Health is the life of an individual. Health includes both physical and mental fitness. Most of the people are aware about physical health, but not about the importance of mental health. This knowledge makes people to think and treat only physical problems, even if they suffer from mental illness due to stress and other reasons in their ongoing life. Mental illness can be a general term which focus on a number of illness including psychotic symptoms or changed mood behaviours. This is mainly making difficulty for an individual in his or her relationships, capability to do work and in the other demands of life. There is a complex relationship between the mental illness and stress (Better Health Channel, 2011). According to WHO, mental health refers a broad array of activities that can be directly or indirectly related to the components of mental well-being which are included in the definition of health: “A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of any disease”. This is related to the steps to promote the well-being of an individual, preventing mental disorders and the treatment and rehabilitation of people suffering from mental health problems (World Health Organization, 2011).

Mental health nursing is a very good profession that can provide lot of difference in the lives of people with different needs, variety of experiences and those from diverse backgrounds. Mental health nursing is a specialised field of nursing that can provide care and treatment for significant mental health problems. The knowledge and skills of a mental health nurse is inevitable in this recent world (Happell, B., Cowin, L., Roper, C & Foster, K, 2008). An approximate calculation shows that one in five adults of Australia is faced by mental health problems during many times in their life. This means that almost half of Australian adults (45 per cent) got affected by problems in their mental health. Among the most of these conditions depression and anxiety disorders were common. The statistics shows that around 15 per cent of adults suffered from depression and 26 percent from anxiety disorders (Better Health Channel, 2011). So it is going to explain the necessity of role and participation of nurses in mental health not only based on the statistical feature, but also related to some personal experiences.

The care and treatment of mentally affected people are in a pathetic situation. This can clearly explain based on one personal experience. Mr. X was one of my seniors who studied in my nursing college. He was very efficient in his studies and practical works. During the last year of his course he had a suicide attempt. His roommates found that and took him to the hospital. His life has saved, but within 2 days the hospital and college authority asked him to leave the studies and sent him back to the college. They did not bother about the reason why he did that attempt?. After one week we heard that Mr. X has committed suicide. I strongly believe that this happened due to the improper management of nursing staff, college and hospital authority. They even did not search for the reason and sent him to home without giving any mental or psychological support. This is the attitude occurring in our society towards the people those who are affected by mental health problems.

There are many reasons creating lack of care in mental health nursing. These include the rejection of care by a nurse due to fear and lack of awareness of feelings. The other significant characteristics influencing this are the lack of communication capacity and poor emotional maturity (Shives, L. R, 2008). So a skilful mental health nursing has to be achieved by improving knowledge in human psychiatry, psychology, physiology and pharmacology. The nurses working in the field of health should be an open-minded and reflective. The nurse should have a nature of understanding the concepts such as spirituality and hope. The nurse should have some essential qualities including self-awareness, responsiveness and insight. The development of therapeutic alliance is required for a mental health nurse. The confidence of a mental health nurse can be enhanced by a supportive collegial relationship (Elder, R., Evans, K & Nizette, D, 2009).

A psychiatric nurse can provide a safe and qualified care through many interventions. Among this, communication plays a major role. While creating an inter-personal relationship, the nurse has to maintain a patient centered and therapeutic communication. By this simple talk she can understand the feelings of a mentally affected person. Reassurance and encouragement are the other basic interventions in which the nurse achieves the use of her communication skills to make a patient calm and comfort. By this the nurse can relieve anxiety from the patient and can motivate the patient to a positive attitude. These natural attitudes of a nurse can avoid the aggressive and depressed state of an individual to make him independent. The structural behaviour by a nurse also has its significance in achieving natural behaviour of a psychiatric patient through simple suggestions and guidance. This can help to meet the daily needs and routine of a mentally affected person (Macneela., Clinton., Scott & Treacy, 2009). In addition to this the nurse should have a sensitive behaviour to the issues that can affect the psychiatric client and family. The nurse should determine the outcome of a client that are relevant for diagnosis and realistic for client’s unique situation (Shives, L. R, 2008).

Several concepts and issues are there to provide effective and safe mental health care. Caring is widely considered as the central part of nursing practice. The nurse has to be engaged with a custodial care and control in the treatment of mentally affected patients. The concept of hope plays a vital role in the lives of clients and their families. The concept of hope has a growing recognition with its relationship to health, well-being and recovery from illness. The hope is described as “the act by which the temptation to despair is actively overcome” ( Fitzgerald Miller 2007, p 13). The concept of hope has some association with the belief system of spirituality. The therapeutic relationship is the foundation or central activity of mental health nursing. The therapeutic relationship needs the knowledge, skills and personality of a nurse in order to make a connection with a client. This achieves only when client feel safe enough to explore personal and distressing information. The common humanity with the client and his feelings recognises a marked therapeutic relationship. The ability of a nurse to empathise with a client is directly related with the capability of a nurse to capture a therapeutic relation. The concept of self awareness in a nurse is to know the events in our background and the way in which it relates that might affect how a nurse relates to client. The nurses must be aware about the values and belief systems which arise from the social, cultural and family background. Reflection is another concept which examines the thoughts, feelings and actions against beliefs, assumptions and knowledge. The purpose of reflection is to develop a base for practice with knowledge and to motivate self-awareness (Elder, R., Evans, K & Nizette, D, 2009).

