Building a User-Driven, Consumer Mental Health Collection for Patients and Families

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Project overview

- A quality improvement study conducted at Canada's largest mental health and addiction hospital, within the Client Library.

- The Client Library is a space where clients can access creative programming and recreation.

- Introduced a pilot collection to encourage feedback on types of consumer health information.

Background

- Consumer health information is defined as "any information that enables individuals to understand their health and make health-related decisions for themselves or their families" (1).

- Client libraries have increased in health care settings and include collections of books, journals, pamphlets and electronic sources (2).

- Client libraries represent a tool that can be effective in responding to informational and educational needs of the clients it serves (3).

Client Library space at CAMH

While the Client Library already exists at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, our team identified a significant lack of health information materials specific to mental health and addictions.

Objectives

1. What are the <u>health information needs</u> of inpatient and outpatient mental health clients and their families?

2. What _topics and types_ of health information resources do mental health clients and their families find most useful?

3. What are the <u>information-seeking behaviours, steps and strategies</u> of clients and families to locate and use health information?

4. How can the Client Library <u>best facilitate the uptake</u> of client and family health information?

Methods

- Conducted a literature review

- Introduced a pilot collection of consumer health information (30 publications)

- Needs assessment

  - One-on-one semi-structured interviews with three groups of participants:

    CAMH patients (n = 11)

    CAMH families (n = 8)

    CAMH health care providers (n = 7)

  - Semi-structured focus groups held with library volunteers (n = 7)

Main findings

- **Diversify available health information**

All participants recognized the importance of providing information in varied formats from diverse voices.

"I would say a wide variety, especially taking into account that so many of our clients have lived very marginalized lives that if we use the same platform for all of our information it may actually be a barrier for some people to access that information." — Clinician

- **Increase awareness and accessibility of client library**

For many participants, a lack of promotion and awareness of the Client Library was a significant barrier. Both inpatient and outpatient clients also stated the importance of prioritizing accessibility to the library by having consistent hours.

"You see, the library has been too much inconsistent. Because it opens maybe once, twice a week, the people come here, the library is closed and the people sometimes give up and they stop coming. They should treat the library the same as other parts of CAMH, have people from CAMH working here, not just volunteers." — Patient

- **Introduce more web-based information**

All participants discussed the importance of including web-based information related to mental health and addiction.

"I don't know if this is within the scope of the resource centre but inclusion of online resources. I see that as a major opportunity." — Family member

- **Access to information supports empowerment**

From a clinical perspective, having access to health information may contribute to a patient's overall knowledge surrounding their illness and/or situation. However, the information provided in the patient library should complement the care and information provided by health care professionals.

"Well, I think there's the danger too that the information they might acquire here might be very general and not specific enough to their situation. So, I really would always direct them back to whoever they're working with because you don't want them drawing generalizations from something they've read in some material." — Volunteer

Response to Identified Needs

Our team responded to the needs of patients and families through the development of:

- a pilot collection

- installation of two computer stations

- creation of signage

- introduction of an online cataloging system.

Conclusion

- Inform future educational programs and activities designed for patients and families at CAMH.

- Laid the foundation for replicating a similar collection of educational materials and engagement activities with family members of patients living with mental health issues.

What does this space mean to you?

"I think a library should be a safe space that encourages learning and not just one style of learning as well. Because there are many styles, and I think they should all be encouraged and all have a safe place."

— Patient

What does this space mean to you?

"I think there's a nice amount of flexibility, that the space allows people who might be at different places of recovery to feel safe and to feel included, to have a space of their own."
— Clinician

What does this space mean to you?

"Well, I think it's a warm, safe spot. They're [patients] welcome. And it's just a comfortable place to come to." — Volunteer

References

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Thank you!

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