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An Overview of Community Rehabilitation for Ex-Mentally ill Persons

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Introduction:

The Mental health rehabilitation is a lengthy and difficult course. During the rehabilitation course, an ex-mentally ill person has to face with a series of social and psychological adjustment tasks in order to reintegrate into the community. However, as many of the mentally ill persons are unmotivated, inactive or disturbed by the negative symptoms, they seldom seek for community service initially. As a result, a seamless cooperation of medical treatment and community rehabilitation service is crucial for an ex-mentally ill person to during the course.

Purpose of the Project:

In order to facilitate ex-mentally ill persons & carers understanding & link with suitable community services, the Community Mental Health Link - Hong Kong Island (CMHL) built up a partnership with Psychiatric Department of PYNEH under the interfacing of Community & Patient Resource Centre (C&PRC), offered a series of services for the out-patients, the pre-discharge patients and their family members.

The Development of the Collaboration Model:

1. Mental Health Resource Station
It was a pilot project in Psychiatric Out-patient Department for the CMHL units to promote services and link up ex-mental ill persons to the rehab service.
After four years development, the station was expanded to a new Mental Health Resource Station, not only service promotion, but with the participation of ex-patient / relative volunteers and information loan service. Trainings were organized by multidisciplinary parties to equip volunteers to assist in the station.
2. Jointly organized empowerment programme
Groups and empowerment programs were jointly organized. Such as “Rehabilitation Tea” (復康茶座); “Rehabilitation Journey” (復康之旅), and other seasonal programs for patients & relatives (親心互牽病人及家屬活動系列). Programs were aimed to motivate mentally ill persons to reintegrate into the community with the support of family and personal growth.
3. Publication of “Tips for Carer 2nd edition” (親心互牽家屬錦囊第二版)
“Tips for Carer 2nd edition” was jointly produced by multidisciplinary parties of PYNEH & CMHL. This booklet provided practical skill and informational support for the carer and equipped them in caring the mental ill persons.

Results:

Consultation and referral service has been made available in the Psychiatric Out-patient Department over recent years resulting in enhancement of service accessibility. Up to June 2006, a total of 204 ex-mentally ill persons have been referred to the Community Mental Health Link Service or CROSS Centre, which provides service for the drug abusers, and a number of 338 ex-mentally ill persons have been referred to other community service units. With the effort of multidisciplinary parties, there was an obvious expand in service.

Conclusion:

Community Rehabilitation is an indispensable part for the rehabilitation process of ex-mentally ill persons. The process of rehabilitation of an ex-mentally ill person includes decreasing the frequency of relapse and adjusting to the process of reintegration into the community. Therefore, to increase the success of rehabilitation, it is vital to maintain a multidisciplinary service for the ex-mentally ill persons.

The partnership between the CMHL and C&PRC is appreciated and we look forward to having a closer collaboration with medical service units and professionals in order to let the ex-mentally ill persons receive a holistic care to achieve successful rehabilitation.