

The use of Case Studies as a Basis for a Model of Support for Visiting Mental Health Nurses Providing People-Centered Care

Project Leader: Mami Kayama

【Goals】

In the process of developing strategies for providing care aiming for “Nursing for People-Centered Initiatives in Healthcare and Health Promotion” at our college, we sometimes experience difficulties in interacting or dealing with people with mental health problems. We therefore think it is crucial to set up a venue for supporting the understanding of difficult mental health related cases and how to deal with such cases, analyze the challenges in relating with people with mental health problems, and review ideal support systems. The following are three specific goals in this project:

- 1) Project members specializing in the area of psychiatric nursing participate in case study meetings that are held by professional volunteers providing health counseling to the public. By analyzing the contents of these meetings, professional volunteers providing health counseling to the public would be able to reexamine the difficulties they encounter during counseling sessions, the influential elements of these difficulties, and the required support.
- 2) A series of case study meetings organized by psychiatric certified nurse specialists (CNS) should be held on a regular basis.
- 3) A series of case study meetings organized by psychiatric visiting nurses should be held on a regular basis. By analyzing the contents of these meetings, psychiatric visiting nurses supporting people with psychiatric problems would be able to reexamine the difficulties they encounter at the point of care-delivery, the influential elements of these difficulties, and the required support.

【Plan and Implementation Process】

- 1) Conducting case study meetings by professional volunteers providing health counseling to the public are mainly attended by the project leader and project members involved in public health counseling.
- 2) Conducting case study meetings by psychiatric CNS
The meetings held every two months are conducted primarily by the project leader and project members who are psychiatric CNS. Graduate students from the advanced practical course (psychiatric CNS) are also asked to help conduct the meetings.
- 3) Conducting case study meetings by psychiatric visiting nurses
The meetings held once every two months are conducted mainly by the project leader and project members who are psychiatric visiting nurses. Graduate and undergraduate students of psychiatric nursing are also asked to help conduct the meetings.
- 4) Involvement of community
Information about up-coming meetings are announced in advance at health centers, hospitals, and visiting nursing facilities, etc. in the Kanto area, by postal mail, e-mail, and putting up notices on websites, etc.

【Goal Attainment】

1. Research activities

- 1) Case study meetings by professional volunteers providing health counseling to consumers

Since 2004, health counseling service for the public has been provided on the first floor of the St. Luke's College of Nursing Building Two by professional volunteers such as nurses, doctors, psychologists, and nutritionists. Due to the large number of people with mental health problems seeking this service, the professional volunteers sometimes have problems with how to coping with all of them. To resolve this problem, the project members participated in case study meetings held by professional volunteers to review difficult-to-handle case studies of people with mental health problems. Beginning January 2005 four such meetings have been held.

<Analysis of difficulties experienced by professional volunteers providing health counseling service for the public>

- Fear/Anxiety (Afraid that the safety of users will not be maintained, afraid of being disliked by users)
- Difficulties in communication, hesitation about the users feelings
- Feeling burdened, pressured, and being blamed while attempting to support user
- Despair over lack of foresight
- Limitation of one's ability

<Difficulties that professional volunteers providing health counseling to the public are aware of>

- Characteristics of actions and words of person seeking counseling (public)
- Characteristics of professional volunteers
- Characteristics of public health counseling system

<Effects of reviewing meetings for difficult case studies in public health counseling>

Analysis of such difficulties suggests the need for opportunities for professional volunteers to obtain knowledge about mental illness, to talk freely about their feelings, and to follow-up on their anxieties such as burden, fear, sense of insecurity, and despair. Currently, these review meetings are thought to provide this role and have a strong significance in related activities.

2) Case study meetings by psychiatric CNS

Since May 2006, the St. Luke's College of Nursing Research Center for Development of Nursing Practice has been holding and conducting these review meetings once every two months.

<Effects of review meetings by psychiatric CNS>

Many hospitals have only one psychiatric CNS, which results in limited opportunities for nurses to seek CNS advice how to deal with difficult clinical cases. These meetings therefore serve as a venue for reviewing the type of care to be provided to such cases, attended by CNSs from different medical facilities.

3) Case study review meetings by psychiatric visiting nurses

Since April 2006, these review meetings were held regularly once every two months at the St. Luke's College of Nursing Research Center for Development of Nursing Practice. Each meeting lasted about 90 minutes. Participants included nurses, public health nurses, psychiatric social workers (PSW) engaged in psychiatric visiting nursing services in the Kanto region, as well as

nurses and public health nurses with clinical experience in psychiatric nursing not currently engaged in psychiatric visiting nursing services. Table 1 shows the number of participants and themes of each meeting.

