

Horticultural therapy

The experience

The group of patients is mixed for:

- age
- sex
- pathology
- intensity of the disorder

Horticultural therapy

The experience

Unique typology of this kind:

- Acute patients
- Time limited recovery
- Discharged patients (6 months) taking part in the horticultural meetings.

Horticultural therapy

The experience

- Meetings: twice a week
- Place: green area (260 sq.mts)
- Equipment:
 - gazebo with 12 seats to allow socialization
 - plants and essences, flowers, Mediterranean vegetation
 - didactic garden

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A new technique introduced:

Hydroponic cultivation

original and easy in its application

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Program organized in 10 steps :

1. Course of introduction to the hydroponic cultivation, thanks to films on the techniques and the materials employed
2. Simulation in the recreation area of the hydroponic techniques with active participation of the patients

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3. The patients meet the therapeutic garden: they are accompanied and guided by the operators to the use of instruments, tools and materials.
4. Realization of hydroponic tank with tools and recycling materials, localization of the proper planting area, monitoring of the plants' growth

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5. Choice of the seeds and plants to be nursed.
Patients are invited to choose themselves the vegetables to take care of.

During the meetings of this phase, also very difficult patients became involved and cooperated actively.

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6. Positioning of the seeds in the water and then in the tank realized by the patients who have:
 - Used the instruments for the temperature and PH (only one was definitely lost in the water!);
 - Created the panel to locate the seeds;
 - Mineralized the water with the compounds needed to create the proper habitat for the plants

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7. While waiting for the birth of the first plants in the water, the patients come back to the primary activity of “gardening” with bulbs and aromatic plants (rosemary, parsley, onion, radish, etc.)

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8. Check and integration of the minerals in the hydroponic tank; monitoring of the growth of the vegetables planted.

During these meetings the patients were invited to tell their impressions and their comments about the experience in progress.

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9. Evaluation of the work developed by means of reports for each patient related to:
 - Observation of the behaviour
 - Participation
 - Skills acquired
 - Interaction in the group
 - Changes following the next therapeutic meetings

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10. Final feedback with organizations and operators involved in the realization and development of the project:
 - Assessorato per le Politiche dell'Handicap
 - Psychologists and hospital specialized personnel
 - Operators of the co-operative farm “La Fattoria di Alice”

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- Observation of the patients:
 - The attention and the participation are gradually increased with growing enthusiasm.
 - Also the discharged patients came weekly in the hospital department to follow the meetings.

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Our data give a high degree of validity to the most recent theories on the benefits of the horticultural therapy.

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The project's final goal provides the patient's achievement of a psychological and physical balance as well as basic competences supporting them in their future social and working reintegration.

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