

Social context of health and illness

Sociology



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Community Development Community Development This paper explains the meaning of community development and gives an example of community development activity that helps to reduce social exclusion and reduce inequalities in health.

Community Development

Community development refers to the process that brings community members together for collective action that generates solutions to common problems. This collective action aims at bringing community wellbeing in terms of culture, environment, economy and other factors that are important to the society. Community development involves initiatives within both small groups and the larger community. The process of community development is well-planned, long-term and grounded in experience that leads to best practices. The process seeks to promote equity, inclusion and benefit the community. This process makes community members more responsible, organized, united, and empowered. It also promotes health lifestyles, reduces poverty, and creates employment (Gilchrist 2009, 43).

The goal of community development is to improve the quality of life.

Effective community development results in mutual benefit and shared responsibility among community members. The endeavour of the community development process acknowledges the interconnectedness of economic, social, cultural, and environmental factors. Additionally, the endeavour also appreciates the diversity of interests within a community and the role of capacity building in improving the quality of life. The values of community development include learning, equality, participation, cooperation, and social justice. Community development operates under the principles of collaboration, responsiveness, equity, capacity building, and inclusiveness

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(Gilchrist & Taylor 2011, 54).

Community development activity that reduces social exclusion and health inequalities

Social exclusion happens at different levels including individual, community and professional levels. An example of a community development activity that reduces social exclusion and reduces inequalities in health would be one that seeks to counter social exclusion of persons living with physical disabilities. The process starts with identifying the indicators of social exclusion such as being left out from social events and not being mentioned in social talks. Community members can also express shame when being associated with persons living with disabilities and they might take them to hospitals to get necessary help like other people who do not have disabilities (Lee 2006, 42).

After identifying these indicators and establishing that social exclusion exists, community development practitioners proceed to raising awareness about the situation. Community development practitioners provokes community members to be dissatisfied and inspires them to aspire for a situation where they can live with persons living with physical disabilities without being ashamed of them and contributing to make their situation enjoyable. These practitioners then move on to identifying the resources available in the said community, which can help, overcome the problem of social inclusion and inequalities in health. Examples of resources would include women's groups, religious groups and health centres (Ledwith 2011, 73).

Community development practitioners uses these resources as platforms for training community members the benefits of incorporating the members of

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the community living with disabilities in the mainstream community activities and systems such as health. These practitioners help community members to organize themselves into manageable groups and appoint their own leaders who can help them set goals about including persons living with disabilities into mainstream activities and systems and implement these goals. They also help establish communication channels between the given community and their agency (Pitchford 2008, 63).

Community development practitioners are instrumental in training community members how to assess their progress in attaining their set goals and making necessary adjustments. Areas of monitoring and assessment would be checking the record of the number of persons living with disabilities who attend clinic, visit health centres and who attend social events and gatherings in a given period of time. This would help in ensuring the sustainability of these initiatives (Lee 2006, 43).

In conclusion, community development is a process that mobilizes community members for collective action that seeks for solutions to common social problems. An example of a community development activity that reduces social exclusion and inequalities in health is one that seeks to include marginalized persons living with disabilities into mainstream community events and systems such as the health system.

Reference List

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