Ethical Mental Health Care beyond Institutional Spaces

To truly address questions of mental health care; we must broaden our understanding of the contexts in which they arise. We must go beyond ethical questions related to care, design and treatment that arise in clinical settings to include questions of care that emerge and create a call for response within ordinary settings of the everyday. While ethical concerns around mental health care in clinical settings are centred around questions of patient autonomy, informed consent etc; the nature and type of ethical challenges that informal caregivers (family members, friends etc) confront in caring for people with mental health issues are qualitatively different as care is embedded in ongoing relationships. Emerging from spaces where apparently dichotomous categories such as care-abandonment or freedom-constraint collapse in the face of crises of mind, of relatedness, of intimacy (Pinto, 2014); concepts such as autonomy, consent etc might offer limited help in settings where mental health issues are relationally lived. In so far as care ethics conceives of relations as the ontologically basic unit and caring relation as the basis of ethical behaviour, the presentation aims to analyse the extent to which care ethics can provide key insights with regard to these questions.