

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THERAPEUTIC GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS FOR IMPROVING THE AUTONOMY OF DAILY ACTIVITIES TO PATIENTS IN MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

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*Thuani Mello Rosado*

*Felipe David Gomez Bitencourt*

*Larissa Kelbouscas Noya*

*Pamela Martins de Vargas*

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**Abstract:** The main objective of this research work is to analyze the importance of the work carried out by groups and therapeutic workshops within the scope of Psychosocial Care Centers. In order to do so, a bibliographic survey will be carried out in order to make a historical overview of the Brazilian reality with regard to mental health care and which factors influenced the adoption of alternative methods to the old asylums. The purpose is that through this reflection it is possible to perceive how the group work materialized through the groups and workshops offer new possibilities to those assisted, and that the search for resocialization must be a constant. The research also seeks to warn about the realization of superficial projects that aim only at recreation and that do not contribute at all to the recovery of community ties. The theme involves several disciplines and has a social bias that makes it quite complex, for this reason the results will be analyzed through a qualitative approach, since the mere analysis of mathematical data, although important, is not capable of representing in an elucidative way all the aspects that involve from history and culture to psychology and assistance. The choice of theme is justified by the need to alert professionals about the importance of the work carried out and how much any action of theirs can be able to determine the success or not of the groups and workshops.

**Keywords:** Mental health. CAPS. Therapeutic groups and workshops.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of humanity, issues involving people with mental disorders have occupied several debates. But for most of the history of civilization they were just excluded from community life. During classical antiquity, for example, it was common for the father himself to choose whether the life of the child with a disability would be viable or not. In the Middle Ages with the Catholic Empire, work started to be seen as an aspect of dignity that man can develop on earth, especially the poorest, this time as there was a discriminatory process against people with mental pathologies, it obviously became quite difficult for able to carry out daily activities, their peers ended up labeling them as useless to life in common, as incapable of performing their social function, generating more isolation in a vicious circle that lasted centuries, with which it can be concluded that the segregation process it is long and based on the most varied forms of social organization.

It was only with Enlightenment ideas from the 18th century onwards, and the development of the natural sciences, that there was an advance in research related to mental pathologies. The scholars of that time began to be concerned with a clinical treatment given to the sick. In Brazil, this thought began to expand with the arrival of the Portuguese royal family in the early 19th century, combined with practices considered hygienists, which intended to “clean” the streets of the main Brazilian cities. Remembering that at this time, because there were no articulated care actions, most people with some form of mental disorder went to the streets after being abandoned by their families. In this context, the first Brazilian asylums emerged, which represented a true evolution for the time, as it demonstrated that these vulnerable people would receive at least minimal attention and treatment instead of simply being abandoned

on the streets.

It so happens that over the years and the evolution of psychiatry, it was perceived that the methods used were unhealthy and that they did not contribute to the resocialization of the subject. Brazilian asylums had terrible conditions, they were actually deposits of people unwanted by their families who were thrown there and forgotten. Inside, their rights were completely neglected, painful treatments were constantly applied, punishment was the way to maintain order, many lives were lost in the midst of this chaos.

All these abusive practices began to be denounced by movements linked to the cause. In several countries, including Brazil, there were protests for the end of the inhuman treatment applied to internees. In Brazil, there was a psychiatric reform that began in the 1970s and culminated in a series of legislative changes in the early 2000s. The aim was to create a form of intervention that took into account the dignity of the human person, that fundamental rights were protected, and that, above all, the service user was given the opportunity to reintegrate into life in society.

The creation of Service Centers was an effective way found in Brazil to ensure that all this was put into practice in practice. Within these centers, therapeutic groups and workshops were developed as a way of working on aspects of the resocialization of users through leisure, art, work, etc. The main objective is to overcome the stigma that every mental health user needs to stay away from their community context. This is an erroneous and prejudiced view that is in no way compatible with the modern reality that values the recognition of human dignity for all.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

### **PSYCHIATRIC REFORM IN BRAZIL**

According to Cordeiro (2012) the issue of

mental health in Brazil began to be put on the agenda as soon as a high production colony was established, still in the 17th century. Being a society based on manual labor and slavery and distinction was made in the sense of having normal and abnormal individuals. Normal people were able to work, abnormal people were considered useless because they were not able to contribute to society. The separation was informal, those considered to be people with mental disorders were segregated in their own homes or, when completely neglected by their families, they were left to their own devices.

