The rights of people with lived experience of mental health problems during the pandemic: what we know and what we can learn for the future

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COVID-19 global health crisis

- Increase in obsessive, depressive, anxious, and stress symptoms.

- Increased alcohol consumption and suicide rates among men.

- Increased violence against women.

- More intense in people diagnosed with severe mental disorders

People diagnosed with severe mental disorders

- Stigmatization outside and within the mental health care system.
- Violations of their human rights.
  - Involuntary inpatient and outpatient treatment
  - Forced medication and overmedication
  - Electroconvulsive therapy under duress
  - Mechanical restraints, seclusion, isolation
  - Arbitrary legal incapacitations and guardianships
- Not considered full citizens.

Citizenship framework

- Emerging trend n the field of mental health.
- Degree to which a person is a part of and can influence society.
- Tries to improve the living conditions of people with psychosocial impairments by fully exercising their rights.
- 5 Rs by Rowe and colleagues:
  - Rights
  - Responsibilities
  - Roles
  - Resources
  - Relationships

2 focus groups

- 17 participants

participants

- Mental health professionals including peer support workers
- Policy makers - health managers
- Anti-stigma campaigns technicians
- Mental health activists

Recovery

- Polysemic term, linked to empowerment and resilience
- Sometimes problematic: productivity, normality
- Roots in the rehabilitation movement (Spain 80s)
- Consensus on the need for the participation of affected people and their families
- Shift from classic biomedical views based on symptoms still very present in mainstream care

Recovery

- Survivors sometimes say they do not want to "recover" their former life, as it was not full of meaning at all

- Relatives sometimes say that it is a model designed for those who can recover, there are more affected people who need 'more intense support'

- In general, there is an understanding of the concepts generated by the North American recovery movement

Citizenship

- The debate on citizenship in the focus groups is influenced by mental health concepts as it was discussed after recovery

- There is consensus that people with mental health problems are denied a part of their citizenship

- Important for mental health and social professionals because there are people who are denied citizenship even though citizenship is innate

Citizenship

- Specific debate o migrants as they must meet requirements to acquire it

- To be a citizen do you have to be participating in some kind of activity? Are you if not? It's very difficult to feel like a citizen if you don't participate.

- Crisis of values in today's society that affects the citizenship status of many people.

Personhood

- Difficult term to translate into Spanish

- For some participants (professionals) the concept of person is better understood than citizenship

- Sometimes not to recognizing the other is needed to constitute oneself. Denying the other's personality allows some to build themselves

Personhood

- Interesting concept because if a person with a mental health problem feels like a 'person', there are things that cannot be done

- People with mental health problems often do not consider themselves people because parts of their socially recognized identity (profession, possessions …) are missing.

- Humanity concept (collective)

Covid-19

- Contradictions, tensions on the table. The best and worst of each have come out.

- There are crisis situations in which it has been managed more collectively. It was an improvisation with some positive things.

- Homeless people, there was suddenly accommodation for everyone.

Covid-19

- Inpatients, permission to who were most affected. In addition, many people have understood that being locked up is bad for mental health, cannot be considered a treatment.

- People who could finally stay home without having to justify themselves.

- BUT. The digital divide is wreaking havoc.

- People with many difficulties, little space, families sharing a single room.

Thank you