

A Humanistic Approach to Schizophrenia

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Abstract

It is rather a common belief that nothing can prevent, improve or cure schizophrenia besides strong medications. There are a small number of therapist and professionals who strongly believe in the humanistic approach in curing or at least managing complicated mental issues such as schizophrenia.

Along with treating patients with the normal rights of any healthy human being, there are greater responsibilities, ones that are facing the social and cultural beliefs towards mental health patients.

Introduction

Schizophrenia is perhaps one of the most complicated mental disorders. Schizophrenic persons, suffer from hallucinations, paranoia, anxiety and delusions to the points where it can simply affect their way of thinking, speaking and communication.

Some of the contributing factors in birth of schizophrenia are genetics, early environment, neurobiology and psychological and social happening around those individuals.

Schizophrenia is a costly disease; it takes lives and it costs millions of dollars each year to treat people who are diagnosed with schizophrenia. It applies lots of pressure on society as number of schizophrenic individuals rapidly grows due to obesity, alcoholism and smoking.

Due to our ever-growing knowledge of medicine, we came to recognize mental illnesses as physical problems. We gave them names, created lists of symptoms and equally created different kind of medications and sometimes even perform surgeries to cure them.

In our medical and physical approach to cure schizophrenia, we often prescribe antipsychotic medications; but there are other alternatives in dealing with schizophrenia such as psychotherapy and vocational and social rehabilitation which are equally, if not even more important as prescribing medications.

Every year there are hundreds of people who are forced to live in the streets as there are no physical or emotional supports available to them as schizophrenic.

They are often referred to as crazies and despite being harmless they are often mistreated by others, people who often don't have any knowledge of such disease. Reading the example above, remind you that there are more dimensions into mental disorders than simply prescribing pills.

It's not only the social factors that are great contributors; family cultures, behaviors and traditions also play an important role in identifying an individual who needs help, who was perhaps abused at some point in their lives. Familiarity with a verity of mental disorders and learning how to live with people who are suffering from it can give people a valid reason to learn more about it; it can also be a great subject which media, such as newspapers, magazines, billboards and movies can help people to become familiar with.

Where a combination of therapy and medication is used in treating patients, it is "life" they have to face once they are out and back to the community. In that setting, looking at them as people will have a much greater influence on them than their daily dose of Risperdal.

Method

In humanistic approach to schizophrenia, there are several methods used in different stages in order to diagnose the disease, treat it with the proper support system and finally release the patient back to the normal life setting.

One of the first things that needs to be done is to perform a number of tests (such as the Q-Sort), where the perspective on the result is based on the human being as a positive and good natured individual. Performing such tests also assures the mentally troubled individuals to achieve confidence in your knowledge and understanding of their problem, which is a great contribution to the humanistic treatment. There are also different sets of scales used to determine the final result.

The positive look at the mental patients is accompanied by the belief, that people are able to achieve the highest goals; that they are all equally powerful and capable of reaching their goals. Such perspective helps and encourages individuals to try harder and change a lot faster than simply taking medications.

Once tests are performed and diagnoses are made, an important part of the therapy, which is making connections with the patient at a higher "You" level, begins. This is a stage where you acknowledge the patient's problem and show a deep understanding of their issue by gathering information about the possible reasons behind their mental challenge. It is only by collecting such data that you can help your patient to regain their self esteem, achieve their personal growth and change into a new and untroubled being.

Therapist provides the individual with sympathetic and constructive feedback in a friendly manner. They do a reality check every then and now to stay connected with the current and past issues. They also often find a similar interest which brings the therapist and the patient closer to one another and makes the conversations easier to form.

Activity schedule is one of the most useful plans at the early stages of the therapy where patients are back to their homes and trying to move on with their lives while undergoing therapy. According to this schedule, patient keeps busy by participating on a variety of activities, in order to keep organized and also avoid anxiety. Behavioral assignments and also stress management skills are often followed by empowering the self-sufficiency in patient and by cutting of the doses of their medications gradually to make them independent of the drug intake.

During the later stages the focus is often on patients dealing with their surroundings, people and their social life. Also, gaining back their self esteem and overcoming their fear of relapse.

Last stages of therapy usually includes dealing with patients feelings in regards of cutting off their medications which will be considered after a series of tests including stress and coping abilities are performed. The therapist will then construct a daily plan according to the patient's needs and requirements while providing them with the therapist's contact number in case anything goes wrong.

Result

A humanistic approach towards a schizophrenic patient provides therapist and the patient with great understanding of the unique process of change in the disease and the patient. Where the main concentration is on the patient's state of mind and feelings rather than medications, slow and gradual process brings out the best results which are positive and constructive.

Discussion

Where there are arguments over the use of humanistic approach as a waste of time, there are proven results on how effective it can be when it comes to raising social and cultural awareness against mental disorders. It can also create a natural and positive setting for the patient where scientists can gather up their data without forcing the individuals to participate or use external methods which can often be quite abusive.

Lastly, humanistic approach does not under value the constructive power of medications and other forms of treatment; it simply concentrates on how things might go wrong by studying the patient's life history while keeping a positive approach towards its findings.

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