

Chapter 15

How LAM Sector Can Improve Quality of Life for Underserved Groups via a Whole Person Approach

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ABSTRACT

A Whole Person Approach (WPA) can be used in various parts of LAM (Libraries, Archives, and Museums) sector to provide effective services for underserved groups of society to achieve civic engagement with the communities it serves. WPA is a relatively new theoretical framework in the fields of social science and healthcare. It highlights the necessity and importance of having a holistic view in dealing with different life matters and challenges. This chapter focuses on the special services that LAM sector can offer to facilitate the way towards achieving the goal of enhanced civic engagement, as serving the unserved groups of society is an urgent priority for the sector. Several Creative strategies will be discussed that can be implemented in the current services to make sure the special needs of communities that a sector serves are considered and met. A limitation of this chapter is that it is not a case study, nor is it based on field experiences. It is in fact a critical exploration of the concepts to facilitate in building a theory in an interdisciplinary perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Information professionals who work in the LAM sector (Libraries, Archives, and Museums) need to pay particular attention to the various needs of their communities and especially, to those groups of people in a community who, for whatever reasons, are not being served through the library services. Why?

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Because as this article postulates, they are potential users of services who can benefit from the many services offered by these agencies and thus improve their quality of life and their wellbeing. There are various strategies and methods that can be adopted by information professionals in this context, and one of them is a Whole Person Approach (WPA). This paper reviews existing literature in this area and identifies several themes that can be used by LAM information professionals to achieve the goal of engaging with and serving potential clientele in the community.

BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The central theme of this chapter is WPA; the context is role of LAM in analysing the current challenges and finding workable solutions. The central question is how LAM agencies can improve the quality of life information provided to the underserved groups by understanding their needs.

A search for the literature related to this chapter found two streams of ideas about the trends in information dissemination. First, lack of clear strategy of LAM sector around WPA. Second, strategies of outreach using a WPA approach by LAM sector needed intensive research. Evident is another fact that WPA concept in other fields seems to get better attention, for example, under the caption of ‘Arts in Medicine Now?’, Hanna et al. (2017) state: “The 21st century healthcare paradigm is shifting away from a medical model driven by the protocols of disease focusing on cure. It is now becoming a system based on the caring for the whole person to sustain high quality of life throughout treatments and to better manage ongoing care.”

The search for literature for this article started in WorldCat for the term “whole Person librarianship”, which lead the researchers to several books. Other searches were extensively carried out, starting with Google Scholar and moving into the university subscribed databases for retrieving full texts of article discovered. All relevant search results provided by databases were manually scanned for the required words. Based on the contexts, sometimes a proximity search (Golenberg, 2008, June) was performed where the matched items were picked for a full-text search. Such a search was conducted first in title, abstract and the text to identify first the occurrence of each word, second the frequency of occurrence, and third proximity of the terms to describe the work.

WHAT IS WHOLE PERSON APPROACH?

Whole Person Approach (WPA) is a relatively recent theoretical framework in social sciences and healthcare to highlight the necessity and importance of having a holistic view in dealing with different life matters and challenges. The main purpose of WPA is to improve the quality of life and promote wellbeing in the society by equally paying attention to all the environmental, social, and personal aspects of life. The WPA is part of a bigger movement called Person Centred Approach (PCA), which focuses on “the person”, with all their needs, characteristics, and values as the focal point of planning, policy making, and practices. Although some traces of WPA go back to the 1960s, it has gained more attention since the early 2000s in several fields such as healthcare, mental health, management, education and the LAM industry (Sultanoff, 1997; Slater, 2006; Hoover, 2007; Hallyburton et al., 2011; Waters & Buchanan, 2017).

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