

The dynamics of giving and receiving: Love and Tender Care as an example.

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ABSTRACT

The focus on standard care protocols or fixed clinical pathways has undesired side effects and carries the risk of making care recipients individuality seem to disappear and impairing human dignity. The development of Love and Tender Care (LTC) in health care aims to increase the human dimensions of care. As such LTC gives us the opportunity to scientifically study and gain understanding of the dynamics of giving and receiving. Benefactors - those who offer LTC - and recipients of LTC, their relatives and/or caregivers were asked about their motivations and experiences and the perceived benefits of LTC. We position LTC not against cost-effectiveness, increased bureaucracy or protocols in healthcare but rather we strive for an integration of standardized care, based on human dignity.

KEYWORDS

Love and Tender Care, human dimension of care, caregiver-care recipient relationship, reciprocity, LTC and intellectual disability

INTRODUCTION

At the moment health care is mainly being improved by developing and implementing efficient and cost-effective care protocols, guidelines and clinical pathways (1-2). These measures have together led to substantial improvements in several aspects of care (3). However, the focus on care protocols or clinical pathways that have been proven to be successful, has had three undesired side effects. First, care protocols are most applicable to care recipients whose clinical course is within the 'normal range'. For clients outside the defined group for whom the pathway was developed, following a prescribed care pathway may result in mediocre or impaired outcomes (2). Second, standardized care has its own time and rhythm; with increasing focus on using time and money in an effective and efficient manner, care degenerates into an economic factor (4). One of the risks in implementing fixed guidelines is that care giving becomes a standard set of actions and attention to the uniqueness of the care recipient vanishes (5). This could lead to impairment of human dignity and add extra suffering. People can start to feel like they are an object or a number (6). Third, when professional caregivers become mere executors of tasks and base their actions on numeric standards and protocols, without relying on their own values, this can lead to an instrumental work conception (6). A risk exists that actions are no longer grounded in the human relationship between caregiver and care recipient and that the human dimension of care will be obscured (3,7-9).

During recent decades several initiatives have been taken in healthcare that aim to contribute to the promotion of the human dimension of care. These initiatives have in common that they all put the relationship between caregiver and care receiver in a central position. However, each concept has different nuances. Professional loving care claims that caring is about a modest but meaningful variant of enacted love for one's fellow human beings, practiced in an institutional context (5,10). Compassionate care strives for professional care givers to respond compassionately to the basic human needs of their patients (11). Planetree strives for human centered care through affection and attention in a healing environment within a healthy organization (12). The Dutch initiative Love and Tender Care (*verwenzorg*) is described as 'patient care, especially care provided to the chronically ill, which is not only focused on proper medical care but also on improvement of their quality of life, by, among other things, giving them personal attention' (13). This initiative, Love and Tender Care, is the subject of this study.

In the context of Love and Tender Care (LTC), patients who are admitted to long-term mental health care facilities or nursing homes and clients with intellectual disabilities are invited to take part in a variety of activities (such as a high tea, a beauty day, a concert or an outing to the zoo). The activities are mostly made possible by the (financial) support of the business sector. Providers of LTC can be volunteers, professional care givers or both (14). Three aspects of LTC call for attention. First, as stated above, efficient and cost-effective care standards aim for real healthcare improvement. LTC however, focuses precisely on those groups that are forgotten because they are chronically ill and thus have life-long dependencies and limitations. For these groups a LTC activity is something that would often otherwise be out of reach for them. Secondly, LTC is not considered a care activity that replaces the regular care but is rather seen as an extension of, or addition to, regular care. LTC takes place outside the daily routine or structure of the institutional context and is not part of the treatment plan. Therefore it requires extra effort from people and extra money. It also requires a certain openness, spontaneity and unpredictability. Thirdly, where working according to standards and protocols limits the possibilities for individualized care for the client, LTC emphasizes caring as a relationship (14). Trying to improve quality of life it is not only about doing something for someone else, but about being there for another person by giving them personal attention (7).

