Ethics of Care – Scandinavian Perspectives

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Outline

• Background, limitations and inspirations.
• Challenges and strengths
• Important research programs
• The future?
Background and Inspirations – EOC I

• The Historical Tradition of Medicine and Nursing.
  – Hippocratic virtue.
    • The personal and the professional
  – Protestant and Catholic Traditions of Nursing in Norway.
    • Illness and Empathy
    • Compassion and Mercy.

• An Existential and Relational Moral Demand
The Ethical Demand – Phenomenology
EOC II

• The Ethical demand.
  – Uncontradictible
  – Existential and experiental.
  – Spontaneous
  – Direct empathic perception

Kari Martinsen, Norway
The Moral Demand - Phenomenology

- Kant: "While we do not comprehend the practical unconditioned necessity of the moral imperative, we do comprehend its incomprehensibility" (p.139, Grundlegung).

- Levinas and Critchley: This movement of incomprehensibility in ethics: Being-for-the Other.

- Moral sensitivity
The Normative Value of Relationships
EOC III

- Relationships constitute our common humanity (S. Scheffler 2002).

- Ethics of Care – Relational Ontology and partiality
Mapping the Normative Terrain of an Ethics of Care

• Aim: Investigate EOC as a normative theory
  – Theoretical: To investigate the moral significance of partiality in care (Nordhaug).
  – Empirical: To investigate moral considerations and motivations of care in the practical and clinical work of doctors and nurses (Skirbekk, Hem, Nortvedt).
  – Special Issues: The Journal of Nursing Ethics… and Health care Analysis, March 2011,
The Future – tensions and unsolved Questions

• On the Role of Altruism in Care – self-concern and other-concern.
• The normative nature of moral sensitivity and the diversity of moral sensitivities.
• A Reasonable Partiality, the Normative Significance of Relationships.
• Care and the Virtues.