

# F2 Management of risk

O.Pěč  
CMHCD

# RISK

In MH context, risk means *the probability of something harmful or undesirable happening to a service user or something undesirable being done by a service user to others in clinical practice.*

- **DANGER TO SELF**

- self harm or suicide
- self-neglect
- exploitation
- poor compliance with treatment

- **DANGER TO OTHERS**

- verbal, physical and sexual assault
- homicide
- arson
- emotional, financial and sexual exploitation of others
- abuse or neglect of children

# ASSESSMENT OF RISK

Risk assessment is the process of assessing the likelihood of a harmful event occurring and estimating the likely impact on the service user and others.

- We can gain
  - The risk issues (probabilities)
  - Factors that can be modified to decrease the risk
- How to assess?
  - In a structured and comprehensive manner
  - To involve service user and his relatives (engagement)
  - In a clinical team
  - To review an assessment in regular intervals
  - To actively gain information from family, friends, GP, police

# ASSESSMENT OF RISK

- Components:
  - Personal history
  - Risk factors for different risk behaviors in a personal history (e.g. suicide, violence)
  - Functional analysis (antecedents, behavior, consequences)
  - Behavioral and cognitive triggers
  - Symptoms (hallucinations, delusional beliefs)
  - Assessment measures and scales (e.g. Reaction to Provocation Scale; Historical Clinical and Risk Assessment Manual HCR 20)
  - Formulation (to reach a shared understanding of the service user's difficulties and the function served by his risk behavior)

# MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Development of treatment strategies and plans designed to manage identified risks by reducing or eliminating them

- risk management plan
  - Circumstances associated with risk behaviors
  - Early warning signs of risk
  - A description what should be changed to reduce risk
  - Strategies to enable change to occur; user's collaboration
  - The roles and responsibilities
  - Dates for routine review and circumstances of an immediate review
- specific intervention strategies for various risk behaviors
  - Anger: Self monitoring, relaxation, using an alternative behavior etc.
  - Violence: stimulus control, problem-solving strategies, taking responsibility for offending etc.

# DEALING WITH SERVICE USERS WHO DO NOT COOPERATE

- Initial risk assessment
- Special techniques and procedures, e.g.
  - De-escalation
    - Communication intended to minimize disruptive behavior
    - Maintaining calm, controlled manner
    - Giving choices ..... etc.
  - Advance directives
    - The opportunity should be given to individuals at risk of violent behavior to record their treatment needs and wishes before they fall in a acute phase
- **ONLY WHEN LESS COERCIVE VERBAL AND OTHER APPROACHES HAVE FAILED**
  - Rapid tranquilization, event. physical restraint with strict rules, safety precaution to reduce the occurrence or severity of assaults on the staff

# F2-1) DEAL WITH ANY BEHAVIOR THAT PUTS SERVICE USERS OR WORKERS AT RISK

- **Recognize** current or future risk to self and/or to others.
- Recognize current or future risk to health and/or life.
- Identify any action to be taken.
- **Assess** the most important safety issues (including risk-taking behavior), risk of suicide, risk of self-harm behavior (including use of drugs, alcohol), vulnerability, risk of being abused, risk of relapse, risk to others (such as aggressive or confused behavior).
- Collaborate with other **team** members regarding risk-taking behavior.
- **Manage** any situations involving risk-taking behavior to support the service user **in the least restrictive way** possible
- Consider the past behavior of the service user.
- Be aware of the **legal context** and the consequences of any action taken.
- Demonstrate basic knowledge of **first aid procedures**.
- Be aware that in situations involving risky behavior the **family** should be taken into account and/or **involved**.

## F2.2) DEALING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

- Be able to distinguish between actual and perceived danger (e.g. chaotic or bizarre behaviors).
- Acknowledge own attitudes and values and their impact on dealing with challenging situations.
- Be aware of ethical issues and moral dilemmas.
- Participate in supervision, recognizing its value as part of risk management and preventative work.

# Giuseppe Ducci MD

- Psychiatrist, psychotherapist
- Professor of Emergency Psychiatry at the 2° School of Specialization in Psychiatry at the University of Rome La Sapienza
- Head of the Acute Inpatient Psychiatric Ward, S. Filippo Neri Hospital, Rome
- Head of the Professional Audit of Acute Psychiatric Wards of Lazio Region.