Compassion, Ethics & Excellence in Global Health

Task Force for Global Health
Decatur, Georgia
May 14, 2019
Excellence (quality)

Ethics (wisdom, skillful means)

Compassion (motivation, inspiration)
What motivates and sustains us in global health?
Compassion in Global Health
compassion, collaboration, integrity, impact, health equity, others, consequential, difference, community, action, access, innovation, positive, equity, faces, maximum, creativity, global, service, social justice, respect, responsible, humility, preserving, adaptability, health, sustainability, partners.
Compassion and Global Health

“Global health is rooted in the value of compassion – the desire and commitment to alleviate suffering. It is grounded in a deep awareness of our interconnectedness.”

– Conclusion of a Meeting on Compassion in Global Health, The Carter Center, Atlanta, September 2010
4.7.4. An agenda for developing Caring, Respectful and Compassionate health professionals

What is CRC?

Caring, Respectful and Compassionate health professionals have the following four essential characteristics:

1. Consider patients as human beings with complex psychological, social and economic needs and provide person-centered care with empathy.
2. Effective communication with health care teams, interactions with patients and other health professionals over time and across settings.
3. Respect for and facilitation of patients’ and families’ participation in decisions and care, and
Quality in universal health coverage

Quality of health care services is critical to achieving effective universal health coverage (UHC). Resilient health services require quality as a foundation. The success and value of UHC depends on its ability to provide safe, efficient, quality services to all people, everywhere.

- Why Quality UHC?
- WHO Commitment
- National quality policy and strategy
- The Global Learning Laboratory for Quality UHC
- Community engagement

WHO Global Learning Laboratory for Quality UHC

GLL overview

Compassion – the heart of quality people-centred health services

The WHO Global Learning Laboratory for Quality UHC
14 February 2018
Compassion

*Karen Armstrong*

“The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical, and spiritual traditions.”

[http://charterforcompassion.org/](http://charterforcompassion.org/)
Compassion

*Modern Psychology*

Compassion is the feeling that arises in witnessing another’s suffering and that motivates a subsequent desire to help.

Compassion Science
A Social Psychology Model of Compassion

Awareness  Empathy  Action

Adapted from Eisenberg, Batson, Halifax, and others
## A Social Psychology Model of Compassion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Empathy</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive attunement</strong> (perspective-taking; stability of mind)</td>
<td>Empathic Arousal</td>
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Adapted from Eisenberg, Batson, Halifax, and others
A Social Psychology Model of Compassion

Awareness

Cognitive attunement (perspective-taking; stability of mind)

Empathy

Emotional Arousal

Empathic Arousal

Emotional Regulation

Action

Action to alleviate one’s own distress

No

Personal Distress

Fight (moral outrage)

Flight (avoidance, abandonment)

Freeze (numbing)

Adapted from Eisenberg, Batson, Halifax, and others
A Social Psychology Model of Compassion

**Awareness**
- **Cognitive attunement** (perspective-taking; stability of mind)

**Empathy**
- **Empathic Arousal**
- **Emotional Regulation**
- **Compassion**
  - Desire to transform suffering and the wisdom to know how

**Action**
- Action to alleviate the other’s suffering
- Action to alleviate one’s own distress
- **Fight** (moral outrage)
- **Flight** (avoidance, abandonment)
- **Freeze** (numbing)

Adapted from Eisenberg, Batson, Halifax, and others
Excellence
(quality)

Ethics
(wisdom, skillful means)

Compassion
(motivation, inspiration)
Ethics

• Moral philosophy: “How should we live?”
• Ethics: “How should we live together?”
• Applied ethics: “Knowing the right thing to do – and how to do it.” – Nancy Berlinger
• Living in accordance with our values
Core Values in Global Health

• Justice
Chapter I – Objective

Article 1

The objective of the World Health Organization (hereinafter called the Organization) shall be the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health.
Core Values in Global Health

• Justice

• Interdependence (interconnection)
Core Values in Global Health

• Justice
• Interdependence (interconnection)
• Cosmopolitan virtues
  – Tolerance
  – Curiosity
  – Humility
  – Generosity
Core Values in Global Health

- Justice
- Interdependence (interconnection)
- Cosmopolitanism
- Solidarity

that solidarity is the most important value to consider if distant indignities, violations of human rights, inequities, deprivation of freedom, undemocratic regimes and disrespect for the environment are not to be ignored. 18
Core Values in Global Health

• Justice
• Interdependence (interconnection)
• Cosmopolitanism
• Solidarity
• Trust
• Respect
• Compassion
Global Health Values Align with Catholic Social Tradition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catholic Social Tradition</th>
<th>Global Health</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The common good</td>
<td>Interdependence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social justice</td>
<td>Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Option for the poor</td>
<td>Health equity</td>
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<td>Dignity of the human person</td>
<td>Cosmopolitan virtues</td>
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<td>Charity</td>
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About Values...