As such LTC gives us the opportunity to scientifically study and gain understanding of the dynamics of giving and receiving. Firstly, the motivations and benefits of those who offer LTC (the benefactors) are considered. Secondly, the positive and negative experiences of the recipients of LTC are discussed. Subsequently, the results are brought together in the discussion in a model that aims to explain the dynamics of giving and receiving. Finally, we examine what lessons regarding increasing humanity in care can be learned from an initiative like LTC.

METHOD

Recruitment of participants

Six recipients of LTC were interviewed in April 2015 (N=6). Clients were recruited at three LTC activities via care organizations for people with intellectual disabilities (see Box 1). Care organizations that were known to be familiar with LTC were contacted. Inclusion criteria are presented in Box 1. For each activity selected two recipients were chosen to take part in an interview. Inclusion criteria for recipients were: (1) participation in a LTC activity and (2) ability to express themselves. For each recipient a relative, professional caregiver and/or volunteer was asked to take part in the interview as well. When we speak

of a (professional) caregiver in this article, we are referring to the caregivers of the interviewed recipients. These caregivers did not offer LTC.

Next, ten benefactors of LTC were interviewed (N=10). From October-December 2014 eight benefactors of LTC were interviewed. These benefactors were selected after consultation with the pioneer of LTC in The Netherlands, Joke Zwanikken-Leenders, aiming at a diverse sample of sectors and functions. In April 2015 two further benefactors were interviewed at the selected LTC activities mentioned above.

Inclusion criteria

- (1) The activity was labeled as LTC by the care organization or the activity is comparable to LTC activities.
- (2) The activity took place in the spring of 2015.
- (3) The duration of the activity was at least 1 hour.
- (4) There was interaction between benefactors and recipients.

Description of selected LTC activities

Cooking workshop

A cooking workshop was organized in a cooking studio for seven clients of a health care institution for people with intellectual disabilities. The workshop was part of a 'make-a-wish' event organized by the institution in which clients could submit a wish that could be chosen and was sponsored by the head cook. All clients present had chosen cooking as their wish. Clients cooked an Italian three-course menu. Subsequently, the food created was eaten together. The activity lasted from 15:00-18:30 hours.

Beauty day

A beauty day for people with a disability (from different healthcare organizations) was organized by a student volunteer organization. The 80 clients present could participate in various activities during the day: e.g., hairdresser, beauty therapist, zumba or making a picture frame. In between the activities lunch was served. At the end of the day, all clients could have their picture taken, walk on the catwalk and a (carnival) singer performed. The day lasted from 10:00-17:00 hours.

'Make a wish' evening

At an institution for people with intellectual disabilities, all clients are able to submit a wish which is made to come true within two years with the help of the business sector and the neighborhood/acquaintances. A 'Make a wish' evening was organized to make wishes come true. One of the interviewed recipients was able to join a Harley rider present for a ride of about an hour. The other recipient was able to be "hero for a day". He became Batman and was able to help the organizing committee the whole evening, (e.g., with supervising several other clients whose wish was fulfilled at the same time). In addition, a performance of a zumba group (consisting of people with an intellectual disability) and of a carnival singer took place. The guests could also have their picture taken with the players of the football club that hosted the event. The evening lasted from 18:30 to 21:45 hours.

Box 1. Inclusion criteria and description of the selected LTC activities

Instruments and procedure

The study proposal was approved by the psychological ethics committee of Tilburg University the Netherlands. Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with recipients and benefactors of LTC. The interview guide was based on information that emerged from document analysis. Archive footage of LTC was provided by author A.H. and Joke Zwanikken-Leenders. The material was studied and summarized using the following key topics: the motivations and benefits for benefactors and benefits for recipients. We were interested in why benefactors offer LTC and what it brings to the benefactors, as well as the recipients. In addition three pilot interviews with recipients were conducted in order to develop the interview guide with respect to the key topics.