With the arrival of the royal family in Brazil in the 19th century, a large number of nobles also landed in Rio de Janeiro and spread to other prosperous provinces of the then Empire. As the segregation vision still prevailed, these families were ashamed of their relatives who had some type of psychiatric disorder, thus generating the creation of hospices and shelters from the year 1850.

Although the methods used are now extremely criticized by modern scholars, Gonçalves (2013) explains that the inauguration of Hospital Pedro II, the first psychiatric hospital in Brazil, in 1852 in the city of Rio de Janeiro, was a breakthrough in scientific terms. It reflected the moment of effervescence generated by the European scientific revolution. Despite its creation being the result of a political movement known as ordination and civilization, which sought to establish an orderly society in Brazil, being necessary to remove from society those who did not conform to the standards of “normality”, the segregatory character was not its only foundation, although it was the main one. The members of the General Health Commission of the Society of Medicine of Rio de Janeiro, since 1830, raised theses about the importance of having specific treatment places for people with mental suffering, since

in addition to their wandering through the streets of the city, it represented a danger both to society and to themselves, as many were harassed and treated with violence by the population. The creation of hospitals would have, at the same time, a character of social ordering according to the prevailing policy in the historical moment and of specialized therapeutic intervention.

The first Brazilian federal law for assistance to users of the mental health network was enacted in 1912, with the regulation of a new medical specialty, psychiatrists. There was a dispersion of inpatient hospitals across the country, always based on the practice of total and permanent segregation from society. The major criticism against these practices was that individuals completely lost their autonomy and dignity, hospitalizations were arbitrary, there was very little judicial control, and the removal of fundamental rights was immediate. In order to discipline the hospitalized person or to seek to correct the possible mental disorder, dubious and painful methods such as electric shocks, excessive medication and surgical interventions were used. This model remained absolute until the 1970s with the psychiatric reform (FREITAS, 2013).

With the end of the Second World War there was a large number of soldiers with mental disorders resulting from the traumas suffered during the war, due to this psychiatric issues gain great relevance in scientific circles. Mainly in France and the United States, movements aimed at improving the treatment given to users in hospices and a change in the approach to disorders were gaining voice.

In Brazil, the Movement of Workers in Mental Health started in 1978 was the starting point towards the Psychiatric Reform. The group formed by workers working in inpatient hospitals, family members, specialists, union representatives, etc., sought to denounce the

abuses committed in the so-called hospices, the lack of conditions, the deprivation of rights suffered by the inmates, and the hospital-centered and private model applied in All country. The criticism against asylums was so evident that the title of the II National Congress of the MTSM was “for a society without asylums”.

(RAMMINGER, 2005)

It is in this social and historical context that the Psychosocial Care Centers (CAPS) emerged in 1986 in the City of São Paulo. However, the nationalization of the Centers, the extinction of asylums, and the recognition of the rights of people with mental disorders, all in line with the new legal order initiated with the Federal Constitution of 1988, which ensures the universality of human dignity, only took place with Law n° 10.216/2001, which instituted the protection of the rights of people in mental suffering and the redirection to the assistance model in mental health care.

From then on, the asylums gradually became extinct and the CAPS spread throughout the national territory. About the Centers:

Such perspectives converge, radiate and materialize in the expanded concept of health, advocated by the Unified Health System and reinforced by the 1988 Federal Constitution, in which the social determinants of the health-disease-care process are highlighted. Reorienting the previous care model, community care emerges, with psychosocial care centers — CAPS — as the flagship of the new care model, considered equipment par excellence for organizing the care network and articulating the conditions for the reintegration of people with mental disorders. in society. (ROSA and CAMPOS, 2013, p. 313).

According to Lima (2011), the nationalization of the CAPS was the height of the psychiatric reform in Brazil, and it implemented a system based on solidarity, dignity, ethics and autonomy, whose

fundamental objectives are the reintegration of the individual into society and the preservation of their bonds of life. affection. A State that declares itself democratic and of law could no longer accept a model of intervention based on social exclusion, the marginalization of individuals and the deprivation of fundamental rights. The change is a reflection of the historical moment based on the consolidation of human rights.

According to data from the Federal Senate in 2020, SUS has a network with 2,661 CAPS throughout the national territory, with professionals from different areas of activity and with an interdisciplinary approach, with its main focus being the care of people with psychiatric disorders, however, it can also work with chemical dependents.

## **THERAPEUTIC WORKSHOPS AND GROUPS**

Workshops and therapeutic groups are one of the main activities developed by CAPS. Barros (2001) differentiates groups such as those responsible for the space for listening and for creating links in the workshops that would be entrusted with the task of re-socializing the assisted person. Furthermore, Jucá (2010) warns that this dichotomy, which has long been rooted in professional practice, must be opposed to a form of action that intertwines both clinical and political aspects of resocialization.

