

Greater Omaha Community Action, Inc.

The Community Building Project at
GOCA

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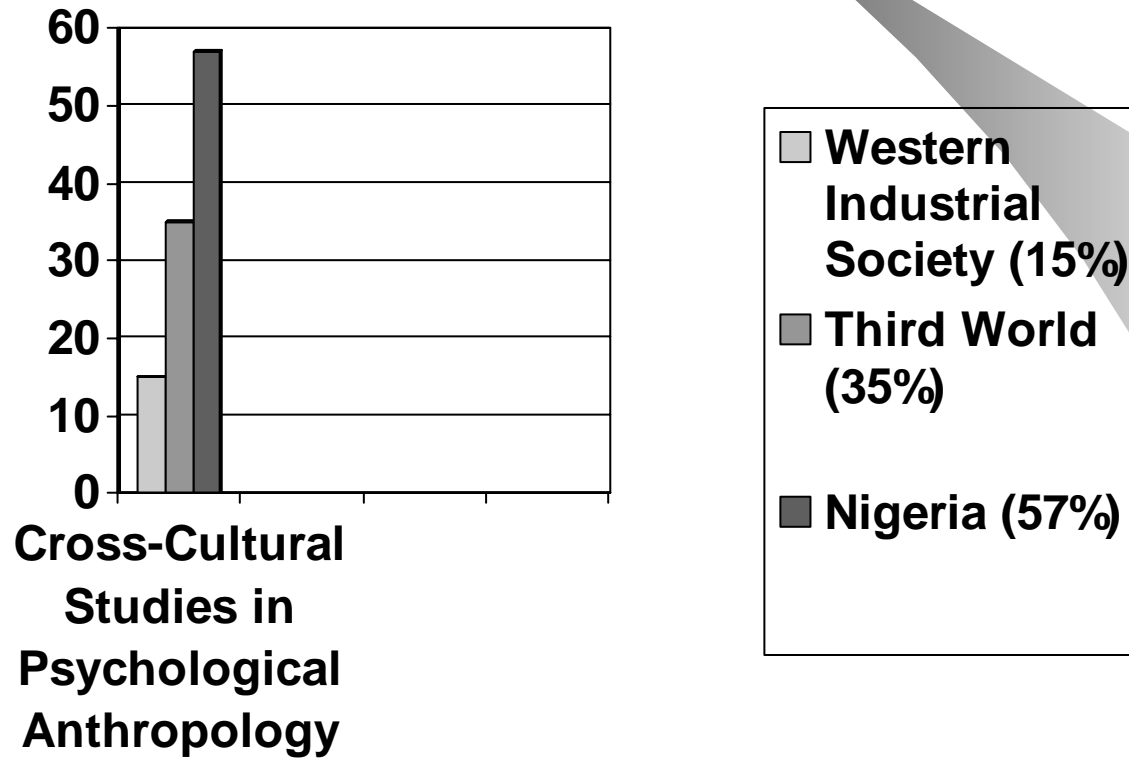


Mental Health Treatment in the United States

Much of Mental Health Treatment/Services are based on the Medical Model

- A biological CAUSE (disease or disorder) results in an EFFECT (symptoms).
- Relies on research to understand causes of pathology.
- Primary medical approach (allopathic) is to treat the CAUSE to eliminate the EFFECT (symptoms). This works very well for physical illnesses.
- Very specialized approach.
- Many social science studies have shown that this is **NOT** always the most effective approach to treat behavioral/emotional/cognitive problems and illnesses.

Positive Recovery Rates for Schizophrenia



What's Going On?

- Collapse of Communal Systems increases the occurrence of emotional suffering and negative/adverse behavior as means to cope.
 - Down side of Industrialism (mental illness resulting from impact of industrialism)
 - Acculturation (cultures in conflict)
 - Forced Assimilation

Mental Health Treatment in the United States

- Barriers to helping people with mental health issues in our industrialized society.
 - Emergency rooms, jails/prisons, and psychiatric or forensic wards are used extensively to address long and short-term mental health problems within a community.
 - “Turf Wars” between different human service specialties/disciplines/professions (e.g., psychiatry, psychology, counseling, social work, drug and alcohol, etc.).
 - Non-profits fighting to stay afloat financially.
 - Discrepancies between the recommendation of a mental health practitioner and a court order.
 - Money, insurance, and ineligibility for social service benefits.
 - Socio-economic and political conditions.
 - Dominance of a mainstream value such as independent individualism
 - The stigma and resulting alienation when labeled with a mental illness.
 - Reactance (resistant behavior)