The group interviews with the recipients (and their relatives and / or professional caregivers) were focused on recipients' experience with and benefit from LTC. The interviews with the benefactors were

focused on the motives of benefactors and the benefits for recipients and benefactors of LTC from the perspective of the benefactors. Prior to each interview, participants received an information letter and consent form. The interviews were conducted in a quiet room and took 45 minutes to one hour on average. They were recorded using an audio recorder.

Analysis

The interviews were analyzed according to the general inductive approach (15). First, the interviews were transcribed verbatim. ATLAS.ti (16), a computer program for the systematic analysis of qualitative data, was used to organize the raw data. Phrases of clear importance for the present study were assigned a code. Subsequently, themes and sub-themes were identified. To increase the reliability of the research the identified codes and (sub)themes were discussed by the first author and two other researchers within the research group and adjusted when needed. Further, inter-rater reliability checks were performed by a second coder and consensus was reached. The privacy of participants was ensured. All research data were processed anonymously and stored in a secure environment.

RESULTS

I BENEFACTOR

Several themes and sub-themes were identified in the coding of the interviews with benefactors. An overview is given in Table 1. In the text below the themes and sub-themes are described in more detail.

Table 1.

Overview themes and sub-themes benefactors

Themes	Sub themes
Motivations and benefits for benefactors	Doing something good for others and society as a whole Receiving by giving: Response of the recipient Becoming a better person An enriching but challenging experience Altered and more positive view of a certain group Win-win situation
Expected benefits to recipients	Enjoyment Forgetting worries Out of the daily routine Becoming more independent Recognition as a human being Feeling special Experiencing afterglow
Undesirable side-effects for recipients	Few unpleasant side-effects

Motivations and benefits benefactors

Doing something good for others and society as a whole

Both a motivation and benefit for benefactors is wanting to do something good for others. Benefactors indicated that they learned the value of being meaningful for society while growing up. Alternatively,

they are moved by the plight of (chronic psychiatric) patients. One benefactor described how LTC fits well into his philosophy of life:

In my opinion our society has become too selfish, we pay too little attention to our fellow humans [...] I think that you should ask yourself every day, have I done something good today? Not only have I furthered my career, have I done my work well, but also have I done something good for the world, for society. [R2:61]

Companies appear to be driven by the idea of wanting to give something back to society or the market in which they operate. They want to do business in a socially responsible manner (CSR).

We are originally a family business so we have always had a corporate social responsibility policy, although never explicitly stated [...] We thought that people were important, that employees were important and we thought that our clients were important and we thought that we had a responsibility to the community. [R4:43]

Receiving by giving: Response of the recipient

Benefactors state that, by offering LTC, they also got something back. *“By giving can you also receive? I always found that a nice subject personally, because I am able to give something away I also get a lot back.”* [R3:28] A benefit pointed out by benefactors is the response of the recipient of LTC. They see recipients shine and sparkle. They see lots of happy faces, and sometimes emotion. It makes benefactors happy when they see recipients enjoying the activity. Furthermore, benefactors appreciate that recipients respond in such a sincere and pure way. Recipients may also express their appreciation and gratitude to the benefactor. This is done in different more or less straightforward ways. Recipients write a friendly message on a card or they make something themselves and give it to the benefactor as a present.

Becoming a better person

Benefactors pointed out that doing something for others gives people a good feeling about themselves. *“Many people like to feel like a good person, to do something good. That indeed strengthens your sense of self [...] That gives gratification. I have done something good.”* [R1:128]

An enriching but challenging experience

The contact with recipients is seen as an experience that enriches. Benefactors can learn more about themselves in getting to know an unknown world or group of people. Alternatively, they can become more aware of their own luck and happiness.

