11-5-2016

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Abnormal Psychology and its Relation to the Human Service Field
Goodwin College
Capstone Research Paper
November 5, 2016
In the Human Service field, professionals help make a difference, help guide, and support many individuals with whatever issue they may encounter in their lives. There are different populations in which Human Service professional can work. These populations include: substance abuse, mental health, anxiety, depression, homelessness, case management, and more.

It is important for human service professionals to be aware of their own beliefs, values, and themselves in order to effectively help a client. Knowing their resources and continuing education can benefit a client, but also themselves as a professional. It is important for a human service professional to use great listening skills, communication skills, and provide empathy to clients. There is many individuals’ Human Service workers will encounter with different mental disorders and knowing the background of this information and the background of the profession is important. The purpose of this research paper in to explore different types of mental disorders and how the human service field helps these individuals. It explores many situations I was able to observe during my capstone experience.

The Human Service field has specific values, a mission, and ethical standards that must be followed.

“The mission of Human Service workers is to strengthen the community of human services by expanding professional development opportunities, enhance internal and external communications, nurturing the financial sustainability and growth of organizations, and promote professional and organizational identity through certification and advocating and implementing a social policy and agenda.” (National Organization for Human Services, 2000)
The objective of human services is meeting needs through interdisciplinary knowledge based, focusing and remediation of problem. It is also maintaining the commitment to improve quality of life service populations. In the Human Service field there are community support skill standard that work in community settings and the Human Services Research Institute. Human Service professionals stands for people who hold professional and paraprofessional jobs in diverse settings such as group homes, halfway houses, mental health, family centers, drug abuse, and more (National Organization for Human Services, 2000).

There are also codes of ethics that human service workers must abide by to protect their client and build on the trusting relationship between worker and client. Some of these codes from the National Organization for Human Services 2000 include:

STANDARD 1 Human service professionals recognize and build on client and community.

STANDARD 2 Human service professionals obtain informed consent to provide services to clients at the beginning of the helping relationship. Clients should be informed that they may withdraw consent at any time except where denied by court order and should be able to ask questions before agreeing to the services.

STANDARD 3 Human service professionals protect the client's right to privacy and confidentiality except when such confidentiality would cause serious harm to the client or others, when agency guidelines state otherwise, or under other stated conditions

STANDARD 4 if it is suspected that danger or harm may occur to the client or to others as a result of a client's behavior, the human service professional acts in an appropriate and professional manner to protect the safety of those individuals.
STANDARD 5 Human service professionals recognize that multiple relationships may increase the risk of harm to or exploitation of clients and may impair their professional judgment.

STANDARD 7 Human service professionals ensure that their values or biases are not imposed upon their clients.

STANDARD 10 Human service professionals provide services without discrimination or preference in regards to age, ethnicity, culture, race, ability, gender, language preference, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, nationality, or other historically oppressed groups.

STANDARD 12 Human service professionals are aware of local, state, and federal laws. They advocate for change in regulations and statutes when such legislation conflicts with ethical guidelines and/or client rights. Where laws are harmful to individuals, groups, or communities, human service professionals consider the conflict between the values of obeying the law and the values of serving people and may decide to initiate social action.

This research paper will discuss how the Human Service field relates to Abnormal Psychology and different mental disorders. Mental health is a part of our emotions, psychological, and social well-being (U.S Department of Health & Human Services). The way we think, feel and act can be altered while living with a mental illness. Mental health can be caused by many different reasons. It can be biological such as genes or brain chemistry, life experiences, trauma, or abuse. There are many different types of mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, personality disorder, and more. Individuals also can suffer from substance abuse. However, there are ways to have a positive mental health. There are severely ill people who need guidance and support that need to receive treatment and appropriate services such as professional help and coping skills. One, who lives with a mental health
disorder, is someone who may need guidance and support, or around the clock care. Everyone may experience some type of hardship in their live where their support can be family friends that help them to overcome the emotions they are feeling. However, a significant amount of Americans develop mental health and substance abuse issues that call for professional care (Dinitto, 2011). There has been a growth in psychiatric medication to help those functions in society, but mental health professionals would rather focus on preventing mental health issues and provide an intervention (Dinitto, 2011).

When individuals with mental health issues cannot find proper treatment, they can end up homeless or in prison. Another factor that plays a part in mental illness is insurance. If an individual does not have proper insurance they cannot receive the help they need. For some people with mental health issues, jail can be their only option because they are unable to receive the guidance they need and are unable to get ahead in life. Research has found that between 61 and 85% of inmates has a mental illness after a screen process (Martin, 2016). Also, individuals in prison have higher rates of mental illness and prisons screen those in order to find treatment options, although some testing comes out false, even if an individual does suffer from an illness (Martin, 2016). This leaves this person with no help or guidance. Systems in the prison need to be improved in order to help the sick rather than incarcerate them.

