

Intervening at l'Autre Maison Crisis Center

Cindy Subaihi

Jessy Paul-Hus

Mental Health workers, L'Autre Maison Crisis Center

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Who are we?

- Community organization (NPO)
- Opened in 1987
- Permanent team of 17 workers
- Center located in Verdun
- Adult clientele, non-sectorized, 18 years old +



Our philosophy

- Support an alternative approach in mental health
- Maintain a critical mind with respect to the psychiatric biomedical approach, and offer a psychosocial perspective of the crisis
- Promote collaboration, coordination and involvement of users, as well as community and institutional organizations in order to make use of their expertise to better serve the person

Our Objectives

- Respond to the needs of adults and/or their relatives in crisis situations
- Avoid or reduce psychiatric hospitalization
- Reduce hospital emergency department overcrowding
- Inform and facilitate access to existing resources

Our services

- Free services offered in French and in English, 24/7
- Intervention in crisis situations (phone intervention, evaluation, short-term follow-up and, temporary accommodation)
- Individual, family and network intervention
- Intervention within the person's environment
- Post-traumatic intervention
- Orientation and referrals

Our environment

- Welcoming house
- Presence of workers on site 24/7
- Rooms with 2 single beds, not mixed
- Home-cooked meals, for which the involvement of the residents is solicited
- Residents have access to everything, are free to go out, and can receive guests
- Autonomous medication management

Regarding our alternative approach

- Emphasis on trust relations
- Involvement of relatives
- Avoid P-38, which is an exceptional measure
- Enforce P-38 only in emergency cases and cases of non-collaboration
- Establish an agreement to not commit harmful actions and mobilize the person and his/her network
- Avoid taking charge in terms of care and work on empowerment

Alternative Social Movement in Mental Health: Elsewhere and Otherwise

- Primacy of exercising one's rights (ex: PAL and Action Autonomie)
- Appropriation of individual power
- Being rooted in the community
- Acknowledgment of speech and experience
- Equal power relationships
- Considering the person as a whole

When someone calls l'Autre Maison

- What happens?
- Forming a relation of trust
- Are you alone?
- Evaluation of the 7 items of the suicidal risk evaluation grid (SAM and CRDM-IU)
- Agreement to not commit harmful actions: contacting network, making an appointment at the Crisis Center and/or establishing a telephone follow-up, or going to the emergency room by him/herself or accompanied by someone

Within the context of incapacity

Psychotic Person

- On the phone: does the person have suicidal thoughts?
- If so:
 - Establishing a trust relation and seeking collaboration
 - What is the nature of the voices heard? What are they saying?
 - Are the voices commanding you to do something?
- Possible accommodation
- Referral toward resources and groups for people who hear voices (Impact)

Within the context of incapacity

Intoxicated Person

- On the phone:
 - Ask the question directly: “Are you using or have you used substances? Which substance and how much?”
 - Relation of trust, work with the person’s responses
 - If the main issue is substance use, establish a safety net and refer to detox centers
- Accommodation:
 - In housing, substance use is not tolerated in order to avoid harmful actions

Within the context of incapacity

Person suffering from dementia or intellectual disability

- On the phone:
 - Be welcoming toward the person who is suffering
 - Coordinate with their treatment team with their authorization
 - Refer the person to their main treatment staff member

Challenges for workers

- Learning to trust
- Tolerating uncertainty
- Managing the feeling of being powerless
- Involving the partners as much as possible
- Receiving increasing demands
- It is sometimes difficult to involve relatives who are exhausted and/or don't know much about how to manage mental health problems