Social Work and the Recovery Movement

SWK 685 Social Work and Mental Health Care System

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to highlight what exactly is the recovery movement, and how it has impacted in today's social work practice. Nowadays, people suffer from severe mental illness, such as Schizophrenia, Depression, ADHD, Anxiety, PTSD and with the use of the recovery model, and proper assessments, the patients must clients adhere to commit on recovering only if they accept to get treated. The discussion of this paper is to address the ecological and medical model, then compared the recovery movement, and lastly explaining how the recovery movement can be applied toward social work practice but most importantly advocating for those patients who suffers from a mental illness.

Keywords, recovery movement, medical model, ecological, advocacy, and treatment.

History of the Recovery Movement

It all began in the early 1930s when it was introduced by practitioners who would apply the recovery movement in the substance abuse field. In fact, the idea was to help individuals who had on going episode of an illness and apply the 12-step process as a way to recover. According to the International Mental Health Collaborating Network (2020) states "The concept of recovery can be traced back as far as 1830, when John Perceval, son of one of England's prime ministers, wrote of his personal recovery from the psychosis that he experienced from 1830 until 1832, a recovery that he obtained despite the "treatment" he received from the "lunatic" doctors who attended him" (IMHCN,2020).

Rephrasing back about what the practitioners taught about personal recovery it was fascinating how it first started with a son of a prime minister who apparently talked about his own personal recovery, but then expressed having psychosis, and then went to get treated by doctors. Upon understanding the real concept of the recovery movement. It was interesting to view the term "lunatic" as a way of explaining that the son prime minister was being attended by the lunatic doctor, while the lunatic doctor was described as a crazy person who meant to be mentally ill.

Due to the fact that recovery are meant for individuals that are transitioning with a current mental illness, not necessarily patients recover from experiencing a substance abuse addiction, PTSD, anxiety, depression, or suicide in fact these people need enough support and motivation from a licensed therapist who are able to assist with the ongoing stigma, and barriers that ones have in their life. In fact, as mental health counselors we question ourselves but what necessary requirements are needed to elaborate on the recovery process to better help these patients?

For instance, a YouTube video on What Does The Recovery Model look like today. Talks about three points explaining the following: if a client is either centered vs. illness centered, then the second point is what actually does the recovery process look like, and lastly looking at the client's strengths. Some examples, of a strength perspective is identifying what are the things the clients can do good for example: is the client a good listener, can the client cook or do good on a hobby they enjoy, do they appear to have a good self-esteem. At my own personal opinion all of these points make an effective method to help the individual know that there is hope to recover only if there are willing to try and collaborate with the provider.

Overall, an article on *The Recovery Model and the Citizenship* written by W. Patrick Sulliva highlights a specific section about the recovery model used by The Dawn of the Recovery Model, similarity to what has said earlier that clients who commence to have a mental illness and would want to recover the strengths perspective can be applied as a solution for recovery. However, "Recovery, as we understand it, involves the development of new meaning and purposes in one's life as one grows beyond the catastrophic effects of mental illness" (Rosenburg 2018, pg10). The definition explains that recovery is a positive insight with great benefits meaning that the individual should not give up but instead learn how to move forward no matter what their mental illness might be at this point.

Even though definition of recovery is to actually to support clients who are in need without being judge mental health counselors must ask the client what are their needs but also help the client feel that they are not being judge based on their beliefs.

Medical Model

What is the medical model, and how is it used today? Briefly, let's point out by stating that the medical model is a mental health disease used in patients that have a severe health issue. Some examples of mental health diseases are Schizophrenia, Depression, Anxiety, ADHD and substance abuse disorder. A clinical psychology article from 2013 on the *The biomedical model of mental disorder: A critical analysis of its validity, utility, and effects on psychotherapy research.* The use of elaborating talk therapy, psychotropic medications are examples of how the medical model is use in an appropriate way to treat the patients with current illness. For instance, the article reports that the main causes for mental disorder tends to be biological meaning that the activities that are done comes from the brain. The researcher also reported that the majority of the brain activity coming from the brain tend to be abnormal (Deacon 2013, pg 848). Also, as you know that the four parts of the brain which are: the frontal lobe, occipital lobe, temporal lobe, and partial lobe. Out of all brain functions the most effected to a person when an abnormal activity is done is the frontal lobe which in this case the frontal lobe is responsible for decision making, personality, emotions.

Moreover, the use of psychotropic medication increases the chances for treating patients with a mental disorder. A reason for claiming this to be true is the following "Antipsychotic medications, traditionally reserved for treating psychotic and mood disorders experienced by less than 5% of the population (Perälä et al., 2007), have become the fifth highest revenue-generating class of medications in the United States. Meaning that for those patients who are in medication there are only 5 % of the treated population in the Unites States of America who produce better outcome to treat their mood disorder.

To summarize, the medical model before introducing the ecological model, it is important to understand that the medical model can only be used by psychiatric to treat clients when

prescribing medication. Therefore, the medical model also is best for understanding the effect of mental disorder, especially when it comes from the brain, or when an activity is held by the client in which would surely identify the outcome of the current illness.

Ecological Model

The ecological model in the social work practice is to look at the client environment, and how daily life's stressor affect the person. An example of the ecological model is focusing on the individual then moving, into the microsystem meaning that if the individual has close relationship among their family members, peers, churches, health services etc. Next, looking at the individual macrosystem it focus would be the socioeconomic status, wealth, poverty and ethnicity, and lastly the exosystem is looked at if the individual had a bad day at work, or may had lost their employment, and then release all of that anger among his closets relationship. A social worker would use the ecological model to identify client's current contribution to their environment, and then work with the client in the areas where the help is needed the most.

