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How psychiatrists and artists collaboratively may lead creative writing-therapies in groups of people suffering from severe mental illness

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Learning Goal:

1. To inform about a new way of collaboration between authors, mental health professional and patients
2. To present examples of patient-evaluations of the creative-writing interventions as an adjuvans to psychiatric treatment
3. To present theoretical concepts to understand the helping transformations in the patients' minds.

Abstract Text:

Introduction:

"Writing cures" have shown positive effects on numerous psychopathological features.

Theoretical assumptions have been proposed to explain the causal mechanisms behind the effects. As yet, however, no consensus has been reached and more research is needed in the search for 'why' and 'how' therapeutic creative writing works in patients with different diagnostic pictures.

Phenomenological psychiatry has emphasized concepts like the ineffability of subjective phenomena in psychopathological states. Psychodynamic approaches have pointed at concepts as symbolization, ego-strengthening, integration of primary processes into secondary processes, and the ability to use more mature defence-mechanisms. Discussing the strengths of these concepts will also be part of the project.

Aims:

To describe changes in the persons' subjective experience when they participate in different groups of patients who go through the creative-writing experience, conducted by a qualified fiction author who follow a manualized approach.

Design and Methods: The study is designed as a qualitative explorative investigation. A pilot project has been conducted. Before the intervention the patients go through Indiana Psychiatric Illness Interviews and fill out self-report scales of TAS, RFQ, HEI. After the intervention, the patients are interviewed concerning their experience of changes in thoughts, feelings and social behavior, and they score themselves at TAS, RFQ HEI.

Preliminary results:

Patient's retrospective evaluations of the method of intervention and the group processes contain many interesting statements that signifies the importance of group processes, and shows how patients can transfer their work with texts in the group into a trust in themselves and reflections on their own words when they participate in social communications outside the group.

Discussion: Conceptualization of the therapeutic effects may lead to focus on how different states of mind and different diagnostic categories may profit from this kind of intervention as an adjuvant to other treatment methods in psychiatry.

**ON THE HEALING POWER
OF HUMAN RECONNECTION**