

THE BODY PRACTICES CONCERNING MENTAL HEALTH: A FOOTBALL WORKSHOP CAPABILITIES AND POSSIBILITIES IN A PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE CENTRE

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Abstract

Physical education has been emerging from the field of mental health in order to contribute to the therapeutic process for mental health service users, e.g. the Psychosocial Care Centres (PSCCs). In this study, we aimed at assessing how important is a football workshop, which would occur at Porto Alegre, for PSCC users. This study is both qualitative and ethnographic. The active participation of users arisen from the football workshop was enormously important for this study. Such participation provided interesting moments of an important role for the participants who had not experienced such moments before.

Keywords: Psychosocial Care Centre - Physical Education - Mental Health

Introduction

Since 1970s, the movement to reform the Psychiatry in Brazil started to be more relevant for society (AMARANTE, 1995; TENÓRIO, 2002; PAULIN, TURATO, 2004). In this wise, a new model for mental health care, not focused on disease and psychiatric hospitals, was required. Such model should prioritise therapeutic projects based on the psychosocial rehabilitation for people in psychological distress. One of the main points of such process, which aims to replace psychiatric hospitals, is to fight exactly for the citizenship (BARROS, 1994).

Considering the Psychiatric Reform, the PSCCs appeared to aid in

the process to separate people in psychological distress from the psychiatric hospitals. Thus, they could get closer of their communities, learning to interact with their family and the society in general. As the introductory book developed by the Ministry of Health, PSCC 'has to provide lasting services for people who suffer from mental disorder in a manner severe and persistent at a certain territory. The PSCC should also offer clinical care and psychosocial rehabilitation to replace the central hospital model' (BRASIL, 2004, p. 12).

For Silva (2009), the PSCC is the main official strategy aiming to replace the psychiatric hospitals; hence, the PSCC would be able to provide home, work, and leisure for people in psychological distress. As examples of the PSCC responsibility, one can consider (a) encouraging the users to resume the interaction with the civil society, (b) how to go regularly again to a relative home, (c) accessing services and (d) public spaces, (e) attending to school again, where necessary, etc.

Such new model which aids mental-health users is based on the assumption that such users are invited to take part actively in the treatment process by using activities which reintegrate them into the society – e.g. (a) going out to enjoy the city and (b) dealing with new options and experiences (re. work or leisure).

Some of such activities are connected to practising body culture built historically by humanity (SOARES, et al, 1992) – e.g. dancing, sports, gymnastic and games. Such practices, according to Wachs (2007), are elements 'composing a certain community, potentially representing a sense of belonging' (p. 95). Thus, it can become an important tool for therapy, since developing this have any meaning for the user.

It reveals our interest in investigating a group linked to a workshop for body practice within the PSCC. During five weeks, we observed a PSCC user group from a public hospital complex in Porto Alegre and involved in the football workshop. We aimed at assessing the meanings considered by the participants from that therapy workshop offered by the PSCC.

Such football workshop was chosen especially considering:

- the contact of two authors of such text with the workshop user group; one was already a PSCC member, the other one was a PSCC trainee before beginning the research;
- the contact with external environment of PSCC rooms, which fa-

vours the environmental observation — in this case, the football field of the association of hospital employees, which is out of the typical environment respecting therapy workshop;

- acquaintance of users with the football practice inasmuch as it is a well-known body practice in the Brazilian culture and, hence, potentially gregarious for user in their communities.

The basis of the Psychiatric Reform is in compliance with ‘a better conception of how service and treatment are comprehended, linking it necessarily to ensure the full rights in the law — e.g. access to education, health, work, dwelling, leisure, etc.’ (SILVA, et al, 2007, p. 173). It is relevant, therefore, investigating how the PSCC users participate in it and how they understand a specific service proposal, i.e. the football workshop, created based on better services/treatment.

Methodology

This study is qualitative and ethnographic, and we consider it perfect for our aim, especially including meanings. It allows to describe the studying group deeply by using observation and participation, focusing on learning the set of understanding or senses shared (WIELEWICKI, 2001, STIGGER, 2002, MOLINA NETO, 2004).

The premise underlining the ethnography, as stated by Pope and Mays (2005, p. 41), ‘is the fact that to comprehend groups of people, researchers need to observe the daily life of such groups, and it requires researchers socialising with such groups’. For such authors, the ethnography shows how important is to understand the symbolism within people’s world. They try, thus, to see the facts similarly as these people see it and grasp the experience senses attributed by such people.

