

The Impact of Racial Inequities on Healthcare Access

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Description

Mental health nursing plays a vital role in the healthcare system, focusing on the care of individuals with mental health conditions. Mental health nurses provide comprehensive support, including assessment, treatment and rehabilitation, helping patients manage their mental health and improve their quality of life. However, the field faces several challenges that impact the effectiveness of care and the well-being of both patients and healthcare professionals.

Mental health

One of the most significant challenges in mental health nursing is the pervasive stigma associated with mental illness. Despite growing awareness, negative perceptions and misconceptions about mental health conditions continue to exist. This stigma can prevent individuals from seeking help, leading to delayed diagnosis and treatment. It also affects the way mental health services are funded and prioritized, often resulting in inadequate resources and support.

Mental health nurses frequently encounter patients who have faced discrimination and social exclusion due to their conditions. This adds an additional layer of complexity to their care, as they must work not only to address the clinical aspects of mental health but also to support patients in overcoming societal barriers. Efforts to reduce stigma through education and advocacy are essential, but progress remains slow.

Another critical challenge is the shortage of mental health nurses and the resulting impact on care quality. The demand for mental health services has increased significantly, driven by a growing recognition of the prevalence of mental health conditions and the need for specialized care. However, the supply of trained mental health nurses has not kept pace with this demand. Mental health nursing can be emotionally taxing and without adequate support and manageable workloads, nurses are at risk of experiencing burnout, which can affect their ability to provide effective care. Burnout not only impacts the health and well-being of nurses but also contributes to higher turnover rates, exacerbating the staffing shortage.

Mental health patients often present with complex and multifaceted needs that require a complete and multidisciplinary approach to care. Many individuals with mental health conditions

also have co-occurring physical health issues, substance use disorders, or social determinants of health such as homelessness, unemployment, or lack of social support.

Addressing these complex needs requires collaboration among various healthcare providers, social services and community organizations. Mental health nurses play a central role in coordinating this care, advocating for their patients and ensuring that all aspects of their well-being are addressed. However, the complexity of these cases can be challenging, particularly in settings with limited resources and support.

Mental health nursing

Despite these challenges, mental health nursing is evolving, with numerous aimed at improving care delivery, patient outcomes and the overall mental health landscape. These innovations leverage technology, evidence-based practices of mental health patients and support the work of mental health nurses.

Telehealth has emerged as a transformative tool in mental health nursing, offering new ways to deliver care and support to patients. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of telehealth, highlighting its potential to increase access to mental health services, particularly for individuals in remote or underserved areas.

Through telehealth platforms, mental health nurses can conduct virtual consultations, provide therapy and monitor patient progress. This not only makes it easier for patients to access care but also allows for more flexible and convenient service delivery. Digital therapeutics, including apps and online programs, offer additional support for mental health management, providing resources for self-care, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and symptom tracking.

The integration of telehealth and digital therapeutics into mental health nursing practice has the potential to improve patient engagement, adherence to treatment plans and overall outcomes. It also offers opportunities for innovative approaches to care, such as group therapy sessions conducted online and digital peer support networks.

Additionally, the adoption of trauma-informed care has gained prominence in mental health nursing. This approach recognizes the impact of trauma on mental health and emphasizes the

importance of creating a safe, supportive and empowering environment for patients. By understanding the effects of trauma and integrating this knowledge into care practices, mental health nurses can better support the recovery and well-being of their patients.

Collaborative care models are increasingly being implemented to address the complex needs of mental health patients and improve care coordination. These models involve a team-based approach, where mental health nurses work alongside primary care providers, psychiatrists, social workers and other professionals to deliver comprehensive and integrated care.

For example, the integration of mental health services into primary care settings allows for early identification and intervention of mental health conditions. Mental health nurses play a pivotal role in these settings, conducting screenings, providing brief interventions and coordinating referrals to specialized care when needed. This integrated approach not only improves access to mental health services but also reduces the stigma associated with seeking mental health care. Peer support and recovery-oriented care are essential components of modern mental health nursing. Peer support involves individuals with lived experience of mental health conditions providing support.