Article review on mental illness

Health & Medicine, Disease

Jennifer Tozier Compentency Assignment 1, Review #2 Dr. Besthorn 09/15/2012 I chose to write my article review on the article entitled, " How clinical Diagnosis Might Exacerbate the Stigma of Mental Illness. " It is a not new concept that people are consistently drawn to a labeling others with a stigma, and this article delves into how we as social workers can (unintentionally) either encourage that stigma or hinder it based on the presentation to the client and to the public. A key point to the article talks about three kinds of potential ways stigma hurts a client.

The first was being label avoidance. Many people do not want to admit to a mental illness, let alone get it treated because of how they might be perceived. Those that can admit having a mental illness and seek services may feel a certain stigma that then draws them back, and they avoid treating the problem, after they have confirmed that they, in fact, do suffer from the illness. They are afraid of being labeled in society or among their peers. The second stigma is blocked lifegoals. When suffering from a mental illness, everyday life can be and often is hard for the client.

Without treatment, thestressof daily life can inhibit the client from seeking opportunities such as work, school, familyand friends. Without these life goals being fulfilled, the mental illness takes control of the clients' life and they are fixed from advancing in the everyday life. The third way a stigma hurts a client is the self-stigma. This is where the client begins to believe what is being said about them and their problem. It further exacerbates the problem because they not only deal with the issue of mental illness but feel judged in every encounter; this changes their behavior and creates a greater issue.

This article also discusses the diagnosis of a mental illness in regards to " groupness" and the " differentness" aspects of how the public distinguishes people with mental issues. This looks into the stereotypes and over generalizations and how it relates with mental illness and the general public. Mental illness while it may be more prevalent in some groups, it is an equal opportunity illness and can affect anyone regardless of age, race, financial status, or occupation. The article does an excellent job of describing how once a person is diagnosed with a mental llness it draws diversity in how they might be labeled and construed in society, similar to how they might be treated if they were a minority group. Research shows that this stigma " groups" individuals once they have been diagnosed with a mental illness, regardless if the client demonstrations any abnormal characteristics. The author did a terrific job of discussing the different stigmas that mental illness produces. It talked about how society or the majority labels a person with mental illness and the way a person can label themselves, both which produce disastrous results.

I can see that this is a relevant article in the field of social work, because social workers can shape the way the client is perceived, both by the majority and the client all in the way they identify the illness. I understand that the article is talking about how the diagnosis can exacerbate the stigma, but I did not get a strong hold on ways to diagnosis it in an improved approach. The paragraph talking about diagnosis as a continuum seems like the closest point of reference for me, as an approach, but as it suggested this dimensional approach is not familiar to most clinicians.

It seems once again there is only so far workers can go, with the limited knowledge we have obtained through research to date. The theory that I associated with the article is social learning theory. I came to that conclusion for several reasons mainly, because social learning theory suggests that human behavior is learned as individuals. The article talks about how people who have been diagnosed at times will not seek treatment solely because of how they will be stigmatized.

The problem behavior will not be treated and will remain a problem because a stigma will be placed on that individual if they admit the problem and get treatment. I think that using the social learning theory as a mode of treatment can be possible if the social worker can convince the client that if they get treatment and function in a " normal" way they will have a better quality of life. The article talked about how the social worker defines the mental illness and relays the information not only to the client, but also to other mentalhealthproviders is a determining factor on how it will be perceived.

It is our ethicalresponsibilitytreat the client with dignity andrespect, therefor when discussing the mental illness we need to be sure to use professional terms and be 100% correct before we unintentionally put a stigma on our client, they may put undue hardship in their life. When engaging with a client with mental illness it is necessary to discuss with them what they can expect, from meeting with the mental health provider all the way through treatment. Also to find out what they expect from the process.

It is vital to let them know that they will have issues to deal with such as social stigma, but a road to treatment will give them a better quality of life.

Mental illness affects people every day. Simply because of the stigma attached to it, people do not want to admit they have a problem. This is an implication because if more people could be honest and upfront social workers and policy makers could be given more time, resources, and attention to create policies that would benefit those struggling. The more resources and policies available the better chance that people suffering from mental illness will not have to deal with a stigma.