We chose the ethnography methodology to develop this PSCC study considering (a) it already has strengthening within Social Sciences and in particular a certain support and interest from the health area, (b) it is an approach allowing researchers diving into an environment which consists of groups of people able to be studied, and (c) the chance to assess groups of people without changing their everyday live in a potential activity (STIGGER, 2007).

The workshop took place at the football field of association of hospital employees. The frequency was weekly for one and a half hour. From 6 to 11 users participated, in particular PSCC team members,

e.g. trainees for Physical Education, Occupational Therapy (as managers and workshop managers), and Nursing (while companions in the workshop). Such users' profile was wide-ranging. They were different from their life history to the manner they arrived at PSCC. The younger was an eighteen-year-old user; the elder, a fifty-two-year-old user roughly. Such participants are people in psychological distress with a quite diverse intensity from utterly different social environments. The diagnoses were also different, and we stress that the focus on such workshop was not only to collect people with a similar specific diagnosis.

The workshop participant-users were not submitted to any special treatment according to the investigation. Within or out of their PSCC everyday life nothing changed during this study. To keep the anonymity for the participants, we simply used the word 'user' for comments from them during the workshop.

The analysis material was produced by using notes based on 'field diaries' and the records were made soon after the workshop observation. Within a five-week period we described meticulously what occurred in the workshop by writing it down in the field diaries. Was considered (a) how the group moved until the field, (b) what activities were performed, (c) how many persons took part in it and (d) kept only looking at it, and (e) what intervention was made by users responsible for such activity. Any type of expression (verbal and bodily) suitable for analytic treatment was also written down in the field diaries. Based on the ethnographic research, one can assert the analysis and interpretation of the information in field diaries. Considering such fact, we intended to 'discover new concepts, new relations, new ways to comprehend the reality' (ANDRÉ, 1995, p. 30); thus, we could learn better on the space and people who interact in it.

The research was recorded by the Comissão de Pesquisa da Escola de Educação Física da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul [Research Commission for the School of Sports of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul] and approved by the Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa do Hospital de Clínicas de Porto Alegre [Research Ethics Committee on HCPA research]. Such research was also based on ethical standards required by the Comissão Nacional de Ética em Pesquisa/Conselho Nacional de Saúde/Ministério da Saúde (CONEP/CNS/MS) [National Committee on Research Ethics/National Health Council/Ministry of Health (CONEP/CNS/MS)].

Main roles or secondary roles?

Some time after lunch, the time usually for a break, arise an invite for a football match. Who accept it, go by the shorter path. It is a sunny day, a hot afternoon. Everyone agree to play in the space of the field more covered by shadow. The participants help to prepare the match by using bricks to do the 'goalposts' in a style commonly named 'closed goal'. After preparing it, the participants are divided into two teams. The match starts!

During the match, one can see a great interaction among the participants. There are dribblings, perfect moves, celebrated goals, shared balls, complains from the players, fault simulations, incentives, verbal stimulus. One can observe participants who are more active in the match differing strikingly from the ones less active.

The match is over. The participants greet and congratulate one another and get together for stretching exercise. During such exercises comments on the match are made, and usually the participants express an opinion. Soon after such stage, the field is undone. All participants go back to the place they were before being invited for that match.

Such narrative describe basically one of the football workshops observed and reported in the field diaries. Is in such space, we had the opportunity to realise some escape moments in which the participants took on a more-active role concerning the workshop plot, resulting in a new practice for PSCC. Such escape moments were interpreted based on the attitudes chosen by the workshop users; hence, such moments were different. considering the field diaries analysis, we discuss now how the users took part in the PSCC football workshop and what does it mean for them. For a better clarification on this study, we divided the text into three parts.

Contributing to the match

The Psychiatric Reform process is a democratic and participative project. In it, Unified Health System (SUS) managers, health workers, mental health services, and other PSCC users including other replacement services acted, and still acting, occupying the main role in such

process (BRASIL, 2005). At first, ‘the PSCC is the centre of a new clinic which produces independence and invite users to responsibility and to occupy the main role during the whole treatment’ (BRASIL, 2005, p. 25). This way, they can contribute to the practice of the users’ citizenship and suchlike.

The workshops involve body practices (e.g. football) within the PSCC focusing on social reintegration for subjects. This fact is a result from the new model stressing the care proposed by the Brazilian Psychiatric Reform movement. The aim of this movement is to ‘tear down the old conception of psychiatric hospital to built new conceptions up, based on new epistemological, political and social basis. Such new conception would also change all the culture which sustains violence, discrimination, and madness capture.’ (AMORIM; DIMENSTEIN, 2009, p. 197).

