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Course

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Impact of Stigma on People Living With Mental Illnesses

Mental health is an issue of major concern in modern society. Several defects have been observed to occur in mental health in many people over the past few years. The same has been the case with developmental disabilities which have been on the rise in the recent past. The patients with such disorders have been enrolled for treatment in different health institutions and new ways of helping them are being developed every day. Nevertheless, these people are usually stigmatized in the process, and this portrays a bad image of the society. In this paper we will discuss impact of stigma on people with mental health and developmental disabilities.

Stigma is one of the most hurtful and isolating issues in society which is often experienced by people with mental health illness. Learning to live with a mental problem can be challenging especially when people experience the prejudice that is brought about by stigmatization (Hanson, 123). For long people in the community have discriminated against people with disabilities and have denied them some of their basic rights. However, times are changing and so should people. Due to awareness campaigns created worldwide by activist's people are slowly gaining knowledge on how to deal with people with disabilities. This does not mean that people living with mental illnesses are not affected by stigma.

One of the ways in which people are affected involves diminishing their self-esteem while at the same time robbing them of social opportunities. It is important to realize that these people are human beings and they are entitled to their rights just like any other person. The opportunities they are denied range from education, employment to lack of accommodation due to their state (Black, Murphy and Gardner, 89). Stigma can also come from the parents or they can suffer from self-discrimination whereby people living with disabilities turn to the stereotypes that are developed by the public towards them. They assume that they will be rejected and they will be socially unproductive (Corrigan, Sokol and Rüsch 1-6). Discrimination has a great effect on the individual, especially on self-esteem and confidence. This in return leads to extreme isolation from society and could reinforce feelings of exclusion and withdrawal from society. According to a recently concluded research persons living with disability are viewed as the object of ridicule or derision and are often depicted by the media as incompetent, violent and impulsive. These are contrary to the truth as persons with mental illness pose the least threat to society.

People living with mental illnesses have for long been discriminated against and have found no say in the society. Additionally they have lacked a platform where they can air their grievances, and for this reason, the stigmatization has continued. In 2004 the US government launched a program named SHIFT; its main intention is to deal with issues surrounding the discrimination of people living with mental illness. More of such programs should be initiated to eliminate the stereotypes that have been formed by the public against mentally ill individuals. The discrimination and stigma have directly been linked to ignorance and researchers have proven that majority of the public have little or no knowledge of mental disability. Additionally,

the information they have may be incorrect. It is important to develop awareness campaigns that will help educate the public on matters regarding mental illness.

Works cited

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