Transcript – information seeking behaviour and practice
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So information-seeking is an umbrella concept along with information behaviour and information practice. And it refers to the ways in which people process information in the context of their everyday life. How they make sense of their environment. How they make meaning. so we talk a lot about meaning making. And I think it is quite important because often we think about information seeking as pointing somebody towards a particular source of information and it's not just that.

And in the context of newcomers in particular it is really important to understand that people come with assumptions and expectations. And people come with huge gaps in their knowledge about how the system works, about even the existence of a particular service. They may not ever have encountered a service like 211 for example so they can't even conceptualize that such a system exists. Therefore they will not seek it.

So it is really important when we think about information seeking not to think of it in a very linear manner very instrumental: if I give them A then you know their their issue, their problem, the information need will be solved. Instead it is more helpful for us to understand information practices or information behaviour along the continuum.

So when we talk about information behaviour often we talk about three things:

1. information seeking - how people go about finding information in the context of solving a specific issue in their lives
2. information needs - how do people conceptualize the need for information whether it's about housing, employment or settling into a new neighbourhood
3. and the last piece is information use - once you give people the information what will they do with it? Will they share it? In what format? What's the the rate of distortion in someone that information that will be passed on to others.

So that's information behaviour - the seeking, the need, and the use now, and the sharing as well.

And the latest research is showing that the concept of information practice is a little bit more helpful. And the difference between information behaviour and information practice which I think has implications for the work that settlement workers workers do, is that information behaviour tends to focus on the individual. What happens in the head. What are their motivationsThe affective dimension, you know, I need information urgently about housing

So when you are the context of need or emergency often you will make decisions about which information to select and to act on in a different way then if you had a bit more time. So information behaviour often is about the individual and their motivation, their affective and cognitive processes.

Information practice is a little bit different. Information practice says, you know information is encountered in the environment. Knowledge is socially constructed. People may have an encounter information in a very passive way often they will not be self aware and really be conscious about solving a problem.

So what is important about that is we as, as information professionals, as settlement workers, need to know that people will encounter information not only within the setting of the settlement agency or the government agency or the website but people are actually surrounded by information that they encounter through their social network ties, through their monitoring the media, listening to the radio, being on WhatsAp with people back home... So all these are sources of information that will impact on what a newcomer knows and what the newcomer thinks he or she needs to do.

So I like information practice a bit better than information behaviour because it adds that social and communicative element to our definition or how people seek information in the context of their everyday life.

I think it's a new conceptualization I think it's a bit it's more holistic approach to information. In information behaviour, often the the focus initially was on this very, the interaction of the user with another person, with a worker, a settlement worker, with a website or a system. So information seeking was really just reduced to that interaction between two people or between a system and an individual without really taking into account the fact that people come with connections, people know things, people have prior knowledge that they may have from their position, their education, their travels. In look in the context of refugees for example they have had frequent settlement and resettlement in different settings. So they come with a range of knowledge and understanding and ties and expectations that we need to take it into account. And I think information behaviour was not covering that tacit knowledge. Those information encounters that happen outside of just that direct connection with a settlement worker or the website.

And having an appreciation and understanding of the full environment, the context, the uses of social media for example, how people learn and share information and seek it beyond the agency, really seek it through people most locally and transnationally is critical in our day and age to understand migration and to understand social inclusion, really.