Chapter 12

Building Relationships Within a Therapeutic Team

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes how a therapeutic team is a term defining all qualified healthcare workers, who are actively participating in the treatment, care and rehabilitation processes of a patient. Depending on the type of department or institution where a patient is staying, he can come across numerous therapeutic teams. A therapeutic team consists of a group of people, who fulfil a treatment process together. Their cooperation may result in the most effective strategy to provide care, due to every member of a team being a source of information about the patient and his afflictions. Professional development of every member of a therapeutic team is an important component in improving quality of provided services, which effects the increase of a patient’s satisfaction level. Therefore, its role is incredibly important. Moreover, professional development is a process that takes place during a human lifespan and is associated with activities, achievements, but also with existence, expression and self-realization.

INTRODUCTION

The role of a therapeutic team is, integrally, a complex care of a patient, with consideration of all the aspects of patient’s condition. At the basis of a teamwork lies the holistic philosophy, which is defined in medicine as a comprehensive treatment of a patient as a bio-psycho-social unity. According to this, a man is able to come to a health welfare only by undertaking a complex care with a consideration of all the elements affected by the disease. Therefore, holism implies cooperation, not a misconception associated with a responsibility, that in all circumstances I can deal ‘with my patient’ on my own (Szary & Knotowicz, 2014)

The history of medicine shows, that until not so long ago, a doctor decided about the whole care and treatment process, and the other people related to a patient care remained to doctor’s disposal and their role was limited to execution of commands without ability to make their own decisions.

Nowadays, there is a tendency to let all the therapeutic team members make their own decisions in consultation with each other and in their own field of professional competencies, while the doctor remains a core of a treatment process. In this conception, it is important to develop an individual specialization, but multidisciplinary meetings are also important, because the essence of medicine and its roots claim that, if possible, one should effectively help an ill and suffering man, and this implies an open attitude, an ability to work within a therapeutic team, having a proper life philosophy, professionalism and the ethics (Szary, 2013).

Is this type of working with a patient system really commonly used? From experience, creating a good therapeutic team with proper relationships within and in which decisions are made without unnecessary conflicts - is possible, but difficult.

In a social awareness, doctor appears as the main decision maker and this picture is so ingrained that the other members of a therapeutic team tend to accept this conjuncture, despite of the autonomy of their own professions. The patients also look forward to the doctor to make all decisions in their recovery process, lessening the role of the other members of a therapeutic team.

This conjuncture may cause conflicts and have a bad impact on relationships within a team, and hence on a treatment process and care of a patient.

Conflicts are integral components of a human life and it is not only a negative situation. Conflicts indicate lack of consent on present conjuncture and ambition of development. Despite that fact, conflicts are usually treated as something undesirable. That is a result of lacking the ability to deal with them.

It is worth to emphasize that in recent years the views on conflicts in organizations essentially changed. Stephen P. Robbins have noticed an important difference between a traditional and current view on conflict – which he calls an interactive conflict. (Robbins, 2001).

Today it is considered that conflicts are inevitable, and often even necessary. Their occurrence is a natural phenomenon. Large number of conflicts are negative: they may impede achieving team’s goals and even harm individuals. However, some of them are positive: they may cause work of a team to be more effective. Conflicts are often tools of innovation and change, they lead to finding new resolutions. The purpose of this publication is to see into the process of building positive relationships within a therapeutic team and functional use of appearing conflicts.

THE MEMBERS OF A THERAPEUTIC TEAM AND THEIR ROLE IN TAKING CARE OF A PATIENT

Working at the health service in the atmosphere of cooperation and professional co-responsibility, results in many positives for a patient. None of professional groups in a medical care cannot work individually, considering bio-psycho-social approach to an ill man (Kapała, 2007).

Modern model of a holistic care of a patient requires cooperation and professional co-responsibility of every member of the therapeutic team (Fejfer-Wirbal, Gladczuk, & Marcinowicz, 2013).

A therapeutic team is a term defining all qualified healthcare workers, who actively participate in a treatment process, care and rehabilitation of a patient. According to B. Jankowiak and A. Bartoszewicz ‘a therapeutic team is a group of people jointly implementing the treatment process’, whereas features of the team are:
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