- Values lose their power if not lived
- They may change with time or circumstance
- They have limits
- They may be in tension – “competing claims”
- The hardest ethical decisions are about “right” vs. “right” - Rushworth Kidder (How Good People Make Tough Choices)
  - Truth vs. Loyalty
  - Individual vs. Community
  - Short-term vs. Long-term
  - Justice vs. Mercy
Ethics

• “Ethical reasoning involves disciplined and critical reflection on ambiguity.” – Joan Halifax
• Values can become distorted
• “Near enemies”
Critiques of Compassion (in Global Health)
Critiques of Compassion (in Global Health)

Didier Fassin

• An expression of superiority
• “Compassion ... always presupposes a relation of inequality.”
• “When compassion is exercised in the public space it is always directed from above to below, from the more powerful to the more vulnerable.”

Critiques of Compassion (in Global Health)

• It’s all about us

They were so alive!: The Spectacle Self and Youth Group Short-Term Mission Trips

TERENCE D. LINHART
Critiques of Compassion (in Global Health)

• An “unstable emotion”
• A poor basis for public policy
  – Socrates, Kant, Nietzsche
• Privileges those we can see
• Promotes inequity and injustice
Global health without compassion

“Global health decisions without compassion become bureaucratic, they become impersonal, they become insensitive. Global health operations without compassion may become autocratic.”

Abhay Bang, MD
SEARCH
Gadchiroli, Maharashtra State, India
“Willing to see faces”

“If we are to maintain the reputation this institution now enjoys, it will be because in everything we do, behind everything we say, as the basis for every program decision we make—we will be willing to see faces.”

Bill Foege, *Smallpox, Gandhi, and CDC* – *Fifth Annual Joseph Mountin Lecture*, Atlanta, October 26, 1984
The ‘Global’ Nature of Global Health

Implications for Ethics

‘Numbers’
- Justice
- Rights
- Policy
- Principles

‘Faces’
- Compassion
- Relationships
- Dialogue
- Care
Excellence
(quality)

Ethics
(wisdom, skillful means)

Compassion
(motivation, inspiration)
Quality is not a given. It takes vision, planning, investment, compassion, meticulous execution, and rigorous monitoring, from the national level to the smallest, remotest clinic.

- Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
WHO Director-General
The MedSurplus Alliance is a cross-sector alliance that works collaboratively to improve access to quality donated medical products, through accreditation, capacity-building, management and technology solutions, and leadership.
THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Questions to Consider

PRUDENCE
Don’t just do it

Good judgment requires controlling our enthusiasm to do good so that we also do it well, even in times of emergency. Technical expertise is necessary but not sufficient for action. International activity requires many things, including assessment, planning and evaluation.

What is the history of international health activities within the organization?
- Know the international locations where the organization has had good partners and partnerships;
- Identify the international locations where barriers have been experienced and dig deep to fully understand any barriers.

Who are the various stakeholders in the organization?
- The many stakeholders can come from the sponsoring body, former congregational sponsors, clinicians, marketing, formation leaders and other groups.

What is the main motivation for conducting international work? What are secondary motivations?
- Motivations must be surfaced. If the program is about helping associates and clinicians renew their commitment to health care or find personal renewal, it might be unwise when promoting the activity to primarily highlight the number of patients seen or pounds of items donated.

Is the international project part of the organization’s strategic plan?
- International activities should be supported by the board and an explicit part of the organization’s strategic plan with appropriate measures of accountability.

What organizational resources are available to conduct the international project and how were they determined?
- Determine the human resources, financial assistance and in-kind donations that are available for each specific international health project.
- In human resources, be sure that any persons participating are competent in the roles in which they are placed. An accountant should not be dispensing medications.

Can resources be changed as assessed needs are determined?
- Conducting a needs assessment that places the requests...
The ‘Global’ Nature of Global Health

*Implications for Ethics and Excellence*

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“Concern for effective action is a way of expressing love for the other”

Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez