

# MENTAL HEALTH AND THE VEGETABLE GARDEN, THE PROJECT

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## Introduction

People with mental disorders suffer stigma within society, even among young people. Horticulture as therapy and as an educational and socializing instrument is a vehicle to develop or recover personal autonomy. Changes in the educational field promote a competent curriculum that seeks to achieve the basic and transversal competences. A collaboration agreement is established between the health institution and the educational center.

## Objectives

The objectives of the present project are to improve the quality of life of the people admitted to Mental Health resources and to fight against stigma and discrimination. To promote the competence curriculum of secondary education students through community service that allows them to experiment and to lead actions of civic commitment, learning the active exercise of citizenship.

## Methods

Labor therapy sessions in an urban garden located in a psychiatric hospital, with psychiatric inpatients and secondary education students. We performed horticulture activities and theoretical/practical workshops dealing with the environment, responsible consumption, healthy eating and social skills involving respect and awareness towards people affected by mental illness. Results were measured through an evaluative survey.

## Results

The project started the last quarter of 2019. The global impression has been very satisfactory for both participants and teaching and caring managers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the activity had to be suspended, as its quantitative assessment is no longer allowed.

## Conclusions

Horticulture as therapy seems to contribute to the general well-being of participants. Ensemble participation in the activity seems to favour the removal of both stigma and rejection of mental illness.

