ingrid Burkett lectures in Community Development at University of Queensland.*

The environment in which contemporary human services operate is more like a mangrove swamp than solid ground. It is a swamp which appears as hostile, difficult terrain where it is often difficult to find a patch of hard ground on which to stand. Swamps are generally viewed with disdain – they can be messy, unpleasant places – and yet they are now recognised as supporting the most amazing ecosystems.

The swampy environs of human services are the subject of this article in which I have contemplated how a service can work with and in a community. The map that I use to navigate this swampy terrain is informed by some of the principles of community development. It is a map which has various guide-posts which can help in broad navigation, but that has no set paths - each service must develop its own paths in relation to the directions it wishes to take.

The **first of these signposts** points us in the direction of asking what is this thing we call 'the community'. Before a service can work in, and with a community, there needs to be some analysis of what 'community' the service wishes to engage with. Increasingly we hear politicians and bureaucrats referring to the roles and responsibilities of 'the community', as though some solid entity exists out there which can take up where the government leaves gaps in its ever diminishing safety-net. 'The community' which is the subject of this rhetoric is an imagined entity. The notion that some kind of stable, static and enduring entity called 'the community'

exists out there somewhere, is a myth. This is not to say that 'community' itself is mythical – but it does mean that we need to be a little more specific about what we understand by 'community'.

At the root of 'community' are human relationships – the different ways that people find to live with, and love one another – in informal and formal ways, through friendships, associations, organisations, interactions, and so on. The ways in which these relationships are portrayed often revolve around notions of harmony, mutuality, and closeness. What is left out of this quaint, nostalgic picture is what a real struggle relationships can actually be. Human relationships, as we all know, are filled with difficulties – they are hard work, requiring vast amounts of dedication and ongoing efforts and maintenance. This is not to say that relationships are never harmonious or wonderful, but only to say that they are filled with paradoxes: pleasure and pain, harmony and conflict.

'Communities are not only more difficult than is often portrayed, but they are also more complex.'

Communities are not only more difficult than is often portrayed, but they are also more complex. People no longer live in single communities. More often, people are members of all sorts of communities, centred not just around localities, but also around identities and interests. And importantly, it should be emphasised that for many people, the fact that they have very few relationships within any of these spheres, is a major feature of their social marginalisation. It is increasingly recognised that a lack of relationships – a lack of community – is a key characteristic of disadvantage and poverty in Australia. For this reason, very often 'a community' does not exist for services to work with; increasingly one of the roles of human services is becoming that of building community. This means that rather than asking the question of how services can work in and with communities, services are themselves being asked to build communities of people who can support, encourage, live with, and love one another.

The **second signpost** in this swampy terrain leads on from where the first one ends. If one of the ways in which services can work in and with communities is to become actively engaged in community building, then how do we go about doing this? Is the building of community something we can read about in books and apply to whatever context we work in? Again, I would suggest not. For human service organisations such a process is particularly challenging because the outcomes of engaging in community building are not always clearly identifiable in the short term. Their processes may not always appear logical or 'professional' from the perspective of funding bodies or service evaluators who are seeking clear, objective, quantitative outcomes.

Two particular challenges exist for services wishing to engage in community building. The first is how to ensure that communities are strong enough to be long-lasting. It is a common misconception that communities, in order that they remain harmonious, should be based around commonalities. I often hear the notion that the word 'community' is actually a combination of the words 'common' and 'unity'. Apart from the fact that this is not an accurate understanding of the roots of the word 'community', it is a very misleading interpretation of the realities of life in community. Building communities amongst people who are all similar (whether in terms of identity or interest or other characteristics) may seem less fraught with difficulties in the short term and yet, it is diversity, not 'common unity', which actually sustains communities in the long term. Just as the swamp is filled with diversity, and this diversity makes the ecosystem of the swamp sustainable, so too communities need diversity and difference – in terms of roles, capacities, personalities and interests – if they are to remain sustainable.

