

**Date:** March 10<sup>th</sup> 2017      **Time:** 1.30pm      **Venue:** G006, ILAS

**Presenter:** Professor Kate Irving, School of Nursing & Human Sciences, Dublin City University

Dr Irving started her career in 1998, qualifying with a degree in Nursing from Leeds Metropolitan University. After staffing on the wards she went to Western Australia to commence her PhD studies At Curtin University. She completed her thesis investigating the use of physical and chemical restraints in acute care, in 2001 and returned to clinical education before commencing an academic career, initially in University College Dublin and in 2006 moved to Dublin City University. Dr Irving has developed significant national leadership in the area of dementia planning, education and policy. Dr Irving was a member of the National Dementia Strategy Working Party and is now a member of the Dementia Strategy Monitoring Group.

Dr Irving has led the national education initiative, the Dementia Skills Elevator, a State and Philanthropic funded project to empower communities and workplaces to promote aging in place for people with dementia. The education has a strong human rights focus and with innovations such as involving a group of people with dementia in the design, execution and evaluation of the program. This ensures foregrounding the voice of the person with dementia and relevancy to the people it is attempting to support. Other areas of interest include dementia prevention, strength based approaches to supporting people with dementia and social policy and dementia.

**Title:** Strength Based Approaches in the context of dementia

**Objectives:** To explore and develop a narrative care model to foster the strengths in the person with dementia, their valued relationships and their communities.

**Methods:** We used an in-depth, qualitative case study approach with 5 people with dementia and those close to them. Case study requires attention to the situatedness of a phenomenon and investigates issues in the complexity of the real world (Yin 2014). We made twice weekly visits over 14 weeks, taking a very collaborative approach to identifying existing or potential strengths of the person with dementia and carer and together exploring how these could be enlisted to help them achieve a mutually agreed goal.

**Results:** Four main themes were uncovered: **Untapped potential** - There was potential in all instances to move the person with dementia or carer closer to the goal. **Goal definition**- Understanding the person well enough to help them to define their goals took a long time and was complex. **Ethical issues:** Engaging in this way caused ethical dilemmas for the therapists. **Loci of strength:** Strength potential lay in a different location for each individual. The recognition of this was essential in order to impact positively on the lives of the people with dementia and their carers.

**Conclusions:** A strengths based, narrative model gave flexibility for the development of a therapeutic relationship that was in all cases positive for the person with dementia, the carer and the therapist. The breadth of the model was a challenge for the therapists and gave rise to ethical issues which required group reflection to ensure the approach was appropriate.