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## NURSING CARE FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN THE FAMILY HEALTH STRATEGY

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**Abstract: Introduction:** The potential of the Family Health Strategy (FHS) in the context of mental health is noteworthy, and the results of the care provided by the nursing team are highlighted, especially the nurse, who directs decision-making and forms of health planning, actions and interventions. **Objective:** The objective of this study is to describe, through the literature, the actions of nursing in the family health strategy, emphasizing the importance of these actions for mental health. **Materials and Methods:** This is a literature review carried out using virtual databases such as the Scientific Electronic Library Online (Scielo) and the Virtual Health Library (BVS). The data collection included articles published between 2014 and 2024, which were then analyzed and interpreted in the light of the literature. **Results and Discussion:** The ESF was consolidated in 2000 as a model in Brazil of primary health care actions for the population, through guidelines for the whole community. Nursing professionals have played an important role in consolidating the care practices offered by the Family Health Strategy, both individually and collectively. The Mental Health Policy emerged from the Anti-Asylum Movement, which led to a transformation in the model of care for people with mental illness, which until then had been carried out through hospitalizations and the use of medication. The link between mental health practices and the Family Health Strategy is the essence of care, which strengthens health actions and services. **Final considerations:** The challenge of reorganizing the care offered to mental health patients persists, as well as the materiality of teamwork, the creation of spaces that enable discussions, planning and agreements in the daily routine of the ESF, which favor the strengthening of mental health care.

**Keywords:** Nursing; Care; Mental Health.

## INTRODUCTION

The journey of the Unified Health System (SUS) is marked by a change in the way health services are offered, guaranteed by the 1988 Constitutional Charter. This system broadens the health context, seeking to revise the concept of health and disease individually and socially (Almeida, 2022).

One of the guiding principles of the SUS is that care must be provided free of charge, and that individuals and the community in which they are eminently active must receive comprehensive care, guaranteeing them respect and human dignity. The execution of actions must be decentralized, with municipalities, states and the union being responsible for resolving demands according to the scope of the existing problem (Scaglia; Zanoti, 2021).

The Family Health Strategy (ESF) was consolidated in 2000 as a model in Brazil for primary health care actions for the population, through guidelines for the whole community. The creation of the FHS was a milestone in the context of the quality of health services, contributing to a reduction in infant mortality, a reduction in the population's mortality due to diseases and, above all, a reduction in hospitalizations due to cardiovascular diseases (Giovannella *et al.*, 2020).

The aforementioned author also points out that this health care policy has enabled the population to access a range of services and professionals from different areas, promoting comprehensive family health care in the SUS.

The care provided by the nursing team is of the utmost importance for consolidating the care practices offered in Primary Health Care to the population, whether on an individual or collective basis. However, in order for these professionals to be able to act in an organized and effective manner, they need to have scientific and systematized knowledge, as well as understanding the peculiarities and characteristics of the environment in which they are

working. By working properly and efficiently, professionals contribute to improving health services, as well as providing the population with the knowledge they need to take care of their health, with an emphasis on prevention (Pires, Lucena, Mantesso, 2022).

According to the Ministry of Health, nurses in the Family Health Unit have the following duties: planning, managing, coordinating, executing and evaluating, prioritizing comprehensive care for the population's health conditions, including mental health (Almeida, 2020).

The Mental Health Policy emerged from the Anti-Asylum Movement, which led to a transformation in the model of care for people with mental illness, which until then had been carried out through hospitalizations and the use of medication. With this change, actions began to focus on the social inclusion, autonomy and citizenship of individuals, providing care for people with mental disorders and psychological suffering in their environment, using different health care tools, such as actions carried out in Primary Health Care (Chiossi, 2023).

From this perspective, this study arises from the initiative to understand how nursing care occurs in mental health care in the ESF. The study is justified by the reorganization of the mental health care model that has taken place in the social setting of the community where people live, in a decentralized, participatory, comprehensive, continuous and preventive way.

In this sense, the aim of this study is to describe, through the literature, the actions of nursing in the family health strategy, emphasizing the importance of these actions for mental health.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study is a review of the literature in order to discuss, through scientific studies, the actions of nursing in the family health strategy, with regard to the mental health of individuals.

In this context, the literature review, according to Lakatos and Marconi (2017), is a study that searches for public information in various sources such as articles, books, magazines, among others, which contain different types of knowledge and opinions.

