THINKING OUTSIDE THE ILLNESS

To the Editor:

In the December 2012 guest editorial, “Shared Decision Making: A Recovery Cultural Process,” Warren shows concern that those with mental illness spend the majority of their lives focusing on how to get better. Individuals with mental illness tend to think of themselves in terms of their illness. Warren goes on to explain that their hopes and dreams become lost as they take on treatment, stating that some healthcare workers have the same mind set, which can intensify the loss of what the person wanted to achieve in his or her lifetime.

I am currently in my psychiatric clinical experience in my university’s nursing program. I have witnessed that many individuals with mental illness spend a majority of their time focusing on their illness and “getting out” of the psychiatric hospital. At my current location, the nurses perform a morning meeting and the patients share a goal they have for the day. After observing these morning meetings, I have found that most of the patients’ goals revolve around illness, medication, or the facility itself.

In my clinical rotation we have to perform a group project. I found this article compelling to base our project on. My group will be holding a meeting that the psychiatric patients can voluntarily attend. We have advertised the meeting around the psychiatric hospital units. The group exercise is based off of Warren’s idea that patients with mental illness lose sight of their goals and dreams. We have made worksheets for the patients to write down one long-term goal, one short-term goal, and interventions to achieve them. The catch is, we will explain that their goals cannot be related to mental illness or their treatments. I cannot wait to see the goals and interventions the patients create and the interventions they come up with to work toward their goals when discharged from the hospital. Thank you so much for the inspiration!

REFERENCE

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