You very often hear that this is an experience that enriches you, that gives you something. By going out of my environment into another environment and coming into close contact with people who are different, I also learn more about myself. [R3:32]

At the same time, it may well be challenging to come into contact with an unknown group of people. Benefactors may be a little scared the first time they meet recipients. One benefactor described it thus:

I have been in the situation where I sat around a table with severely handicapped people with whom I found it very difficult to communicate [...] In my daily life I don't come into contact with severely handicapped people who have multiple handicaps. Then you really have to overcome that so, for me as a person, that was also very instructive. [R4:29]

An altered and more positive view of a specific group

Often, people in society have a certain image of a group of people such as chronic psychiatric patients or people with intellectual disabilities. By getting acquainted with these people this image proves to be incorrect or to be different than expected.

I have also become aware that people with chronic psychiatric problems are not scary. If you meet them on the street and they behave strangely, people find that rather scary. But because you have that interaction- That also breaks down this barrier. [R2:103]

Win-win situation

An asset of LTC is that there is generally a win-win situation. Benefactors who offer LTC often get something in return. For example, someone offers his services without costs (a photographer or artist for example), but gets contacts and brand awareness in return. The same is true for companies who offer LTC that contributes, in turn, to a good image. In the previous section we saw examples of what benefactors get back in return. According to one benefactor: *"There must be a balance between giving and receiving, otherwise people stop giving."* [R1:331]. That 'giving' is not entirely altruistic is not a problem, according to benefactors. They don't feel clients suffer from it. Whatever the benefactor gains, a nice activity has been organized for the recipient. One benefactor says: *"I think that it is rarely completely without self-interest. But that doesn't matter. It has an effect, it works."* [R7:218]

II RECIPIENT

Next, several themes and sub-themes were identified in the coded interviews with recipients. An overview is given in Table 2. In the next section the themes and sub-themes are described in more detail.

Table 2.

Overview themes and sub-themes recipients

Themes	Sub themes
Benefits to recipients	Pleasurable anticipation Enjoyment Forgetting worries Variation Learning something new Getting to know people Being proud, feeling special and appreciated Nice memory
Less positive experiences of recipients	Too intense Insufficiently stimulation Too hectic Too little preparation

Benefits recipients

In this section the benefits to recipients are described according to recipients themselves (and their relatives and care givers) and according to benefactors of LTC.

Pleasurable anticipation

According to recipients of LTC themselves, their relatives and caregivers, recipients experience pleasurable anticipation prior to the LTC activity. It gives them something to look forward to. At the same time some recipients are stressed or nervous about what is going to happen, how to get there and if everything will work out. A caregiver describe it thus: *"I noticed that, before his wish was going to be fulfilled that he [the recipient] became restless. He couldn't sleep well and he found it incredibly exciting. It worried him."* [G15:258]

Enjoyment

Recipients of LTC, their relatives and caregivers indicated that a main benefit of LTC is that recipients experience enjoyment. It makes them feel good, they are happy. Recipients have fun during the activity. Relatives and caregivers indicate that they see the recipients sparkle. A volunteer who was present at the beauty day said:

You see them enjoying themselves a lot. When you are there, when they simply get this attention, then you often see this big smile in the mirror. And I've also made photos of this and you can then see that they find it amazing. [G13:124-V]

Forgetting worries

According to recipients, their relatives and caregivers the positive experience of taking part in an activity can help recipients to forget their worries or the negative things in their life for a while. The activity offers distraction. This can sometimes have a longer lasting effect. After a relaxing day recipients can be more ready to deal with the routine of everyday life. As one benefactor said: *"You see people get away from their problems, from the thoughts in their heads. You see that people are much more [...] in the here and now."* [R6:109] Furthermore, benefactors describe LTC activities contribute to the wellbeing of recipients. Because these activities are a highlight in peoples' life, they enable them to keep going:

In the same way that we, as healthy people, sometimes feel the need for a little treat, going out or doing something or going to the cinema. It is exactly the same for them. It is a highlight that can keep you going for a while. [R4:35]

Variation/Out of the daily routine

Participation in an (LTC) activity can offer some welcome variation in one's everyday life. A benefactor stated that a (new) activity may broaden the recipient's world: *"That you can be in another situation or become acquainted with new music."* [R6:104] People with intellectual disabilities mostly have a certain structure in their lives with regular activities. This structure is often necessary.

