

Promoting Consumer Participation in Healthcare

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What is consumer participation?

- It is the process of involving health consumers in decision-making about health issues, such as planning, policy development, setting priorities and quality issues in the delivery of healthy services. (Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing 1998)



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- Consumer participation is much more than an individual's participation in decisions about their own care and treatment rather it is essential that consumers are involved as partners in health policy development and health services design and improvement



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- Consumer participation in healthcare is now internationally recognized as a key factor in the provision of safe, quality healthcare in all settings.



But why improving participation?

- Consumers have a right to be included in decisions and choices about health and care.
- The World Health Organisation cites participation as a key element in its International Classification of functioning, disability and health.



Where does participation happen?

- Consumer participation in healthcare happens, mainly at 3 levels;
 - Individual level – involvement in individual treatment and care, eg personal and family centered care, self management
 - Programme level – involvement in co-design, implementation and evaluation of programmes, eg consumers or community members in working groups or committees



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- Organisation level – involvement in higher level decision making and governance, eg consumer advisory groups, consumer/carer/community members representation at executive levels.



What health services can do to promote consumer participation.

- Health services seeking to promote and nature consumer participation at all the above 3 levels need;
 - ✓ A policy stating the organization's commitment to consumer participation (purpose of participation need to be clear)
 - ✓ A working framework to embed participation activities



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- ✓ Policies and procedures to guide all participation activities
- ✓ A participation plan to monitor and evaluate all participation activities (involvement from beginning)
- ✓ Resources allocated to support consumer participation (leadership, funding and support)



Innovative ways to involve consumers in healthcare services

- Consumer participation does not just happen at the bedside or at a meeting table. There are many innovative ways to involve consumers in the work of a health service;
 - ❖ Narratives/talk shows
 - ❖ Surveys (ask specifically opinions about improvement of the programme)



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- ❖ Focus groups
- ❖ Rapid improvement events
- ❖ Outreach activities
- ❖ Co-design
- ❖ Evaluation process
- ❖ Staff training



Cont.

- ❖ Staff recruitment
- ❖ Formal committees (Consumer Council of Zimbabwe)
- ❖ Reporting



THE END

- SIYABONGA TATENDA THANK YOU

