



Relevance of Psychiatric Social Worker in Treatment of Mental Illness at Federal Neuro Psychiatric Hospital Dawanau, Kano Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

According to the constitution of the World Health Organization, mental and physical well-being are inextricably linked to good health. "Health does not only refer to the absence of illness or infirmity; it also refers to a state of total physical, mental, and social wellbeing.". Like other health-related features, mental health can be influenced by a range of socioeconomic circumstances. For this reason, comprehensive government-wide recovery, prevention, treatment, and promotion policies are necessary. Personal characteristics such as the ability to regulate thoughts, emotions, behaviours, and social interactions, as well as social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental factors like national policies, social protection, living standards, working conditions, and community support are all factors that impact mental health and mental disorders. Early adversity exposure has been demonstrated to be a preventive risk factor for mental problems in research. Thus, in psychiatric hospitals, psychiatrists address the biological as well as the medical components of mental diseases. They

diagnose a patient and then suggest the right drugs to treat the condition. Medical models are frequently used and accepted by the public and medical profession; however there has been discussion about their effectiveness. Psychiatric social workers, on the other hand, concentrate on the social elements of illness and utilize their education and experience to support patients who require psychosocial support. From this point forward, the primary objective of this position paper will be to examine the contribution that psychiatric social workers make to the treatment of mental health diseases in psychiatric institutions. The facts were supported by secondary data, and relevant stakeholders have been urged to fully involve psychiatric social workers in the treatment of mental disorders in order to fulfil the World Health Organization's goal of providing comprehensive, integral, and responsive mental health and social care services in community-based settings.

Introduction

Psychiatric social work is a subfield of social work concentrates on theoretical and clinical practice. As well as the knowledge of psychiatry, which mainly addresses mental health issues and related disorders. Psychiatric social work's primary goal is to assist individuals who are experiencing mental health issues, behavioral issues, or more specifically, issues relating to the mind and brain and their resolutions. As a subset of medical social work, psychiatric social work focuses on supporting, treating, and managing the care of people with severe mental illnesses who need to be hospitalized or receive other forms of intensive mental health assistance.

Psychiatric social workers carry out a variety of duties with their clients, including risk and psychosocial assessments, group and individual psychotherapy, crisis intervention and support, care coordination, and services related to discharge planning. Psychiatric social workers are employed in a range of settings, including outpatient mental health clinics and intensive care units.

A member of the psychiatric team with professional training in mental health social work is qualified to treat patients with behavioral issues or psychiatric disorders in a comprehensive manner. In order to help

the patient get well within the family and the community, he or she applies social work principles and techniques. A psychiatric social worker (PSW) is a member of the team that works closely with psychiatrists, child guidance, social services departments, and people with mental disabilities in their homes and communities. Psychiatric social workers now accept the government's preventive mental health programs for the general public, expanding their role and responsibilities beyond confines of hospitals and mental clinics.

Professionals like medical anthropologists treat mental health disorders, conditions, and other issues comprehensively. Mental health professionals include a variety of practitioners and professionals who offer their services to improve a person's mental health or to treat mental illness. These practitioners and professionals include psychiatrists, psychiatric social workers, clinical psychologists, psychiatric nurses, mental health counselors, and psychiatrist clinics. Their area of expertise does, however, vary from case to case.

To achieve comprehensive, integrated, and responsive mental health and social care services in a community-based setting, this paper will vividly examine the relevance of psychiatric social workers at psychiatric hospitals to effective treatment of mental illness

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

Mental illness is a huge global health concern. According to government estimates, 970 million people worldwide, or 1 in 8 individuals, suffer from a mental disease as of 2019. People with mental diseases do not have access to affordable care, and there is a severe dearth of effective preventative and treatment options. Many people also experience stigma, discrimination, and infringement of their human rights.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To investigate the value of psychiatric social workers in mental hospitals;
- To analyze the critical roles that psychiatric social workers play in providing psychosocial support to individuals with mental illnesses.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

SOCIAL WORK:

As defined by the Nigerian Council of Social Work (2022), social work is the assistance provided by professions that use environmental science and social science knowledge and skills to prevent, treat, and resolve social problems that impact individuals, groups, and communities in order to improve social development and the quality of social functioning.

