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MODULE: ACADEMICS AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILL

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Introduction:

What is Mental Health?

Mental health is a state of emotion, social wellbeing and psychological way of thinking, feeling and how an individual is coping with life issues and challenges. In life, everyone has mental health which varies from day-to-day lifestyle, ranging from good mental state of health to poor health and from poor state to a good mental health.

Reflection:

I choose this role because I want to see people in need of support recovering from their state of being in poor mental health to good and become stable fulfilling lives using specific skills which includes empathy, communication, compassionate care and active listening skill to help the patient get better.

Duties and responsibility of mental health nurse: They provide essential care to an individual with mental illnesses (such as depression, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder) aiming to promote recovery and improve quality of life. Mental health nurses work in the hospital, homes and community centre. They focus on assessing needs of an individual with disorder, administering medications, providing therapeutic support and conduct risk assessment.

Roles of Mental health nurse: A mental health nurse (or psychiatric nurse) is to promotes and provide therapeutic care to support an individual to recover, helping them to live independent and fulfilling lives. Mental health nurses are often the consistent point of contact for patients, helping them manage their condition and navigate recovery.

The 3 essential skills needed to perform role mental health nurse:

1. Communication: the ability to engage with service user or individual in need and communicate effectively is a fundamental skill required of all mental health nurses. Also building a good rapport and developing a therapeutic relationship may also be useful for some service users. (Sandra Walker, 2014) (“engagement and Therapeutic communication”)

2. Empathy: This is the ability to understand and share the feelings of the other person. This skill helps us to deliver the right care to the service user. This is a core therapeutic skill, is not merely a feeling, it involves the ability to perceive, understand, and relate to a patient's experience without taking on their emotional burden, it is essential for building trust, improving patient outcomes, and requires active listening, validation, and emotional regulation to prevent burnout.
3. Compassionate care: The act of being intentional with the service we provide and passion. Skill – based practice of recognizing a patient's suffering and taking action to alleviate it with sympathy, dignity and respect. It involves building trusting relationships, active listening and providing personalized care for recovery while also requiring self-care to prevent burnout.

Why the 3 skills are essential:

Communication, empathy, and compassionate care give essential skills in mental health for it helps to build trust, allows deep connection, enhance values, strengthening relationship and reduce conflict.

Examples of issues (Mental health issues / challenges includes):

- Depression and mood swings
- Anxiety
- Difficulty in concentration
- Eating disorder
- Loneliness
- Sleep problem
- Alcohol and drug abuse

(Doris Harouici. 2014)

The strategies to improve these 3 skills includes:

1. Strategies to improve communication are:

- Using Digital skills
- Collaboration and improved engagement
- Improving virtual team effectiveness
- Mobile communication in houses, hospital or care setting to discuss problems, possibilities and solution.

Book – Antony Normore, Mitch Javidi, Larry Lang (2019) Citation “Handbook of research on strategic communication, leadership and conflict management” (Normore, A.H. 2019)

Role specific examples of communication in mental health:

Suppose a nurse must draw blood from a patient. Standard communication would require the nurse to describe the procedure briefly and then move on. However, in the same scenario with therapeutic communication, the nurse would take the time to discuss the patient’s concerns, reluctance, or worries. They would explain the procedure while also ensuring that the patient is heard, their emotions are validated, and their viewpoints are respected.

The respectful and compassionate nature of therapeutic communication helps patients open more about their needs, including their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. It also encourages them to share their experiences with the treatments, potential side effects, and other related information. (Nightingale College, <https://nightingale.edu/blog/therapeutic-communication.html>)

2. Strategies to improve compassionate care in mental health nursing include:

Active listening, empathy training, encouraging selfcare, supporting nurses’ wellbeing to prevent burnout. Providing training and education that emphasises emotional intelligence. Improving compassionate care in mental health involves, cultivating empathetic communication and holistic person-centred approaches that prioritise dignity. Key strategies include specialized empathy training, implementing reflective practice to manage burnout, fostering care support and involving patients in shared decision making rather than relying on diagnostic labels.

Key strategies for Compassionate Care:

The basic strategies to facilitate compassion are straightforward: ensuring an effective support network and considering modes of relaxation (including alcohol intake). The extent to which relaxation involves trauma-related drama (e.g. violence on TV) and reading should be addressed (Matheieu, 2014). Shapiro et al (2011) reported on a simple, evidence-based technique that enhances the ability to make difficult decisions in medicine. There are six steps to the process: (1) take a breath; (2) find something positive about the patient; (3) assess the situation, other people and yourself; (4) clarify your goals and intention; (5) choose an option and implement it appropriately; (6) evaluate.

- Active listening and communication: Focus on validated listening, maintaining eye contact and using calm, non-judgemental communication to make patient feel heard.
- Motivation: the motivation to be caring, supportive and helpful.
- Sensitivity: a capacity for sensitivity and open attention, noticing when others need help, and not turning a blind eye or using denial or justification to avoid engaging suffering.

These strategies will specifically help me to develop my skill by:

- Improve self-awareness and the ability to tolerate painful emotion
- Distress tolerance, motivation
- Mindfulness training
- Personal therapy
- Building a support network, or participating in reflection with colleagues
- Improving or maintaining personal wellbeing
- Improving awareness of perspectives of patients and others
- Empathy, sensitivity, sympathy, motivation, non-judgement
- Increase involvement with patients in different settings (e.g. joint projects, working with the voluntary sector).

- Read and listen to patients' accounts and perspective.

[Royal college of psychiatrists, https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/members/faculties/general-adult-psychiatry/general-adult-fr-gap-02-compassionate-care.pdf?sfvrsn=e6852ee1_2]

Role specific examples of compassionate care

Small acts of kindness that help model compassion include:

- Helping a neighbour in need.
- Holding a door for a stranger.
- Stopping to help a lost dog.
- Complimenting someone.
- Buying coffee for someone behind you at the drive through.
- Giving food to an unhoused person

3. Strategies to improve empathy includes:

- Active listening without judgement
- Validating their emotions
- Observing body language and their facial expression when the clients are worried.
- Putting oneself in their shoes to feel their pain.
- Avoid clinical jargon and use person first language to avoid dehumanizing patients.
- Eyes contact, Tone of voice, Hearing the whole person and your response.

Role specific examples of Empathy in mental health:

- Sensing someone's emotions
- Imagining yourself in someone's situation

- Feeling sadness for someone else's sadness
- Feeling happiness for someone else's happiness
- Feeling strongly for people who share your identity

(helpfulprofessor.org, <https://helpfulprofessor.com/empathy-examples/>)

Conclusion:

The roles of mental health nurse (or psychiatric nurse) is to promote and provide therapeutic care to support an individual to recover, helping them to live independent and fulfilling lives. Mental health nurses are often the consistent point of contact for patients, helping them manage their condition and navigate recovery.

References:

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Helpfulprofessor.org, <https://helpfulprofessor.com/empathy-examples/>

Nightingale College, <https://nightingale.edu/blog/therapeutic-communication.html>

