



Abstract Nr: 262

Learning Goal:

When staying in a natural environment, at home, is no longer an option, how can we organize a warm place for psychotic people where they feel welcome and accepted? How do we create a holding and containing environment where mental growth is enhanced?

Abstract Text:

A refuge for the stranger in the city.

How to organize a warm place where people feel welcome and accepted?

The psychotic person often feels inhabited by alien forces, by strangers. They feel alienated from themselves and from the world around them. When hospitalized or treated, they often feel as if in a foreign country where they know neither the language nor the culture. It is a major challenge to respectfully welcome them, in all their strangeness and to not increase their alienation.

The symposium proposes three examples of welcoming places in Flanders, Belgium for people with psychosis. One is an open meeting place in the city of Ghent, another a closed treatment ward in a psychiatric hospital for young adults with an acute psychotic episode, and the third is a psychotherapeutic in-patient ward in a psychiatric hospital for young adults with psychosis and psychotic vulnerability.

Although three very different settings, their work is based on a psychotherapeutic attitude in a milieu-therapeutic climate. Based on theories of psychoanalysis, institutional psychotherapy (antropo-psychiatry) and psychodynamic family-work, holding environments are created in which transformations can become possible. The metaphor of the Stranger in the City invited us to reflect on our treatment units: Can we be like a multicultural open city, rather than a tower of Babel?

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**ON THE HEALING POWER
OF HUMAN RECONNECTION**