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The Use of Electroconvulsive Therapy in an Acute Care Setting: Enhancing the Knowledge and Skills of Mental Health Professionals

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MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY MANKATO

The Use of Electroconvulsive Therapy in an Acute Care Setting: Enhancing the Knowledge and Skills of Mental Health Professionals

Lori Thom

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Department of Social Work

PURPOSE

1. To enhance the knowledge of mental health professionals working in the psychiatric care unit of the New Ulm Medical Center on the current use of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT).
2. To enhance the knowledge, insights, and skills of mental health professionals working in the psychiatric care unit of the New Ulm Medical Center in working with patients and their families when ECT would be a beneficial component of mental health treatment.

METHODOLOGY

- Met with task supervisor to identify a need of the in-patient psychiatric acute care setting.
 - Determined ECT was an area to explore as a patient was undergoing court-ordered use of ECT.
- Completed an extensive literature review regarding ECT.
 - The review included the impact of residing in a rural location along with issues of diverse populations.
 - Literature from the years 2003-2013 was reviewed. Sources included MN State Statutes, journals, books, and personal interviews with three psychiatrists.
- Developed an online training regarding the use of ECT in an acute care setting.
 - Organized ECT research into a five section online power point presentation.
 - Visual detail, web links, and key points were incorporated into the training.
 - Developed a 20 question post-test examination and accompanying certificate allowing for the acquiring of Continuing Education requirements (CEUs).

Acknowledgements:

Nancy M. Fitzsimons, PhD, MSW, Academic Advisor & Co-Author
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Allina Hospitals and Clinics, New Ulm Medical Center

Offsite Supervisor: Gordy Larson, LICSW

ELECTROCONVULSIVE THERAPY

- Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is a treatment for significant mental health issues such as major depression, schizophrenia, catatonia and bipolar disorder.
 - ECT involves the conduction of electrical impulses through the brain. Electrodes can be placed laterally or bilaterally.
 - Treatments typically occur 2-3 times a week for 4-6 weeks
 - Many people correlate ECT with the 1975 movie, *The One who Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*
 - Modern day ECT takes place in a hospital setting with the patient being given general anesthesia and a muscle relaxant.
 - ECT is often considered a treatment of "last resort".

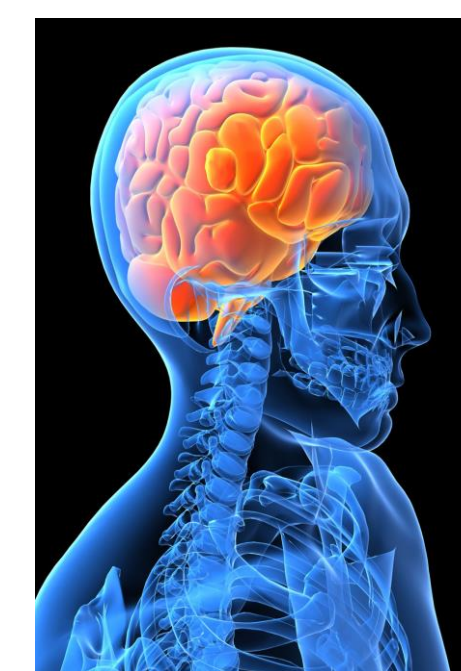
Training Content



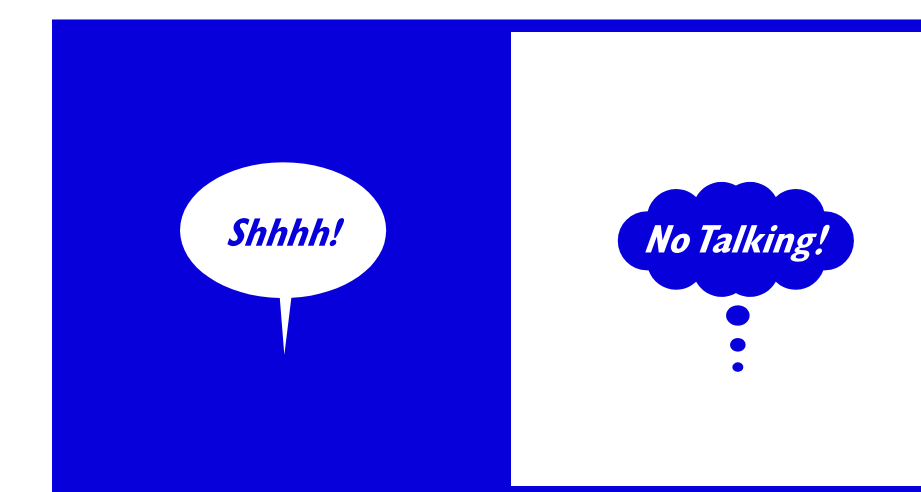
Section One: ECT as a Treatment Option for Significant Mental Health issues



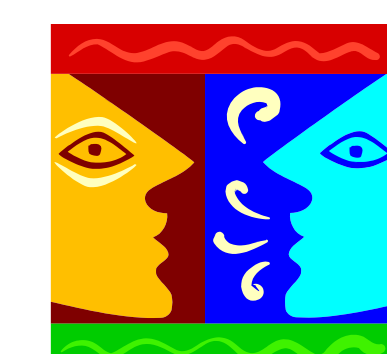
Section Two: The Legal Process and Law



Section Three: Current Uses of ECT with Children, Adolescents, and Adults



Section Four: Stigma and Mental Health Disorders



Section Five: Communicating with Patients and Families about ECT

KEY FINDINGS

- 26% of the adult population in the United States will experience a mental illness during his or her lifetime.
- Mental health issues often occur with other conditions such as substance abuse, physical illness and vascular changes of the brain.
- ECT is often not considered a first line treatment for mental health issues.
 - Historically, ECT has conjured up images of inhumane and barbaric treatment of individuals.
 - ECT is utilized to treat the following mental health conditions: major depression, bipolar disorder, catatonia and schizophrenia.
 - Allina Hospitals and Clinics has five sites throughout Minnesota which provide ECT on both an inpatient and outpatient basis.
 - Consent to ECT involves significantly more than having a client read an information sheet and provide their signature.
 - If a patient makes the decision *not* to participate in ECT treatment against the recommendation of his or her psychiatrist, court action may be commenced. This court action is referred to as the Price Sheppard Law.
 - ECT is frequently utilized for adolescents and adults whom have not responded to other treatments such as medications and therapy.
- Significant stigma continues to exist regarding mental health issues. People often delay seeking treatment due to lack of anonymity in rural communities.
- In general, people who reside in rural areas tend to experience more health issues and delay care.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- This training regarding ECT will be mandatory for all staff who work in the acute care inpatient unit at the New Ulm Medical Center.
- The social worker in the inpatient acute care clinic will present the information to staff on an annual basis.
- The information contained in this training will only be useful if the information is updated on a periodic basis to ensure the accuracy of information. This will be the responsibility of the inpatient social worker.

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

