COUPLES’ PRIVACY NEEDS
In Residential Aged Care

Alison Rahn
School of Behavioural, Cognitive & Social Sciences
University of New England
arahn3@myune.edu.au
2014-15:

51,444 married or de facto residents (30% of permanent residents)

COUPLES: what are the privacy needs of partnered aged care residents?
COUPLE
doors kept open
surveillance
labelling
separation
gossip
intrusions
no private space
no knocking
no locks
Phase 2
Review of parliamentary documents & print news 1974 - 2015

Phase 1
semi-structured interviews
29 participants (purposive sampling)

Phase 3
anonymous online survey
168 participants (volunteer sampling)
“where in a nursing home can you...lie down on the bed next to each other...and just cuddle? Let alone any form of sexual activity...someone’s always around...not all the rooms have doors”

Dr Anthony Brown, Health Consumers NSW
POLITICAL DEBATES 1954 - 2015

- Nursing Homes
- Sex
- Aged Care
- Sexual
- Sexual Needs
- Sexual Expression
- Married
- Couples
1954 • Aged Persons’ Homes Act
1974 • Royal Commission- Human Relationships
1987 • National Aged Care Standards
1990 • Charter of Residents’ Rights
1994 • The Human Rights (Sexual Conduct) Act
2015 • Anti-Discrimination Amendments
“...in conditions approaching...normal domestic life...with proper regard to the companionship of husband and wife”
“the right to be treated with dignity and respect... including the right to have religious, cultural, sexual and emotional needs ... treated with respect”
“We wouldn’t be able to implement our homes’ philosophy. The draft agreement aims to give residents the right to indulge in adultery, fornication and sodomy in our homes”.

Mother Mary John, Little Sisters of the Poor
Charter of Residents’ Rights
1990-2016

- personal, civil, legal and consumer rights
- dignity and respect
- personal privacy
- safe, secure and homelike environment
- select and maintain personal relationships
- control over his/her daily life
“Sexual conduct involving only consenting adults acting in private is not to be subject… to any arbitrary interference with privacy”

Human Rights (Sexual Conduct) Act 1994
“...to get any real shift in the industry it has to be legislated...we need...explicit statements in standards...At the moment there’s no measure...it’s very subjective”
“…beyond the negative conception of privacy as freedom from unwarranted intrusion…to include the positive right to establish, develop and fulfill one's own emotional needs.”

Simon Bronitt, 1995, re the European Convention on Human Rights
Resident Feedback
Resident Needs Assessment
Staff Training
Policies & Practices
Built Environment
Standards
Legislation
“Not about us, without us”
Any Questions?

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