The second challenge for services in building communities lies in the fact that diverse communities are also those which are dynamic and ever-changing. The challenge is not to see communities in terms of achievements or outcomes, but to see them as continuing processes. This is not to say that community building happens in the dark, with no guiding method – community development has very clear methodologies and frameworks of analysis – they are methods and frameworks of how to engage in process, not how to determine or define outcomes. In engaging in community

building one can be very clear about how one will go about working with people in open, democratic and participatory ways. And yet the methods of community development do not only rely on having the right 'tools' to create good processes – community building is much more about nurturing a 'spirit' of community than it is about applying techniques. Too often we hear of concepts like 'empowerment' or it's newer alternative, 'capacity building', being interpreted as though they represent some kind of super tool which can be applied to 'create' community. It is crucial, if services are to become involved in community building, that opportunities are created for a diverse range of people to commune in spontaneous, creative and enjoyable ways that are not just exclusively related to their service functions.

The **third signpost** points both straight up and straight down; it points both in and out. It indicates that the engagement of services in the messy endeavour of inventing and creating community, presents challenges both to the outside environment in which a service exists, and to the inside, not just of the organisation, but to the inside of each person within that organisation. Engaging the process of building community means an engagement in a process of transformation – personally, professionally, and organisationally. For human service organisations I think this presents some challenges, particularly in the contemporary political and economic environment.

'Engaging the process of building community means an engagement in a process of transformation – personally, professionally, and organisationally.'

Services are under increasing pressure in the current political and economic environment. Financial management and accountability have, in many cases, been taken to such an extreme that I sometimes wonder how workers find the time to do anything outside of keeping statistics, and recording the cost-benefits of each activity they undertake. Most human services are working to full capacity, and yet they are often asked to take on even more work. The danger of this situation is that there is often only time for constant activity with little or no time for reflection on those activities. Further, whilst participatory community processes are now recognised as the ideal, they take a great deal of time and effort, and for many services the realities of the demands and pressures they face from the outside environment are such that this makes community processes impossible to sustain. If services are to be involved in building community this situation needs to be addressed internally and externally: through the creation of reflective spaces that are central to the workplace culture within an organisation; and externally, through the lobbying of funding bodies, making them aware of the realities of work which has, at its centre, community processes.

Building communities not only means building relationships between people but it also means building cooperative relationships between services and amongst the people within them. My map of community development makes me think of how a mangrove tree presents us with another picture of how services could work with and in a community.

Mangrove trees do not exist in isolation – nature has realised that a single mangrove tree at the edge of the water is too susceptible to the push and pull of the tides. Rather, mangrove trees exist in clusters and they link their roots in such a way that each tree connects with each other tree, the root systems intertwined, supporting the entire group of trees. The strength of the root system means that it is much more difficult for one tree to be pushed over, and together the trees support an amazing ecosystem. The contemporary environment in which human services exist is one which makes it very difficult for services to formally interconnect – they are increasingly subject to competition policies, administrative demands from funding bodies, applications of privatisation and management ideologies, and the list goes on. And yet, if services are to work with and in communities in ways which build community, then the values of interconnection, cooperation and integration are central – not just as abstract principles, but as enacted components of the work which services undertake.

Community building involves processes that are slow, small-scale, unpredictable, fragile, and often difficult – but which also can be beautiful, touching, and heart-warming. Community building is not something that can be done in isolation either by one person in an organisation,

or by one service acting in isolation from others. It involves the invention of ways of making the most micro-actions reflective of the principles of participation and justice. It requires a commitment to making real, the power of creativity and spontaneity. It demands a valuing of diversity and difference in all facets of work, and is founded on a belief in the possibilities of the impossible.

Services can and do have a role to play in building community. To do so involves some very real challenges that require making conscious decisions to undertake journeys into rather swampy environments, in which plans change, maps are only vague guides, and where each one of us, whether 'provider' or 'recipient', becomes explorer and inventor of never-ending stories. ■

The Mixed-Reality Of Community Life

***Richard Warner** shares some insights and learnings from his relationships and work in the local community. Richard is presently working with CRU to coordinate a gathering of young adults from across Queensland who want to help create communities that are more humane and inclusive.*

No one can live in isolation. To be human is to be interdependent; to give and to receive. A life that is fulfilling involves making contributions to the lives of others, and relying upon what others have to offer us. This requires a range of relationships with many different people, many of whom are found in the community.

Yet there is a sense that modern society is losing connection with community as a 'lived reality'. As people work longer hours, become increasingly mobile, and engage with others with more frequency but less intimacy, something has to give way. What often gives way are some of the more localised and intimate aspects of community life. People know this well; we mourn this loss of community because we understand it to be something that is important and worth holding on to, and if possible, worth re-creating.