Learning something new

Recipients indicated that they had learned or done something new during the activity. They learned which make-up or hairstyle looked good on them on the beauty day or how to make fresh spaghetti during the cooking workshop: *"I had never handled that machine so I wanted to try it. And it went well."*

Such long pieces." [G12:539-R]. Furthermore recipients learned that a wish can come true. The caregiver of a recipient who was a 'hero-for-a-day' said that he had learned that he can make people happy. According to benefactors sometimes new interests or talents are discovered by taking part in an (LTC) activity. Sometimes knowledge of a part of the personal history of a client can get lost due to change of caregiver among other things. Therefore, it can be surprising what someone is able to do.

Becoming more independent

Furthermore, an assumed benefit of LTC according to benefactors is that some recipients become more independent. Because recipients are asked to think about what they want, for instance, or see what possibilities they (still) have. A benefactor explained:

Another woman, who had been in long-stay care, [...] now lives by herself. 'I have become independent again thanks to LTC. ' [...] I think that that has come about because she attended our dinner parties, as well as our days out and so on. And this developed a pattern of the kind 'hey! I could also do these other things.', I could also do things outside of the institution and I could cope with them. [R2:29]

Getting to know people

Recipients describe that they got to know (new) people or they got to know more about people they already knew. They have had social contact during the activity. This is of value to recipients. A relative said: "*He is a really sociable person. He likes to do nice things together in a group.*" [G12:262-N]

Recognition as a human being

According to benefactors, recipients may experience recognition during an LTC activity. During the activity recipients are not seen as patients with complaints, but as human beings.

For these women [refugees who the staff of a company cooked for] it was great that they were noticed by other people whom they could talk to. That they were seen as women, as human beings and not only as patients with complaints. [R5:161]

Feeling special/Being proud, feeling special and appreciated

A benefit of LTC can be that recipients feel special or noteworthy, according to benefactors. "*If people are invited, they feel special. Because somebody had thought of them.*" [R6:23] Feeling special is also mentioned in the interviews with recipients, relatives and caregivers. Recipients of LTC feel special, because they have been chosen to participate in the activity or because a special effort has been made for them. Also using fancy plates for dinner, as happened at the cooking workshop, can be a demonstration of special attention. Recipients feel famous, important, proud and valued because they get a lot of nice comments from others and others are proud of them. One recipient said: "*Even the [football] players were proud of me 'Hey! Batman'.*" [G15:95]. His caregiver explained the importance and the effect of it:

He definitely learned that he could feel appreciated. That he felt himself to be important that evening. That is very important for him [...] Because that would have a positive effect on him. He then had something to be proud of, something that he could tell others about later. [G15:431-B]

Furthermore, by participating in an activity the self-esteem of recipients can be encouraged. For example because recipients see that they can look nice as happened on the beauty day.

Nice memory/Experiencing afterglow

Benefits of LTC may also have a longer lasting effect. According to benefactors, some recipients reminisce about what happened for a long time. Usually people talk about the activities for quite some time afterwards. Being able to talk about taking part in an activity can be of importance for someone's (social contacts and) identity:

But there are many people being treated here who never take part in anything, who never go anywhere. That can be felt as a loss in social contacts and in being someone. When you can say 'I was in a museum', then you are somebody, then you have experienced something. Then you have something to tell other people. [R5:119]

According to benefactors, gaining nice memories is extra important for certain recipients, such as people who have experienced a lot of unpleasant things. Recipients also said that nice memories were a benefit of LTC. After participating in an activity recipients have a nice memory to keep. And they tell others about their experience or they look back at pictures that have been taken.

