Hope, Attitude, and Recovery from Schizophrenia

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The Hope Scale by Snyder and the Recovery Attitudes Questionnaire-7 were used to explore the patterns of hope and attitude toward recovery from schizophrenia in a sample of 100 adults diagnosed with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder participating in five psychiatric rehabilitation programs in an affluent suburban setting. Using the Hope Scale, which is based on a definition of hope as a future-goal oriented cognitive process, and the Recovery Attitudes Questionnaire-7 (RAQ-7), this study concluded that the construct of hope is not synonymous with a positive attitude about attaining the goal of recovery. Though participants reported being generally hopeful and having positive attitudes toward recovery from serious mental illness, the two variables, hope and attitude do not correlate with each other. Nor do individual items from the Hope Scale and the Recovery Attitudes Questionnaire-7 load on the same components during principal components factor analysis, though hope and attitude each account for more than 20% of the total variance of the data set. A serendipitous finding was the statistically significant difference between the means on the RAQ-7 of the sample of the current study and the sample of the instrument development process; across all levels of recovery, a more positive attitude towards recovery was expressed than was expressed seven years earlier. An additional statistically significant finding was the direct positive correlation between level of recovery and number of hours of volunteer service per week. Rather than concentrating on talk therapy with persons with schizophrenia to increase levels of hope and positive attitude before recovery begins, a more effective means of encouraging recovery may be to involve individuals with schizophrenia in meaningful social roles through volunteer work.
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