<Analysis of difficulties identified by psychiatric visiting nurses>

These case study meetings were analyzed using a content analysis method. Difficulties included:

- Providing support for enabling users to self-manage their medication
- Identifying what kinds of support users want
- Support of illness management for users who are pessimistic about their treatment
- Support of the financial management for users who cannot stop buying products from door to door sales
- Making individual nursing judgment about the appropriate extent of appropriate visiting nurse involvement in routine activities of users on their behalf.
- Providing food and exercise therapy while taking into consideration the psychological symptoms of users
- Responding to the stress of users who are at risk of suicide
- Dealing with users whose symptoms are having negative effect on family members
- Working together with many different types of professionals at the same time, such as doctors, nurses, PSW, public health nurses, administrative welfare workers, occupational physicians, etc.

<Effects of case study meetings by psychiatric visiting nurses>

- By working with professionals from different medical facilities we were able to gain a variety of useful perspectives as we reviewed better care both difficult cases and people with psychiatric diseases in their routine community life. These case study meetings are effective for visiting nurses providing individual care to users at home. It helps them obtain a more comprehensive picture of users, discover new perspectives, verify, evaluate, and correct care methods and stance, as well as review future plans.

In addition to the initial objectives of the project, this program found the following four merits:

- The case study meetings held regularly by psychiatric visiting nurses were thought to serve as an opportunity to consolidate: 1)tasks related to visiting nursing interventions, 2)tasks related to psychiatric nursing policies, and 3)tasks related to medical remuneration. Certain medical fees should be ensured to facilitate psychiatric visiting nursing care services. Based on the response of attendees we think problem solving and sharing will have a positive impact on the improvement of the care system targeted in this project.
- On-going regular meetings has helped to accumulate know-how for managing the meetings, such as how to steer the meetings, consideration to be given to participants, etc.
- By participating in running the meetings, graduate and undergraduate students were able to learn how to run the meetings and the significance of a well managed meeting.
- We were able to appeal to the community showing the presence of our college as contributing to the community.

2. Education of novice researchers

The meetings served as a chance for the participating graduate and undergraduate students to experience running review meetings. Because they were also engaged in clinical practice while participating in the meetings, they were able to link tasks faced in relationship to policies for building future support systems to: sustain their own nursing activities; support clinically-focused research and establish quality review.

3. Future directions

1) Case study review meeting of profession volunteers providing public health counseling

We plan to continuously participate in the review meetings and intend that the meetings will serve as a source of support to the volunteers. In public support activities, it is a challenge to share and talk about difficulties faced while trying to protect the privacy of the people involved. However, if these care providers are not given any chance to talk and share about these problems and obtain knowledge on how to resolve them, they themselves can “burn out”. While the members of this project have the advantage of belonging to the same college, which allows them to mutually understand their respective positions in participating in the review meetings from the standpoint of psychiatric nursing, they also face the risk of being too close to each other. Another task is the need to review establishing a support system which incorporates these meetings.

2) Review meetings for psychiatric CNS and psychiatric visiting nurses

There is a need to continue these meetings regularly so that they can serve as an important source of support to nurses working with people with mental health problems. Based on these review meetings, it is important to review ideal over premise support.

By continuously analyzing difficulties that nurses are aware of, it is possible to apply these difficulties to foster nurses’ expertise and to provide in-service training, as well as use their experience as the basis for making proposals about medical policies.

Our vision for the future is that psychiatric visiting nursing will be broadly established as a support for maintaining and enhancing the QOL for people with psychiatric diseases. And we also expect these support services will further improve in quality and become a standard practice. Therefore, it is indispensable to clarify psychiatric visiting nursing technologies and verify the effectiveness of these techniques. Many mental disorders tend to become chronic, so that they require continuous symptom management such as drug treatment. Therefore, we hope the results of this project provide effective guidelines for the support of those with mental illness living in the community.

Table 1: Themes and Number of Participants in Visiting Nurse Case Study Review

	Theme	Case Provider	Number of attendance
1st meeting in 2006	What are problems during actual home visits by visiting nurses		22
2nd meeting in 2006	Visiting nursing work for a care user who says, "If visiting nurses don't bring my medication, they are useless."	Visiting nurse office in the hospital	37
3rd meeting in 2006	How to approach care for recipients to be able to manage themselves	Visiting nurse office in the hospital	27

4th meeting in 2006	Visiting nursing work for a patient who is depressive but eager to seek employment again	Visiting nurse office in the clinic	24
5th meeting in 2006	Care user who understands his/her "mental disease", but rejects taking medicines and instead uses walk-in clinical service whenever he/she wants to.	Visiting nurse office in the hospital	22
6th meeting in 2006	Support for a couple, both of whom have schizophrenia, and their families	Public health care center	21
1st meeting in 2007	Visiting nursing activity for a patient who is unable or unwilling to engage in appropriate excretory behavior	Visiting nurse office in the hospital	28
2nd meeting in 2007	Visiting nursing work for a care user who is job hunting despite having an unstable condition	Visiting nurse office in the clinic	42