

Psychosocial models



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Medical Model

The medical model of addiction counseling involves the incorporation of medicinal or drug based mechanisms aimed at detoxifying the affected individual with an aim of assisting them recover from their addiction. In recent times the medical model has undergone significant evolution leading to the inclusion of alternative medicine perspectives in drug addiction counseling, for instance, as seen in shamanism.

General System Model

The general system model entails the analysis of the specific interactions that impact upon an individual during his or her developmental cycle resulting in a significant impact on the person's behavioral traits. The systems model postulates that a distinct change in the functional components of an individual essentially results in a compensatory change being reflected in the other family members (Rokutani, 2002). Hence, the interactions among the family members inform the operational dynamics pursued under the family therapy approaches proposed by the systems model.

Advocates and Critics Views

Medical Model

Most critics contend that the application of the medical model holds efficacy only as an alternative approach to certain drug addiction behaviors like alcoholism. Winkelman contends that alternative medicine is not the most prevalent/predominant approach towards addiction medicine, but is seen as

a mainstream alternative in solving alcoholic related addiction syndromes (Winkelman, 2007). Others advocate that the model offers the best approach for solving problems at the first instance. According to the results released by the SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Abuse and Health (NSDH) about 23.3 million individuals, who form 9.4% of the total United States population and aged under 12 and older actually required adequate treatment for addiction to illicit drug or alcohol in 2007 (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2009).

General Systems Model

Some scientists advocate for the application of the general systems approach focusing on the family as a preferred mechanism of handling drug related problems. According to DelCampo and Crnkovic (1998), "Therapists are increasingly considering chemical addiction from a family systems perspective" (p. 25). Moreover, the systemic affects a wide range of factors, which are considered contentious. According to Rokutani, the systemic approach elementally provides a counselor with a proper understanding of the complexities involved in student's substance abuse, and integrates the affected individual with the family with an aim of getting support by changing the family's current homeostasis (Rokutani, 2002).

What are the strengths and weaknesses for each model as they relate to addiction counseling?

Medical Model

The strengths of the medical model lie in its ability to remove the initial accumulated level of toxins for the affected victims. This is essentially important in preventing the occurrence of adverse medical conditions. However, there also exist significant forms of weakness with the model. The National Institute of Drug Abuse (2009) observes that, “ medically assisted detoxification is only the first stage of addiction treatment and by itself does little to change long-term drug abuse.”

General Systems Model

Focus on the family provides significant strength for this model in that there is significant support available at the family level. According to DelCampo and Crnkovic (1998), “ Effects of chemical dependency upon the family are discussed and intervention approaches toward assisting the family as the families redefine themselves and change their structure are considered” (p. 25). The system provides an expanded view for intervention and identification of elements leading to a systemic dysfunction; hence addresses a powerful centre of influence (Rokutani, 2002). However, the systems approach has a weakness in that there is need to integrate the approach with other contemporary approaches.

Research Supporting or Refuting the Models

Medical Model

There is significant research showing that that the medical model is subject to significant barriers in reaching its desired objectives. For instance, attempts made to popularize the use of marijuana as a medical alternative to

certain forms of addiction came across problems on account of acceptance. According to Swartz, experimental research in the establishing the role of marijuana in accomplishing addiction treatment is subject to significant political and legal technicalities (Swartz, 2010). Moreover, research findings based on medicinal marijuana use indicate that the use of marijuana during drug addiction treatment acts as a potential obstacle in the achievement of treatment integrity as it could lead to an increase in prevalence and relapse in addition to associated clinical and legal decision frameworks (Swartz, 2010)

General Systems Model

Research shows that the systems approach is significantly efficient in solving drug addiction problems experienced in among a wide group of affected users in the population. This is especially on account of its efficacy on diagnosing and identifying interrelated components contributing to the emancipation of the problem in the contemporary world. “ Criteria for such a diagnosis are the development of a tolerance to the drug of choice, withdrawal from the drug when using ceases, physiological and psychological craving for the drug as well as inability to control use, and/or continued use in the face of resulting difficulties” (DelCampo and Crnkovic, 1998). However it also noted that the family systems approach does not necessarily offer a magic or instant solution for drug addiction but serves to provide a different approach for conceptualization (Rokutani, 2002). Hence, it is critical to note that the in as much as there is significant efficacy with the model, this is ultimately subject to failures in certain contextual instances.