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**The importance of therapeutic activities for a better recovery during psychiatric hospitalization**

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**Statement of the problem:** Mental health services in Brazil are usually neglected by the government and the economic crisis in the country has made this problem more evident. There is a shortage of professionals, medicines and other hospital supplies in the public hospitals. In the psychiatric hospital where the author works as a psychologist this has made the number of invasive practices increase, as chemical and mechanical restraint, which should be used in very specific cases; and the number of therapeutic practices such as expressive groups, occupational therapy, and art therapy, decrease. The purpose of this study is to highlight what literature has presented as benefits of therapeutic practices in mental health and to relate them with the experiences lived in the hospital.

**Methodology and Theoretical Orientation:** A literature review of articles containing the keywords mental health and therapeutic practices (and synonyms) was conducted. Results were linked with examples collected from everyday experience in the hospital.

**Findings:** Literature has shown the use of therapeutic activities as beneficial in the work with people with mental disorders: positive changes in worry, depression, sense of loneliness and negative thinking, improvements in self-esteem, empowerment, confidence, concentration, sense of time, use of imagination, sense of satisfaction and social functioning are reported. The lack of these activities results in a greater number of episodes of aggression decreased autonomy and greater delay in recovery. The daily practice in the hospital endorses these findings.

**Conclusion and Significance:** Although health treatment in Brazil is mostly based on the medical paradigm, this study stresses the importance of expressive therapeutic practices, decreasing the length of stay and improving recovery of inpatients. It contributes to the call for more public health attention regarding the benefits of multi-professional interventions in mental health care.

**Biography**

Karin J D Bulik is a graduate psychologist from UFRN, Brazil. She holds an MSc degree in Mental Health and Transcultural Mental Healthcare from the Queen Mary University of London, the UK, and an MSc degree in Psychology, Society, and Quality of Life from UFRN, Brazil. She is also postgraduate in Public Health from Castelo Branco University, Brazil. She studies and works on the following topics: mental health, global mental health, psychoanalysis, and psychopathology. She is a Psychology professor at University Center Uniface, leading the disciplines of Mental Health and Psychoanalysis and supervising graduate students in their placements. She also works as a psychologist at the Psychiatric Hospital Dr. João Machado, where she is the Psychology team coordinator, and in private practice as a psychoanalyst.

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