Holistic Health and Support Services for People with Learning Disabilities Analysis

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The paper analyses the effectiveness of holistic and contemporary therapies, along with support services, vis-à-vis 'learning disability.' The paper further includes health promotion in relation to mental health, coupled with sexual health and a healthy lifestyle. The healthy needs of an individual do not vary with respect to disability, but disability hampers human rights, sexual life, and other form of awareness. As members of society, each individual is relatively aware of their human rights and can identify when they encounter them. On the contrary, people with learning disabilities find it difficult to distinguish abuse from another form of action and, consequently, are unaware of the mechanism through which they can report a crime against their human rights. The violation of their human rights is often thought of as accepted behaviour and occurs on an everyday basis in their lives. The health needs of people with learning disability are complex, in comparison with the health needs of the general population, and require higher quality of services. The advocacy campaign needs to incorporate strategies in which the target population can find solutions to their everyday life problems. In order to reform the condition of marginalized communities, such as people with learning disability, effective services like music therapy or animal therapy exist, but their accessibility is refrained due to their limited ability to learn.

Analysis

The 'value' of people defines the socio-financial and cultural status in society, and the lack of sufficient opportunities for people with learning disability means a low standard of living in society. Jobs are scarce for people with learning disability, and owning a home is less likely. The choice of 'who cares for them' is also not available in most cases, which places people with learning disability at higher social exclusion and vulnerability. The exclusion and marginalization of people with learning disabilities is a violation of human rights and needs to change. The concept of valuing people defines Government priorities and subsequently generates opportunities. People with learning disabilities have the right to own families and live as independent citizens who contribute to local communities. Another common feature of the disabled population is social exclusion and a lack of freedom over their own lives. As a consequence, the disabled population are prone to bad things happening in their lives. For example, evidence stated in Human Rights of Adults with Learning Disabilities (2008) suggests that the efforts to improve the lives of adults with learning disabilities lack significant outcomes in real terms, and the target population is trapped in poverty, isolation, and social exclusion.

Promotion of Healthy Lifestyle for People with Learning Disability

Sexuality refers to the variety of sexual options, that is, bisexual, lesbian, gay, transgender, and even straight. All individual relationships are important, and it has consequences for the learning disability, with only three per cent of people with learning disability actually living as a couple, vis-à-vis seventy per cent of the general adult population. The most common factors associated with barriers in starting a relationship for people with learning disability are the difficulty of meeting people and common social isolation. Unfortunately, people with learning disability have weak skills and knowledge required for maintaining fulfilling and healthy relationships, along with social interaction in general. Educating the target population with adequate sex and relationship education could contribute positively to their lifestyle. Furthermore, adequate sex and relationship education is needed to enhance the skills and knowledge of the individual with a healthy and happy lifestyle, irrespective of the disability. Additionally, it is an opportunity to explore and understand their 'own' sexuality.

Additionally, the lack of privacy to explore one's own sexuality also restricts opportunities for actually understanding sexuality. If an individual engages in an intimate and sexual relationship with someone with a learning disability, then there exist risks and rights for people with a learning disability. The risk and rights generally pertain to restricting the choices of people with learning disability within the family or any other living arrangement (Mencap, 2016). In order to support someone who wishes to have safe sex and a loving relationship with someone with a learning disability, then the three issues of consent, types of relationships, and intimacy play a critical role. The available support and guidance on a variety of topics are available for people with learning disability within relationships and sex education, which includes body awareness, safe sex, consent, making friends, physical and emotional aspects of sexual relationships, the difference between private and public, qualities of healthy and unhealthy relationships, and knowledge of LGBT+ identities (Mencap, n.d.).

The promotion of healthy lifestyles for people with a disability includes support and education that can safeguard them from exploitation and abuse due to being vulnerable. Abuse and exploitation are legal violations of the set norms and values of society, and exploitation of vulnerable populations requires providing support and education. A key way for young people with learning disability is to understand emotions, sexuality, sexual health, and relationships through acquiring sex and relationship education. For example, proper consideration is required in the case of individuals with learning disability around the signs of puberty and the implications for them as beings. Additionally, the concept of holistic health gained significant attention for the well-being of people with learning disability because the approach relies on taking a holistic view of health, which contains not only sexual health but also other forms of health. Marshall and Baker (2012) illustrated holistic health as the combination of an individual's physical, sexual, social, intellectual, and emotional health. Authors further write that individuals have the right to have information, support, and access to features which can ensure they enjoy their sexuality healthily and safely. The rationale for doing so is the

foundational philosophy of ‘duty of care’, which care practitioners consider with respect to providing care to individuals.

