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MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION

A THESIS

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INTRODUCTION AND AIM OF THE WORK

INTRODUCTION & AIM OF THE WORK

Mental health is defined from many perspectives and every definition has its inherent cultural assumptions (Chwedorwics, 1992). Mental health is neglected up till now. There is recent content in it which should be revised.

Mental health promotion has become an essential part of the new public health movement. Mental health promotion comprises efforts to enhance positive mental health and prevent mental illness (Downie et al, 1990). The concept of positive mental illness rather than the mere prevention of illness is taken as the starting point for mental illness promotion (Kennedy, 1998).

Less effort has been made in considering the nature of mental illness promotion as a new form of knowledge and practice. Its salient features, the likely constraints on , and possibility of its development (Macdonald and Bunton, 1992).

We have to abreast on that field especially that we have limited resources aiming at reaching the most efficient intervention in mental health care.

AIM OF THE WORK

This work is done to:

- 1- Review the state of art mental health promotion including definition, assessment, and possible interventions.
- 2- Start including the concept of mental health promotion to our society through adapting a battery for assessment health.



CHAPTER 1

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DEFINITIONS

Disease, illness and health

A disease is a characteristic grouping of physical signs and symptoms, it can be often traced to a specific causal agent.

Illness is a broader term that involves people's beliefs about the state of their physical wellbeing and the resulting behavior they engage in. Illness belief may be the result of a specific disease or just the way we feel when we say we are ill (even when there is no evidence of a disease. Illness is important because it is what motivates people to seek out a physician. A disease is what the physician recognizes as a specific disorder based on known signs and symptoms (Keleman, 1989).

Therefore, a physician is likely to define health as the absence of disease while the average person might define health more broadly as the absence of any ill feelings.

In both of these definitions however, health is described in terms of what is not-as the absence of disease or illness. A better definition conceives illness and wellness as opposite ends of a single continuum (Antonovsky, 1987). In addition to absence of illness a definition of health should incorporate the notion of homeostasis of both internal and external systemic balance.

Optimum health

Seeman 1969 argued for a definition of positive health that would be completely independent on any notion of illness. Seeman based his concept on the definition adopted by the WHO 1946 "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely absence of disease or illness" (Sullivan, 1993). This definition goes beyond even the illness – wellness continuum, because health requires not only just optimal physical functioning but optimal mental and social functioning as well.

Therefore health should be defined as freedom from illness, as homeostatic balance and as optimal physical, mental and social functioning.

This expanded definition implies that health is broadly related to the overall quality of life. It is not just an internal state but involves the external community in which one lives as well.

Mind and body

The precise nature of the relationship between the mind and the body is one of the most long standing debates. Ancient Greek dualists took the position that the mind and the body are separate entities, while holists (from the Greek word "holos", which means whole) took the position that they are one. René Descartes (1596-1650) a dualist who is often called the father of modern philosophy believed that the body and the mind are fundamentally different substances. He believed that the body is "extended