



Horatio: European Psychiatric Nurses

Future Challenge for Psychiatric Nurses



Horatio

- Represents psychiatric and mental health nurses in European countries
- Has an estimated individual membership of 300,000 nurses
- Has 28 National organisations representing 26 Countries in the association.
- Its main aims are to support the work of psychiatric nurses in clinical practice developments, educational initiatives, mental health related research liaison with other national and international mental health groups and to provide a voice for nurses in mental health policy and strategic activities within Europe - including nursing leadership.

Key challenges

- Raising the standards of staff education, both basic and post basic
- Cross border recognition of qualifications
- The development of skill mix personnel
- Collaborative research with mental health users of services and other mental health professional organisations
- Seek for the recognition of specialisms within mental health, and not just the traditional ones based on age range.
- Support the development of community based resources
- Reduce stigma

Nursing Challenges 1

- Must be more active in promoting its ideas and values to influence policy and strategic processes
- Must establish collaborative relationships with patients and develop their advocacy roles
- Must learn more about mental health care so that they are better able to offer patients a tool box of therapeutic options, not restrict them to old fashioned ways of working
- Must become more therapy oriented
- Must become creative, e.g. Working with service users on self rating mental health status apps in the community, using e-comics to allow people with communication difficulties the opportunity to speak for themselves, helping service users to develop individual recovery based care strategies

Nursing Challenges 2

- Nursing has to meet the 21st century increases in demand for mental health care with more open and transparent ways of working with service users
- Nurses must learn to work as team members, both as leaders and followers and not assume that others will take responsibility for difficult decisions
- Nursing must develop better career pathways that include, undergraduate and post graduate staff, nurse consultants as well as clinical nurse specialists and advanced nurse specialists and provide itself with job descriptions and role definitions that address these different levels of competence and care delivery.

Nursing Challenges 3

- Nursing must develop its strategic plans in line with established frameworks and guidelines, i.e. not trying to restructure something which is solely for nursing.
- It must focus attention on areas of practice which are known to have good clinical outcomes, e.g. first episode psychosis, home treatments, crisis interventions, recovery based therapies.
- Nurses have to influence policy makers to utilise these skills

There is a need to focus

- Nursing must choose which 'battle to fight'
- It does not have the resources to be able to do everything at once
- Attempting to do so will result in abject failure
- It has to have a focus
- Is it time to reconsider whether individualised care is resource efficient and/or clinically effective?

Mental health services need to focus

- Mental health services must choose which 'battle to fight'
- Governments do not have the resources to do everything at once
- Attempting to do so will result in abject failure and perhaps worse, a loss of confidence by service users in the ability of services to provide appropriate care for them.
- Governments must have a focus - developing strategic plans which look good on paper but are doomed to failure because of a lack of resources to develop them properly is both unethical undermines social confidence

Danger signals

- Developing community services because everyone else is does not necessarily mean they will work
- Staff have to be properly trained and developed to be able to deal with the transition from institution to community - they often suffer from institutionalisation themselves
- Operational plans that call for new ideas and new approaches, even new technology, must be properly funded and have the appropriate level of qualified personnel to deliver them.
- Not involving users and career of services in the maintenance, development and evaluation of those services is not only heavy handed but sends out a message of failure to society in general
- Seeking 'good practice' examples to increase quality and reduce development times is acceptable only if those practices have been adapted to their new service

In conclusion

- There is no health without mental health
- There are no mental health services without properly trained psychiatric nurses!