The importance of developing group work and workshops lies in several factors. First, because these are one of the ways to establish an alternative route to that used in asylums and internment houses, where the exclusive intention was to keep the inmate away from social life and subject to the rules.

According to Saraceno (1997), in the post-psychiatric reform period, the approaches are different. When a person who has a mental disorder is recognized as a citizen and worthy

of rights and duties, it is natural that, as a result, projects aimed at the reconstruction of the social role, the formation of social bonds and the recognition of social value are applied to them. of work and education. Although this theory has gained relevance in Brazil only in the recent past, experiences have already demonstrated its positive character a few decades ago.

According to Ribeiro (2004) in the 1920s, a German man named Hermamm Simon, known as a practical psychiatrist, when attending a meeting of the Association of German Asylum Directors, was stunned by the antiquated methods developed and the prejudiced way that users of the mental health network were seen and treated. Being challenged by his colleagues to develop a more efficient method he published in 1929 the book *Occupational Treatment of the Mentally Ill*. In this work, he defended that the doctor's attitude towards a person with a mental disorder must not be seen as totally pathological, as this would be a procedural error that would cost that individual's life. The professional must work on the healthy personality of the patient, seeking to rescue it to the detriment of the unhealthy one. In this sense, there will be two possible postures, either by not being encouraged to respond to the community's responses, he will become alien to it and increasingly introspective and hostile, or by promoting his ties with society through work, study and leisure, having their healthy side stimulated and creating new forms of interaction with the social. He also encouraged the patient to have an active conduct during treatment, and the idea of the groups was that through interaction one could help the other (CORREA, 1970).

There is no more room for oppressive and intimidating models, what is sought today are welcoming environments rich in social experience, which allow the assisted to live

together and develop the most varied skills, helping them to understand their role as citizens.

Since the CAPS is one of the main forms of expression of this new period of psychiatry in Brazil, it is within these Centers that new initiatives will emerge and take shape in order to ensure a dignified and committed approach to the social well-being of the user of the mental health system. The groups and workshops are exponents of these new expressions and have demonstrated their efficiency and effectiveness.

Ribeiro, Sala and Oliveira (2018) explain that when the focus left the disease and went to the subject, work inevitably had to be transformed in its approach. CAPSs and therapeutic groups and workshops are the best that is available in Brazil today. Through group activities, first of all, the psychosocial recovery of the patient is sought, the professional creates a favorable environment of integration between the members so that they feel truly comfortable and welcomed so that they can express their feelings, fears and misgivings, because the constant exchange of experiences drives the development of new social skills.

The tendency of families and the community in general is to isolate those who are in a state of mental suffering, prejudice and lack of knowledge about pathologies make those responsible choose to keep them apart from life in communion, many years in this state, having their interaction skills constantly hampered, for them the work in the workshops and groups tends to be more time consuming, since introspection is already rooted in their psychological, reaching the point of not even recognizing themselves as a subject within a society, but always alien to it. Human beings are essentially sociable, they develop in groups since the dawn of humanity. The great driving force capable of making this animal break out as the great dominator on planet earth was its

ability to socialize. When this possibility is removed from him, he is actually acting against his own dignity. This can be demonstrated through the cases of children who, for some reason, end up getting lost in the woods when they are small, and who, although they do not have any initial mental disorder, end up completely losing their human traits, that is, this is not a characteristic of the person with psychiatric disorder, as many prejudiced views lead to believe, but of any person, with or without pathology. What therapeutic groups and workshops seek is to recover the human dignity of those who have been repressed for a long time by a discriminatory system that is contrary to all their rights and basic guarantees.

For Cedraz and Dimenstein (2005) workshops and therapeutic groups are alternative and very effective ways of recovering users, through the reestablishment of interactions between the assisted person and social practices. In them, a series of group activities are developed, ranging from expressive ones, such as music, dance and theater, to income-generating ones, which allow the user to learn and a craft that can be a source of income, something that usually raises self-esteem, because feeling useful is a pleasure factor for any human being. When the person starts to perceive himself as capable, he himself creates new goals and the daily gains in terms of development are fantastic.

For the choice of activities, the professional will use the knowledge he has about each participant, he will be able to identify which are the predominant interests and which type of language is more developed. For these reasons, it is always very important that the multidisciplinary team working in the CAPS is composed of professionals who know how to recognize the reality of each person who is there, not just based on superficial knowledge,

it is necessary to delve into previous and current life, in the factors that led to the development of the pathology, its family reality, etc. All of this builds the individual whole, true reception and rehabilitation only exist when it is understood that any activity, in order to be well developed, necessarily involves the question of the depth of the professional's work.