One of the options arisen from the Psychiatric Reform was to offer services involving periodical aid and social reintegration for users. To perform so, the users would have access to work, leisure, full civil rights, and strengthening of the family and community bonds (BRASIL, 2004). It would result in a new meaning for mental health care. Completing this idea, for Pitta (1994), one of the PSCC trends (from Psychiatric Reform) is exactly to develop programmes to rehabilitate users psychosocially.

In such environment, on one hand protected due to the presence of PSCC team, on the other, available for the whole community the users are invited to play and react against some situations inside therapeutic spaces concerning football workshop. One can see how the users contributed to the match in the fragments from the field diaries:

Arrival at the field: while some users are playing or shooting the ball to score a goal, other users focus on the bricks which will compose goalposts, because there are scarcely any persons to play in the whole field. (Field diary, 18 September 2008).

[...] when someone kicks hard and nealy bruises someone with an accidental ball stroke, or if the ball goes far away from the field (resulting in a waste of time), suddenly users would say that such hard kicks are not necessary. They’d say that actions like that just disturb the match and usually bruise someone. They’d say there’s an utter waste of time going after the ball

and that the best option is trying to score a goal through the pass. (Field diary, 9 October 2008).

According to this fragment, we can observe two different manners to users contribute to a good match. Firstly, they should help to carry the bricks to use it to erect aims. Secondly, they should control one another during the match to avoid stopping the match due to a ball kicked far away or bruising the mates out of hard kick.

Such ‘self-control’ in the workshop made sense for users. They realised if such moves (hard kick or terrible fault) were avoided, they would be protecting one another. This is a therapy effect quite relevant for the PSCC in-progress treatment with the referred group. The activity manager seeks to show users the workshop is a space to play ‘with’ and not ‘against’ others. He sought to strength a cooperative idea of collective activity, in particular that one need not to be violent to feel pleasure when playing. Before, during and at the end of the workshop, the participants usually kept to reinforce it when talking to the whole group. One could see the results of it in the filed by the interventions from the own participants during the match. Such results brought an important role, i.e. users interfering and aiding to establish parametes for other activity arrangements.

Users stopping being care-receiving users (even for a while) to become care-concerning users is a reintegration exercercise which goes beyond just playing game. It means a narrow gap for social life, an escape allowing users to realise they can succeed in their lives, contributing collectively.

Refereeing the match and solving problems

Another way to users take the main role is being match referees. They believed they could manage it without a trainee or other similar PSCC team member. Taking a free kick and a corner kick; marking a winger; etc was up to the own users.

In the case of fouls, often the own users point it out, without requiring the trainee’s intervention. Users seem to have rather a lot of respect one another. Usually, one or other was begging pardon out of unexpected move. (Field diary, 18 September 2008).

Who generally plays such referee role is the trainee and he also manages the workshop. This, however, is not a rule if you consider users also take free kicks and decide on wingers. It is also therapeutically weighty for users to develop somewhat of independence, without depending on trainees or any other team member to decide on things to them. (Field diary, 9 October 2008).

[...] nearly all match participants take free, corner kicks and mark wingers, and at times occur slightly quarrels which the own group smoothed over, solving any type of problem. (Field diary, 16 October 2008).

During the activities, one could easily grasp how important is the therapy in this mutual interaction process for users when solving problems arisen from the match. When they decided on unpredictable events regarding football match, the result was they performing the main role in therapy.

For users who experienced being ‘referee–players’ or assistants for the match organisation, the football workshop perhaps means their treatment space. In it, they are invited to go beyond being just ‘patients’ as trainee, especially active participants in a process their words have been worthwhile and their opinions relevant to the group. Such knowledge co-management (including users and trainees) can open up ‘possibilities to the involved subjects feel as part of the learning–teaching process, realising they have chance and voice’ (MATIELLO JUNIOR et al, 2005, p. 92). During the workshop, we could understand that managing trainees appreciated and gave chance concerning listening the users. This way, such users were encouraged to take part in it more actively.

According to Wachs (2008, p. 118), ‘decision–making shows that the own users are involved in their conflicts. Such small football universe, somehow, allows users to perform the main roles when dealing with their own lives, even briefly’.

In some moments, the discussions in the workshop were solved by the own users in a way they need not trainees’ intervention. It showed that some users can deal with small conflicts arisen during the match. There are concepts of guardianship, interdiction and imprisonment based on moving people in psychological distress away from a potential

social interference. In this wise, perhaps football had not turn (WACHS, 2008). ‘Dealing with PSCC conflicts and frustrations, [however], involves therapy [and] the sport can work as a therapy apparatus in which such matters appear and can be broached’ (Idem, p. 110).

