

Community Based Mental Health: Practice in Thailand

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The Mental Health Policy in Thailand is developed by Department of Mental Health, which mainly emphasize the integration of mental health services into public health services. The integration of mental health is implemented into 5 levels of public health services, namely, self care in family level, primary health care level, primary medical care level, secondary medical care level, and tertiary medical care level. The capacity building to empower public health personnel as well as mental health professionals had been developed. There are many training courses for various groups of mental health specialists such as mental health and psychiatric specialists, medical and psychiatric nurses, psychologists, psychiatric social workers and occupational therapists. All psychiatric institutes provide the service according to a standard of service quality control, which is called Hospital Accreditation (HA).

The Community Mental Health in Thailand has been developed since 1964 due to the shortage of mental health personnel to provide service to coverage Thai population. It was initiated by sending mental health mobile team to provide service in the area which people were not accessible to mental health institutes, During the primary health care period, the mental health was added to be one component. Then the establishment of psychiatric unit in general hospitals were encouraged. The important principle of community mental health in Thailand is to collaborate with the networks and key factors are accessibility and sustainability. The important strategy of community mental health is to promote mental health status of the people and also to prevent them from mental health problems through enhancing capability of related personnel. The mental health technologies were developed as the tool for transferring mental health knowledge and skills.

The meaning of community mental health in Thailand is the mental health service that provided to the community, at the community, by community participation, and follows the needs of the people in the community. The community mental health is composed of mental health promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.

The best practice on family and community preparation for complicated psychiatric patient care by network team in the public health system, the family participation in taking care of psychiatric patient, the mental care in school system, and mental health care in Tsunami disaster, are examples of community mental health programs in Thailand. These programs were implemented based on principle, strategies and all programs are collaborated with the networks.