Abnormal psychology also plays a role in the Human Service field. There are many behaviors and mental disorders a worker will come across. It is important to understand the root of it and diagnostic criteria. The DSM-V will be very beneficial to a human service worker. Abnormal psychology understands the nature, causes, and treatment of mental disorders (Butcher, Mineka, & Hooley, 2011). There is no universal agreement about abnormality or disorders (Butcher, et al, 2011). There are many beliefs or values that may play a factor in the
definition of “abnormal” and how to treat a given illness. It is said, that if individuals struggle in certain areas, they may have some type of mental disorder (Butcher, et al, 2011). These areas consist of: Suffering which is suffering psychologically, anxiety and depression would be an example of an individual who suffers (Butcher, et al, 2011). Others include: maladaptive which interferes with our well-being and interferes with us enjoying work or our relationships, deviancy, and social discomfort which violates social rule (Butcher, et al, 2011). They may feel and experience discomfort or unease (Butcher, et al, 2011). An example would be walking into a room of people.

As stated earlier, cultural plays a role what is considered abnormal and what is not. Beliefs, values, and what people may believe to be a disorder or how to handle it may differ. For example, Christian countries believe the number 13 is unlucky and is linked to the last super. However, Japanese are not afraid of the number 13 (Butcher, et al, 2011). Another example is the word “depressed.” Any one in any culture can have a mental disorder. However, the word “depressed” does not exist in Native America, Alaskan Natives, and South East Asian cultures (Butcher, et al, 2011). In the American cultural we believe in mental illness and follow diagnostic criteria in order to help individuals receive treatment.

The unanswered question is what causes people to experience mental distress or behavior? We cannot plan or predicts someone will have a mental disorder or live in distress. That is why many investigators speak of “risk factors” rather than causes of someone’s behaviors (Butcher, et al, 2011). Although mental disorders are believed to develop when stressors happen on a person who is vulnerable (Butcher, et al, 2011). This is also known as diathesis and diatheses stress model, better known as the DSM-5 (Butcher, et al, 2011). The DSM-5 is a statistical manual of mental disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2014). During my
capstone experience I witnessed many homeless individuals come in who suffer substance abuse. I would see them in the Emergency Room more than once a week.

Substance abuse involves an excessive use of a substance that can result in hazardous behavior such as drinking and driving and continuing the use despite social, health, psychological issues. Substance abuse can go many different ways depending on the individual. There is substance-related disorder; which is extreme high rates of alcohol abuse and dependency. Also, there is addictive behavior which is the pathological need for a substance or activity. Substance abuse and substance dependency differ from person to person. They differ because substance dependency is a severe form of substance use and becomes a psychological need for increasing the amount of the substance to reach the desired effect (Butcher, et al, 2011).

When an individual needs more of the substance to reach their desired effect, they have built up a tolerance. When an individual with substance dependency goes without their substance they experience withdrawal. Withdrawal is physical symptoms such as sweating, tremors, and tension (Butcher, et al, 2011). During my capstone experience I experienced many individuals going through withdrawal or overdosed. When these individuals are going through these symptoms they become very sick and some very angry and violent. Sadly, many homeless individuals who suffer from substance abuse check into the ED because they know it will provide them shelter and a meal.

The mentally ill and homeless also relates to the Human Service field. Homelessness affects many individuals in the United States. Those who suffer from mental illness are known to be homeless or in poverty. In 2013, one in five people lived in poverty (Mooney, Knox, & Shacht, 2013). Individuals live off of $1.25 or $2.00 a day. There are many different types of poverty and different views on the cause and effect of poverty. There is absolute poverty which
has the perspective that poverty is due to lack of resources for an individual’s well-being. These resources include food, water, housing, sanitation, education, and health care (Mooney, et al, 2013). Relative poverty has the perspective that it is due to lack of material and economic resources. Lastly, there is extreme poverty which living is less than $1.25 a day (Mooney, et al, 2013).

In January 2012 633, 782 people were homeless in the United States (Mooney, et al, 2013). These individuals included 30 percent of families with children, 10 percent were veterans and 16 percent were chronically homeless living with a disability (Mooney, et al, 2013). There are many individuals who have mental illness or disabilities who struggle to help themselves. If they cannot help themselves, they struggle to live a stable functional life. More than a third of the homeless live on the streets on pieces of cardboard, wood, mattresses, or plastic (Mooney, et al, 2013). Individuals with mental illness may struggle to find or keep or job which leads to this lifestyle. Therefore, the factors of homelessness are the inability to afford housing, and are unemployed (Mooney, et al, 2013). There are lack of services for the mental ill that contribute to the homelessness of these individuals (Mooney, et al, 2013). The substance abuse and mental health service administration states that 20 to 25 % of the homeless in the United States suffer from severe mental illness. A survey conducted by the National Coalition for the Homeless (2009) indicated that mental illness is the third largest cause of homelessness for single adults and in 25 cities. As for families with mental illness it is 12 percent and the third top causes of homelessness (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009).

