Social Justice, Human Rights and Parenting with a Mental illness
“I am a human and all 30 articles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights apply to me “

Suzy Stevens 2003
Burdekin reported that there are

“International instruments incorporated in federal laws that stipulate that persons affected by mental illness are entitled without discrimination to the same range of Human Rights as everybody else”
Principals for Protection of person’s with a Mental illness

• Discrimination on the basis of mental health is not permitted

• A person being treated for a mental illness must be accorded the right to recognition that as a person before the law
The principles reaffirm that individuals have the right to protection from

- Exploitation
- Abuse whether physical or in other forms
- Degrading treatment
Burdekin when on to say that children of those affected by mental illness are seriously disadvantaged
A diagnosis of severe mental illness is increasingly being used to “fast track” the termination of parents rights to the custody of their children.
Current issues that families face

• Inadequate counselling for children
• Inadequate support services
• Stigma
• fearfulness
Two issues that we need to look at know

• It takes a whole community to raise a child
• Is the family unit being protected by society and state
Cowling 1994

States that we need to identify and respond to these children in three possible domains

• Firstly the provision of programs for children and parents e.g. peer support programs and parent support groups

• Secondly is the skilling and resourcing of professionals

• Thirdly facilitating the development of interagency co-operation
Social Justice

Refers to the idea of creating a society based on principles of equality and solidarity that understands the values of human rights and that recognises the dignity of every human being.
Discrimination and Stigma

Points to ponder

• Is society being educated on mental illness
• What role does media play in the stereotyping of people with mental illness
• Uniformed community attitudes
• Fear and misinformation
Social inclusive approach

Should be a key-driver for the practice of mental health professionals. It would mean looking at the concept of recovery, the idea of building a life beyond an illness.
Recovery

“recovery is about building a meaningful and satisfying life as defined by the person themselves, whether or not there are ongoing or recurring symptoms or problems” Shepard, Boardman and Slade 2008
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