Data collection included articles published between 2014 and 2024, using virtual databases such as the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) and the Virtual Health Library (VHL). The following descriptors were used to conduct the research: nursing, care and mental health.

Documents published in full, which contributed the research approach and which contained at least two of the selected descriptors were included. Articles that were not in line with the objectives of this study, incomplete and that did not come from reliable sources were excluded.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The right to health is guaranteed in Article 6 of the 1988 Federal Constitution, which guarantees the social rights to education, health, food, work and housing. However, in Brazil, providing a timely health service with the capacity to resolve problems in a timely manner has been a major challenge. From this perspective, the ESF has been fundamental in guaranteeing free access to health services, with a multidisciplinary team close to home, enabling health promotion, prevention and care in an agile and safe manner (Cirino, 2020).

It is important to emphasize that Primary Health Care (PHC) is the gateway to the SUS and according to Sturmer *et al.* (2020), it is a set of actions for individual and collective care. Nurses are the professionals responsible

for managing this environment, developing health promotion actions such as consultations, disease prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and health maintenance.

The studies carried out by Toso *et al* (2021) point to the transformations promoted by nursing professionals in health practices, prioritizing the particularities of patients and strengthening the importance of comprehensive care. Since nurses work to intervene in risk factors, promote health and prevent illnesses.

With regard to the role of nursing professionals in activities for people with psychological distress, it is essential to emphasize that nurses are the closest professionals to guide patients and their families. It is essential that this nurse is prepared to make this welcome, to help minimize the problems that can contribute to the worsening of the disorder, in addition to offering qualified listening, effective communication aimed at promoting health (Nunes *et al.*, 2019).

The different types of pathologies that affect mental health and alter an individual's behavior are usually the result of some dysfunction, be it biological, genetic, physical, psychological or social. These disorders can present themselves in different ways, and are often associated with other problems combined with emotions, thoughts, the individual's perceptions of the world around them, or even abnormal behavior. In addition, mental health can be affected in any life cycle. For this reason, promotion and prevention actions need to be aimed at all audiences (Gouveia *et al.*, 2020).

Depression in Brazil has a prevalence of 15.5% in the population, representing a serious public health problem. Its main characteristics are low self-esteem, loss of interest, sadness, lack of pleasure, among others. This problem causes problems for the individual's health, affecting their autonomy, lifestyle and freedom. This makes it essential for nursing professionals to identify it when the first signs appear (Gonçalves *et al.*, 2018).

From this perspective, nurses are the most qualified professionals to act and manage Primary Health Care activities, especially in the care of the population and people with psychological distress (Nunes *et al.*, 2019). Based on this study, in addition to welcoming the patient with their life story based on their psychosocial and political-cultural context, nursing offers a therapeutic intervention, as it hosts welcoming, listening and intervening through instruments actions that make it possible to rehabilitate and, with this, seeks to build a better quality of life (Almeida *et al.*, 2020).

According to Souza *et al.* (2023), one of the major challenges faced by nursing professionals in relation to mental health is the lack of training and the absence of tools to facilitate the work process. The absence of these tools makes it difficult for nurses to work. It is therefore essential that health institutions provide nursing professionals with the resources and adequate training to develop their skills.

From this same perspective, Santana (2023) mentions the need for training and qualification of nursing professionals, as their work has expanded in health services, from care to management issues, requiring skills and abilities in different sectors and for various demands.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research carried out highlighted the importance of the SUS in Brazil, which has gradually advanced in offering accessible and differentiated health services to the population. The ESF proved to be an effective model of care, providing access to professionals and services, including vaccinations, consultations, medicines, referrals to specialized services and highly complex exams.

The results show that the ESF has not only increased access to health services, but has also significantly improved the quality of mental health care. The anti-asylum policy was a milestone that allowed people suffering

from mental illness to be cared for in a more dignified and respectful way, promoting a change in the care paradigm.

In this sense, nursing professionals play an important role by listening to people and directing them to specific services, as well as promoting actions such as talks, conversation circles and other activities that will contribute to people's quality of life.

This study highlights the need for a more humanized approach to mental health care.

The practices suggested are fundamental to promoting patients' health and quality of life. It is therefore essential that professionals continue to develop listening and communication skills.

Thus, future studies that explore the effectiveness of the interventions proposed in the context of the FHS and assess the impact of these practices on the quality of life of patients with psychological distress are extremely important.

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