How Discrimination Against People with Mental Illnesses Can Be Harmful

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Mental Illness, Stigma, and Unequal Treatment

Everyone desires to be treated equally, whether in the right mind and soul or when sick. It should happen anytime and anywhere, be it in an organization, company, health center, or in a group of people among others. It instills a sense of belonging when one fits in a category either socially, economically, mentally, spiritually, or politically.

People with disabilities require particular critical attention because of their state of mind. All medical practitioners and clinicians are responsible for providing maximum care to patients irrespective of their disabilities to facilitate quick patient healing and a trusting relationship between the clinician and the patient (Livingstone & Wilkins, 2004). However, discrimination, which is harmful or lousy behavior toward some people because of their disabilities such as mental illness has risen among people over the past decades. Perception has become rampant to the extent of being noticeable outside mental health systems. It is working against the patients. The paper below is a brief discussion of discrimination and its harmful nature against the mentally ill in various entities.

Discrimination is evident in Medicare in various ways. The clinicians have failed to provide the required support and treatment services to mentally ill people in both hospitals and communities. It has led to an increased number of deaths and patients left untreated and crowded emergency rooms, states, streets, and jails. Neglected care to patients with mental illnesses that can be curbed at an early stage such as drug addiction and bipolar disorder has led to increased expenses in the management of the very individuals whose conditions have advanced to severe mental disorders (Johnstone, 2009) Discrimination has also resulted in the refusal of patients to seek support and essential services due to fear and shame. Medicare law has shown discrimination against the mentally ill by reducing the days the patient is supposed to receive psychiatric care. In private hospitals, there is a reduction in mental beds. There is less payment for psychiatric care than medical care for inpatients. Much care can be given to patients with cardiac diseases compared to those with brain disorders. The law assumes that the mentally ill do not deserve to live proper, safe functioning, and prosperous lives. Hence, the patients are forced to live in a confused and disabled state (Livingstone & Wilkins, 2004)

The government is also identified as the source of discrimination against mentally challenged persons. It constitutes the Laws, orders, and policies made by governmental institutions, more specifically the legislature to restrict privileges and opportunities of mentally ill people intentionally. Examples of discrimination in political institutions are the law- their rights are limited. They cannot

hold an elective office position, no participate in juries, or vote. They are thought to be unable to make decisions alone. News media- people with mental disorders or illnesses, are not well covered in media. For instance, in the majority of the articles they are violent and hazardous people. The government has set rules that penalize the poor and people with disabilities. Other negative characteristics framed concerning their disorder or medical treatments can be unsociable and unpredictable. For this reason, perception is made of them as people who cannot decide independently. As a result, the patients tend to develop fear and a feeling of exclusion, which can affect their healing processes. The government has also created a barrier to access to medical care and reduced psychiatric beds in private hospitals (Johnstone, 2009). There is less payment for psychiatric care by the government than for medical care for inpatients. Much care can be given to the patient with cardiac diseases compared to those with brain disorders.

Discrimination in Healthcare, Education, and the Legal System

Discrimination against the mentally ill is also evident in education systems. Education is a continuous learning process. Learning entails exchanging knowledge, skills, beliefs, habits, and values (United States, 1978). The entire process of learning involves internalization and memorization of the concept. Most children with mental illnesses tend to take a bit longer to internalize and memorize the idea. Most of them end up being discriminated against by their tutors because of their incapacity to follow simple instructions like the rest. Mentally ill students can be granted different accommodations and seclusion from others. And sometimes their confidential information about their illness is spilled out. Most teachers strive to associate themselves with highly performing or intelligent students in the class. There is a creation of a negative attitude in mentally disabled children toward various subjects and teachers in school. They can also refrain from sharing their conditions for fear of disclosure. In the process, the whole performance of the child is affected. The majority can drop out of school due to discrimination and demoralization.

Legal systems. The law on the protection of individuals with disabilities is based tradition on facts about sanity. Once a bill has been passed, it cannot be altered; it only remains in books. For instance, the divorce law; most mentally ill married individuals are considered incompetent by the law. The majority also remain unmarried because of their incapacity for good parenting. The wild and violent mentally ill patients can be authorized to be segregated or locked up in a structure.

Employment Barriers and the Harmful Effects of Social Exclusion

However, there is undoubtedly no discrimination against the mentally ill in the employment and job-seeking processes (Livingstone, 2009). Employees suffering from diagnosed mental health illnesses

are challenging to work with them. This can lead to can be subjected the individuals to absenteeism due to pain, medication side effects, and chronic diseases. A healthy person's work output is incomparable to that of a sick employee. The employer naturally selects people to work with based on their references and qualifications, so everyone can be employed provided you meet the requirements.

To conclude, in my opinion, discrimination toward mentally ill individuals has become rampant to the extent of being noticeable outside by everyone. It is evident in Medicare systems, government institutions, education, and legal systems. The impacts on the patients are negative and very unbearable. It can result in victimization, seclusion, authoritarianism, and harassment. The effects on the health care system can include: This has led to an increased number of deaths and patients left untreated and crowded emergency rooms, states, streets, and jails. Neglecting care for patients with mental illnesses which could have been a preventive measure at an early stage such as drug addiction and bipolar disorder has led to increased expenses in the management of the very individuals whose conditions have advanced to severe mental disorders. Discrimination has also resulted in the refusal of patients to seek support and essential services due to fear and shame. In government and its rules, have led to less payment for psychiatric care for the government than medical care for inpatients. Much care can be given to patients with cardiac diseases compared to those with brain disorders. It is there the initiative of each one of us to come together and fight the discrimination monster in all aspects. We should also treat one another equally, for not everyone is equally healthy. Remember that illness or a disorder attacks anyone at any time irrespective of your origin, religion, occupation, or nation.

References

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