If we are aware of the experiences of people with a disability within the community, we will recognise that many people have been barred from full participation and that this has had a dramatic effect on their wellbeing. We are beginning to understand that the great variety of needs that people have will never be met through the paid relationships of human services alone. As human beings we all need much more than paid relationships in our lives.

It is not difficult to make a connection between the situation that faces the community and the situation faced by people with disabilities when thinking of the dominant ideals of individualism, competitiveness, and rationality. Such a limited set of ideals creates a rigid image of society, where people who do not easily 'fit', are pushed to the margins. This marginalisation happens in overt ways to people who are isolated within institutions, but it also occurs in the day-to-day experiences of people who are socially isolated within mainstream community. Societal values that effectively limit the opportunities of people with disabilities appear very similar to the values that endanger the fabric of our society and ecology. For example, the rampant individualism and competitiveness that cause us to exploit our natural environment, on a human scale, create false hierarchies that divide people and cause the rejection of those who don't fit into the schemas of the prevailing ideals. The health of our community and the wellbeing of many people who have a disability are both threatened by these prevailing values.

As far as I can see, community life in suburban Queensland is neither all-good nor all-bad, but a mixed reality. The different communities that I am involved in have various good and not-so-good qualities. I believe, however, that in relating to each other as honest and ethical human beings, the good aspects can be built upon to create communities that are supportive of everyone. In my role as a paid worker assisting people with disabilities to achieve their desired way of life, it is also useful for me to think about how relevant my support is to those wishing to be more involved in the life of their community.➢

Looking back on the support I have sometimes offered, and that I have seen offered by others, I realise it has not always responded to the person's desire for increased involvement in the community. Some of this support has been offered with the best of intentions but has suffered from a lack of thoughtfulness, creativity, commitment or truly transformative values. Examples of support that reflect some of these deficits can be found in the endless rounds of coffee-drinking, movie-going and sight-seeing that people with a disability are often engaged in by support staff. This kind of support is often easier for workers but it is peripheral to real community engagement and is much less fulfilling for the person who longs for more involvement in the community. If this is the only kind of support that is offered to a person, then that person will never be in the position to make the lasting human connections that are necessary to true community life.

So what might be some better ways of supporting someone? There is no magic formula but what follows are some key learnings that I think are important to assisting a person to live in the community:

Be guided by the person you are assisting. In a sense that person is 'the expert' whose involvement and interest will make the lasting connections and relationships in community. Have your own ideas on how best to support someone, but be prepared to work these out in dialogue with the person you are supporting and with others in the community they live in. Acknowledge that the person you are supporting has a rightful and valued place in the heart of the community. Recognise the importance of community and the fact that we all need a full range of human relationships in order to survive and thrive. If temporarily lacking direction, generate some ideas by realising that you are not doing anything that is 'special', but simply assisting someone to do the range of things that most people take for granted. Don't allow your support of a person to be limited by your expectations of them or of the community they live in. Always believe in a potential for the development and growth of the person you are supporting and of their local community.

A community that does not engage all of its members will ultimately be of no real or lasting benefit to anybody. It is important to remember that when we support the membership of people with disabilities in the community, we are working towards improving the health and wholeness of community life. ■

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES AND THE QUALITY OF SERVICES

*In this article **Keith Tully** challenges the managerial model that dominates in human services systems and briefly explores an alternative, looking particularly at the relationship between managers and employees. Keith has been both a worker and a manager in human service organisations and lectured in Human Service Management at QUT for many years.*

Human services in Western societies are delivered by formal organisations. When individuals need help that cannot be provided by their families or informally at the community level, they are obliged to seek it from an organisation, be it private, government, religious or community based.

There are and always have been difficulties in using organisations to help those in need, in that factors at the organisational level tend to intrude into and affect the quality of assistance provided to clients. Of the many reasons why this should be so, one of the more significant concerns the way in which human service organisations are managed, in that the managerial model on which they are based is inimical to the helping task. Such a model gives rise to a managerial style that neither facilitates the pursuit of that task nor provides direct service workers with a psychological climate that enables them to extend themselves on behalf of service recipients. Unlike most other occupations, the quality of human service work is largely dependent upon the effort that workers

are willing to make over and beyond that which is formally required of them.

