

REVIEW

Comprehensive approach to mental health from nursing and evidence-based care

Abordaje integral en salud mental desde la enfermería y el cuidado basado en evidencia

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: the review addressed the importance of mental health knowledge among healthcare personnel, especially nurses, as a basis for implementing effective prevention, promotion, and treatment strategies. It was suggested that, despite the wide range of information available, healthcare professionals demonstrated a lack of knowledge in the application of psychosocial interventions, which limited their use in a comprehensive approach to patients and their environment.

Development: during the analysis, various interventions framed in standardised NIC language were identified, including physiological and psychosocial actions focused on comprehensive care. Nursing, as a discipline, applied both conventional techniques and holistic strategies—relaxation, massage, aromatherapy, acupuncture, and music therapy—to reduce stress, improve quality of life, and support mental health. These interventions were based on scientific evidence and were implemented depending on the level of professional training. In addition, the concept of psychosocial intervention was explored, understood as a means of modifying harmful environments and behaviours. The types of mental disorder prevention (universal, selective and indicated) were also analysed, highlighting the need for early intervention. The Colombian legal context, through Law 1616 of 2013, supported the right to comprehensive mental health care. Finally, Phil Barker's recovery model offered a humanistic approach, centred on the patient's experience.

Conclusion: it was concluded that strengthening the knowledge and application of psychosocial interventions by health personnel, especially nurses, was essential for humanised, scientific and culturally sensitive care that guaranteed the quality of life of the individual, their family and the community.

Keywords: Mental Health; Psychosocial Interventions; Nursing; Prevention; Holistic Care.

RESUMEN

Introducción: la revisión abordó la importancia del conocimiento en salud mental por parte del personal sanitario, especialmente de enfermería, como base para implementar estrategias eficaces de prevención, promoción y tratamiento. Se planteó que, a pesar de la amplia información disponible, los profesionales de la salud mostraron desconocimiento en la aplicación de intervenciones psicosociales, lo que limitó su uso en el abordaje integral del paciente y su entorno.

Desarrollo: durante el análisis, se identificaron diversas intervenciones enmarcadas en el lenguaje estandarizado NIC, que incluyeron acciones fisiológicas y psicosociales enfocadas en el cuidado integral. Enfermería, como disciplina, aplicó tanto técnicas convencionales como estrategias holísticas —relajación, masajes, aromaterapia, acupuntura y musicoterapia— para reducir el estrés, mejorar la calidad de vida y apoyar la salud mental. Estas intervenciones se basaron en evidencia científica y se ejecutaron dependiendo del nivel de formación profesional. Además, se exploró el concepto de intervención psicosocial, entendido

como un medio para modificar entornos y comportamientos perjudiciales. Se analizaron también los tipos de prevención de trastornos mentales (universal, selectiva e indicada), destacando la necesidad de intervención temprana. El contexto legal colombiano, a través de la Ley 1616 de 2013, respaldó el derecho a la atención integral en salud mental. Finalmente, el modelo de recuperación de Phil Barker ofreció un enfoque humanista, centrado en la experiencia del paciente.

Conclusión: se concluyó que el fortalecimiento del conocimiento y la aplicación de intervenciones psicosociales por parte del personal de salud, especialmente enfermería, resultó esencial para un cuidado humanizado, científico y culturalmente sensible que garantizara la calidad de vida del individuo, su familia y la comunidad.

Palabras clave: Salud Mental; Intervenciones Psicosociales; Enfermería; Prevención; Cuidado Holístico.

INTRODUCTION

Evidence suggests that knowledge of mental health improves strategy planning and determines which interventions are aimed at improving the mental health of individuals so that they do not threaten their health status.

Although it is not known how much health professionals know about psychosocial techniques and interventions in mental health, how they are used and in what situations they can be applied, health professionals do not seem to be involving these interventions in the promotion and prevention of mental illness, which is very important from a nursing perspective.

