
Health education: training of human services students

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The intersection between health education and human services is one where similar fundamental theories and schools of thought anchor the fields. Anthropology, sociology and psychology are threaded in the practices found in both fields. Closely examining the definition of human services according to the Council for Standards for Human Services Education:

[they are] uniquely approaching the objective of meeting human needs through an interdisciplinary knowledge base, focusing on prevention as well as remediation of problems, and maintaining a commitment to improving the overall quality of life of service populations. The Human Services profession is one which promotes improved service delivery systems by addressing not only the quality of direct services, but also by seeking to improve accessibility, accountability, and coordination among professionals and agencies in service delivery.¹

It indicates that the wellbeing of people is paramount to effective client outcome. Health education provides an understanding of health behaviors and how to work with individuals and groups to modify health practices. Berkman (1996) indicated that social workers are in need of training that will enable them to work with patients and clients with respect to the evolving health care delivery models. Such training would empower them to be part of hospital and community health teams that collaborate on patient/client care.

Human services education has continued to evolve to embrace the growing needs of client populations. This evolution has increased to include the health and wellness concerns that impact client abilities to access needed services. This change includes a need for human services students to better understand

the health and wellness concerns of clients, and client ability to actualize their role in society. The development of the affordable healthcare act impacts client care not only from the perspective of human services, but health services and personal health needs that become community issues. When the training of human services professionals was examined for health education instruction, such courses play little to no role in the curriculum.

Training human services students to care for clients in a variety of areas of their lives is critical at this time because of the governmental focus on health care for all. It is essential that human services students are prepared to understand the health care changes as it relates to their professional training.

References

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- COUNCIL FOR STANDARDS IN HUMAN SERVICES. Available at: <<http://www.cshse.org/>>. Accessed on: April 1, 2014.

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- ¹ < Available at: http://www.nationalhumanservices.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=88>