

Social and emotional well being



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Introduction

Social and emotional well-being has been the area of interest for people belonging to different walks of life but still it remains the least researched area in relation to the nursing profession (Health I, 2010). Nurses play a valuable part in patient care as they interact directly with the patient and are also involved in decision making about the treatment at various instances. Therefore the ability of a nurse to understand different elements influencing social and emotional well being of a person is of critical importance (Litwin, 2011). Though current bio-medical practices have provided enough facilities and now treatment has become much easier but still human beings have specific emotional demands. *Nurses while taking care of their patients must understand and care for various SWEB perspectives. They must also take into account the cultural values, family dynamics, relationship conflicts and communication barriers a patient faces. Without having complete understanding of a patient's emotional and social situation it is impossible to ensure environment facilitating appropriate healthcare delivery.*

In the present literature there are different opinions about the importance of social and emotional well-being perspectives and their role in assuring suitable environment for healthcare delivery. The coming paragraphs will discuss opinions of various authors in relation to these perspective and then a conclusion will be drawn as to how understanding of different dynamics of SEWB becomes imperative for a nurse.

Bio-medical model says that health is a condition wherein a person does not face any kind of disability or disease. Proponents of this model are deeply obsessed by the concepts of biochemical and pathogenic origin of the disease (Kobau et al., 2011). While on the other hand, there are many scholars (Wang et al., 2010, Latwin et al. 2010 etc) who believe that social and emotional wellbeing is as important as the physical health of a person. In simpler words well-being can be called as existence of satisfactory condition.

According to bio medical journal (2011) a person aspiring to create the environment of complete social and emotional well-being must be able to satisfy the needs by coping with the environmental pressures. Social and personal resources and physical capacities of a person all can be brought under the umbrella of social and emotional well being (BMJ, 2011). Here it is important to distinguish between the concept of social and emotional well being amongst indigenous and the idea of mental health amongst non-indigenous settings. In indigenous settings the idea of social and emotional well-being comes more from the culture, land, spirituality, family values and how all these elements affect health and life of a person. While on the other hand, mental health amongst non-indigenous people focuses more on clinical perspectives and the level of functioning of a person in social environment (Larson et al., 2009). Marmot (2010) says that in the culture of aboriginals and Torres Islanders the social and emotional well-being cannot be achieved solely by achieving physical health instead there is a need to cover a wide range of issues including trauma, violence, abuse and domestic conflicts.

Wang et al. (2010) favors the concept of social and emotional well-being of aboriginals saying that complex, multi-dimensional model of healthcare

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cannot work without appropriate understanding and communication. Each and every person should work according to the clear lines of responsibilities. They must show capability and capacity to support and assume the responsibility of joint care in health management system (Wang et al., 2010). It means that Nurses and doctors should try to find various social factors that affect the physical and mental condition of a patient. Wang et al. (2010) also argue that the entire system cannot work in isolation and here is a need to boost linkage amongst all the players through communication and understanding.

For healthcare providers it is critical to understand different perceptions of health because they cannot facilitate a diverse range of people one by one by utilizing stereotypic principles. Here it is also important to note that there cannot be one model to cater the needs of all patients instead an integrated approach should be developed based on human understanding. Each model can prove to be suitable to one condition for which it has been developed and not for every patient facing different health issues (Kobau et al., 2010).

Thomas et al. (2010) believes that the indigenous concept of social and emotional well-being is more effective because it works on the basic principles of human health. It takes into account community, family, spirituality and ancestry. All these elements provide a person with a unique reservoir of recovery when he has to face adversity (Thomas et al., 2010).

In the above context, in order to bring social and emotional well-being in a community it is critical to understand cultural and behavioral dimensions of a person's well-being. But in contrast to the above proponents of the Medical

Model and Mental Health Plan believe that mental health is all about achieving condition wherein a person is able to interact socially. He must be able to cope with the social stress while working in a productive manner and having optimum opportunities for development.

For instance Helliwell et al. (2010) oppose the concept of SEWB as presented by the aboriginal community saying that this is a broader concept that puts emphasizes on changing society instead of changing the condition of the person who is ill. In most of the cases it is possible to reshape the entire society and the effort can become a time waste. On the other hand, if focus is maintained on reshaping the health condition of a person, good results can be obtained (Helliwell et al., 2010).

Huber et al. (2011) also reinforce the above standpoint saying that extreme focus on the social and emotional well being of a person withdraws attention from the basic principles of diagnosis. More attention is given to changing the society instead of reshaping the health condition of the patient. This is an extreme approach according to which the person who is affected must not be dealt for his illness and the entire society should be forced to change.

Yoon et al. (2008) also strongly criticize the social and emotional well being concept saying that this idea is disruptive as it brings a lot of confusion and shifts the attention of the healthcare provider from the basic principles of medicine to completely a different approach that is also impractical. This approach does not help anyone understand the cause of disease or disability (Yoon et al., 2008).

Yoon et al. (2008) also believe that the concept of SEWB denies the diagnostic criterion that is set to identify the origin and cause of a disease. Existing definitions of physical and mental ailments do not fit to this concept. According to him this idea is also unrealistic because if society could play a strong role to change one person then everyone else living in the same society must change and experience the same symptoms.

Conclusion

Torres Islanders and Aboriginals favor the concept of social and emotional health and well-being and while working with them it becomes even more important to take care of what they believe in. Many scholars also favor this idea saying that this is the perspective that shows positive and holistic approach to the physical and emotional well being of a person. According to them social, emotional, physical well being cannot be achieved without a holistic approach that focuses on the life of families, communities and individuals. A nurse working on the basic principles of social and emotional well-being can participate in the integrated care plan very effectively. She can also participate in the healthcare programs designed for patients coming from a diverse range of backgrounds and cultures. Through such practices patients are also empowered and a range of needs and problems of these people who come to find treatment are addressed. Though there are opposing views as well and many believe that extreme focus on these dynamics can withdraw attention of the healthcare provider from the actual matter. However, in my opinion the social and emotional well being should be taken into account while finalizing the medical approach for treatment. It helps the medical practitioner to identify the cause and origin of a specific

health condition and then suitable treatment options such as medication, change of environment, counseling and other remedies can be suggested. This the only way to appreciate the role of society that it plays in changing the physical and mental state of a person. Without appropriate diagnosis of a patient's state and origin of his disability or disease cannot be identified and finally suitable treatment options can also not be selected.

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