

Don't know what happened

No Answers

Seeking justice following a life-changing medical event: What is a fair process?

Some people spend many years seeking justice from healthcare services after they, or a family member, experience a life-changing medical event. This can be very time-consuming, expensive and distressing.

The Department of Health and Social Care wanted to know how to help this group of people.

Artist: Liz Shaw

Expensive



Patients and families discussed key features of a fair justice seeking process

Not listened to
No one contacts you



Looks

Fair

Feels...

HUMANISING

TRANSPARENT

Information:

Decisions:

PERSON-CENTRED

Desired processes and outcomes were unique to each person.

Face to face apologies were highly valued.

TRUSTWORTHY

Involving all key people but with objective oversight

Timely
Clear pathway
Support

Empathic, validating, two-way dialogue between justice-seekers and people perceived as responsible for the harm.

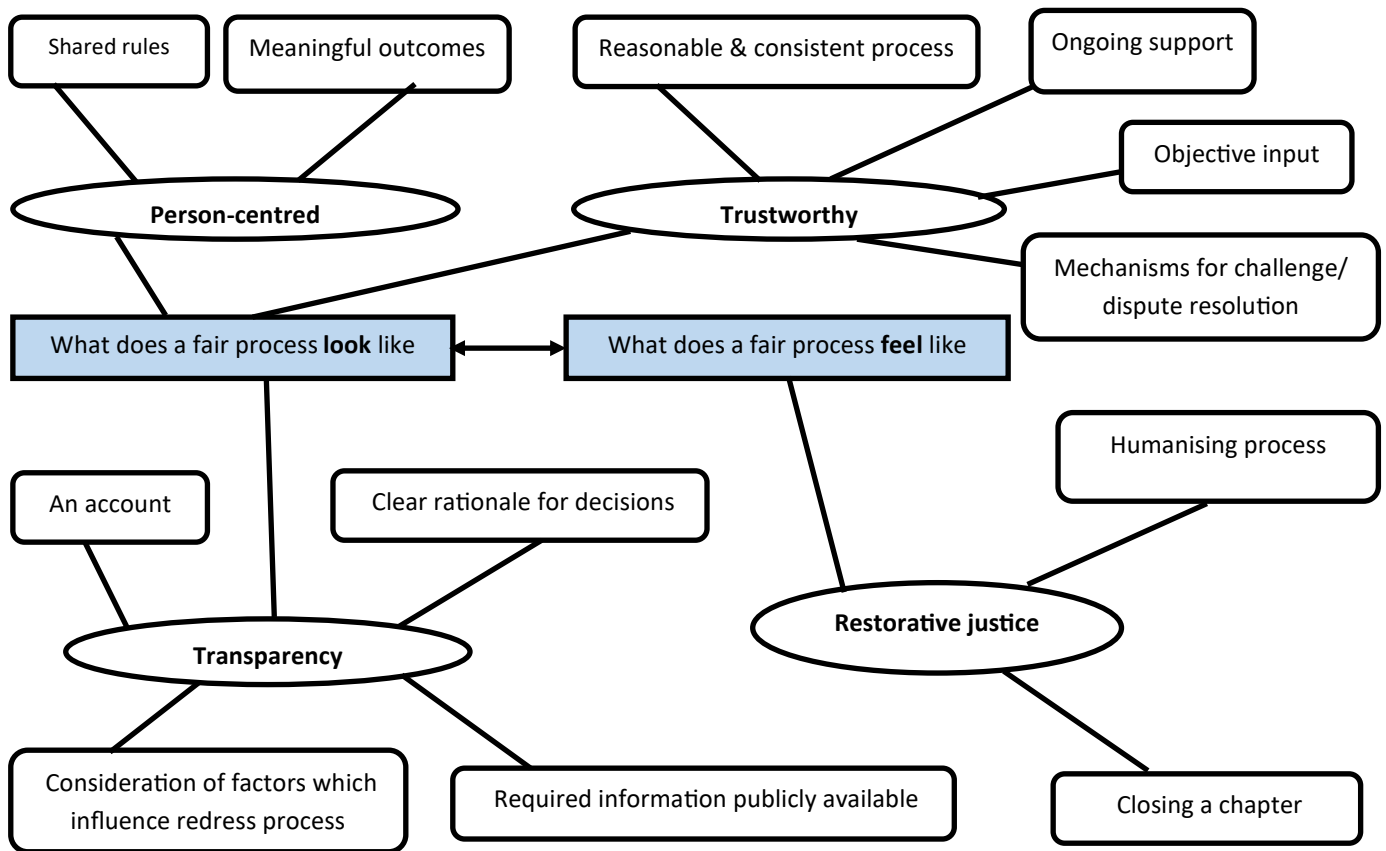
CLOSING A CHAPTER

Creating a narrative helps people process trauma

Seeking redress and reconciliation following a life-changing medical event: What do patients, families and carers think is a fair process?

Families have been calling for a process that investigates unresolved cases of suspected National Health Service (NHS) care failures. Unresolved cases have often been subject to multiple reviews over periods of many years, but families feel that justice has not been achieved and remain traumatised. Before an appropriate system that addresses individual safety concerns and historical medical cases can be established, it is important to understand how the current processes are experienced by those affected by a life-changing medical event and what the key features are that lead to perceptions of “truth, justice and/or reconciliation”.

This systematic review, which was commissioned by the National Institute of Health Research Policy Research Programme, brings together qualitative evidence regarding the experiences and/or views of individuals and their families/carers of the redress and reconciliation processes following a life-changing event that lead the individual and/or family or carers to feel that they were/were not treated fairly and appropriately.



Key findings from synthesised qualitative research and how they relate to each other

The findings highlight: Three interdependent themes ‘**Transparency**’, ‘**Person-centred**’ and ‘**Trustworthy**’ which represent what a redress-reconciliation process **looks like** (procedural elements) to support a fair and objective process. A final theme ‘**Restorative justice**’ that encapsulates how a fair process **feels** to those who have experienced a life-changing event. A combination of what the redress-reconciliation process **looks like** and **feels like** influences whether the process & its outcomes are perceived as fair and appropriate.

These findings could help support NHS systems or professionals involved with reviewing cases to establish if individuals seeking justice following a recent or historical medical life-changing event have experienced a fair process, or not and where further intervention might be needed.

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The Exeter PRP Evidence Review Facility is one of two research groups in the UK commissioned by the National Institute of Health Research Policy Research Programme to conduct syntheses of evidence to inform policy development and evaluation across the full policy remit of the Department of Health and Social Care. The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the NHS, the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care.



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