

SWK 2750

Notes Unit III

How do we define mental health? Mental illness?

Both are socially defined
Depends on context and functioning

How do we diagnose mental illness?

- Medical Model (typical method)
- PIE perspective
- Szasz theory

“Rather than shun people for acting in ways you can’t explain, ask questions about their behavior. You may discover they’re deploying an ingenious coping strategy to a challenge you weren’t aware of.”

Glenn Alperin

Disabled have legal protections for treatment

- Wyatt v Stickney (1971): reformed standards of care for mentally ill and developmentally disabled. Focus for care to be on returning to society
- O’Connor v Donaldson (1975): non-dangerous individuals who are capable of surviving safely in society can not remain confined. This ended indefinite hospitalizations.

Some social problems are linked to mental health, including:

- Homelessness
- Dual diagnosis
- Suicide

Treatment options for mental health problems:

- Use of treatment
- Partial hospitalization
- Hospitalization
- Workshop settings and employee assistance programs
- Group/supportive community homes

Roles for social workers at all intervention levels

- Advocacy
- Case management
- Policy and research
- Counseling
- Multidisciplinary team
- Crisis intervention
- Education

Working with substance abuse problems is another area of social work practice. Many facilities require that a worker have additional training on addictions before being hired - these certifications can be acquired in any state.

Theories/concepts relevant to addictions:

- Anomie (Durkheim and Merton)
- Labeling
- Differential Association (Sutherland)

What are the most commonly abused substances in the U.S. ?

Highlights from research by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
(samhsa.gov)

Populations at the greatest risk of addiction:

- Anyone who uses
- Adolescents
- Elderly
- Members of a subordinate group

Treatment issues:

- Withdrawal
- People, places and things
- Aftercare

Use of groups and family support greatly increase the likelihood someone can successfully manage their addiction

Social work roles with addiction:

- Treatment
- Administration
- Policy
- Advocacy

Social work practice with the elderly is known as “gerontology.” This is already a large area of practice and it is increasing (as the U.S. is an aging society).

What is aging? (senescence)

Terminology to be familiar with:

Young old: 65- 74
Middle old: 75 - 84
Oldest old: 85+

Theories on adaptive aging include:

- Activity
- Cellular (DNA)
- Disengagement
- Developmental

Issues of concern for the elderly:

- Adequate income
- Access to healthcare
- Benefit programs
- Independence
- Vulnerability and safety
- Contributing to society

Social workers services to the elderly include:

- Case management
- Direct services
- Advocacy
- Counseling
- Policy and research

Most individuals have in some way violated a law...the question is, “How does the U.S. deal with crime, and where does social work fit in?”

The criminal justice system in the U.S. has four main components:

- Legislative
- Law Enforcement
- Judicial
- Corrections

What is the difference between adult and juvenile corrections?

Social workers who work in a criminal justice setting are known as forensic social workers

Ethical dilemmas in criminal justice settings:

- Confidentiality
- Use of coercion
- Quality and access to treatment
- Rehabilitation
- Dignity and worth of a person
- Family disruption

What is involved for restorative justice and victim assistance?

Specific social work roles in corrections include:

- Change agent (especially in prisons)
- Addressing environmental issues
- Probation / Parole
- Diversion programs
- Victim services
- Advocacy
- Policy and research