

Patient and Public Library Services for Mild to Moderate Mentally Ill People: An Information Behavior Study

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Background:

Approximately one out of five adults in the US population experience mental illness in a given year (NAMI, 2017). Almost 60% of adults with a mental illness did not receive mental health care in the previous year (NAMI, 2017).

- Currently there is a dwindling number of patient libraries in the US (Johnson, 1995).
- Bibliotherapy is extensively used in the UK (Fanner & Urquart, 2008).
- Bibliotherapy was used with American WWI soldiers, but has not been used as greatly in the US since WWII (Panella, 1996).
- There are a scarcity of studies on mental illness and librarianship.

Research Question:

How can patient libraries and public libraries serve patrons with mild to moderate mental illness?

Method:

Data:

- University of Iowa Patients' Library Website.
- Other Websites (5).
- Scholarly Literature (11).
- Newspaper/magazine articles (3).
- ASCLA 2007 Guidelines for Library Services for People with Mental Illnesses.
- IFLA 2000 Guidelines for Libraries Serving Hospital Patients and the Elderly and Disabled in Long Term Care Facilities.

Analysis:

Content Analysis of the above referenced data-> Themes: Bibliotherapy, Using appropriate materials, resources, staffing, and space, Consumer Health Information, and Patient Health Information.

Bibliotherapy:

"Bibliotherapy involves using any text to improve physical or emotional well-being, through reading, discussing, and facilitating a greater understanding." (Brewster, 2009). Creative vs. Cognitive.

UK approaches:

Books on Prescription: Self-help bibliotherapy programs throughout the UK.
Get into Reading: Inpatient reading aloud of "the canon" in groups to facilitate discussion and understanding (Brewster, 2009).
Reading and You: Creative individualized and group therapy through public libraries which focuses on the depressed/anxious/isolated (Brewster, 2009).
Healthy Reading: Program on information and health techniques formed by partnerships with local government, public libraries, and mental health providers (Robertson, et al., 2008).

US guidance:

Librarians can recommend books they think are applicable to the patron for reading, and can also consult with clinicians about appropriate books to use in therapy (ASCLA, 2007). The Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies has an online list of recommended self-help books at <http://www.abct.org/SHBooks/>.

Using appropriate materials, resources, staffing, and space:

Provide fiction/nonfiction reading materials such as poetry, religion/spirituality, mystery, classics, adventure, best sellers, and picture books (IFLA, 2000). Computer access and iPads are desired (University of Iowa Patients' Library, 2017). CD's and other multimedia materials are also useful (Clark et al., 2003). Entertainment such as performances, game nights, book groups, and music therapy help the patrons remain engaged (IFLA, 2000). There should be enough space for contemplation/meditation (IFLA, 2000). It is important to have staff trained to interact with mentally ill patrons as well (ASCLA, 2007).

Consumer Health Information (CHI):

CHI includes Information on health and medical topics including symptoms, diagnosis, treatment of disease, health promotion, preventative medicine, medical reference, the determining factors of health, and accessing the healthcare systems in response to requests from the patients, their families, and the public (CAPHIS, 2017). Sharp Memorial Hospital has an approach where trained volunteers consult with patients individually giving printed general diagnostic information, the MedlinePlus website, and the librarian's business card for further informational requests if desired (Davis, 2013).

Patient Health Information:

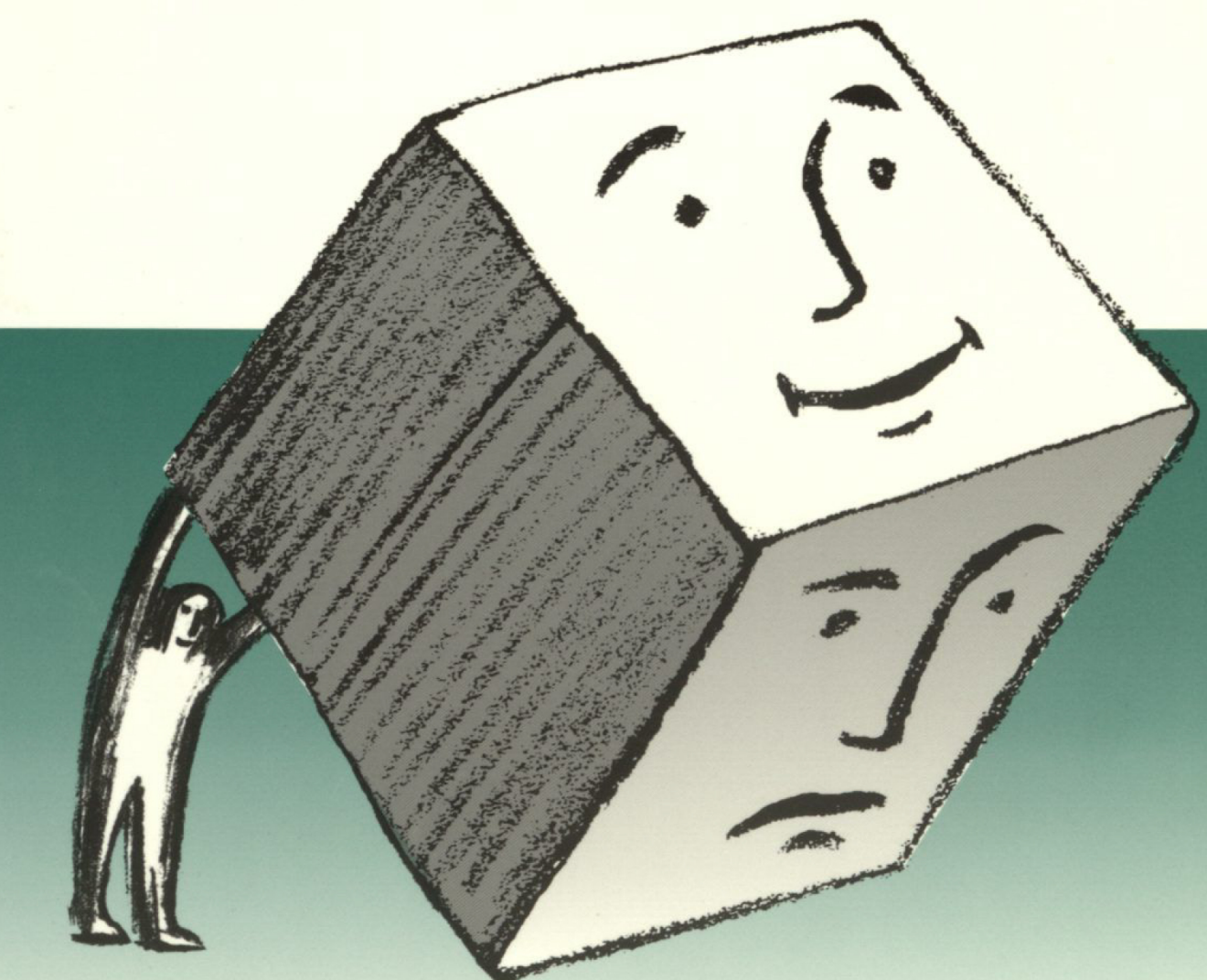
The librarian must not be in a position of giving medical advice to the patron (Fanner & Urquart, 2009). The medical provider should provide the confidential patient chart contents to the patron. See <http://www.hhs.gov>. The librarian may provide health information, education, and advocacy (CAPHIS).

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Conclusion:

Appropriate materials, activities, and staffing of patient libraries and public libraries, including possible use of bibliotherapy, are key to adequately addressing the information needs of mild to moderate mentally ill patrons.