

Review Article

Importance of Insight in the Recovery of Mental Illness

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Received on: 27-08-2020; Revised and Accepted on: 18-09-2020

ABSTRACT

Background: Mental illness makes a person denies of its own existence. It interferes with their thoughts, beliefs and perception which creates difficulty to understand one's illness and becomes a barrier to recovery. The problem arises when an individual doesn't comprehend about their illness which hinders in the treatment regimen. Hence, it is essential for an individual to have clear understanding of their illness in order to cope well.

Objective: To evaluate the importance of Insight in the Recovery of Mental Illness.

Method: Literature review conducted to explore the importance of Insight in the Recovery of Mental Illness Different electronic engines were explored from 1959 to 2014.

Results: Literature suggests that 97% in India believes that people with poor insight should be excluded from society in which lack of family support plays a crucial role. Therefore, due to the lack of acceptance, motivation from the society and family, it has become an obstacle for a person to recover from illness to a wellness state

Conclusion: Mental illness affects cognitive ability and makes it difficult for a person to recover because they don't take responsibility for the treatment and don't remain compliant with treatment regimen. It is our duty to cater patients with different strategies like Cognitive behavioral therapy so that they can cope effectively.

Keywords: Insight, Mental Health and Recovery.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Mental illness makes a person denies of its own existence (Tracy, n.d.). It interferes with their thoughts, beliefs and perception which creates difficulty to understand one's illness and becomes a barrier to recovery. Understanding of illness is the main protective factor that increases the chance of recovery. Hamilton and Roper (2006) stated "Insight is a glimpse or view beneath the surface, the faculty or power of thus seeing" (p. 416). The problem arises when an individual doesn't comprehend about their illness which hinders in the

treatment regimen. According to Chakraborty and Basu (2010), lack of insight is when patients are unaware about their illness which becomes an obstacle in their recovery. Torrey (2011), coins the term lack of insight as "Anosognosia" which says inability to accept the true nature of one's condition and consequently it becomes a hindering factor for their recovery. Hence, it is essential for an individual to have clear understanding of their illness in order to cope well.

2. CASE SCENARIO

During our clinical rotation at Psychiatric Hospital, I encountered a 24 years old female with Schizophrenia. She belonged to a poor family. During interview, when I inquire about the reason behind her admission she replied "My father used to roam naked in the house and he brought me here. I don't know why he dropped me. I'm just here to play with my friends". On inquiring more about her family background I came to know that she was attached to her mother but she died. Moreover, she has siblings but no one visits her which disrupts her self-esteem and makes her to feel lonely and isolate.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4035785>

Furthermore, she was emphasizing that “I’m fine and nothing has happened to me so why I will take medication”

Reflecting on the scenario, I realized that it is very difficult to work with her because she is unaware about her illness and doesn’t know the reason behind her admission. I realized that denying illness could be one of the symptoms of poor insight. Chakraborty and Basu (2010),

says it is a symptom rather than a denial coping strategy. Therefore, I have chosen this topic to build a clear understanding of their illness which will enable them to cope effectively.

3. FINDINGS

Lack of insight is the prominent factor seen in the patients suffering from schizophrenia (Bastiaens & Agarkar, 2014). A person with poor insight is often stigmatized within society. Shrivastava, Johnston and Bureau (2012) states, 97% in India believes that people with poor insight should be excluded from society in which lack of family support plays a crucial role. Therefore, family support also plays a vital role in the recovery of a person. It provides a sense of belongingness and a true flavor of motivation towards the acceptance of illness (Marsh, 1998). Therefore, due to the lack of acceptance, motivation from the society and family, it has become an obstacle for a person to recover from illness to a wellness state. Resultantly, it lowers self-esteem, motivation and makes person lonely and reluctant with the treatment (Shrivastava et al., 2012) as it is also reflected in my patient.

4. ASSESSMENT TOOL AND ITS INTERVENTIONS

There are different ways to assess person with poor insight. Scale to Assess Unawareness of Mental Disorder considered as multidimensional approach which includes awareness of having illness, understanding of related symptom and acceptance of treatment (Husted, 1999). Furthermore, Jaspers (1959) modified which includes understanding, resilient with its effects in acute and chronic state, cognitive abilities of his illness, determination and the attitude towards one’s own illness. I believe that multidimensional approach on patients will help in planning properly so that a person can recover soon.

Insight plays a fundamental role in the recovery of the patient (Bragen, 2011). Basil et al., (n.d.) states on the basis of five stages, we can develop insight in a person. In the first stage, patient denies of their illness. In the second stage, we can provide them little awareness by

proper orientation through hospital environment but still, patient may deny of it. In the third stage, they become aware but they blame on external factors. Intellectual awareness starts in fourth stage in which they accept that their illness is due to disturbance in their internal environment. Finally, in the last stage, they understand their symptoms that aware them about reality and help to build self-concept (Basil et al., n.d.).

Reflecting on my scenario, I applied above mentioned stages on my patient and discovered through interviewing that my patient was in denial phase. Literature supports that denial coping mechanism protects patient from reality (Basil et al., n.d.). As my patient says “Nothing has happened to me, I’m totally fine”. Hence, it creates a barrier on client’s recovery.

The case scenario can be explored by the CARE framework which will help in developing insight (McAllister & Walsh, 2003). Using the framework, Containment refers to maintain safety and encourages a person to express their feelings. Awareness provides information about their illness which will only accomplish by building rapport. Resilience refers to proper understanding of illness in order to cope well. Engagement is aimed to engage client in different activities so that they can socialize with others. Hence, it will enables health professionals to manage their plans and allowing them to participate in different activities. It will help them to understand their disease condition (McAllister & Walsh, 2003).

As a nurse, it is our duty to provide awareness to patients by building good rapport at initial stage. We can involve them in different activities like drawing, coloring so that patient can socialize around. As I have involved her in drawing, coloring activity so that she can socialize with others. Moreover, teach them for treatment adherence which will help them recover soon. It will also lower the chances of relapse and re-hospitalization. Moreover, Cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) will also help a person to recover and enhances their learning process (Holtforth et al., n.d.). I applied CBT by making her understand that it is important to compliant with the medication in order to prevent from relapse.

At institutional level, community health nurses along with qualified staffs should work at different institutions. Psychotherapy can be introduced in order to modify patient’s behavior.

Moreover, Psycho-education sessions should be initiated to build awareness (Bastiaens & Agarkar, 2014). CARE framework should be familiarized at national and interventional level in order to develop insight.

At group and community level, different community programs should be taken through live classes in groups in order to emphasize treatment adherence and the support from the society (Bastiaens & Agarkar, 2014). In addition, families should be involved in patient care as they play an integral part in their support. Hence, it will decreases stigmatization towards clients and increases the chance of recovery.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, mental illness affects cognitive ability and thus person denies of their illness. Insight plays a key to recovery (Bragen, 2011). Lack of insight makes it difficult for a person to recover because they don’t take responsibility for the treatment and don’t remain compliant with treatment

regimen. It is our duty to provide above mentioned strategies to enhance their ability to understand of their condition so that it would help to cope up and they could live a meaning full life ahead.

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Article Citation:

Authors Name. Zahra Salim Jessani, Importance of Insight in the Recovery of Mental Illness. SJNR 2020;1(1): 05 - 08
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4035785>