

Educational interventions in psychiatry: school in the communities

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According to the OMS reports, four mental pathologies (affective disorders, mental weakness, schizophrenia and dementia) are among the twelve pathologies that, world-wide, cause a long time term disability most frequently.

Therapy, rehabilitation and integration of the psychiatric patients involve different professional figures and different Institutions. In this paper we present an inter-institutional collaboration experience between the School and the Local Service for Mental Health, started at the beginning of the '90, in Padua. A team of teachers operates full time in some psychiatric communities, where they are part of the multidisciplinary team, with adults affected with chronic psychosis.

The aims of this project are: Contributing to curb the pathological symptoms; Promoting and increasing self-efficacy and personal autonomy; Contributing to the improvement of self-confidence; Increasing the social-relational abilities; Contributing to restore acceptable psycho-physical conditions; Facing problems connected to the use of the new technologies. The proposed activities include: an expressive-linguistic laboratory with the editing of a Communities Newspaper, an informatics laboratory, a biological horticulture laboratory, an adapted physical activity programme and a musical-artistic laboratory that includes a chorus.

The integration of different roles, competencies and Institutions in the management of a rehabilitative path is a complex process, in which identity affirmation of the different figures (psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, teachers, educators) represents a key point. The need to connote (in a non regressive manner) the presence of the school represents an ulterior difficulty. Despite this, the presence of the "Institution School" in the psychiatric territory has been positively valued, regarding different aspects: the percentage of patients that regularly attend the courses is very high; for many patients the participation has contributed to an increase in personal autonomy, it has promoted social abilities and has allowed the acquisition of competencies in different fields. Attending the courses has significantly facilitated the passage of any patients to rehabilitative-relief structures with a lower degree of protection.

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