Holistic Therapies and Support Services

The literature review on holistic therapies and support services for people with learning disability emphasizes a higher quality of commissioning and service provision for delivering the vision of holistic health. Additionally, progressive thinking and innovation also play a critical role in the technological world (Mansell, 2007). It is argued that developing and expanding on the local services intended for people with learning disability relies on understanding and response mechanisms for behavioural challenges. The specialist services provided locally aim to support mainstream practice directed towards a small number of people with learning disability but require challenging needs. Generally speaking, the opportunities for learning and exposure to adults with learning disability are limited. A holistic approach is required, which addresses the areas of housing, social opportunities, education, relationships, independent finance, and employment. The curriculum for education for people with a learning disability is of a personalized nature and only aims to provide learning that can enable the person to achieve self-sufficiency.

The ‘Role Models’ campaign of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) was launched in the year 2012, on the International Day for Disabled People, placing emphasis on health and well-being, income, inclusive communities, education, choice and control, and employment as key areas for fulfilling the vision. First-hand insights from disabled people suggest that education is fundamental to lifelong learning processing and not just merely limited to school. The lack of income results in material deprivation for disabled people, and being employed is an opportunity that can provide strategic outcomes in other aspects of life. Similarly, health outcomes are critical for disabled people because their condition, directly or indirectly, impacts their health outcomes. The indicators of health and well-being provide insight into the overall satisfaction level of a disabled person in his or her life. Inclusive communities play a critical role because each member of the community has the responsibility, both able and differently abled, to participate in all societal aspects. Holistic therapies and support services promote healthy lifestyles with sufficiency in terms of sexual health, mental health, and sexuality in general.

There are basic needs for a decent standard of living, which are particularly important to the differently abled population, which includes friends and family, housing, transportation, attitudes, social participation, and information & access. For example, the pathways to getting a life consist of a person-centred transition (support) plan, which aims at addressing employment, housing, good health and developing friendship and community relationships. A most effective plan will ensure paid work, own place, good health, social networking, learning and work opportunities as its key features. The holistic therapies and other services for learning with disability are scarce, and the limitation of services is also of central focus. Few opportunities result in reliance on charities and voluntary donations. Different types of holistic therapies exist, including massage, reflexology, singing, dance,

gardening, hydrotherapy, animal therapy, music, and much more. The effectiveness of contemporary holistic therapies varies to the need type of person with disabled learning.

Mencap (n.d.) argues that the basic understanding of personal rights on the part of people with learning disability is the path which is incorporated in advocacy campaigning. Advocates provide support to people in terms of confidence building, skill development, and knowledge enhancement to speak up about their concerns. Advocacy refers to the active support for an idea or cause, and people advocating for the rights of people with disability are the advocates who, in a way, speak on behalf of the people who cannot communicate their concerns effectively due to disability. Advocacy can be categorized into self, peer, independent citizen, paid, and case-wise. For example, self-advocacy allows the person with a disability to speak up for him or herself. In the same way, two people can have similar experiences with the aim of finding support in advocating for their rights. Independent citizens can volunteer in community work aimed at raising awareness, while paid advocacy also exists with the assistance of larger organizations having similar mission and objective statements.

Conclusion

People with learning disability are a vulnerable population living their lives in marginalization. On a daily basis, violations of human rights occur in their respective lives despite being aware of it, in the process of enabling people with disability the confidence and knowledge to comprehend and respond to possible violations. Holistic health campaigns are aimed at making the lives of people with disabled learning balanced in different aspects of life, which includes financial, employment, physical, mental, sexual, and emotional. A comprehensive approach to raising the standard of living for people with disabilities requires active participation on behalf of the beneficiary population. However, the current state of people with learning disabilities requires special attention, and programs aimed at uplifting their lifestyle are scarce. Different stakeholders of the society should work together in creating inclusive societies where people with learning disability can play equal and productive roles in creating vibrant societies. In recent years, advocacy for the rights of people with learning disability has resulted in a higher level of understanding of the rights of people with disability; however, the policy-making process should aim at understanding the needs of the target population with holistic health indicators.

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