METHODOLOGY

The study's secondary sources of data include information gathered from a variety of international organizations, including the World Health Organization, as well as from libraries, journals, and other sources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

MENTAL ILLNESS

When an aberrant response to stress gets so bad that it keeps us from going about our regular routines. It is said that we are mentally unwell. One way to conceptualize mental disease is as an inability to adequately adjust to societal demands. It could also be seen as a failing to adapt to societal change. It is described as a complex syndrome including a person's nature and their incapacity to handle life's terrible stressors and strain. (Ahmed, 2010:125)

When a person can no longer reasonably and successfully handle the difficulties and responsibilities of daily life, it is referred to as a mental disorder or mental disease. It may be seen as an inability of the person's psychological defences to carry out their intended function of shielding him from excruciating distress brought on by psychological conflict.

Mental sickness and mental disorder are other names for mental illness. These are two distinct ideas. A person with a mental illness has brain damage brought on by either physical or bacterial factors. When someone has a mental disorder, they are mentally ill due to societal circumstances rather than any brain damage. Differentiating between the two ideas is challenging, especially when they are developed.

The term "mental problem" is used to illustrate both ideas. We do not infer that someone is suffering from a mental illness when we state that they are acting strangely. It can simply indicate that he is not acting in a way that is accepted by society.

Thus, abnormal behaviour varies depending on the period and location. A victim's behaviour must match several criteria in order to be classified as mad. Firstly, it must be unpredictable, meaning the victim cannot rationally explain his actions or communicate effectively.

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People in health settings can be helped to achieve independence from overlapping internal and external concerns, such as social and economic conditions, with the help of psychiatric social work. Psychiatric social workers are mental health specialists who can assist patients and their families in achieving better health and well-being as well as coping with a variety of economic and social concerns brought on by mental illness or psychiatric dysfunctions.

In addition to helping with mental health issues, psychiatric social workers can also assist with family and other relationships in both the formal and informal workplace settings. Harmony across all systems, self-actualization, and personal growth are their objectives. They are an essential member of the treatment team of the department of psychiatry and behavioural sciences. They work in prisons, drug rehab centres, nursing homes, state and local governments, hospitals, outpatient and inpatient settings, and private practices. Francis (2014)

In response to the demands of patients who were emotionally or mentally disturbed, psychiatry social work was created. These people can receive assistance from a psychiatric social worker in comprehending the environmental and social elements that are causing their problems. Psychiatric social workers provide all medical care for patients with mental health disorders or behavioural problems.

The main areas of concentration for social work in psychiatry are planning services, crisis intervention, individual and group psychotherapy, support care coordination, and psychosocial risk assessment. Psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, lab technicians, occupational and physical therapists, and other medical professionals are frequently teamed with psychiatric social workers. In order to understand and provide care for the patient, the team members draw on their respective specialties and education. The diagnosis, treatment, and discharge of mentally ill patients and their families are

facilitated by psychiatric social workers through person-to-person assistance connections and casework and group work services (Hewitt, H. 2017:261).

Psychiatric social workers provide person-to-person help relationships in the diagnosis, treatment, and discharge of mentally ill patients and their families through casework and group work services.

The psychiatric social worker is professional services provider in multidisciplinary team, which includes medical and paramedical professional, each team member utilizes their specialized training and skills to collaborate in understanding and treating the patient. The psychiatric social worker plays a crucial role in the diagnosis, treatment, and care of mentally ill patients and their families through Casework and group work services. By establishing a person-to-person helping relationship through individual interviews or group processes, the social worker assists individuals in identifying and resolving specific problems in their environment and interpersonal relationships that hinder their ability to function effectively. This valuable assistance is provided through the social worker's professional skills and techniques, working in collaboration with other members of the psychiatric team, with psychiatrists ultimately responsible for medical care. The social worker coordinates their activities with the rest of the team and contributes to the overall treatment plan. Adeyemo et al., (2018)

ROLES OF PSYCHIARTRIC SOCIAL WORKER

Psychiatric hospitals are medical institutions or units that specialize in treating mental health illnesses. They are also known as behavioural health hospitals or mental health hospitals. Their differences in size and classification are substantial. Certain psychiatric institutions may solely provide short-term or outpatient care for individuals who represent minimal risk, while others may specialize in either permanent or temporary therapy.

