

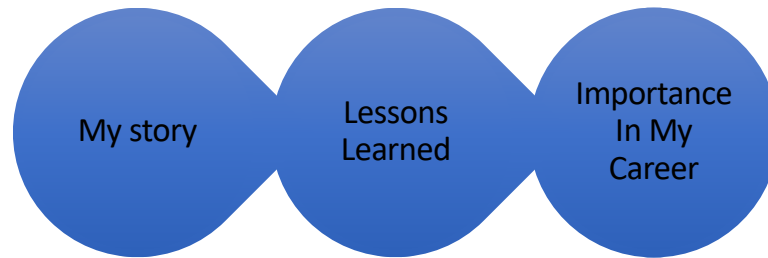
Mental Illness/Mental Health 101

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Presenter

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Session Outline



With this in mind, I share a personal story

- Iowa City – 45 years ago!
- A newbie to Iowa – intending to be here 4-5 years-Complete my Ph.D. and start a career in behavioral disorders somewhere warmer!
- My road took a sudden turn!

This Sudden Turn

My “path to success” was interrupted by a significant change in my thought and interpretive powers.

I felt my assertiveness in advocating for graduate students was leading to perceived retaliations from others.

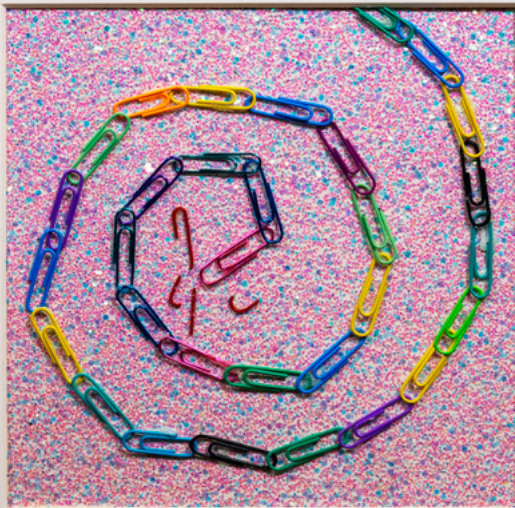
Seeking services – No way! – Look at national example – Senator Thomas Eagleton

The Result

- Hospitalization for majority of Spring, 1973
- Among the Diagnoses
 - Primary affective disorder
 - Acute atypical psychosis
 - Acute schizophrenia-form psychosis
 - Paranoid state in remission
 - Reactive agitated depression in remission

An Interesting Representation of These Diagnoses

Jim Teagarden
Kansas State University



298.3 Acute atypical psychosis

Jim



295.4 Acute schizophrenia-form psychosis

Jim

The Interventions

- Medications (Thorazine, Stellazine, Artane)
- Extended use of seclusion (quiet room for extended times)
- Talk therapy
- Support from family, friends and mentors

Possible Paths That “Could Have Followed”

Exclusion from school, financial support
Being sent back to Virginia for services

My life since . . .

- A “secret” to be hid most of my adult life
- “Bumps” along the road
- Advised by others not to share story
- Changed more recently (Commission my friend, Sally)

Let's Look On the Positive Side

“The biggest gift of being unambiguously mentally ill is the time I've saved trying to be normal”

Mark Vonnegut

In addition there are . . .

Lessons Learned and How These Have Served Me Professionally

Lesson # 1 – Significant Events Shape Our Lives and Journey

Positive Results

- Perhaps has deepened my understanding of mental illness and behavioral differences
- How this realization helps in my understanding of behavioral differences in youth

Lesson #2 – Mental Illness is Real-Not a Social Construct

- Wave goodbye to my undergraduate heroes (Thomas Szasz, Erving Goffman, D. L. Rosenhan)
- Even goodbye to some special educators (Bill Rhodes, Tom Skirtic)
- It is real, it hurts and importance in viewing youth with whom we work
- “. . . It is an act of moral cowardice to treat it as a romantic freedom” (T.M. Luhrmann)

Lesson # 3 – Importance of Multiple Interventions Across Our Lifetimes and How This Has Served Me

- “Continuum” versus “Categorical” approach in viewing behavioral/mental health conditions
- “Pills or Skills” (O’Leary) is actually “Pills and Skills”
- And, the importance of supportive relationships and how we apply with the youth we serve

Lesson #4 – Relationships, Relationships, Relationships

- Medications can't replace " . . . The healing power of relationships" (T.M. Luhrmann)
- Going it alone – perhaps a myth!
- The threads of our relationships (Professor's story)

Lesson #5 – Healing is Multifaceted

- Avoiding biological reductionism – " . . . the first resort of oversimplifiers who are allergic to messy complexity" (Seymour Sarason)
- Don't overlook – diet and sleep – remember our training regarding setting events

Lesson #6 – Early Identification and Treatment Are Critical

- Early treatment – Minimizing effects (Ron Powers)
- Challenge of hidden symptoms
- Promise of Mental Health Checkups (Mental Health First Aid)

Lesson #7 – The Challenge of Reducing Stigma

- Making public our stories
- Decoupling mental illness and violence
- "Deservedness Criteria" (Smith)
- Replacing "Them with "Us"

Lesson #8 – Progress with Stigma Issues: Maybe!

- Self Disclosure – Does it color interactions?
- My behaviors – Would they be tolerated today (Catch 22)?
- As a community – Can we afford to lose our friends?
- Can we afford the consequences of “losing” these students?

Mental Illness and “Casserole Effect”

- “If you have a child or parent in the hospital for surgery, your neighbors might bring you food, but if you have a family member in the hospital for schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, you’re unlikely to receive any casseroles.”

• Anne Hallward, *The Sun*, January, 2019, 517, 5

Lesson #9 – Applying These Lessons To Our Work with Our Students and Families

- “We have every right to be humble” (Bruce Balow)
- Rejecting the tendency to blame
- Mental Illness – A significant setting event (in addition to those noted earlier)

Thank You For Being Here!

Comments