Community Mental Health (CMH)

- Components

- Incorporates the Public Health Model in which treatment occurs within the environment where people live. (Stages of Prevention.)
- Community is an *attitude* in which all systems/groups function to reduce marginalizing of people in distress.
- Defining community as something much more than networks and support systems.
- Health and disease begin and end in the community.
- Medical treatment (a formal support) is just **one** component for effective treatment and can not stand alone.

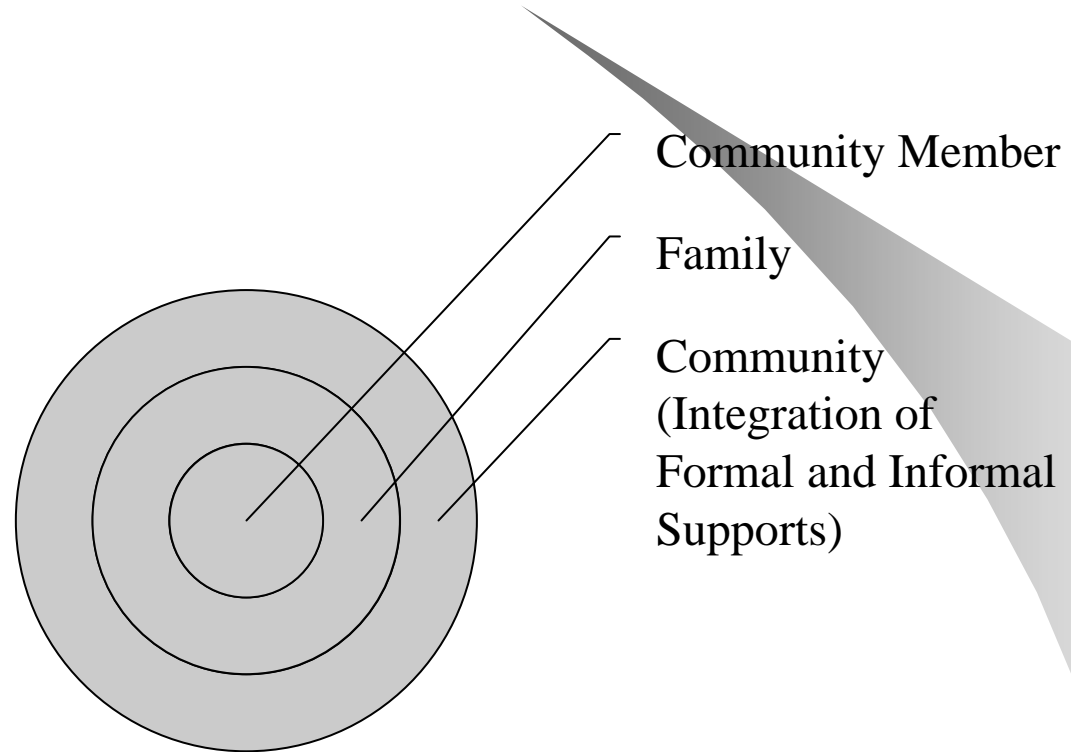
Community Mental Health (CMH)

- Components (continued)
 - More emphasis is placed on the community's welfare by integrating the strengths of its individual components.
 - Integration of Communal Systems (*personal, family, and supports of the community*) are the basis to giving effective help for those suffering from mental health and substance abuse problems.
 - Correlates nicely with principles of Restorative Justice, Community Corrections, and the “wrap around” approach.
 - Volunteers: must be trained to provide therapeutic friendship based on motivational approaches.
 - Importance of developing cultural/ethnic identity.
 - Nurturing of concepts such as Social Intimacy as the highest form of Competence within a community.

Community Mental Health (CMH)

- Integration of Communal Systems of Help
 - Personal Level- In our society, entering counseling (formal support) or accessing self-help strategies, resources, and other personal supports.
 - Family Level- an informal support and includes extended family and close friends.
 - Community Level- both formal and informal supports and can be any person(s) or group(s) in the community. They can not be family members and must have contact with the client on a regular basis.

Community Mental Health (CMH)



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