An overview journal on *Applying an Ecological Framework to understanding Drug Addiction and Recovery* informs the use of how an ecological model is applied among those clients who have a drug addiction, but are working toward sobriety. The critique of this journal declares that the best way to focus on the ecological model is by looking at the internal and external process. An example, given by researcher (Matto 2010, pg.8) mentions "Culture has been defined as a social group's behavior patterns and customs, and as "a set of traditional, explicit and implicit beliefs, values, actions, and material environments that are transmitted by language, symbol and behavior within an enduring and interacting group of people."

To rephrase what was said by Matto a person's culture gives the role of a person life it identifies them as an individual. Which in fact the true for social workers is to look at the way

the client has strong values to their language, symbol, beliefs etc in which helps the social

worker get an look of how important culture is to the client.

Furthermore, the key points illustrated by Matto in his journal when it comes to

addressing the ecological model after the person is fully done with recovery the idea is

acknowledging identity transformation. With this being said, that while the client is on recovery,

they tend to ask themselves "Who am I now?" "How do I act?" "What do I do?" in negotiating

through acute social status confusion. In addition to individual and treatment facility components

implicated in identity transformation and cultural socialization, ecological variables (Matto 2004,

pg.9). The researcher gives the reader the idea to recognize that when the client is in the stage of

finding out who the really are as individual, then they may come to realize that that they have an

addiction, and emotions such as guilt, confusion, despair and frustration accumulates in their

ego.

To conclude with the journal, the ecological model is working on finding out the proper

interventions for clients' needs when they face an addition. As social workers, it is very

important to keep in mind that completing an assessment would actually help the social worker

decide whether if the client has a substance abuse problem. A few interventions that a mental

health counselor would focus with the client are assessing an assessment tool and finding out

what triggers the person to be under the influence of drugs. A screening tool by the name of

Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (AUDIT) would assess alcohol consumption, drinking

behaviors and alcohol related problems. Another screening tool would be utilizing the CAGE

assessment to determine how severe is the use of alcohol. Both of the assessment can help the

social worker determine if the client needs outside referral or treatment to possibly enroll in an

Alcoholic Anonymous meeting. There is also the Drug Abuse Screen Test (DAST10) which is

only used for clinical screening to figure out proper treatment to help identify how serious is the addiction.   **Comparison with the medical and ecological model**

The main idea to actually understand if the medical and ecological model tend to relate to each other. Therefore, through the focus of the paper is on the recovery movement. From reading the few journals, that pointed out the differences between medical and ecological model, both terms are different from each other because the medical model goal is to treat the mental illness for those with medical disease and looking for useful ways to treat the client with a current disease. With that being said, the idea for assessing psychotherapy, and medications. Studies done by researchers explains that the most effective method to help clients recover from possible recovery, is by providing the options to the client and letting them know about what options and interventions are for them. For example, as mental health counselors working with the client what can be done with them is provide them with the needed referrals, services and advise the client to discuss about their emotions, experiences, encourage to attend group session with other clients who present the same issue.

From the ecological model based on the critiques it tends to be different from the medical model because the idea is to look at the client's own environment and identify the current stressor that one's is living. Some of these things can be if the person does not get along with their peers, experience hardship at work, less motivated to gain interest in activities they liked to do such as playing tennis, attending to the gym, hiking etc. For clients after the medical model is implemented then the ecological model can then be applied much better to find out that purpose of ones illness, and how does it affect their way to live a better lives.

Social Work's role or responsibility in advocating or challenging recovery-based treatment.

Advocacy role in social work practice is fighting for client's rights but it also involves working on needed resources that the client isn't able to do for themselves. Let's give the example of an undocumented woman who is working on getting immigration services, and due to her legal status she is unable to talk for herself to meet with an attorney who would be able to work seeking permanent stay in the United States of America. For social workers the help for the client is to go with client to the appointment and ask on how the client can get help in order to seek an asylum. Going back to rephrase the example given on how social worker would advocate for clients, with need lets take forth to advocacy in the recovery-based treatment. The best way to surely speaks on how social workers think through the process of recovery is by analyzing on this journal that actually speaks on *Thinking Through Recovery: Resolving Ethical Challenges and Promoting Social Work Values in Mental Health Service,* the main point of the article begins by utilizing interventions such as psychiatric advance directives, shared decision-making, wellness recovery action plans.

The focus of the social worker is to help clients identify autonomy and recovery within applying social work values. While recovery is meant for reach, when social workers tend to advocate for clients needs, they do it with the intention of helping them get to prosperity and find a goal. Let's say "Hope is the belief that recovery from severe mental illness is possible, while healing is the process of "recovering the self" by "reconceptualizing illness as only part of the self" rather than the defining feature of the self, and also uncovering the means of controlling symptoms"(Solomon &Lukens 2013, pg.64). Based on this, I would say this a good example for advocacy being a positive side for social workers to do when working with clients as the quotes stays that hope is the reason for looking at yourself to uncover negativity and find inner peace within you, but especially have the social worker help the client while they in despair.

In conclusion, the recovery movement declares as a positive contribution to help those who are in need and decide be helped but most especially let the clients who are dealing with a substance abuse issue get identified that recovery is a process, and commitment to find the real self-, and most importantly challenge yourself in promoting change to your life for the best.

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