Less positive experiences recipients/Undesirable side effects for recipients

Few unpleasant side effects for recipients (according to benefactors)

The results show that benefactors see little or no undesirable side effects of LTC. However, some benefactors stated that recipients occasionally do not like an activity. These recipients have different interests, they feel unwell that day, it is too busy during the activity or the activity is just not as expected:

It is always about expectations. They had expected something else. Something went wrong, they didn't feel well, there can be all sorts of reasons why you don't enjoy it [...] Or someone is sat next to someone that they don't want to sit next to. [R4:73]

However, the fact that recipients do not like an activity is not necessarily considered an undesired side effect by benefactors. Benefactors tend to look at the common denominator in a group instead of the individual. In addition, they indicated that recipients do not have to participate if they do not like the activity. It is voluntary and so people can still cancel or withdraw before or during the activity. One benefactor explained:

If you organize something for one hundred people there will undoubtedly be someone there who this doesn't suit [...] it is of course best if you can take account of what they would like to do, [...] what the majority want, that is what we are going to do. But they are still free to decide whether or not to take part. [R7:80]

Too intense

The interviews with recipients, their relatives and caregivers showed that the duration of the activities did not always seem to be attuned to the target group. For example, according to one of the recipients, the location of the cooking workshop was too far away and the ride there was therefore long. Furthermore, recipients found one of the activities (the beauty day) too long. Especially at the end of the day, when they still had to wait for the singer to start, it took too long: "Because many of them will then go home, they were so tired after such a day." [G14:20-V]

Insufficiently stimulating

According to recipients, their relatives and caregivers the execution of activities is not always attuned to the group of people either. (Parts of) the beauty day and the cooking workshop were felt to be insufficiently stimulating. At the cooking workshop the head cook had made a lot of the preparations beforehand. A recipient said: *"It would have been nice when everything was not set up. That we could do that ourselves."* [G11:123-R]. During the beauty day some of the participants also finished some of the activities quickly (crafting a photo frame for example) and then had to wait for the next activity.

Too hectic

Two recipients indicated that having many people around them at the activity was too hectic. For example, one of the recipients therefore found having her make-up done less enjoyable: *"There were too many people there. And a bit too hectic."* [G13:60-R]

Too little preparation

The interviews with the recipients reveal that sometimes too little preparation seems to have taken place, for instance between the people who organize the activity and the caregiver of the client, or in preparing the client for the activity. For example, one client had no jacket with her when her wish to ride on the back of a motorcycle came true. Another client did not come to the activity (which was planned on April 1th) because he thought it was a joke. And in one accompanied-living-facility a beauty evening took place the evening of the beauty day.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of giving and receiving within LTC by studying the motivations of and benefits to benefactors and the benefits for recipients of LTC. In the discussion, we will first bring the results together in a model that aims to explain the dynamics of giving and receiving (I). Finally we will examine what lessons can be learned from an initiative like LTC for increasing humanity in care (II).

I. Dynamics of giving and receiving

The development of LTC in health care aims to contribute to the promotion of a human dimension of care. The relationship between caregiver and care receiver is made central. A certain reciprocity, a dynamic of giving and receiving, appears if we compare the themes that emerge from the interviews with both benefactors and recipients (see also Figure 1). Benefits for both benefactors and recipients emerge from the interaction between them (shown in Figure 1 at B1 and R1). In this sense both recipients and benefactors are part of the 'good' that emerges.

The results showed that benefactors are motivated to offer LTC because they want to do something good for others or for society as a whole. Through offering LTC, they experience happiness because they enjoy seeing the enjoyment of recipients: by giving, they receive. Furthermore, because benefactors come into contact with the recipients, they get to know an unknown world. This is described as a challenging experience that enriches at the same time. In addition, it leads to an altered and more positive image of the recipients. These benefits for benefactors reinforce their motivation to offer more LTC.

Recipients take part in an LTC activity. In interaction with the benefactors several benefits emerge. Recipients experience enjoyment and they may enjoy the attention they get. Furthermore, they may feel recognized as a person instead of as a patient in making contact with the benefactor. They may also

feel valued and appreciated, special and noteworthy through positive feedback and compliments given by the benefactor and others. Lastly, they get to know new people, including the benefactor.

