

Empowerment in health promotion



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Empowerment in Health Promotion The term empowerment often refers to increasing social, political, gender, educational, spiritual, or economic strength of communities or individuals (Linhorst 43). This term covers a vast area of application, interpretation, and definition that varies across different disciplines that range from philosophy and psychology to highly self-help commercialized industries and motivational sciences. For instance, sociological empowerment usually addresses a group of person who are socially discriminated. Social discrimination often involves exclusion from decision-making based on race, disability, religion, or gender. In most cases, empowerment is usually associated with feminism. These affected persons may be empowered on individual or community levels (Lee 22). Therefore, the person intending to empower either individual or the community must initiate the process by identifying the groups affected and then evaluating the nature of the discrimination involved.

Individual empowerment is equally empowering a community since the empowered individual will reflect the same change initiated in the same community thereby affecting the entire community, group, or society.

Empowerment often aims at enhancing an individual's capacity to transform and make an informed choice on the already available choices towards a desired action to effect an appropriate outcome (Linhorst 51). The universal aim of individual empowerment is to initiate an action or process that builds an individual and his collective assets towards improving fairness and efficiency of institutional and organizational contexts that govern the use of the targeted assets (Minkler 59). In healthcare institutions, integrative medicine practitioners often empower individuals to take active roles towards their own their health care as well as the ultimate decision makers.

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Moreover, they also encourage their patients to be responsible towards maintaining their individual health.

Numerous health care agencies advocate for patient centered health care provision. For instance, according to the National Academy of Science, patients should be given adequate and necessary information as an opportunity for them to exercise a degree of control on their health care decisions. It further argues that health care systems should readily accommodate the differences in the patients' preferences and encouraging shared decision making among the patients (Linhorst 72). Additionally, patients should be allowed access to their unfettered medical information and clinical knowledge. Finally, this health care institution urges that patients and health care providers should be in constant, effective communication as well as sharing clinical among other relevant health care information (Minkler 67). Certainly, including patients and their families in the care provision have been seen to empower patients towards effective clinical decision-making and responsible self-care; thus, empowerment is an integral part of effecting and improving social changes in different ways and capacities including health care provision. Furthermore, empowerment was once used as HIV prevention program that targeted women whose actions and choices were constrained by gender roles, poverty, and cultural norms. In this context, women were trained on how to take control over their social, economic, and sexual lives (Lee 73). Notably, the above are some examples how empowerment has been used to trigger social change at different multi levels.

There are numerous principles and strategies of empowerment towards both social and political changes. The poor people have initiated most these

strategies; however, governments, private sectors, and civil societies have introduced some. Nonetheless, there is no single strategy defined as single institutional empowerment model (Linhorst 44). The key elements of empowerment that often employed institutional reforms include accountability, access of information, participation and inclusion, and local organizational capacity. The initial step towards empowering a community is identifying challenges affecting that community. Such information must be accessed in a timely manner. The identified information may be political or social. After identification of the challenge, other mechanisms of actions follow, for instance, the inclusion of the affected persons in the understanding the nature of the underlying problem.

Works Cited

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