The role of nurse in the management of mentally affected patient has its significance in the rehabilitation of that patient. The lack of proper knowledge or its negligence can lead to severe harm or loss of the client’s life. This can explain with an example which happened in a hospital where i have done my posting of psychiatric nursing. It was a medical college and a young patient named Mr. A got admitted there because of the complaint of alcohol and drug withdrawal. He had many friends and he started alcoholism with his friends and ended with drugs. When he got admitted in the hospital, his condition was very bad. He was very angry towards the nurses and he used to shout at them. When somebody reaches at him, he tried to do some physical harm on them. The nurses also got angry with his character and they started to avoid giving proper care to him. Even the relatives where there and the nurses used to shout at them instead of giving proper support. The lack of nutrition and not done properly. At last, it ends up with the loss of a family member to his relatives. Here it is clearly visible that the nurses were not unaware about the management of those situations. They became selfish and forgot their roles.

It is necessary that the nurses must identify their role in the management of each step in mental health nursing. Not only giving the medications, but also apart from that the nurses have several significant roles during the management of a mentally affected client. The role of nurse as a socializing agent is in a one to one basis. This can focus on the difficulty of client in sharing the thoughts and feelings to others. Here the nurse has to adapt a proper behaviour and affect on the client. The nurse can act as a teacher by giving health education to the client as well as the relatives. This includes illness prevention, illness management and health promotion. Another vital role of nurse is the role of a counsellor. This can be focusing to help the patient in achieving specific goals and outcomes. Here the client is moulding to cope up with the issues and to express their feelings and behaviours. The nurse can do a better assessment in the improvement of patient’s coping skills, self confidence and communication (Patel, S. C & Jakopac, K. A, 2011). The nurse has to do a role play to support the emotional attitude of a client. The main focus on emotional health is to support a patient to get control over his behaviour and attitudes towards surroundings. There is a deep relation between the mind and the body, which means mental as well as physical health. The emotional support can achieve this and so that the client gets adequate sleep and rest. Thus the physical as well as emotional wellbeing precipitates in a psychiatric patient (Smith, M., Segal, R & Segal, J, 2011).

The WHO is providing guidelines on mental health in an international level. This includes the evaluation of competency, confidentiality and the access to care. There originates some national as well as international mental health policies to achieve a safe and effective care of people at risk of mental health and are already under treatment. Including Australia, about 62 per cent of countries among world has developed mental health policies (World Health Organization, 2005).

Australia has a number of mental health resources. This includes:-

Mental Health Policy: A mental health policy is present in Australia which was initially formulated on 1992. The policy is focusing on several components such as advocacy, prevention, treatment, promotion and rehabilitation. The aim of the policy reduces the impact of mental health disorders in the individuals and families among the Australian community. The policy is implemented through five year National Mental Health Plans (1992-97; 1998-2003; 2003-08).

Substance Abuse Policy: A substance abuse policy was formulated in Australia in 1985. The National Drug strategy on 2004-09 focused to solve the drug issues of Australia. It was fully supported by the territory, state and national government. Its mission is to prevent drug abuse among Australian community.

National Mental Health Programme: Australia has formulated this programme in 1992. This programme is focusing on the first as well as second National Mental Health Plans. This includes the strengthening of the quality of health promotion, fostering researches and the innovations. This programme participated to reform recovery and rehabilitation (World Health Organisation, 2005).

National Therapeutic Drug Policy: A drug policy has also has initiated in 1991 with a list of essential drugs. This policy is mainly focusing to increase the availability of drugs in Australian community.

Mental Health Legislation: This has formulated in 1996. This is focusing on the assessment of mental illness and improvement of care.

Mental Health Financing: Australian government is allocating a budget for the improvement of mental health care. The country spends 9.6% of the total health budget for the development of mental health resources (World Health Organization, 2005).

The society may sometimes show some bad beliefs. They watch mentally ill people in a negative line with a thought that the psychiatric problems are incurable. The society could not keep a scope of recovery of mentally ill patients and start to avoid those people from the working areas. Even the patients can understand this fearful behaviour of the society towards them. Once if they lose the job, then nobody is ready to give the same job back to him. It is the better time reached for the society to think and understand about the developments and facilities generated in the field of mental health. And it must be say that the recent society started to change their attitude towards psychiatric patients and so that most of the patients are getting discharged soon and prior affection and care for them is providing in home. This can make the patient mentally happy and the stay with his loved ones can influence for his immediate recovery. The media has started to take part its major role in supporting the mentally affected people. Thus the society itself can start health education among them and can easily identify a change in someone’s behaviour to start with prior treatment (Hunter Institute of Mental Health, 2011).

It is to be concluded that the nurses has the most important play in the prevention and treatment of mental illness. They are the only ones who can do a primary care in the motivation of self care and physical activities of a psychiatric patient. Diseases were the fighters defeating the human beings even they are at the top of researches and inventions. But nowadays it has changed to vice versa. People start fighting against physical as well as mental illness. But the concept of society has to be changed with proper channels through better health education. The nurses have to be well trained and educated in the management of psychiatric patients. The mental problems have to be treated in the same way of physical problems from its starting itself. This has to be achieved through proper public awareness. Hence here the role of medical team is very essential in the promotion and management of physical as well as mental health.

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