

Course

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Establishing Empathy and Common Ground in Clinical Cares

Background

One of the main challenges of clinical psychiatry is the contradiction it faces daily: while its science is based almost exclusively on descriptive classifications that put at the top of their agenda to reduce as much as possible the subjective aspects of the description and evaluation of the nosographic categories and dimensions defining the disorders it aims to treat, its clinical practices cannot ignore or neglect the subjective aspects that are at the center of the suffering of the patients they have to follow. Additionally, evidence has emerged that treatment efficacy and effectiveness in psychiatry may be overestimated. Empathy is an extremely important issue for deeper understanding of mental health and treatment of mental disorders. Good therapeutic communication is a cornerstone of medical professionalism. Empathy facilitates trust, disclosure, respect, wisdom and collaboration and can be directly therapeutic.

Objectives

This course will aim to consider the process by which a professional can access the subjective aspects of a patient's health status and reflect on how this process might be integrated into various clinical practices; it will aim therefore to consider clinical empathy, practicing empathic communication and establishing rapport, therapeutic alliance and collaborative partnership.

Methods:

The methodology of this course will be based on the theory, art and practice of learning organization offering a review of the literature on empathy in the clinical process and a discussion of clinical material from clinical experiences in a variety of settings. Particular reference will be made in the context of predictive, preventive, precise, person-centered and participatory medicine within the concepts of transdisciplinary integrative psychiatry and of creative person-centered narrative psychopharmacotherapy.

Outcomes:

Health professionals need to be trained in practicing therapeutic communication and establishing therapeutic context. They also need to be trained to listen to patients' verbal and non-verbal narratives to access their subjective lives in interaction with the patient and their carers to listen to patients' verbal and non-verbal narratives to access their subjective lives in interaction with the patient and their carers

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