



# Digital frontline work

From chronic resource problems to responsive services?

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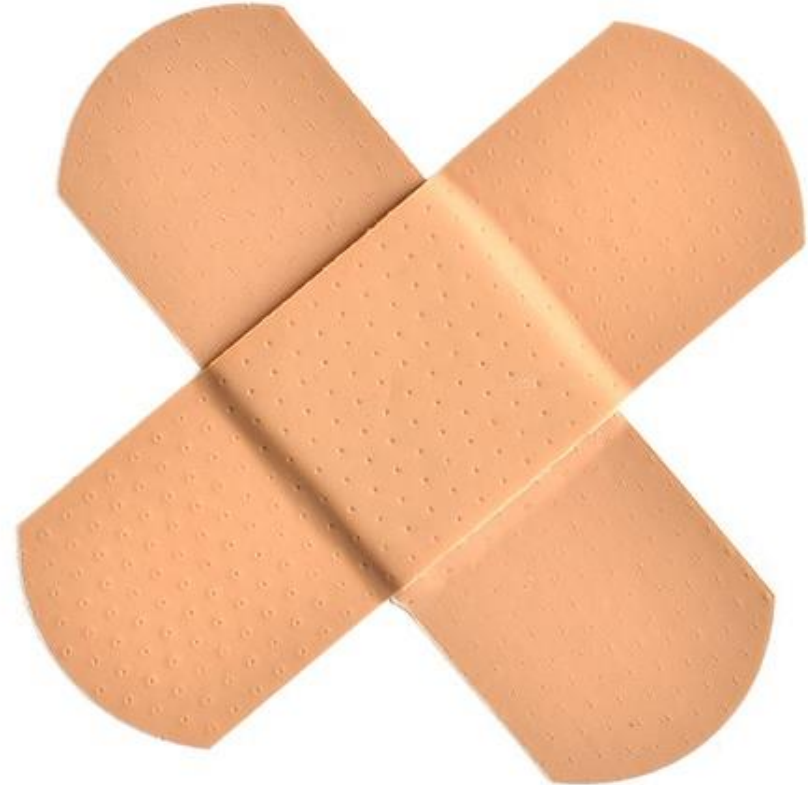
# Frontline workers

- Meet clients and exercise discretion
- Work under vague rules and limited resources



Dilemmas that frontline workers must cope with

(Lipsky, 2010)



# NAV

- Provides financial and social support
- Follow-up at local offices
- Clients can now interact with NAV online



Time



- Digital communication is efficient **but....**



“I believe it is a good thing, but, at the same time, we have become very available and it takes a lot of time.”

Frontline worker, NAV



“They say that “Oh, it is so nice. Do not have to wait in line; do not have to wait three or four months for a conversation. Now, we can talk all the time!”

Frontline worker, NAV



Digital communication can create a demand for services



Løberg, 2021. For similar examples, see Chen et al, 2006.

“It is those who yell the loudest that receive help first, but it is not necessarily those who yell the loudest who need the help most.”

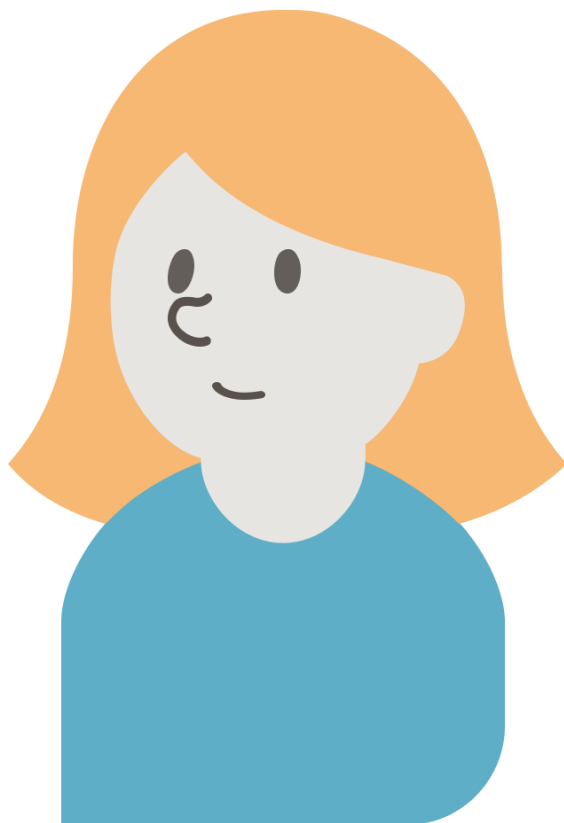
Frontline worker, NAV

# Information



“Sometimes it is useful to see ... who it is we have in front of us. Are there any teeth missing and ... ? I believe this tells us something about the person we can lose sight of when everything is digital ... I met a woman who only had stumps of her teeth left. [Experiences like these invite us] to provide different counselling and follow-up that relates to the situation.”

Frontline worker, NAV



[← Tilbake](#)

## Er opplysningene riktige?

Her er opplysningene vi har registrert om deg.



Situasjon: Har mistet eller kommer til å miste jobben

[Endre](#)

Høyeste fullførte utdanning: Høyere utdanning (5 år eller mer)

[Endre](#)

Utdanning godkjent i Norge: Ja

[Endre](#)

Utdanning bestått: Ja

[Endre](#)

Helseproblemer: Nei

[Endre](#)

Andre problemer: Nei

[Endre](#)

“She was here in 2017 as well. Then there was a break of some years. Therefore, she has had some sort of income. It could be that she ran her own business. A company. Then went bankrupt or something happened. Then she returns with a file here.”

Frontline worker, NAV



= complication strategies

Workers complicate their perceptions of the task

(Løberg, 2022)

# Relational aspects





“[It’s very difficult to find] the person in all of this. You are communicating through a ... Unless they use a lot of emojis and smileys and winking face emojis ... You still get no emotions out of it. It makes it a lot easier to be cynical in my job as a case worker, as if “This is what it’s like—behave accordingly!” Had it been face-to-face, perhaps I would have made more compromises—met them halfway—because tragic fates make a greater impression on us.»

Frotnline worker, NAV

“But then I have also had clients where we had good conversations in the office first, and I received messages in Modia afterwards like “All I said was a lie, I am sorry, but it was all a lie. I am not doing well at all”. (...) He drank and told me during the conversation that all was fine, no problem, that he had stopped and was in control and was so happy and so on. Then I received the message.”

Frontline worker, NAV

“We get that it is a burden for some people (...) Then, I’m flexible with meetings, scheduling them for a time when they can perhaps have someone at home.”

Frontline worker, NAV

# From chronic resource problems to responsive services?



- Does not seem to solve time problems but services can still be responsive
- Need for systems that support meaningful discretion and professional efficiency

(Elyounes, 2021; Germundsson, u.å.; Petersen et al., 2020)



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# Literature

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