‘But I’m not a health professional!’: A qualitative study of mental health promotion across professional identities

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The field of mental health (promotion)

- Increased awareness on mental health
- Many players on the field
Mental health

A state of well-being in which every individual
• realizes his or her own potential,
• can cope with the normal stresses of life,
• can work productively and fruitfully,
• and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. (WHO 2014)
Mental health promotion
Background for the study

Aim
Explore perceptions of and approaches towards interprofessional collaboration with MHP among practitioners from the health, social and cultural sector
Method

- Phenomenological approach (Heldbjerg et al. 2009)
- Professional identities (Wackerhausen 2009)

Data collection:

Observations at workshop (April 2016)
5 semi-structured interviews (April/May 2016)
Focus group interview, 4 participants (October 2016)

Participants (n):
- Health sector (3)
- Social sector (2)
- Cultural sector (3)
Results

Area of professional responsibility in relation to MHP
- Core tasks
- Attitude towards ABC
- Tasks within MHP

Interprofessional setting
- A mental health promoting community
- Potential areas for collaboration
- Demarcations
‘You see, I’m not a health professional. So for me it’s just a little.. You feel slightly on the side-line in regards to [ABC]. Because I don’t work with health. And [...] I could obviously hear that many of the other [employees in VIVO, at the workshop,) had a different relationship to it than I have. You see, I think [laughs]. I wouldn’t say that it doesn’t concern me, but I’m not a health professional! And it is not my primary task to work with making people feel better about themselves. This is kind of how I understand ABC, right now and here. Well, but indirectly I do. You could say that art and culture are in some ways about getting people to feel good about themselves and having some good experiences. But I just don’t see myself as a health professional.’

Marie, employee from the cultural sector, interview
Results 3

‘We will also get stronger as [employees], who are employed in this area. I mean, then we’ll see each other.’
Sofie, health sector, focus group

‘So that it becomes a place, where [visitors] are at the same level as us [employees]. There should not be such a big difference between; now we are staff, and now you’re just a visitor or citizen.’
Almina, social care sector, focus group

‘I’ll gain knowledge when I move [to VIVO]. Because, I can contact a nurse, I can contact a psychologist.’
Esma, social care sector, interview

‘It’s more the health sector, I think, that will struggle to see where the culture comes in […] Many of them [health professionals] have a strong focus on the body. Or alphas. Or whatever they are. But as I see it, there is more focus on problems than on potential’
Peter, cultural sector, interview
Lessons learned

1. Numerous perspectives and approaches
2. Professional identities are challenged
Tak for opmærksomheden