Global Health Ethics: The View from Mental Health

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WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

World Federation of Mental Health

The 10th of October 2015
There is no us and them anymore.

Ethics is aiming for the “good” life with and for others in just institutions. Paul Ricoeur
What constitutes ethical action in health care when the moral horizon includes the entire world?
GLOBAL Health Ethics
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Elements of Global Health Ethics

- Human dignity
- Human rights
- Social responsibility
- Social justice
- Global health governance
Dignity is underpinned by respect: each human being has inherent worth and a claim to equal rights.
Dignity in Mental Health Care

- Persons with mental disorders face social exclusion, violations of their human rights, barriers to accessing effective care, and challenges in sustaining or improving their standard of living.

- “a global emergency on a par with the greatest human rights scandals” (Patel, 2011).

- “a failure of humanity” (Kleinman, 2009).

- A “moral transformation” is required as it is due to “prejudice, discrimination and lack of political will to commit adequate resources” (Kleinman, 2009).
**Human Rights**

*Human rights* is a reflection of values based on the belief that every human being has natural rights, that is, they can make certain claims based entirely on their humanness.

**1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights:**

The UDHR makes the respecting, protecting, and fulfilling of human rights the responsibility of nation states.
Article 25 of UDHR
Right to Health

The right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of him/her and his/her family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood in circumstance beyond his/her control.
Other Human Rights Instruments

- International Convention on All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1965
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966
- Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1984
- Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006
- International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance 2006
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

- Universal Declaration of the Human Genome and Human Rights 1997; Endorsed by UN 1998
- Declaration of Bioethics and Human Rights 2005
Human Rights and Mental Health Care

- Human rights doctrine can be effective in addressing issues in mental health care as:
  - human rights can be violated by mental health policies, programs, and practices;
  - mental health is adversely affected by rights violations;
  - rights and mental health are complementary approaches to a flourishing human life.
- Human rights supports the “right to health”
  - Lawrence Gostn 2001
Human Rights Resources for Health Professionals

- Physicians for Human Rights
- Global Lawyers and Physicians
- Human Rights Watch
- WHO's MINDbank: online platform with national and international resources related to mental health, addiction, disability, and human rights
Responsibility: a moral obligation to behave correctly towards or in respect of a person or thing (OED).

“SOLIDARITY”

Social Responsibility
Approaches to Responsibility in a Global Society

- Cosmopolitan and Humanitarian
- Anti-Cosmopolitan and Statist

- **Negative duty**: Do not harm the other
  - Supererogatory to help others
    (i.e. not required; so in this sense, charity)
- **Positive duty**: Help the other
Social Connection Model of Responsibility Iris Young

- Responsibility is delineated by social roles; shared with others
- Deciding what you can do:
  - Interest
  - Power
  - Privilege
  - Collective ability
Social Justice

“the fair distribution of society’s benefits and responsibilities and their consequences”
Canadian Nurses Association

Health Equity

Equity is the just treatment of individuals in their own social context. Canadian Nurses Association

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT GAP

According to Global Burden of Disease 2010 data, mental, neurological, and substance (MNS) disorders are the leading cause of Years-Lived-with-Disability [DALYs] (Whiteford et al., 2013).

Mental health receives less than 1% of health services in low- and middle-income countries.

- Investment in human resources in this area is urgent.
- Poverty is a major factor
Global Health Diplomacy

Global Governance
Global Governance and Mental Health Care

- WHO Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020
- mhGAP intervention guidelines (WHO, 2010),
- calls for action by world experts in mental health (see Lancet series 2007, 2011),
- Grand Challenges in Mental Health research initiative
- Movement for Global Mental Health
5 Recommendations

Develop a global state of mind.

Re-orientate your vision of health and health ethics to encompass the global community.

Raise consciousness of all regarding dignity and human rights in health care.

Acquire and/or contribute to capacity building for global health ethics.

Reflect upon your social responsibility as a health professional in a global community.
Thank you for your attention.

COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS?