

Experiences and the characteristics of the occupations done in day centres for people with psychiatric disabilities

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People with psychiatric disabilities are a vulnerable group, in need of support and rehabilitation. Day centres that provide meaningful daily activities are an important link in that rehabilitation. More knowledge about what users do and how they perceive that, when visiting day centres, is needed in order to have a realistic point of departure for goal setting, evaluation and development of such day centres. This study investigated individuals with psychiatric disabilities participating in day centre activities within four different municipalities in the southern part of Sweden. Ninety persons visiting seven different day centres, meeting-place oriented as well as more work oriented day centres, were asked to complete a time-use diary that covered the hours spent in the day centres. The time-use diary focused on the most recent day at the day centre in terms of what the users did, with whom, where and how they experienced the occupations performed. The data analysis had a qualitative approach, and was based on content analysis. The findings indicated that the day centres served as a social meeting point and an opportunity to be engaged in activities. Participation in the centres' activities was important and valued even for the individuals with very little engagement. The data indicates that there are similarities and differences and a continuum between work oriented and meeting-place oriented settings through the activities performed and experiences made. This can be described as a rehabilitating pathway within the different day centre settings that can be further investigated. Future studies of day centres need to be made in order to generate knowledge of how to prevent social isolation and give adequate support to people with psychiatric disabilities.