Mental illness disrupts people’s abilities to carry aspects of daily life such as self-care and household management. A factor as to why it is hard for mentally ill to live a normal life is because they tend to push away caregivers, families and friends. If these individuals are trying to
help their homeless loved one, the individual struggles to have a relationship with others. Individuals with bipolar disorder or schizophrenia are the most vulnerable to homelessness and struggle to build or keep relationships. If there were better health services, it would be able to target the mentally ill and homeless as well. There are outreach programs that are successful and individuals are willing to receive help. However, those that are mentally ill will struggle to achieve stability and remain off the streets. I believe the cause and effect of this paper is discuss how mentally ill lack stability to live on their own. Their cognitive thinking disables them into making choices that will lead them to a better lifestyle. Although there are services for these individuals, when someone is mentally ill their understanding of the matter is difficult for them to grasp (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009).

Another mental illness that can lead to substance abuse or homeless is anxiety and depression. In the human service field it is important to know the background of these disorders. You can come face to face with one of these clients who may need case management services, resources, and counseling. There can many different types of anxiety disorders such as generalized anxiety disorder. In the DSM-5 it can diagnosed as the person must worry more days than not for at least 6 months. The thoughts from the individual must be difficult to control. The treatment for this disorder can consist of medication. The individual can reach out to their doctor for Xanax or Klonpin. These are used to relief the tension. There is also cognitive behavioral therapy. Depression is when an individual may feel hopeless and sad. These individuals may have lack of interest or motivation within their lives. Depression can come from life factors, or the serotonin imbalance in the brain. Those who suffer from depression can seek therapy and medication to help the symptoms. Sadly, those who suffer with depression have thoughts of suicide. It is important for human service workers to be educated on these symptoms and
illnesses in order to guide these individuals through their time. It is important to show empathy and compassion when helping these individuals. Knowing services and protocol when you client suffers from depression and has thoughts of suicide is a very important of the job in the Human Service field (Butcher, et al, 2011).

I have truly had an amazing experience at Saint Mary’s Hospital. I feel as if I was able to see and learn so much from patient situations, and the staff. I have been able to build relationships with staff members who appreciate my help and I enjoy being able to help to them. I also enjoyed learning from them and seeing how they all work as a team. When a mentally ill patient comes into the emergency room and requires attention they all come together to help this individual. Another example, a young patient came into the emergency room and was having an asthma attack. The focus and determination the staff had to help this individual was inspiring. In a hospital everyone comes together on the medical team and reaches out to different departments such as case management or social work to ensure appropriate treatment for the patient.

I have also been able to witness families or sick individuals and the intensity of their coping during this time. Recently a patient was very sick with failing kidneys and was hardly coherent. To see the family in such distress and almost grieving was heavy on my heart. It helps you realize the importance of family and of life. It helps me realize why I choose this field. Life is never perfect and people endure tough situations in their lives and lose loved one and grieve. They need support and guidance from somewhere. If I can make a difference in one’s life I will consider myself successful. I also see many mental health patients who may suffer from depression or substance abuse. The hospital does a great job in providing proper treatment and resources for these individuals. Being understanding to these individuals is very important. When
I go into the profession of social work, I will always ensure my patient or client feels safe while talking to me and to make them confident that I am there to help them.

Although throughout my experience at the hospital I was not able to perform intakes or assessments I was able to engage with many different patients who suffer from different behaviors or substance abuse. I was able to assist medical team with necessities for patients. Also, I walked around room to room to check on patients or family members who needed anything. During those moments I was able to listen to sick patients or families concerns and provide empathy and compassion. The exposure I had to the different types of behaviors and illness taught me a lot. Also, the intensity of being around individuals passing away and to witness the grieving family helped me understand the different types of clients I will experience throughout my career. Being exposed to these intense situations reminded me why I chose this field. I want to be the calming the storm for individuals who are distressed or need support or guidance from someone.

Mental illness can never be guessed or known. It be genetic or can occur after life events in someone’s life. It can lead someone to be homeless and suffer from substance abuse. These individuals need services and people who are on their side. That is why Human Services worker chose this field. They are strong enough to see individuals at their worst and are educated to help and guide in whatever situation the client is dealing with. Being in this field requires knowing a lot of resources, different illnesses, and effective communication with others. We are here to make a difference to those who may not be able to help themselves.
References


