

Psychosocial therapies for psychoses and bipolar disorders

ERGOTHERAPY

Ergotherapy is comprised of two sections: Activity Therapy (AT) and Work Therapy (WT). Activity therapy is designed to offer psychologically ill persons the opportunity to help them improve their emotional state by means of creative and practical techniques as well as exercises that are relevant in everyday life (e.g. cooking groups and house visits). This approach aims to retain existing capabilities and counteract the degradation of individual initiative. The primary focus is on reinforcement of healthy components. Active working with techniques, materials and media presented (e.g. working with clay, wood, metal, rattan reed, textiles, artistic media, music, literature) and the results that can be achieved reinforce self-confidence and help to master everyday life. Individual ideas can be developed and implemented. In addition, critical examination of individual working methods and procedures is helpful in achieving a realistic self-evaluation of one's own capabilities. Groups that focus on expression (e.g. reading circles, painting and music groups) offer patients the opportunity to confide in others and establish contact to others. AT can be used to practise concentration, memory, stamina and capability of expression as well as communication skills. Activity therapy motivates patients to take control of their lives again. When things start falling apart in a psychosis, the experience of an external structure, e.g. by means of a concrete task and the associated planning and execution of a course of events, can also assist in rediscovering the inner structure.

Ergotherapy can be performed individually or in groups. The therapy can take place in an in-patient or partially in-patient environment, or in special out-patient environments, or in an ergotherapy practice. Ergotherapy is a therapeutic method recognised by statutory medical insurances. Where ergotherapy is prescribed by a general practitioner or psychiatrist, the costs will be assumed by medical insurance.

Text: Adapted from Ute Wurmstädt

Source: Fritz-Michael Sadre Chirazi-Stark, Fritz Bremer, Ingeborg Esterer: Wege aus dem Wahnsinn. Therapien, Begleitung, Selbsthilfe bei psychotischen Erkrankungen. Aktualisierte und erweiterte Neuausgabe, Psychiatrie - Verlag, Bonn 2002.