Patient and Family Engagement: Co-designing Care in British Columbia's Mental Health and Substance Use System

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Abstract

British Columbia Mental Health and Substance Use Services (BCMHSUS) provides mental health services, education, and health promotion initiatives to people with mental health and substance use issues across the province of BC. As a Project Coordinator in the Patient and Community Engagement portfolio, I performed a variety of work to support patient and family engagement under the newly created Patient Engagement Framework. Engaging patients and families as active participants and co-designers of their own care is an important component of patient-centred care that improves healthcare quality, health outcomes, and overall experiences of care at a system level. To work towards this goal, I developed a trauma-informed policy and procedure for BCMHSUS on patient and family engagement to serve as a guideline for giving patients and families a voice in the design and delivery of their mental health care. I also drafted two patient engagement playbooks called *Managing Conflict and Respecting Emotions* and *Engaging Mandated and Incarcerated Patients*, which focus on barriers and solutions to engaging patients in vulnerable circumstances. Moreover, I worked with provincial stakeholders to write the annual report for the BC Partners, which is a collaborative mental health promotion partnership between BCMHSUS and 7 provincial organizations with different mental health and substance use specialties (e.g. BC Schizophrenia Society, The Mood Disorders Association of BC, Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research, etc.). I also performed a literature review of the evidence supporting family engagement in patient- and family-centred care, and I made infographics and other visual designs to translate research and knowledge in visually appealing ways. Overall, my practicum helped me contribute towards advancing public mental health by valuing patients' knowledge, skills, and lived experience in the health system and working on a variety of initiatives to promote mental health in the province.