“Using field notes, case notes and participant observation to understand the meaning of support in the life experience of vulnerable groups in social care: perspectives from an occupational therapist practitioner-researcher”.

Dr Blaine Robin

Seminar Presentation
Will explore the case study use of participant observation fieldnotes and auto-biographical narratives of four women with the chronic autoimmune disease known as lupus. I used participant observation in two roles as Community Occupational Therapist and as a son. I combined materials from diaries the women kept about their day-to-day experiences of living with the illness, with my fieldnotes from my personal ethnography as a son whose mother later died with the disease whilst in the care of paid health professionals. I will discuss how using an "conceptual methodological approach" helped me to explore and explain the complex social impact of living with lupus, as a son, as a critic of social provision and as a health professional. In this role I learned how to become a sociologist.

Practitioner Workshop
Dr Blaine Robin will follow his Joint Qualitative Methods Forum/HSC Seminar presentation with a further interactive discussion about his work as an OT practitioner-researcher and his approach to empowering and anti-oppressive working with vulnerable clients. This will include discussing interventions to reduce unnecessary deaths as a result of acts of omission, such as those highlighted by the Health and Safety Executive; the Francis report and subsequent government reports such as the Beaver Report. He will focus on health professional competencies in an international context to discuss what specific skills they bring to managing the risk of abuse and preventing abuse of adults with disabilities and the elderly.

Brief Biography
Dr Blaine Robin is an ethnographer and an Advanced Practitioner Occupational Therapist with Luton Borough Council. He aims to connect theory to everyday practice. Born in Paddington, North London in the 1960s he grew up against a backdrop of widescale racial prejudice towards people of Afro Caribbean descent which inspired him to be self driven and educated. From 2008 to 2012 he held elected office as Southend on Sea's (UK) first ever councillor of Slave Heritage (Black) to be elected to office. His working commitment to the use of ethnography helped him to uncover and address issues such as inappropriate hospital related deaths; feelings of community alienation amongst white working class communities; serious youth crime and gang culture; homelessness; the merits of multiculturalism; identity and belonging amongst Sri Lanka Tamil community and the contribution to Europe of the Roma Gypsy traveller community. He is author of The Politics of Lupus: An ethnography study of living with Lupus. Scholars' Press (2014)

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