

Mental Health Stigma



An Introduction

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Abstract

Mental health stigma hinders help seeking behaviors, it is a detriment to an individual's overall well-being, and negatively impact every facets of a person's life. In the United States approximately 50% of the adult population will experience some degree of diagnosable mental health disorder, but only 45% seek and receive treatment. One major hinderance to help-seeking behaviors is stigma associated with mental health.

Introduction

Mental health stigma discourages those inflicted from seeking proper-needed services. The stigma associated with mental illness has long been documented within religious and medical accounts (Jones, 2017). The public's beliefs, emotional response, and discriminatory behavior towards mental health and mental illness have had devastating consequences for individuals needing treatment.

Mental Health and Mental Illness

- ▶ The interchangeable use of mental health and mental illness as terms having the same meaning (the terms are not interchangeable).
- ▶ While one refers to an individual's well-being/mental health and the other refers to psychopathology
- ▶ Growing empirical evidence emphasizes the need of evaluating mental-wellness and mental illness when evaluating for mental health care (Franken, Lamers, Ten Klooster, Bohlmeijer, & Westerhof, 2018).
- ▶ *“mental health is a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”* (World Health Organization, [2005](#)).



Stigma and the Process of Stigma


- ▶ stigma is defined as a mark of disgrace that is associated with a particular circumstance, quality, characteristics or a person.
 - ▶ examples include, individuals who are HIV positive, transgender, of differing sexual orientation, and diagnosed with mental illness amongst others
 - ▶ The constructs/process of stigma
- ▶ **Public Stigma**
 - ▶ Beliefs/emotional response/negative behaviors
- ▶ **Self-Stigma**
 - ▶ Self-stigma or internalized stigma, is a process that occurs to individuals with mental illness when an individual or group become aware of the negative beliefs, biases, and feelings about their condition and internalize these beliefs and attitude towards themselves.



The Impact of Stigma

- ▶ The term stigma as a broader concept
- ▶ Association with persistent inequalities
- ▶ For instance, Hatzenbuehler, Phelan, Bruce, & Link (2013) lists the fundamental concepts as social disease risk factors, social factors that inhibits access to resources, and social health inequalities that consistently negatively impact the health of the population.
- ▶ Mental health disorders in the United States
- ▶ Income and employment disparities

Psychological need and Self-Determination

- ▶ Psychological needs refers to a innate drive to become a fully realized and self-determined individual (Deci & Ryan, 2018). These needs are relatedness, competence, and autonomy. They are a person's ability relate to others, feel they are connected, and part of something bigger than themselves.
- ▶ Self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan () is a theory of motivation, why people do what they do and how to get people motivated to become fully self-determined. According to Deci and Ryan (1985) individuals have to be intrinsically motivated in order to take on the challenges in their lives. Intrinsic motivation is taking part in a activity just for the joy of it.
- ▶ Extrinsic motivation within self-determination theory is referring to external forms of motivations such as a parent coercing a child to take their medication to stay functional or offering monetary compensation to take part in an activity, or even withholding affection until they start acting “normal.”

CASE Study

A woman was being ostracized by her neighbors and husband's family after he passed from complications due to HIV. After his death she was forced to move back with her mother's home. But not before everyone in the neighborhood brought back everything they ever borrowed from her and burnt the items in front of her. Their behavior was their reaction following her HIV diagnosis. Her husband had succumbed from HIV complication.

All the negative beliefs, feelings emotions and discriminatory behaviors she was experiencing led to her isolating herself in her mothers' home. The women stopped working, she no longer took care of herself, and her mental health deteriorated. She become paranoid that people where she currently lived knew of her HIV diagnosis as she was now aware of the stigma associated with her mark of shame, and as a result her neighbors were now protesting her existence outside her window, this was her perception her belief.

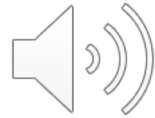
Intervention

- ▶ Research shows educating the public about stigma lessens the likelihood of individuals endorsing stigma attitudes and discriminatory behaviors (Corrigan & Watson, 2002). Research on this matter is limited as research have focused on the specific characteristics (developmental disability, HIV status, ageism, sexual orientation)
- ▶ To gain a better understanding of utilized interventions, this researcher interviewed LCSWs regarding their use of interventions that they see as being helpful to address mental health stigma.



Conclusion

- ▶ Mental Health stigma is a major public health issue that impacts individuals and groups in all aspects of their life. Stigma negatively impact an individual's mental-wellness, psychological need, their ability to be self-determined.



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