

Everyday life with chronic illness: developing a democratic and culture-sensitive healthcare practice

The growing incidence of chronic diseases and an ageing population, worldwide as well as in Greenland, call for an intensified focus on health promotion and rehabilitation. However, research shows that the existing disease-oriented healthcare system is not geared to manage the psychosocial problems of chronically ill or disabled citizens. The problem is related to the prevailing biomedical institutional structures where expert- and professional knowledge trumps the knowledge and perspectives of the users of the institutions. Speaking about health in the broad sense of WHO, there is a need for an intensified focus on wellbeing, not only physical health. The chapter presents the visions for an ongoing research project in Sermersooq Municipality.

The research aims at developing knowledge about the citizens' everyday lives with illness or disabilities, their cultural values and perspectives. Involving this kind of knowledge in professional practice requires the professionals' reflection on means and ends in a welfare institution like home care. Welfare-professional contributions are meant to support citizen participation in social living. Therefore, professionals must learn about citizens' social and cultural conditions for managing their lives.

Furthermore, the project aims at revealing and describing the conditions for professional practice as a contribution to the professionals' abilities to analyze their practice.

The material is developed through participant observations in the municipality and the citizens' homes, and qualitative interviews with citizens, care personnel, therapists, and leaders on different levels.

The expected outcome is a set of tools for professional practice reflection following the principles described above.

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