

Halifax 2005

## Rapporteur

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I thought ...

A person skilled at telling funny stories



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I discovered ...

A person charged with preparing a report



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Difficult Theme

Accountability

“What happened to that resident?”

“What can I do as a manager?”

“If it’s all the system, people won’t act responsibly any more”

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Difficult Theme

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Accountability

In the denotation, the wrong question

If good people are led into bad failures, making those people “accountable” will be felt as punishment.

Don Berwick’s Foreman No. 1

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## Accountability

In the broader sense, the most important issue

Imagine if the videos included an interview with a nurse involved in a fatal drug mis-administration –

Would we then feel satisfied?

Or would our sense of what kind of accountability we want change?

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## Accountability

What do we want accountability to do for us?

Address problems in skills, knowledge, attitudes

Provide a sense of justice

Satisfy the need to blame

Provide an explanation

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## A Way Forward

- Reason, Westrum, Flin
  - Senior leadership's accountability
    - Production / protection balance
    - Elicitation / suppression of information
- Conway
  - What organisational accountability looks like
- Sless, Helmreich
  - Who's accountable for design?
  - For selection?

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## A Way Forward

- Lee, Morath, Gisvold
  - Reporting as accountability
  - Reciprocal accountability
  - The proper role of regulation
- Justices Moshansky, Krever, Sinclair
  - Help from the law and society at large
  - A peek at real accountability by asking the “question behind the question”
  - But *ad hoc*
- Compare to Duke transplant case

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## New Understanding

Accountability could mean, not *mea culpa*, but:

### To give an account\*

What would such an account look like?

- Independent
- Credible (expert)
- Shared
- Inescapable
- Not *ad hoc*

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## Risks and a Challenge

- Inexpert analysis
  - Mistaking conditions for causes
  - Premature closure
  - Posturing, turf, revenge
- Conflation with regulation (non-independence)
  - Regulator is part of the system, too
- Counterproductive regulation
  - No industry has become safe without outside regulation
- Canada is leading the world in this area

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