For organisation, play; for play, organise yourself

One of the major difficulties for sundry users who usually attend PSCC is to organise themselves to perform everyday tasks. During the studied workshops, however, was interesting that the users talked to their teams, creating tactics, establishing positions and then marking relay. Such tasks are not so easy and to organise it this way one need to be focused on and in harmony with the other groups. We could also realise some users’ demands and some demands from users to trainees during the match.

Verify some notes from the field diaries showing that:

They (the users) can interact a lot one another. They say to mark more, go back to help the defence, pass the ball more; as in any other place people play football. (Field diary, 18 September 2008).

‘Our team’s very individual... we ain’t passing the ball, that’s why we’re losing.’ (User) (Field diary, 2 October 2008)

‘Really! Let’s pass the ball more, we’re playing well.’ (User)

‘Just pass the ball and we score a goal.’ (User)
(Field diary, 18 September 2008).

‘What’s up, teacher? Not this way! This pass has to be more in between, otherwise I cannot take it!’ (User) (Field diary, 9 October 2008).

Similar sentences as that were common during the matches. Such moment when organising teams before and during the matches are also considered main roles. The escape moments in which participants managed to get guiding the group minimally included (a) showing a path to be followed by team colleagues and (b) acting actively in the match to take on a role of builder.

The football workshop arose, provided in users such escape moments in which they could manage their teams to provide matches with more quality, organisation and attraction for participants.

The football, thus, allowed a space for users organise themselves. It means that they could acquire a level of collective system allowing them to organise the teams and think match tactics up. The trainees who coordinated the workshop pass on some tips to the group. The users, however, not only followed the managers' guidance, but also assessed relevance of what was suggested. They also made their comments on how it was organised and discussed what occurred during the match, as they were in an ordinary football match.

As there were the demands, there are also the group's incentives:

'there isn't lost ball! Let's go! (User) (Field diary, 2 October 2008).

'Let's go, mates! Let's go after the match.' (User) (Field diary, 18 September 2008).

'C'mon, man! Now you went wrong. But in the next you'll get it right! That's it! (User A) (Field diary, 9 October 2008).

Such incentives usually were spontaneous among users, as well as trainees used to encourage anyway, and the group celebrated together. Take on managing roles or even 'skippers' in a way allowed users to enjoy their moments while occupying the main role in the workshop, match, and football.

We consider important such reflection concerning the role users take on or the roles they have to take on in the workshop. The idea of group is strong for the team of trainees and professionals for Therapeutic Recreation Services (TRS) of the PSCC, NB, when someone leaves the workshop (users, trainees, coach) for some reason, such person is invited to communicate the leaving to everyone. After a proposal made by the PSCC team, who takes part in the activity (trainees, coaches), the football training bibs used in the workshop started to be taken by a different user every week. This way, such bibs would be washed to be clean for the next week. This was performed focusing on collective collaboration. The users suggested a barbecue in a workshop day for a get-together. The TRS-PSCC team liked it, thus,

both parties arranged the price sharing and event date. Such parties arranged also a time to go to the supermarket to buy the necessary goods for the barbecue. Due to such facts, once again we realised the users both played and enjoyed the space. Perhaps it means a satisfaction moment for them since they could take part in such process and build the workshop with PSCC team.

Final considerations

At the end of the field research and analysis, we consider the football workshop a therapeutic space able to improve users' main role. It can also further how they should organise themselves based on personality and collectivity, besides contributing to solve problems involving score, which arise during the mental-health service-users' match.

Such body practice can become an important therapeutic tool to work along with the PSCC. This practice is closely connected with local body culture. It can also work as a device to stimulate users' interest, so that the PSCC can involve more effectively in the communities where such users live, assisting their social reintegration.

There are many events which may interfere during the care for people with acute psychological distress. Naturally, such events are much more complex than a football match; however, if the users participate actively in the workshop they can realise they have main roles within a group, roles that they rarely occupied along their lives. Commitment, personal and collective organisation, pleasure, independence, and keen insight are stressed in each ball match, discussion on doubtful moves, free kick, goal scored, and 'final whistle'.

The investigation allowed us to conclude that the football workshop put into effect sundry elements linked to the body culture of PSCC users (specifically) and SUS users (in general). It is one among sundry tools which can insert effectively the body practices arranged in the perspective of public health.

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