

GROUP THERAPY WITH CHRONIC MENTAL PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

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Introduction: The meeting of families who share the same problem enables the creation of a new therapeutic space that allows a rich exchange regarding solidarity and mutual aid. The presence of others allows reviewing each family's beliefs, questioning the secrets, incomplete information and taboos, and raises questions about assumptions maintained over time.

Objectives: To characterize group meetings of chronic mental patients and their families regarding thematic and interaction of participants.

Aims: Understand the interaction between chronic mental patients and their families.

Method: This is a qualitative participant observation study. Five weekly outpatient groups with 15 patients and their families were analyzed.

Results: The subjects discussed were related to symptoms of mental illness, treatment options and cures, expectations of patients and families facing the reintegration of those in work and other activities, and the group concern with the difficulty of expressing feelings. Emotions had resonance in these meetings and, among them, feelings of gratitude, recognition and reconciliation, as well as anger, boredom, disappointment or discomfort. The possibilities of group contention expanded, and each person was accompanied and stimulated the expression of his/her own feelings, for being a witness and co-participant of expression of affection from others. When psychotic patient gather with their families, deep and unwieldy anxieties are mobilized.

Conclusion: The importance of including the family is in the fact that we can confront patients with the real objects of their family history and make corrective emotional experiences of primitive distorted object relations.