

Prevention essay



Prevention is better than cure, and as with the medical field, it is true for human services. Prevention is defined as the process of preventing social problems and issues that surface due to the needs of the citizens of the country, closely related to the concept of prevention is how able the government is to provide for those needs. Human services is tasked with the delivery of different welfare services that is geared towards alleviating the plight of the poor, the homeless, the disabled and the unfortunate members of society.

The history of prevention have indicated that measures to prevent diseases, calamities, epidemics and the like had been haphazardly designed and implemented or it was not even part of the design but a consequence of several human services policy (Burger, 2008). The government was more concerned with answering the immediate needs of the society such as the rising number of HIV infected individuals have led to the delivery of medical treatment to help those who were HIV positive, in the outcome, it was obvious that to prevent the number of HIV patients, a massive awareness campaign had to be directed towards the society. Prevention campaigns geared towards different physical illnesses abound but these have not been true for mental health. Mental health had been largely misunderstood and conditions like schizophrenia, hallucinations, delusions and paranoia had been seen as bizarre and was treated with prayers, rituals and the like in the past. It is only with the burgeoning research about mental illness have contributed to the awareness that mental illness is a medical condition and which is qualified for treatment and at the same time, the principles of prevention could also be applied.

It is only with the increase in knowledge and information about the different researches on mental health conditions that have opened the eyes of the government and the general public towards the different psychological conditions manifested by the mentally ill. Mental illness sometimes can be qualified as a physical illness or brought about by certain diseases, however, individuals with disabilities or those who are incapable of taking care of their needs because of mental retardation or physical handicap is another story. Often times, the services given to these individuals are about recognizing their needs, providing them with opportunities to integrate themselves to society and to improve their quality of life. The concept of prevention in this area had been slow and almost non-existent save for the outcomes of preventing certain disabilities like the campaign towards fetal alcoholism where pregnant women are cautioned about the consuming alcohol while pregnant and the like (Longmore & Goldberger, 2000).

The concept of prevention has 3 categories; it is primary when the process directly prevents a disability, disease or dysfunction from occurring, secondary prevention is said to occur when early detection and treatment of a dysfunction is implemented while tertiary prevention refers to the rehabilitation and reintegration of patients with mental illness to mainstream society (Burger, 2008). The three categories overlap with existing programs designed for treatment and rehabilitation, however the concept of prevention is to prevent something from occurring, thus the need for primary prevention had been stressed. Primary prevention is implemented to stop a dysfunction from occurring and for persons with disabilities, it may be defined in terms of preventing a certain condition from occurring, but this is

a double edged sword since individuals with disabilities or special needs already have a condition which cannot be prevented from occurring. Thus prevention should be geared towards stopping the incidence of this disability from appearing in the society (Bane & Ellwood, 1994). Take for example Down syndrome, it is a genetically based condition of which science had not been able to prevent from occurring; most DS individuals have mental retardation, have physical handicaps and may need constant care and attention from caregivers.

It has been found that DS is largely associated with the age of pregnancy and the risks of having a DS child increases with the mother's age, thus the government have integrated this knowledge to motherhood programs however not all women who had children after 35 years old bore a DS child which can account for the fact that many women are now choosing to have children late in their life. For people with disabilities, primary prevention is not very applicable, what is more in keeping with disabilities is tertiary prevention. Although tertiary prevention is specifically directed towards persons with mental illness, it can actually be applied to persons with disabilities as the objective is to rehabilitate and reintegrate them to society. Physical disabilities make the individual poorly equipped to care for themselves, thus prevention strategies should be geared towards giving these individuals the skills and the tools too improve their quality of life by teaching them life skills.

The rehabilitation of persons with disability may include teaching them how to use their remaining functions, if blind teach them how to read using Braille, if the individual cannot walk, let him/her learn to use the wheelchair

and the like. Reintegration of persons with disabilities has already been started with the various laws and decrees that uphold the basic rights and protection of these individuals. The suggested prevention strategy is in keeping with the existing laws and government regulations and policies, it is only to improve what has already been done as it is sorely lacking in intensity and scope (Trattner, 1999). The negative treatment and discrimination against persons with disabilities had still been around, and accepting them as part of society has been the hardest hurdle to conquer. Thus, an awareness campaign about disabilities, its origins and their special needs should be implemented.

Obstacles in the implementation of this proposed strategy would be the poor reception of disabilities in government funding, the misinformation of the public and the disinterest of the persons with disabilities in general (Longmore & Goldberger, 2000). With this prevention plan, it is important that government should first conduct a census of how many individuals have disabilities and what are their needs and be able to allocate an equal amount of funds for each different disability.