Short Commentary

Tolerance As an Effective Step to Stabilize Ethical Relations in the Health System

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Today's societies are affected by the phenomena of globalization, communication, urbanization, immigration of ethnic groups, and conflicts caused by different values and beliefs. These conflicts may lead to violent results and behaviors due to conflicting values [1]. However, people around the world need continuous and extensive interaction with each other. To manage these interactions and differences between individuals and groups, tolerance is one of the most effective methods.

Tolerance is one of the concepts that are woven into many aspects of our lives and we will find signs of this issue everywhere in culture, economy, ethics, health, and politics. Tolerance, whether as a value or method or as an approach or behavior, is vital in the daily life of humans [2]. Some thinkers consider tolerance as a social virtue among people and groups who have different views and ways of life and coexist peacefully in a single community. Tolerance forces us to face people and their actions peacefully, even when we do not quite agree with them. To be tolerant is to accept that human beings are different in their attitudes, speech, behavior, and values. Tolerance appears in the behavior and actions of individuals; therefore, it is a kind of attitude and pattern of respectful action toward individuals, groups, their opinions, and actions, as well as issues that are not approved and liked by the individual [3].

According to the religion of Islam, God values tolerance very much; that is, as much as He emphasizes doing duties, He also considers it necessary to be tolerant, and if someone does not do his religious duties, he will be reprimanded, and if he is not a person of tolerance, he will be questioned [4]. Also, regarding the importance of tolerance, one of the reasons for the virtue of prophets over other people is their great amount of tolerance [5]. In Islamic teachings, tolerance is considered the head of reason, and this not only indicates the rationality of tolerance but also means that a large part of managing relationships with other people is done via tolerance [6]. Tolerance is one of the most effective ways of interacting with people whose beliefs or behaviors are intolerable. With the explanation that using tolerance, in addition to benefiting an individual from doing this good deed as a value and a sign of the individual's rationality [7], it is possible to perform professional duties with better quality by establishing a positive interaction, or even create the field for positive changes in the other person.

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Definition of tolerance

The word "tolerance" has an Arabic root. It means "behaving gently" which is opposed to violence and harshness; and it can be defined like this: "Softness and gentleness in non-violent and non-horrifying behavior." However, in determining the principle or method of tolerance, it can be said: If tolerance expresses a way of existence and the way of educational activities, it is considered an educational principle. For example, in the command and prohibition method, tolerance recommends the soft quality of applying this method. On the other hand, if the concept of tolerance includes the teacher's behavior and external action, tolerance will be an educational method. Therefore, from one point of view, tolerance is an educational method, and from another point of view, it is among the educational principles [8].

In American Heritage Culture, tolerance is defined as respecting the opinions and behavior of others and recognizing the formal rights of individuals and groups to hold opposing opinions. Also, in the "statement of the principles of tolerance" which was approved by governments during the twenty-eighth meeting of the UNESCO general conference on November 16, 1995, tolerance is defined as: "Respecting, accepting, and valuing the cultures around us, various forms of freedom and expressing diverse ways of being human." The word "tolerance" in European languages comes from the Latin root "tolero" which means to tolerate, to allow, and to survive. Volhard citing Voget says: "Tolerance is self-restraint against something we don't like or something we feel threatened by" [9].

Scope of tolerance

Tolerance includes different groups of people, including people at different levels of development in different cultural and social fields, and it also includes interaction with people considering their social and political status. Also, tolerance includes different environments including family, work environment, and society.

It should be noted that although tolerance is general and includes different groups, tolerance to one person should never cause oppression to another person.

Application in the health system

If it is believed that tolerance is a sign of rationality [7] and comes from the strength of character [7], it will never be considered a sign of weakness, and with tolerance, a feeling of excellence will arise in the individual.

Tolerance causes effective communication in adverse conditions and provides the right context for the occurrence of desirable behaviors on the part of the patient, his companion, and colleagues.

Tolerance improves the level of health by increasing the level of security, reducing the number of injuries, and increasing the possibility of achieving goals [7]. When a person gets sick, the pain and suffering from the disease may provide the basis for disrespectful and violent behaviors. Sometimes he does not consider the services provided to him sufficiently and he feels inadequate in taking care of himself. In such a situation, the patient or his companion may show uncontrolled behaviors. In this case, if the health service providers do not show the necessary tolerance, we cannot expect proper cooperation from the patient and his companions; this can affect the correct process of treatment and lead to mental and physical injuries to the patient and his companions, as well as damage the components of the health service provider system, and for this reason, tolerance with the patient is considered in religious sources [10].

On the other hand, tolerance for equal or unequal colleagues in the work environment can create a suitable environment for personal and professional growth and development, and promote the quality of services.

Tolerance expands polite relationships with affection and promotes forgiving, peaceful, and tolerant behaviors with good manners in the work environment.

The positive effects of tolerance can be seen in the following cases

The health of a tolerant person, patient, and staff: A tolerant person will not experience many negative emotions, worries, conflicts, and distresses, which can affect the mental and physical health of a person.

Quality of health services: This variable is influenced by the tolerance of the patient to the treatment staff and the tolerance of the treatment staff to the patient affects this issue.

Increasing productivity: Tolerance at different levels between health service providers, as well as between health service providers and patients will lead to increased productivity.

Factors affecting tolerance

Various factors affect people's tolerance. Among the most crucial predicting factors of social tolerance are the variables of country context, local context, and personal context [11]. It has also been shown that a cooperative spirit affects the level of social tolerance [12].

Several factors at the community, family, and individual levels are effective in people's tolerance. Culture, mass media, and educational priorities in schools are examples of variables that affect tolerance at the community level. The way people interact in the family, the way of communicating with others, and the educational method governing the family also have a significant impact on people's ability to tolerate. Individual variables including psychological, genetic, age, and temperament characteristics of people are critical variables affecting tolerance. Even some scientific principles accepted by the individual, such as whether a fixed truth outside the mind exists in all cases? Is it easy and accessible to achieve the truth in all cases or is it difficult and relative in some cases? To what extent is the effect of agency and structure in shaping beliefs and behaviors? And... are also effective in tolerance power.

One of the vital factors in strengthening this feature in health service providers is the correct recognition of this value in the religious and cultural context governing the health system. For example, paying attention to this hadith, "whoever dies with tolerant ethic is a martyr," [6] can create a suitable motivation to strengthen this ability in people.

Conclusion

With the institutionalization of tolerance in the health system, the level of intimacy increases, and the possibility of benefiting more than the company of patients and their companions are provided. Tolerance reduces the number of damages by improving the level of security and improves the health level by facilitating the achievement of goals. To achieve the above positive points, it seems necessary to have a written program in this field, especially considering the cultural and religious characteristics of Iran.

Ethical Considerations

Compliance with ethical guidelines

There were no ethical considerations to be considered in this research

Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest

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