

Research paper on providing clinical services for a diverse population: views on ...

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Diversity is not a new concept in history. From the time man emerged from Africa and dispersed to other parts of the world, culture was established and demographics became varied, yielding far-reaching implications in human society. Appreciating diversity and recognizing subjective responses to others whose culture is different from one's own is quintessential for mental health professions.

Review of a research made in England by Dogra and Vostanis (2007) that explored the impact of multicultural diversity to mental health service and mental health training enabled the reporter to be mindful of one's own professional skills, an element of personal interest. In all professions, one must take time in valuing the uniqueness of others through a kaleidoscope of many dimensions. In helping professions, multicultural competence must be like "second nature".

For the methodology, semi-structured interviews were undertaken and audiotaped with the participation of 17 professionals. Data was examined using the thematic analysis and then further evaluated by the researchers to validate and improve reliability (Dogra & Vostanis, 2007). Results of the study articulated that diversity influenced service provision through accessibility; in communication channels; in mental health perceptions; in perceptions about mental health services, and service factors. Half the participants perceived cultural diversity as equivalent to ethnic diversity (Dogra & Vostanis, 2007). The results of the study portrayed mental health professionals feeling ambiguous about their own training needs and remarked that training to date was unsatisfactory and lacked clear training agendas (Dogra & Vostanis, 2007). Encouragingly, the staff's keen attitude

toward learning and improvement presents an ideal opportunity to start dialogues with community groups about how practices and services may be improved for training goals in service of the local clientele (Dogra & Vostanis, 2007).

The main ethical principle emphasized in the paper is the priority for “cultural competence” in the face of “multicultural diversity”. Examining clinical services for a diverse population is relevant in research and in other service-oriented professions because if one can understand the “multicultural” needs of the clients as well as identify variables to be improved, it can directly result in better training programs that can help assist mental health professionals in conceptualizing and delivering better and more relevant services for the local community.

One criticism identified in the paper is the exclusion of the stakeholders’ point of view as a research element. Another is a tendency for participants to give politically correct responses rather than their true views. Hopefully, future research may patch any gaps to our knowledge by including other mental health professionals and client groups as variables (Dogra & Vostanis, 2007).

Overall, from how the researchers explained the objectives, the methodology, and the outcome of the study, it was very plain that they were able to illustrate the case for multicultural diversity and also clearly show the issues being faced by mental health professionals working in the setting of the study.

In an endnote, Welfel (2013) pointed out that ethics requires professionals to break free from cultural encapsulation. Attention to multicultural issues is a

natural outgrowth of discussions for respect for autonomy, justice, and the obligation to do good for others. Ethics is about commitment to reducing the suffering of other people, advocating for social justice, and helping clients flourish and reach their full potential (Welfel 2013).

References

- Dogra, N. & Vostanis, P. (2007). Providing clinical services for a diverse population: Views on training of child and adolescent mental health practitioners. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*; 21(6), 645-655.
- Welfel, W. R. (2013). *Ethics in counseling and psychotherapy* (5th ed.) Cengage Learning.