NDIS Engagement and CALD perceptions and experiences accessing mental health services in Australia: implications for practice

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Wellways Australia | incorporating Australian HealthCall Group

Wellways

Wellways is a community managed mental health and disability support service, delivering services across Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, Queensland and the ACT.

We have special interests in:

- CALD sensitive practice
- Family inclusive practice
- Peer workforce

In Inner East Melbourne, Wellways delivers Partners in Recovery to people with complex psychosocial disability.

Two Coordinators provide support and supervision to this team of 15.

Our Challenge

- Engagement under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is challenging for consumers and families with mental health issues: to understand new models and service structures, new funding opportunities and limitations, and how to take on self and collective advocacy in this changed environment.
- For Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) consumers and families there are some more pronounced barriers to utilization of services in Western countries. This is important to address to ensure access and equity.

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Our Approach to the Challenge: What we did

- A team of researchers have conducted 3 systematic literature reviews and a series of interviews with consumers and family members. It was found that factors that may contribute to difficulty for individuals and families to engage with services include: relatively limited English proficiency; low mental health literacy; suspicion of Western approaches and models; and high levels of cultural, internalised and experienced stigma.

This presentation offers up-to-the-minute evidence of best practice and new ideas, to explain the experience of stigma for adult CALD consumers and family members, and to examine implications for practice, including practical suggestions for consumer and family engagement under NDIS at present in Australia.

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1. A systematic literature review of NDIS and people with mental illness

- Our key question:

How well are people with mental illness accessing NDIS and how can we improve?

- The review process
- -only peer-reviewed articles were chosen
- -year range: from 2008 to 2018
- -English language only

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Databases searched: Ovid MEDLINE, PsycINFO, SAGE, Scopus, Taylor & Francis

Search strategy: abstracts were searched with the following terms: ("mental illness" OR "mental health")
n= 473,374

Search strategy: abstracts were searched with combination of the following terms: ("NDIS" OR "national disability insurance scheme" AND "mental illness" OR "mental health")
n = 37

n = 7 duplicates identified
n = 30 articles after duplicated removed

n = 30 assessed for eligibility

n = 11 articles excluded based on screened abstracts

n = 19 assessed for eligibility

n = 5 of full text articles excluded with the following reasons:
Focused on children (n =2)
Not focused on mental health (n=2)
Commentary on another article (n =1)

Total n = 14 articles included in qualitative synthesis

What did we find from 14 articles?

From the service providers' perspective

- Transition and learnings from Partners in Recovery (n=4)
- The concern about the early intervention in NDIS (n=3)
- The health and disability literacy of service users and their families (n=2)
- Confusion about the responsibility of the health system and the NDIS (n=1)
- Provision of flexible support (n=9)

From the policy makers' perspective

- The conflict between the episodic nature of much of mental illness and the usual determination of 'permanence' (n=6)
- Workforce issues (n=4)
- Concern about ineligible patients and patients who are hard to engage (n=4)
- The cost and financing in NDIS (n=2)

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2. Barriers affecting access to mental health services for Chinese people living in Australia

Caregivers

A brief anti-stigma intervention for Chinese immigrant caregivers

Chinese from Australia

Barriers to accessing mental health treatment among Chinese-speaking international students in Australia

A **B**

D **C**

Chinese in other countries

1. Chinese college students
2. Barriers and facilitators for psychiatrists
3. East Asian immigrants to North America

Grey literature review

CONSLUSION
RESPONSE TO MENTAL HEALTH

Caregivers

- Lack of knowledge about the symptoms
- Holding internalized stigma
- Do not have experiences in coping discrimination

Chinese in Australia

- Chinese-speaking international students → high risk of developing psychological distress
- Transportation
- Limited knowledge of available services
- Time constraint
- Do not recognize the symptoms are severe enough to seek help
- Language difficulties

Grey literature

- Preferred seek help from friends and family members in the very first step
- Preferred professional help who is Chinese
- Cultural barriers of protecting their privacy and reputation of the family members
- Lack of understanding of the culture and language in the services

CONSLUSION

Mainland Chinese college students

- Gender, anticipated benefits, anticipated risks, self-stigma were positively related to help-seeking
- The importance of psycho-educational campaigns

Psychiatrists in Hong Kong

- No coverage of mental health problems in insurance plans – Top barriers
- Transportation
- Patient stop taking their medication after improvement
- The stigma of seeing psychiatrist
- Reluctance to accept the diagnosis of severe mental illnesses

Chinese immigrants in North America

- Lack of availability in culturally-sensitive services
- Beliefs about the causes and risk factors of mental illness
- Self-help strategies and social support
- Interventions need to be based on a more culturally informed framework

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Questions?

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