

"Villa Voortman"

A meeting place for people with dual diagnosis problems within community care



Social inclusion structure

The villa is open from Monday to Friday and from 9 am till 5 pm. During this period the visitors themselves can decide how many hours a day/week they want to spend at the centre. Although we don't work with a tide activity schedule, we do have several activities that reoccur each week at a specific time (music, creative workshops, dance...). Moreover we keep to preparing lunch together and each week we have a visitor-staff meeting.



with one of the staff members. We even stimulate them to meet up with other health-care workers at the centre. This underlines our effort to create a safe, yet open house where the visitors can interact with society. This is also the reason that we prefer to work with volunteers (often with an artistic background).

The starting point of our project is the hard reality of 'serious exclusion of society' for people suffering of psychiatric problems (psychoses) in combination with a severe addiction to illegal drugs. They are also those people for whom access to regular care is particularly difficult because of their therapy resistance. The feeling of failure and powerlessness experienced by them, as well as by the community workers is very high. Sometimes they are described as 'alarming care avoiders'.



Under 'Article 107' that deals with 'community-based health care' and 'assertive community treatment' we started a day centre in a disadvantaged neighborhood in Ghent (Belgium) for this vulnerable group. "Villa Voortman" is structured according to the principles of social psychiatry and is a very low threshold open house with the opportunity to use 'mobile teams' when necessary. Our centre wants to be an anchor in their endless being-on-the-run and exclusion. It has to be an environment in which they recover their own value, self-esteem and feel invited to participate. Or how we would put it in a one-liner: "a minimal structure with a maximal responsibility".

The central concept is 'hospitality' as a synonym for ethics in which "the other", the 'outsider' may show itself in its otherness, to make connection and encounter possible. Our centre is a shelter, a refuge for the 'excluded speak' where through 'deconstruction' and 'wondering' the man with his story can appear. Through 'active citizenship', 'empowerment', 'harm reduction', 'case management' and the construction of networks a further marginalization and exclusion will be avoided and social participation and integration promoted.

Our work is based on and inspired by Foucault, Lacan, Derrida, Winnicott and Maxwell Jones.



Visitor-staff meeting

Weekly the visitors and staff sit together for a meeting. We consider this meeting as the central steering point. The input and feedback from the group is essential to our work. Besides planning the weekly activities, it is a place where – through an open and democratic discussion – we co-construct how to run the villa on a day to day basis.



