

Article Critique #1

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The article I chose to critique is *A Comparison of Appropriate Behavior Scores of Residents with Chronic Schizophrenia Participating in Therapeutic Recreation Services and Vocational Rehabilitation Services*, written by Ann Finnell, Jaclyn Card, and Anthony Menditto, and published by the Therapeutic Recreation Journal. I thought this article would be interesting because it attempts to not only see if Therapeutic Recreation has a positive effect on patients with chronic Schizophrenia, but also how well it compares to vocational rehabilitation.

Summary

The purpose of this article and study was to confront the problem of the “revolving door” that exists with patients who have been admitted to a psychiatric hospital (Finnell, Card, & Menditto, 1997). The “revolving door” refers to patients who are released from their treatment back into the community but consistently end up being readmitted to the hospital because they could not assimilate back into society. This study tried to observe and see if therapeutic recreation and/or vocational rehabilitation was a successful form of therapy that spurred appropriate behavior in activities that patients could participate in when they returned to the community. The researchers observed specific patients in both types of therapies and analyzed how they reacted and how appropriate their behaviors were while participating in different activities. The study was able to show that therapeutic recreation leads to displays of appropriate behavior and also that patients displayed more appropriate behavior in therapeutic recreation and less in vocational rehabilitation.

Strengths

The strengths of this article and study was that it analyzed behavior rather than knowledge (Finnell, Card, & Menditto, 1997). A patient might know what the appropriate behavior should be, but consistently displaying that appropriate behavior was something they could transfer into their lives back in the community. Another interesting thing that Finnell, et al. (1997) wrote about was that both systems of giving tokens as rewards for good behavior or not giving tokens at all, improved behavior in the patients. The researchers really focused on specific social-learning programs in a variety of activities to help patients participate in different things that they could directly apply to their life back in the community.

Weaknesses

The researchers (Finnel, et al., 1997) placed the patients in both therapeutic recreation activities and also in vocational rehabilitation programs to analyze the difference between the two. The researchers did acknowledge that recreation provided a more natural setting for appropriate behavior, whereas work related activities is naturally harder for people to express appropriate behavior because it is naturally harder. Since vocational rehabilitation would naturally have lower scores of appropriate behavior compared to therapeutic behavior it is a little false to say that therapeutic recreation displays higher levels of appropriate behavior because the nature of this type of therapy is more positive than vocational therapy.

How This Can Be Applied

I gathered that both therapeutic recreation and vocational therapy are methods to help patients improve their behavior and participate in activities back in their communities. The token system is also something that may be desirable to use in such therapies as a way to encourage behavior, but it is not always necessary. It's pretty direct that for patients with chronic

schizophrenia do have ways to better their behavior before returning to the community in a way that won't make them have to be readmitted. These types of programs can really work with such a variety of patients and has been proven to be effective.

Personal Reaction

I really enjoyed reading this article because as a future professional in the area of therapeutic recreation it made me more interested in different populations that I hadn't thought about before. I have always been pretty set on the idea that I wanted to work with juvenile delinquency, but through this article I have seen how it would be very interesting to see the effect that therapeutic recreation can have on patients with chronic schizophrenia or any other mental illness. I was interested to see how this population reacts to therapeutic recreation and vocational therapy and how it can affect their quality of life.

References

Finnell, A., Card, J., & Menditto, A. (1997). A Comparison of Appropriate Behavior Scores of Residents With Chronic Schizophrenia Participating in Therapeutic Recreation Services and Vocational Rehabilitation Services. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, 31(1). Retrieved from <http://js.sagamorepub.com/trj/article/view/1189/1158>