4th International Conference on

Mental Health and Human Resilience

April 26-27, 2018 | Rome, Italy

Reconstructing a story from a therapeutic narrative to a narrative for social change; an innovative model for social change with people who cope with serious mental illness in the community

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The approach of therapeutic narrative suggests that people will re-tell their story to themselves and then re-tell it to others in their environment. In contrast to this approach, we aim to present a model of narrative reconstruction for social change in people with serious mental illness (SMI), aiming to combine a reduction in self-stigma and in social stigma. The model we shall present is part of the Amitim program (by the Israeli Ministry of Health and the Israeli Association of Community Center), which offers social rehabilitation services in the community for people with SMI, and the promotion of personal recovery and social change. Over the last decade Amitim program has reached 75 cities nationwide and gives service to 3000 people with SMI. Amitim's story reconstruction model includes several dimensions: first, the narrative is approached through several baseline questions: who is the audience, what is the purpose, and what is the message we want to convey by telling the recovery story. The story is then externalized to a text, and the narrators (i.e., people with SMI) learn to tell it in a way that enables listeners to accept it, and to promote social change. This, in turn, causes the narrators to build a new identity and learn to mediate their story to both themselves and their environment, i.e., the manner in which they re-build their story for the audience, enables them to reconstruct it within themselves. In the proposed workshop, we aim to delineate different formats for using this model with people with SMI, while discussing the dilemmas that arise and providing examples based on video interviews with participants.

Recent Publications:

1. Carlson T D and Erickson M J (2001) Honoring and privileging personal experience and knowledge: Ideas for a narrative therapy approach to the training and supervision of new therapists. Contemporary Family Therapy 23(2):199-220.

2. Green M C and Brock T C (2000) the role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives. Journal of personality and social psychology 79(5):701.721.

3. Halperin G and Boz-Mizrahi T (2008) The Amitim program: an innovative program for the social rehabilitation of people with mental illness in the community. The Israel journal of psychiatry and related sciences 46(2):149-156.

4. Roe D and Davidson L (2005) self and narrative in schizophrenia: time to author a new story. Medical Humanities 31(2):89-94.

5. Roe D, Hasson-Ohayon I, Mashiach-Eizenberg M, Derhy O, Lysaker P H and Yanos P T (2014) Narrative enhancement and cognitive therapy (NECT) effectiveness: A quasi-experimental study. Journal of clinical psychology. 70(4):303-312.

Biography

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International Journal of Emergency Mental Health and Human Resilience
ISSN: 1522-4821

Mental Health 2018
April 26-27, 2018

Volume 20

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