In accordance with the above, although the literature provides extensive information on the benefits of mental health interventions, there is a high degree of ignorance about psychosocial interventions developed by health professionals for healthy and sick people to address patients and their families. It is therefore necessary to describe, through this literature review, the psychosocial and mental health interventions developed by human talent in health.

It is essential that nursing, as a discipline, be aware of various care alternatives through interventions to provide care based on scientific evidence to prevent, promote, maintain, and treat phenomena related to mental health, thus guaranteeing quality of life for the individual, family, and community.

Considering the above, a narrative review of the psychosocial and mental health interventions developed by healthcare personnel is required to provide the healthcare team with tools for a comprehensive approach to the individual, their family, or community in an institutionalised and non-institutionalised context to provide comprehensive care.

Given the above, the following question was formulated.

Objective

To describe the psychosocial and mental health interventions developed by healthcare professionals, emphasizing the role of nursing, to provide tools that favour a comprehensive approach to the individual, their family, and community in institutional and non-institutional contexts, promoting care based on scientific evidence.

DEVELOPMENT

Intervention

In health, the word intervention is associated with a procedure, treatment, or action aimed at treating, preventing, or improving the symptoms related to a disease.⁽¹⁾

Interventions aim to work on a context's psychological and social dimensions.⁽²⁾ However, in the standardised language of NIC interventions, the nursing discipline includes both the physiological and psychosocial spheres. These interventions have been established for the treatment of diseases, prevention, and the promotion of mental and general health.⁽³⁾

Nursing Interventions in Mental Health (NIC mental health and psychiatry specialty)

The NIC is a comprehensive standardised language that provides nursing professionals with descriptions of psychological and psychosocial treatments and interventions to treat, prevent, and promote the health of individuals and their families.

The interventions covered by the NIC encompass a series of practical activities in nursing practice; they require specialised training, and several cannot be carried out without the appropriate qualifications. Others describe essential measures that can be delegated to nursing assistants, but a nursing professional must carry out their planning and evaluation.⁽⁴⁾

Holistic Nursing Interventions

Holistic nursing interventions are strategies that comprise a series of integrated tools for the prevention, promotion, and treatment of mental health.⁽⁵⁾

These tools include:

Relaxation Therapy

A set of effective psychological strategies designed to reduce stress levels and/or responses in some people is an effective technique for preventing stress.⁽⁶⁾

Massage

A technique that forms an important part of integrative medicine, massage stimulates the skin, muscles, and tendons with varying degrees of manual pressure. It aims to alleviate pain, improve circulation, reduce stress and related disorders, and promote relaxation.^(8,9,10,11,12,13)

Aromatherapy

A therapeutic tool used to promote mental health through the unique properties of essential oils extracted from aromatic plants and administered through massage, topical creams, baths, inhalations and showers with the aim of soothing pain, increasing relaxation and comfort, and improving harmony, balance and mental well-being.⁽¹⁴⁾

Music therapy

This is the use of harmony, sound, rhythm, or melody in music for patients to provide emotional support and indirectly a relaxing effect by diverting attention from stimuli that cause stress.⁽¹⁵⁾

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is a traditional Chinese technique based on stimulating certain points on the body using various painless techniques such as acupressure, ultrasound, and low-voltage electrical current. It aims to improve the individual's mental health by effectively reducing pain and/or post-surgical symptoms, as well as the negative effects of chemotherapy and addiction treatment.⁽⁷⁾

Psychosocial intervention

A discipline within social psychology that attempts to predict, understand, and change human social behaviour and modify harmful aspects of the environment to improve social behaviour and quality of life, thus creating a link between individuals and their social environment.⁽⁹⁾

Mental health promotion

According to the WHO, health promotion is 'a process through which people can increase control over their health'. In short, health promotion encourages environmental changes that promote and protect the health of individuals.⁽¹⁰⁾

Prevention of mental disorders

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the aim of prevention of mental disorders is to "reduce the incidence, prevalence and recurrence of mental disorders"; the time people remain symptomatic or psychotic, the risk of developing mental illness, prevent or delay relapses and reduce the impact of the disorder on sufferers, their families and society.^(10,11,12,13,14,15,16)

Preventive interventions: focus on reducing risk factors, increasing protective factors associated with mental health disorders and discovering the causes of mental disorders. In the research we were able to identify several types of prevention interventions taking into account the community to which they are directed and the risk to which they are subject according to their health status.^(12,17,18,19,20,21,22)

Universal prevention: these are interventions aimed at the whole community in general that has not been identified as having a specific risk factor.