Santos and Romagnoli (2012) warn that all professionals involved in the implementation of group work must be careful not to trivialize the practice and forget its eminently resocializing and rehabilitative character. It is not just a space of disconnected activities with the intention of flowing time, under penalty of turning them into prisons as much as asylums were. The exchange of one disordered practice for another cannot be allowed. The professional must masterfully know the purpose of the activities and be intimately committed to them.

For these same reasons, the use of varied activities is valued, which do not fall into the routine but encourage users to face new challenges daily. These factors can never be lost sight of, for that it is essential that all this is worked out from the training of each professional. Anyone who intends to work with people must learn to understand them in a dynamic, critical and complex way, as well as their social and historical context, the question of how people with mental disorders fit into or isolate themselves in society is an eminently social factor, its character is multifaceted and unfolds in the most varied ways, the professional cannot separate the subject from his social context, as they are inseparable and will always walk together and influence each other.

For Bechelli and Santos (2006) the CAPSs and their workshops and groups represent a change in perspective in the psychiatric approach in Brazil, since from them many

people spread across the country are finally having the opportunity to re-socialize and find a social identity of their own. In addition, the treatment reduces the use of medicines, which when used to a large extent end up harming the individual's body.

Psychosocial rehabilitation is much more than an applied method, but a way of rebuilding the user's citizenship, and of realizing their fundamental rights and guarantees. The daily struggles are not few, Social Assistance, for example, suffers from financial difficulties, often lacking materials and infrastructure for the development of activities, in these moments the professional will have to make use of their creativity and even the fruit of their work. Handcrafts produced in the workshops, the most important thing, however, is not to allow abusive and segregating practices to gain space again, society is a construction and everyone has the right to participate in it.

## **CONCLUSION**

For all the exposed throughout this research work, it can be said that from the 1970s onwards, the internment policy implemented through asylums went into crisis in Brazil. All kinds of complaints were made known, arbitrariness, abuse and complete neglect of human rights were common within these "hospitals". Advances in science and experimental work around the world regarding the importance of preserving the well-being of each individual and their social capacity. These studies reflected on the Brazilian reality and led to the Psychiatric Reform from 1970.

Several new initiatives emerged as an alternative way of treatment, but what solidified and spread throughout Brazil, being mentioned by legislation, were the Psychosocial Care Centers. These centers have an integrated performance of several specialized professionals, from psychiatrists

to physiotherapists, the aim is to develop a multidisciplinary work that recognizes the individual as a whole and does not form compartmentalization, the main objective of the treatment becomes the subject himself and the your reality.

The main goal of CAPS is the resocialization of the assisted. As stated, experiences around the world have proven that removing any human being from their social context is a mistake and attacks their dignity by taking away from them the right to self-development together with their peers.

With this essential objective in mind, the Centers have developed ways of working together on the socialization capabilities of each one, one of the efficient ways that today are the basis of intervention are therapeutic groups and workshops. In these, a series of activities are carried out in groups aimed at leisure, education and work. The objective is to make the service user feel in a welcoming and safe environment, where he can express himself without fear of being repressed. Through groups and workshops, professionals must seek to reestablish the social bonds of individuals, recovering in them the perception of their role in society. Under the current aegis of human rights, it can no longer be accepted that human beings are arbitrarily separated from life in communion under the masked pretext of maintaining order, armed with unfounded prejudices and discrimination.

Despite all this, it is necessary to make a reservation regarding the trivialization of work in workshops and groups. It is necessary that every active professional realizes that the effectiveness of the activities are the positive results that are so expected, they depend directly on the quality of what was proposed. Activities that are disconnected from the reality of those assisted, that do not take into account the interests, that are applied without the necessary depth and that serve only to

fill the period in which the individual spends at the Center, are also disrespectful, they also affect human dignity and violates the fundamental rights of users.

The care revolves around that, even if it is not perceived, the CAPS are not transformed into modern models of imprisonment. All activities developed must be well thought out by the team and those assisted. Professionals must know each person in detail. Knowing how to recognize their abilities and fears will give them an adequate indication of which projects will be better received and that will provide positive results.

Therapeutic groups and workshops are excellent ways to guarantee mental health users the opportunity for community life and dignified treatment, the difficulties that are faced daily in an extremely unequal country like Brazil are many, however, all professionals involved must always be aware that their work will be able to transform lives.



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