

Legal provision in mental health services

Law



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Reflective Log

Mental disorders have become a global social problem due to its significant contribution to the disability globally. This explains the concern by different national and international regulatory agencies to ensure that there are guidelines in the management of these health problems. The underlying logic is that the individuals with mental problems still have potential. They can still be reinstated to become responsible members of the society if the problem is fixed in time. As such, a milestone has been recorded in the quality and type of care that these patients receive, from the traditional hospital-based care to the current community and home-based care. The patients can often receive quality care while in the comfortable company of their families.

While dealing with the patients with mental health problems, the care-providers are often faced with situations of dilemma that require proper decision-making. The traditional approaches to decision-making that concern a patient with mental disability involved the professionals at the central position and the families of the patient. Little or no attention was given to the feelings of the patient. The patients were required to follow the directions of the professionals and the available members of the families. However, significant changes have been recorded with the increasing needs to protect the rights of these patients with mental health problems. To make the appropriate decisions, the care providers should integrate both the professional ethics and the regulatory provisions that guide the provision of care to these individuals with mental health problems. The individuals should be included in making all the decisions that are likely to affect their health.

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The patients have to be guided to make a decision. The professionals need to explain to the patients all the possible courses of action to be taken and their respective consequences. This will enable a patient to make an informed consent on the kind of intervention that is appropriate. The practitioners and carers have to understand that even though this patient has mental problems, he/she still has the rights to make decisions on his or her life. The legal provisions require that they be consulted.

Another important legal provision is that the care for the individuals with mental problems should not be considered the responsibility of the families, as was the case earlier. This increased social and psychological problems to the families. Rather, it is considered the responsibility of the government and the society. This implies that a care-provider dealing with these patients should not consider it a philanthropic service he/she offers to the community, but an accomplishment of the task bestowed by the government. This affects the carer's attitude towards the patients. He/she will be able to develop tolerance.

Our organization understands and applies these provisions in its operations. Besides, I have continued, and still intend, to apply this approach to solve any other issue that will be encountered in the future. In the stated cases, another approach would be to talk to the families of this patient and seek their opinion then act according to this opinion. Worse still, another professional would just go by the understanding that the patient needed this medication and so he had to take it. However, I do consider neither of these approaches it appropriate, both ethically and legally.