Selective prevention: interventions aimed at individuals at risk of developing a mental disorder according to the conviction proven by existing psychosocial risk factors.^(12,23,24)

Indicated prevention: interventions aimed at individuals who have presented detectable signs and symptoms or who are at high risk of presenting mental disorders and who indicate the onset of a mental illness, but who do not meet the criteria for being diagnosed with a mental disorder.^(12,25,26)

Human Talent in Mental Health

Human talent in health is the foundation of the healthcare system, regardless of its organisational and

operational model. Through their activities, the right to health is exercised, and access to and quality of healthcare services are ensured. The performance and sustainability of health systems and their organisations depend largely on human talent in health, who are exposed to various situations involving the people they provide health care and attention to.^(16,27,28,29,30)

Legal context: Law 1616 of 2013 - mental health

Its objective is to guarantee that Colombians enjoy the full right to mental health care through health promotion and the prevention of mental disorders, prioritising children and young people, and establishing standards for reform, implementation of rights, and territorial and population policy standards in all Staged Approaches to the Life Cycle.

In Colombia, mental health is an important public health issue and a fundamental right. All individuals and the state are obliged to support patients and their families to improve the quality of life of Colombians.^(17,31,32,33,34,35)

Disciplinary context: Phil Barker's 'Tide or Mental Health Recovery Model'

This model can be applied to professional practice and shows that nurses can guide individuals in their recovery process through listening and dialogue.^(36,37,38,39,40,41)

According to research carried out in different countries, this theory seeks to connect nurses and other mental health professionals, focusing attention on the person,⁽⁴⁹⁾ respecting the culture, beliefs, rights of each individual and their expectations about treatment, taking into account the characteristics and fundamental commitments of the model.^(50,51,52,53,54,55)

CONCLUSIONS

Mental health has become fundamentally important in public health systems, not only because of its impact on people's quality of life, but also because of the urgent need to implement effective strategies for its promotion, prevention, and treatment. This review shows that psychosocial and mental health interventions developed by healthcare professionals, especially nurses, are essential for ensuring a comprehensive and humanised approach to individuals, their families, and the community in general.

It is recognised that despite the wide availability of information on mental health interventions, many health professionals remain significantly ignorant, which limits their application in everyday clinical practice. This training gap compromises the effectiveness of promotion and prevention programmes, especially in institutional and community settings, where early and timely intervention can make the difference between chronicity and recovery.

In nursing, structured interventions such as those in the Nursing Intervention Classification (NIC) stand out, as they allow for the standardisation and guidance of therapeutic actions from a biopsychosocial approach. In addition, holistic care strategies such as music therapy, aromatherapy, acupuncture, massage, and relaxation techniques offer evidence-based complementary options that promote patients' emotional and physical well-being.

In this regard, it is imperative to strengthen the training of health professionals in the knowledge, application, and evaluation of these interventions, thus ensuring person-centred care that is respectful of their rights and culturally sensitive. In addition, the Colombian regulatory framework, represented by Law 1616 of 2013, legally supports the importance of addressing mental health as a fundamental right, establishing a state commitment to comprehensive care.

Finally, Phil Barker's mental health recovery model brings a humanistic and inclusive vision to the care process, promoting active listening and respect for the patient's experience. This approach, aligned with the philosophy of nursing, reinforces the role of the professional as a facilitator of change and recovery. In conclusion, knowledge and application of psychosocial and mental health interventions are key to strengthening the healthcare system's response to current mental health challenges, ensuring comprehensive, efficient, and science-based care.

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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