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'Being an Expert' and Psychosis: Encounters with Lives on the Margin

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Learning Goal:

To recognize self-reflexivity as a tool in qualitative research.

Abstract Text:

Psychosis is a confusing, stigmatizing, and demoralizing experience. Being a clinical psychologist qualifies one to identify, understand, and intervene. However, the training can manifest a sense of detachment from the suffering and struggles of the mentally ill by its exclusive focus on the signs and symptoms of the illness to secure an efficient and effective treatment. This therapeutic stance is paradoxical given the lifetime nature of the diagnosis and 'irrecoverable' nature of the recovery. Traditionally, expertise is located within the clinician or the caregiver in the context of psychosis. The know-how, knowledge, and skills of people living with psychosis are usually overlooked. Their expertise becomes visible only beyond the bounds of the biomedical models. In this paper, I aim to share my experiences of endorsing the paradigmatic shift from 'patienthood' to 'personhood' while locating myself as a clinical psychologist researching the lived experiences of psychosis. I also aim to illustrate the alternate narratives of agency exercised through 'art' and 'pretence' utilizing two case studies. The presentation is a reflexive exercise in my journey towards establishing meaningful connections in the context of psychosis to allow visibility to these alternate discourses.

**ON THE HEALING POWER
OF HUMAN RECONNECTION**