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Staff Perception on Integration of Peer Specialist into Mental Health Service Team

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Introduction

Castle Peak Hospital has integrated peer specialist (PS) service in community psychiatric service successfully for years and therefore extended this to in-patient service, the Rehabilitation Team of General Adult Psychiatry Department, in November 2014. Evidence on the positive impact on service users has been proved by international studies while some studies focusing on feedback from peer specialists reflected certain challenges, especially the role and relationship issue. Measures were provided by the unit to enhance the workforce development over the years, in order to maximize the benefits to the service users, peer specialist and organization. Survey using a self-developed questionnaire was repeated across the years to reflect the improved staff attitude on the integration of PS service.

Objectives

This paper aims to understand the change of staff perception on the integration of peer specialist service in daily practice in a regional unit in Hong Kong.

Methodology

A questionnaire with 18 items using a 6-point Likert scale of agreement (from totally disagree to totally agree, without option of neutral perception) was designed by the above captioned unit after literature review; the group consisted of 10 staff of experienced multi-disciplinary professionals, including psychiatrist, psychiatric nurse, occupational therapist and medical social worker. The items concerned the agreement on the positive perceptions that PS service could help to enhance some areas of clinical practice, such as cooperation between staff and service users, role modelling, instillation of hope and empowerment of service users; as well as some negative perceptions, such as role confusion and impact on privacy. The responses were recoded that higher scores reflected more positive feedback. First survey was

implemented in April 2015 while the second one was done in May 2016. All clinical staff of the unit was invited to complete the questionnaire. Statistical test was executed to detect any significant difference across the years.

Result

In 2015 and 2016, 44 and 51 responses were collected respectively. The mean score and range of score over the 18 items were higher in 2016 (4.51±.70, 4.06-5.14) when compared to 2015 (4.35±.64, 3.78-5.32). Using Mann-Whitney U test, statistically significant difference was found in three items which were the improvement of staff and service users cooperation (U=789.5, p=.007), enhancement of service users' active participation in recovery (U=761.5, p=.003), as well as promotion of advocacy (U=845.5, p=.022). It was concluded that staff of the unit showed improved perception on PS service.