

Jun 28th, 3:45 PM - 4:15 PM

# Caring in the Act of Service: A Case Study of the Who, What, and How in Hospitality Service Experiences

Carrie Herzog

*TEFI Excellence Award for Early-Career Scholarship in Sustainability*

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Herzog, Carrie, "Caring in the Act of Service: A Case Study of the Who, What, and How in Hospitality Service Experiences" (2016).  
*Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI) Conference. 2.*  
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## **Caring in the Act of Service: A Case Study of the Who, What, and How in Hospitality Service Experiences**

**Dr. Carrie Herzog**

**TEFI Excellence Award for Early-Career Scholarship in Sustainability**

The focus of this presentation is on discussing the “who,” “what,” and “how” of caring in hospitality service experiences. The hospitality and tourism literature has addressed “what is sustainability” and “who cares about sustainability” but has paid less attention to “how do we show we care about sustainability” in the service experience, and “who should be engaged in the act of caring.” By presenting the findings of an inductive study exploring how the construct of “sustainability” is enacted in the context of Canadian full-service restaurants, I will discuss the meanings of sustainability at four levels—a broad hospitality industry level, a broad consumer marketplace level, a firm or restaurant level, and a service experience level (the what). I will also explain what influences the meanings and perceptions of sustainability among key participants in the service experience—managers, employees, and customers (the who). Finally, I will illuminate how meanings and perceptions of sustainability are created by individuals in the service consumption process (the how).

A conceptual framework—Berry, Wall, and Carbone’s “service experience clues”—is applied in this research to help us uncover rational and emotional perceptions of sustainability in a specific service context (a case restaurant experience) from the perspectives of managers, employees, and customers. Sustainability is an important consideration not just before and after a service experience, but also during the experience itself. What is communicated about sustainability, who is involved, and how the meanings and perceptions are formed during the experience need to be considered to better understand caring as a dynamic process in service.