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the 1990s, the number of people with a diagnosis of schizophrenia has increased in many countries (Murray & Lopez, 1996).

There is a growing awareness of the need to improve the lives of people with schizophrenia. The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a strategy for the care of people with schizophrenia, which emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to care, including social, psychological, and medical interventions (WHO, 1993).

One of the key components of this approach is the need to provide a supportive environment for people with schizophrenia. This involves providing a range of services, including housing, education, and employment opportunities.

One of the most important aspects of this approach is the need to provide a range of social and psychological interventions. These interventions are designed to help people with schizophrenia to develop a sense of community and to improve their social skills.

One of the most effective ways to provide these interventions is through the use of self-help groups. These groups provide a supportive environment in which people with schizophrenia can share their experiences and learn from each other.

Self-help groups can also provide a range of practical support, such as help with housing, education, and employment. This support is essential for people with schizophrenia to be able to live independently and to participate in society.

There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that self-help groups can be an effective way to provide support to people with schizophrenia. This evidence includes studies that have shown that self-help groups can improve social skills, reduce symptoms, and improve quality of life.

One of the most important reasons why self-help groups are effective is that they provide a supportive environment in which people with schizophrenia can share their experiences and learn from each other. This support is essential for people with schizophrenia to be able to live independently and to participate in society.

There are a number of factors that can influence the effectiveness of self-help groups. These factors include the size of the group, the frequency of meetings, and the quality of the support provided.

One of the most important factors is the size of the group. Research has shown that self-help groups with between 8 and 12 members are most effective. Groups that are too small may not provide enough support, while groups that are too large may be difficult to manage.

Another important factor is the frequency of meetings. Research has shown that self-help groups that meet regularly (at least once a week) are more effective than those that meet infrequently. Regular meetings provide a consistent source of support and help to build a sense of community.

Finally, the quality of the support provided is also an important factor. Self-help groups that provide a range of practical support, such as help with housing, education, and employment, are more effective than those that only provide emotional support. Practical support is essential for people with schizophrenia to be able to live independently and to participate in society.

There are a number of ways to improve the effectiveness of self-help groups. These ways include providing a range of practical support, ensuring that the group meets regularly, and ensuring that the group is well-managed.

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