Psychiatric Hospital Nurses' Attitudes Towards Trauma-Informed Care

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TIC at the state psychiatric hospital in Malta. Statement of the problem: The high prevalence of trauma among mental health service users has been extensively reported. Consequently, the integration of a trauma-informed ethic in mental health care service delivery is being increasingly recommended. Service providers' attitudes towards trauma-informed care (TIC) are a particularly mensurable outcome for ascertaining whether a service is trauma-informed. However, research on mental health professionals' attitudes towards TIC is scant. Aim: This mixed method study was designed to gain an initial understanding of nurses' attitudes towards Methods: One hundred and thirty-six nurses completed the Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care scale. Data were analysed using inferential statistics. A focus group interview among ten nurses ensued. Thematic analysis was used. Findings: Nurses demonstrated favourable TIC attitudes. Ambivalent attitudes for the subscale "Causes" were identified. Nurses employed for less than 5 years at the hospital and those in acute settings displayed more favourable attitudes on some subscales. Three themes "Awareness," "Unhealthy boundaries" and "Inhibition" emerged from qualitative analysis.Conclusions and significance: Challenges uncovered in the provision of TIC include the unacknowledged impact of trauma on challenging behaviour among nurses, the influence of blurred professional boundaries with long-term clients on the cycle of perpetuated trauma identified by previous research and nurses' work-related traumas. Identified challenges to TIC integration among nurses can facilitate the implementation of TIC in hospitals. TIC educational packages for nurses should acknowledge traumatic histories in the aetiology of challenging behaviour and stress the importance of maintaining professional boundaries with clients.

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