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TITLE: Making the case for paying for emotion work: How might we evaluate the exchange value of creating emotionally well-equipped workers in aged care and disability support?

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Neo-liberal ideologies have been the *bête-noir* of those concerned with just social policy for several decades. Valorisation of markets, individualism and reducing public expenditure on social services have been influential in efficiency drives, as well as the birth of consumer-directed and person-centred models in aged care and disability support.

Paradoxically, neo-liberalism relegates the 'soft' skills and emotion work at the heart of person-centred approaches to the domestic sphere, denying them a market value and keeping wages for care and support workers low. Yet we know that workers' emotional labour is important in the effective delivery of person-centred support.

Drawing on the literature and on evidence from a doctoral study of meaning and identity in aged care and disability support, I report on the sorts of emotion work people in care and support worker roles perform—both for clients and for themselves.

I argue that the 'market' or exchange value of emotion work shows up when it is neither paid for nor treated as a marketable skill to be developed and sustained. I then speculate on some means by which, to use a martial arts analogy, we might use the force of neo-liberal policy against itself.