Confinement of people whose mental health conditions need them to get therapy, continuing care, or to be in a particular, regulated setting. Psychiatric wards or units, or just "psych," are other names for psychiatric institutions that are housed inside medical facilities. A substantial percentage of individuals providing psychiatric treatment are social workers. They are used to treat patients with mental disease and psychiatric disorder in a variety of settings. It gives patients the necessary interventions and enhances their general and mental health. When it comes to providing social and psychological care to patients in addiction treatment facilities, substance abuse treatment centres, and medical outpatient clinics, psychological social workers are essential. Psychiatric social workers do the following essential tasks (tushershukla, v. 2019:546–547).

Psychiatric social workers are interested in how well a person functions in his or her family, workplace, and other social circles. Since this is a component of the individual's surroundings, they are also engaged in the social structure of the community. The worker's responsibilities within the client family may include providing practical assistance, fostering effective communication, or offering individual, group, or family counselling as part of a psychotherapeutic intervention. The worker may perform these tasks alone or in tandem with other professionals. What causes are defended depends on the treatment plan and the level of expert assistance needed to implement it (savage1974:216-217)

Conducting pre-admission visits, pre-admission screenings, and pre-admission planning with the agencies regarding their various roles; preparing the family and client for admission; conducting admission interviews to help the family and patient deal with separation anxiety and role-adjust; taking part in social assessments and diagnosis; providing information to the staff of the institution; taking part in treatment planning and assessment of treatment progress; conducting individual, group, and family psychotherapy; consulting with agencies, individuals, and families on behalf of his client; taking part in discharge planning; preparing the client, family, and community for the client's return to the community; helping Participates in the continuation of active therapy and provides consultation services to clients and their families.(NARSI, 2011)

EVALUATION AND ESTIMATION

The first healthcare provider to stay in touch with a patient in need of psychiatric treatment is a social worker. In order to provide the right kind of intervention, a patient's social and psychological conditions must be assessed and estimated before they can begin treatment. A psychiatric social worker meets with clients, assesses them, and gathers general information about their medical and psychiatric histories, treatments, prescription drugs, and social and community issues. The degree of intervention needed for the patient, the kind of treatment needed for the patient, and the diagnosis needed for the patient and his family all require critical evaluation and assessments.

MAKING TREATMENT PLANING

In a psychiatric setting, the social worker creates a treatment plan after the evaluation and assessments are finished. The proposed course of treatment is based on the patient's problems as well as numerous additional social or community issues that the patient may be facing. It covers every topic that was assessed in the initial evaluation phase. Throughout the course of treatment, specific psychological and

social issues and concerns about the patient that were discovered during the evaluation are taken into consideration. While creating the treatment plan, other experts like psychologists and psychiatrists as well as the patient's family and community members are consulted. The workers choose the intervention strategy based on the circumstances. For instance, a patient exhibiting severe psychiatric symptoms, such as delusions and thoughts of suicide, needs more urgent and intensive care than a patient exhibiting milder symptoms.

INTERVENTION DURING CRISIS

A psychiatric professional typically participates in crisis intervention, which entails giving the patient who needs it immediate emergency care as well as assistance. In cases of psychiatric emergencies, patients need immediate interventions to prevent death or other life-threatening situations. The psychiatric social worker makes sure that the psychiatric issue has no organic or physical cause. To evaluate and identify any aggressive behavior, homicidal thoughts, or suicidal tendencies, the circumstance must be carefully examined and screened. The patient receives prompt psychological and psychiatric care from the psychiatric social worker. Assessing whether a patient can return to normal levels with short-term intervention or long-term assistance is the primary objective of a psychiatric social worker.

TREATMENT AND SERVICES:

Psychiatric social workers offer their patients a variety of treatments and other services tailored to their individual needs. Short-term psychotherapy is one of the therapies and services offered by psychiatric social workers. Advocacy, case management, group counseling, family therapy, play therapy, cognitive behavior capabilities, and counseling for substance abuse are all included. In addition, a psychiatric social worker offers advice to other medical specialists who work with psychiatric patients. This includes updating families, physicians, private therapists, and other relevant parties on a patient's progress in treatment.

CONCLUSION

In summary, psychiatric social workers are valuable in the treatment of mental health issues. Psychiatric social workers and housekeepers play crucial roles in providing comprehensive, responsive, and integrated mental healthcare services, as well as in assessing and estimating, planning, treating, and intervening during crises. Therefore, in order to achieve the World Health Organization's vision and

mission in providing comprehensive, responsive, and integrated mental health and social care services (mental health action plan), psychiatric social work intervention is crucial to the effective treatment of mental illness.

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