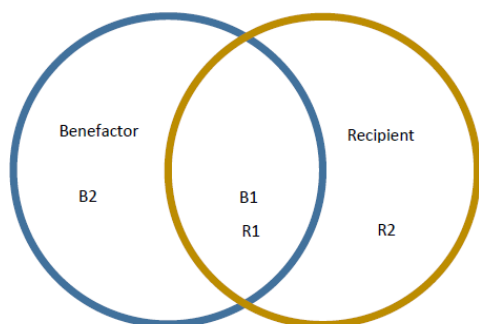


Figure 1. Dynamics of giving and receiving

Note. B1 = benefits to benefactors emerging from interaction with recipients, B2 = other benefits to benefactors, R1 = benefits to recipients emerging from interaction with benefactors. R2 = other benefits for recipients.

There are also other benefits to benefactors as well as to recipients that do not (directly) emerge from the interaction between the parties (shown in Figure 1 at B2 and R2). For benefactors it is often a win-win situation. By offering LTC they may also gain brand awareness or serve a commercial goal. Next, the results show that recipients experience certain benefits that seem to emerge from taking part in the activity itself and not just from the interaction with the benefactor. Recipients experience pleasurable anticipation and an afterglow due to taking part in an activity. It also gives them some variation to their daily routine and may help them to forget their worries. By taking part in an activity they may learn something new and sometimes their independence is stimulated. Besides many positive experiences, the results also showed a few less positive experiences. The results show particularly pitfalls in the area of attunement to the recipient, who is over- or underestimated.

II. Humanity in care

Finally we will reflect on the lessons that can be learned from an initiative like LTC for the increase of humanity in care. Since the focus on standard care protocols or fixed clinical pathways has undesired side effects and carries the risk of making care recipients individuality disappear and impairs their human dignity, the risk exists that LTC is positioned *as opposing* cost-effectiveness, increasing bureaucratic regulations or protocols in healthcare. However the focus in the discussion should be on integration rather than polarization of these different interests. We therefore focus on three challenges that we have to face when we want to integrate both interests into standardized care based on human dignity.

As we have seen, several benefits for both benefactors and recipients emerge from their interaction. However, LTC is mostly offered by volunteers who spend their free time offering LTC to clients. Professional care givers are in the best instances involved in the initiatives. They are usually busy providing the necessary care to clients. What can be concluded about the condition of our care system from this perspective? LTC seems dependent on the availability of 'generous givers' in health care organisations. Should not all vulnerable clients be allowed to participate in an LTC activity from which they grow and forget their worries for a day? When we take the simplicity of their wishes into account,

this should not be that difficult. Otherwise, what expectations does LTC raise concerning the meaning of offering care? It should not only be necessary but also something enjoyable. Is this expectation justified? Next, inherent to offering standardized care is that attention to the wishes of an individual care recipient might vanish. A parallel process can be distinguished in offering LTC. While organizing a LTC activity, benefactors tend to decide according to a utilitarian principle. They look at the common denominator in a group instead of the individual. A consequence is that not all clients feel addressed although expectations might be high. When a care organization combines a utilitarian with a deontological way of arranging care, a discussion of the fundamental principles in care - including offering LTC - should be held.

Finally, inherent to offering standardized care is the feeling of powerlessness and system pressure on professionals. Offering LTC might feel like a way of making a difference and being of significance for clients, their relatives and for the caregivers involved. LTC can be considered as a form of soft power. Integrating LTC into standardized care might be an opportunity for professionals to have the power to bring about change.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

All authors were involved in conception and design of the study. EK collected the data. EK and MH were involved in data analysis. EK, MH and PE drafted the manuscript, which was critically revised for important intellectual content by all authors.

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The study proposal was approved by the psychological ethics committee of Tilburg University the Netherlands.

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