

WE WILL GET OVER THIS. A MENTAL HEALTH GUIDE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE PERSON IN CRISIS

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Javier Erro has a degree in psychology and has trained in different areas of health psychology. His career has gone hand in hand with his involvement and participation in different social movements. Although the present work is written by a psychologist, it should be mentioned that different survivors of psychiatry have actively participated in “*We will get over this*,” so it is the result of collective work.

Collectivizing mental healthcare is, in my opinion, one of the potentialities of this work. We are immersed in a society in which care in this and other areas has been centralized and professionalized (psychologists, psychiatrists, occupational therapists, etc.) and the “environment” has been disconnected from its role within the machinery that makes up the mental health of a person. In addition, reductionism by conceiving distress as “within the individual” has promoted, among other things, stigma and ignorance, but fundamentally social and emotional isolation. With it, it is customary for us to “feel emotionally alone within our heads” and the only tool we have left is the professional one.

Recovering the role of the social environment and revaluing different ways of conceiving care is not exclusive with the role of professionals, but it is necessary to propose tools for the collective management of distress. Listening to the voice of people with mental suffering, and strengthening the social resources of the environment and the person, have been and still are elements that have been forgotten by

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conventional psychology/psychiatry. However, thanks to the discourse and the proposals of those directly affected and of critical groups, a new direction is being consolidated in the management of mental suffering that aims to go beyond the hegemonic models of mental healthcare.

We will get over this. A mental health guide for the environment of the person in crisis, is a contribution in this direction. It is not unique or sufficient, but it is necessary.

From a social point of view, the book focuses on the support that the “environment” –understood as our friends, relatives, work colleagues, etc.– plays when a person from our near context finds themselves in a crisis situation. The author has made a remarkable effort to accurately integrate a practical work, accompanied by a subtle reflexive process, which, beyond its applied purpose and offering specific solutions, allows us to question and rethink mental healthcare today.

In my opinion, it is also an invitation for professionals in the field, such as myself, to consider the need to stop, criticize and reflect on our role in mental healthcare.

This book is composed of 74 pages, grouped into a total of 10 chapters. Although there is no division established by sections, we can detect three parts. The first part is comprised of the prologue and the introduction and acknowledgments to the collaboration of *Primera Vokal*, and, from the beginning, the objective and central perspective of the work are explained. The introduction, in the words of the author, is a call to “lose the fear” and brings the reader to an understanding of a complex reality, proposing alternatives to the conceptualization of mental health and collective management.

The second part is composed of four chapters, which constitute the main body of the work. In the first chapter, some questions of reflection on the environment of the person are raised, such as the coordination with the people involved (family, friends, etc.) and the questioning of one’s own limits and/or availability. The second chapter, entitled “*Principal forms of psychological suffering that may require our attention*,” includes a brief description and practical information on a series of problems, which could be considered to be affected by generalized stigma and ignorance and/or where the involvement of the environment is fundamental. Delusions, hallucinations, manic and depressive episodes, self-harm, drug use and aggressiveness are clearly discussed in non-exhaustive way. Without intending to catalog in





diagnostic terms, this section tries to contextualize “what is being talked about” and to break the barrier of ignorance associated with these circumstances. The third and fourth chapters are devoted to communication and practical resources, respectively. The third emphasizes the importance of communication and listening as central axes of care and exposes different formats of communication between the person who is suffering and the environment, from dyadic and group interaction to the communication of the environment with oneself. The fourth chapter presents some practical tools, such as pacts of care, specifying situations and strategies, mutual support groups, accompaniment, and sharing the problem and the information with the environment.

In the last section, composed of four chapters, the author offers general guidelines to be considered regarding professional care (pharmacotherapy and psychotherapy) and exposes some personal reflections on the objective and its limitations. Finally, a list of references is included.

This book serves two fundamental purposes, the personal and the professional. Its careful and amenable language makes it accessible to

all audiences, whether or not they are linked to the field. In addition, the accuracy and synthesis of the contents make it suitable for students and professionals of mental healthcare and/or for those who in one way or another feel the need to enter into it. It should be noted that the publication has been self-managed and its profits go to similar collective projects, and neither the authors nor the publishers receive personal financial benefits.

In short and following Javier, although the subtitle of the work defines it as a guide, *We will get over this* does not attempt to solve all of the doubts, since doubts are precisely the motivation for the writing of this work. It is not –nor does it aim to be– a new model, but “only the basic foundations of how to decide or act.” In addition, it is a call to “talk of people again” when we work, support, claim, talk or write about mental health.

We will get over this is a resource of collective effort and defense of the human rights of all of us who, inevitably, feel the need to take care of ourselves collectively as far as mental health is concerned.