The prevailing managerial model for organisations arose in the nineteenth century in response to the needs of industrial capitalism, and has undergone little change since that time. It is based on managerial control to achieve an organisation's primary goal, traditionally defined as the generation of profit. The body of knowledge on managerial practice developed over the past one hundred years has, almost without exception, focussed on what managers can do to motivate or oblige workers to make the required effort in the interests of the organisation. It regards managers as having legitimate power to direct workers whenever they consider it to be necessary. In short, the task of the manager is essentially about the use of power to achieve an organisation's goals.

This conception of the managerial task thrives today in the form of managerialism, with its emphasis on an economically derived notion of rationality and the use of such strategies as quality assurance, performance indicators and performance review. Few human service organisations are unaffected by it, either directly through the approach adopted by their managers or indirectly via government directives. Although the dysfunctions created by a conception of the managerial task based on power have always been known, they have not been widely recognised because of the pervasiveness and dominance of the traditional conception of management. Its major dysfunction is that it creates an approach to and method of dealing with those managed that make it difficult for them to commit themselves to their task and perform at the required level. The controlling and directive manner in which those in managerial positions deal with workers tends, whatever the intentions to the contrary, to have an alienating effect that diverts them from their task and creates a preoccupation with self and their own survival. The result is a reduced ability to commit to the organisation and its goals and to make the necessary effort to achieve them.

Why should this be so? Those in management positions whose managerial approach is based on power are concerned primarily with ensuring that workers know what is expected of them and that they perform to the required standard. Their actions tend to be directive and distant in that they do not work closely with those they manage to understand the problems they encounter or assist in resolving them. Moreover, they are inclined to adopt a blaming approach when workers experience major difficulties rather than provide meaningful support. The lack of assistance that managers extend to workers is in itself a generator of stress, and the more employees find managers to be insensitive and unhelpful, the more they are likely to experience stress.

What does all this mean for organisations delivering services to people in need? Clearly, it suggests that a model of management based on managerial power is not suited to their purposes. Where managers function according to that model and alienate those they manage, it becomes difficult for the latter to provide the quality of services needed by clients. The problems workers encounter in their relationships with managers and co-workers intrude into the helping task and undermine it. Even though workers may be highly qualified and experienced, and possess a strong commitment to assisting clients, the help they are able to give is less than what they know it should be. This tends to engender personal dissatisfaction and a sense of frustration that may manifest itself in a loss of interest in and disillusionment with work. Not only does that further undermine the quality of assistance, it also detracts from the kind of person they wish to be.

Is there, then, any alternative? The answer is in the affirmative. A far more effective approach to the management of workers has been known for over forty years but has never penetrated to any significant extent the dominant conception of the managerial task. This approach in no way opposes the need for direction and control but asserts that the power inherent in the managerial role should not define how the managerial task is undertaken. In other words, the achievement of an organisation's goals should not be through the exercise of managerial authority but the empowerment of workers. The management task thus becomes a process, an on-going pattern of interactions between managers and workers where managers assume responsibility for facilitating the efforts of those they manage, both individually and in groups. Managers work with and, where necessary, alongside those they manage to ensure that they have the necessary means to provide a high standard of service, and

their effectiveness is determined largely according to whether they are experienced as helpful.

The changes required to achieve such a managerial approach are not insignificant. They begin with the inversion of the traditional organisational pyramid to place those in direct support positions at the 'top' of the organisation to symbolise that they are its most important resource. They involve a quite different conception of and attitude towards workers, and the development of a broad range of skills concerned with enabling and facilitation. Such skills focus on creating supportive relationships with employees, facilitating team functioning to achieve collaboration, and on-going work at both the individual and collective levels to identify and resolve problems as they arise.

If human service organisations are to achieve the standard of service they aspire to, the dysfunctions generated at the management level need to be addressed. New forms of service delivery and additional resources and staff may make little significant difference in many organisations for as long as the approach adopted by managers alienates workers and creates a psychological climate that undermines their ability to provide a high standard of assistance. ■

Ethical Leadership: when management isn't enough

*This article is an excerpt from a recent paper by **Beverley Funnell** and is based on a conviction that competent human service management recognises a responsibility for leadership and for understanding ethical issues. Beverley is a CRU Consultant who works to assist services to be very clear about what they are doing and why.*

"Doing the right thing and doing things right" is both a management and a leadership issue. This is particularly so in organisations purporting to work in the interests of socially devalued people who historically have been on the receiving end of morally questionable actions. Although not mutually exclusive, management and leadership are two distinct concepts. In human service organisations where management is seen to be more important than leadership, the focus is likely to be on getting a job done rather than on a vision and commitment to achieving better lives for people with disabilities. On the other hand, leadership without competent management is likely to result in a weakened capacity to meet the needs of service recipients.

Leadership is the pinnacle of management, although one does not have to be a manager to play a leadership role. Different people can, and will, lead in different ways about different issues, or even the same issue. A person doesn't need to be in charge of an organisation to initiate ideas or actions. All roles within human service organisations provide possibilities for speaking up or for taking actions that will add to the momentum of positive change. But because the role of manager has both the authority and responsibility for influencing people and actions, the person in that role is well positioned to inspire, guide, lead and develop those who come within the scope of management responsibility. Managers who are also leaders will appreciate the moral-ethical nature of their responsibility. Without ethical action, little will change for people with disabilities. It is leadership that provides the lever for transformational change.

Despite advances in recent years, living with a disability still means that one is vulnerable to missing out on the value and respect normatively accorded to other citizens, the lifestyle choices available to most citizens, as well as being vulnerable to some very harmful and hurtful things happening.

One of the current ethical issues for human service systems is: Why is it that people with disabilities are more likely to live in a 'facility' rather than in a 'home', as understood by most citizens? Facilities do not necessarily look like the large institutions we are familiar with. On the contrary, from the outside they may look like

regular houses or units in ordinary neighbourhood streets. But for some people the place where they live feels more like a workplace or program location than a home. The difference between a home and a facility is that facilities are created by a particular mindset and maintained through formal service practices, whereas a home is created by a person and is maintained by its meaning and significance to the person.

The provision of additional funding for individual lifestyle packages alone will not address this ethical issue. Funding allocations, without a high consciousness of what a home is and should be, is likely to produce more residential 'facilities', albeit of a smaller size than large institutions. What might be the ethical action that is needed to counter these possibilities?

This important question should reverberate at all levels of the service system, but especially for those in management-leadership roles. Within the ranks of politicians, policy makers, bureaucrats, managers and coorodinators there are good people who will be prepared to stop and reflect on this question. For many, however, the pressure to follow the technocratic route will be overpowering. Through the systematic application of rules, the rhetoric of individualisation can easily be translated into standardisation. One of the losses in standardisation is a strong sense of what a 'real home' would be like for people who are already vulnerable to not having this fundamental human need met.

A manager-leader will see the need to get 'home' right for each person. To ensure that people experience a real home manager-leaders may, for example, need to work in ways that value a family's close involvement in getting all elements right for each person's living arrangements and own home. It could also mean taking a more strategic approach to the recruitment, selection, supervision and support of staff, so that the contradictory practice of a person's home also being a service workplace does not act as a barrier to a person having a sense of a real home. It could further mean that formal service provision is seen as the core element of support while other informal relationships are nurtured so that the formal support and the informal support complement each other. If these kinds of issues are not understood as ethical issues then how will knowledge-free or content-free managers recognise practices that further heighten the vulnerability of people?

Over the last decade we have seen the advent of content-free management in human services. This refers to the practice of appointing people to management positions who do not possess relevant knowledge or experience, but are appointed for their management expertise, as if that exists separately from a value base or a body of knowledge that is relevant to the appointment. An example would be where a person who might have successfully managed a transport company is appointed as the manager of a human service organisation. Such content-free managment, without the benefit of wisdom derived from knowledge and practice that is integrated with management expertise, is not positioned to appreciate what is, and what is not, an ethical issue in human service management.

The fundamental assumption of such appointments is that managerial technologies and formula-based services will deliver the needed solutions. A professional manager is deemed able to control, organise and allocate resources dispassionately, without the distraction of knowing about client needs or service principles and practices. A manager-leader, on the other hand, will be able to understand and interpret trends and other external influences at any given time, be able to recognise them for what they are, and submit them to critical analysis. In other words the manager-leader will filter them by asking the fundamental question: Does this work in the best interests of vulnerable and marginalised people? ■

[This article draws on ideas in Michael Kendrick's work: *Some Ethical Issues in Residential Services,* which is available from CRU. The full paper by Beverley Funnell is also available.]