The Contribution of the Emotional Intelligence on Social Services for the Homeless People

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Abstract: Insuring the access to an adequate housing is frequently a pre-condition for the exercise of many other basic rights that any individual must gain. Lacking the access to civilized living conditions probably signifies the most serious manifestation of social exclusion. Lacking a home is synonymous to the extreme poverty, in fact, representing more than a life contingency but the extreme frame of a deficit of means and opportunities. The term "homeless" defines a human condition which is hard to believe that someone would have problems in understanding it. However, almost everybody who uses this term uses a different definition to define it. These definitions become mere "instruments" which justify the action or the lack of it depending on who uses it. The condition of an adult homeless person presupposes a series of attributes which define it. Therefore, the state of isolation, marginalization, alienation and social exclusion have extreme outcomes within the frame of emotional, relational and social integration. In this respect, there must be built and improved new programmes and social services for the benefit of the homeless persons. As a result of the work experience with these homeless persons I identified some stages of the adaptation to the street life. It is self-evident that the psycho-social degradation is a process and not a gradual evolution. The intervention of the specialists through the specialized services is vital for the improvement of the quality of life for these beneficiaries of welfare work. The present research develops a strategy related to the social services in Braila offered as a method of social reinsertion of the street life, especially those from the municipality of Braila.

Keywords: welfare work; social services; homeless persons; social reinsertion

1. Introduction

Insuring the access to an adequate housing is frequently a pre-condition for the exercise of many other basic rights that any individual must gain.

In other words, insuring the access to a decent home signifies the basis of the attainment of an impartial society in which every individual may play an active role. In this respect, one may say that the access to housing embodies the main factor of the social inclusion. "The homeless adult is that person who does not own a house and lives in the street (in the parks, markets or on the flight of stairs), who finds him/herself in a crisis situation at the mental, communicative, health, social, juridical level caused by the absence of a shelter or by the impossibility of mustering the efforts so

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that he may obtain an identity card, a job or to reinstate his/her position in the family and by the exclusion from the external services (public medical-social services)[1]".

The state of an adult homeless person presupposes a series of attributes which define the state itself. Thus, the state of isolation, marginalization and social exclusion has severe effects on the emotional, communicative or social level. Therefore, the access to a home becomes the basic element of social inclusion.

"The social exclusion appears as a multidimensional and multifaceted concept which, applied to the category brought forward, includes aspects such as psychosocial vulnerability, the hostile attitude of the community towards them or the poor legislative milieu". (Muntean & Sagebiel, 2007, p. 229)

Emotional Intelligence vs. General Intelligence (IQ)

Although this paper seeks to explain the advantages of emotional intelligence should not be overlooked general intelligence as measured by IQ. In fact many psychologists still believes that IQ is only that can guarantee success. If you are a smart, if you have a high IQ if you graduated from a recognized university, or a higher qualification, you cannot worry about. IQ is very important, but to increase your competitiveness, you need to build your future development plans Encompassing own emotional intelligence. Based on the adaptive role of emotionality was found that people who have an IQ (IQ - an index of development level of intelligence, mental age determined by reference to chronological age) or high academic intelligence is doing very well developed, much less everyday life, while another group of subjects, but have a lower IQ compared with the first, had good results in practice.

Where did the question: "How do they manage to have success in critical situations, to cope with life circumstances at any time?". asked people on the streets to demonstrate what they understand by an intelligent person. Following analysis of responses to the survey concluded that they have a different skill than academic intelligence, able to overcome obstacles which makes everyday life (Goleman, & Boyatzis, 2005). This ability was originally reported to social intelligence, which refers to the ability to understand and establish relationships with people. Unlike IQ, which changes very little after adolescence, emotional intelligence appears to be largely learned and continue to develop as we go through life and learn from experience. Our expertise in this area can continue to grow, and for this there is a popular word: maturity.

Unlike IQ, emotional intelligence (EI) has proved to be a more reliable predictor of success in personal and professional life. IQ and not IE opposing powers, but rather separate, yet one can not operate at its maximum potential without the second. It is useful to note that there are often differences between the innate potential of a person's emotional intelligence and its development potential throughout life. Each child is born with a potential for emotional sensitivity, emotional memory, emotional control, with a potential ability of emotional learning.

This innate intelligence can be developed or altered by life experiences, especially emotional lessons given by parents, teachers, professors, family, etc.. during childhood or adolescence. These lessons can have a positive or negative, unhealthy on the evolution of innate emotional intelligence. It is possible for a child to start life with a high level of innate intelligence, then heads to unhealthy emotional habits from living together in family abuse. Such a child will be when it grows, a much lower level of emotional intelligence than the level it was at birth, because lived experiences during

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[1] The Romanian quotation is from (Muntean & Sagebiel, 2007, p. 228)

childhood . On the other hand, it is also possible that a person has a low level of emotional intelligence at birth, but received a positive emotional growth and modeling in childhood, it will increase its level of emotional intelligence. However, the child's emotional intelligence is more easily altered than developed, following the principle that it is much easier to destroy than to build.

Currently, models including the model of emotional intelligence Mayer / Solovey / Caruso combines variables measuring innate emotional (emotional sensitivity, emotional memory, emotional control, emotional learning ability) with the same environmental variables influenced.

2. The Factors of Social Inclusion in the Case of Adult Homeless Persons

There is a concurrence of reasons involved in giving birth to and maintaining the phenomenon of homelessness. These reasons followed from the statements of interviewed persons in the Emergency Center for the Homeless Persons in Braila.

The family disputes. The tenseness of the family climate may result in the coming out of certain major conflicts between the conjugal partners, parents and children, brothers, relatives etc. induced by the lack of incomes, sometimes amplified by drinking or mental problems of some family members. It may also bring about the family members'driving away, the home abandonment or even the family abandon on the part of a conjugal partner.

Divorce is one of the main cause that has determined the loss of the house. In this case, men are frequently evacuated from their house. At a small interval after the evacuation (when they consume all the resources that have remained), some of them are not able to maintain a socio-economic balance, eventually, ending up by adapting to a new way of living-the street life.

There are also cases in which individuals may make an earnest request to the alienation of the house so that they may afford a cheaper house, move in the countryside, move with a relative, start a business, etc. Later, when the money are spent (before investing in a more modest house), they end up in the street. These individuals either have moderate incomes or have endorsed loans with their own houses for their personal or other's business and they have not been paid.

The loss of the job results in the reduction or total absence of the incomes, which gives rise to both the impossibility of paying the upkeep of the house or the rent and the appearance or aggravation of family conflicts. One may assert that the loss of the job has as an outcome, in many cases, the loss of the job.

The impossibility of paying the rent or the upkeep of the house led to the accumulation of small debts that have had as a consequence the evacuation of the tenant or the annulment of the rental agreement.

There are other cases in which certain individuals have desired to sell their house but they have been cheated and have not received any money. The circumstances in which these frauds happened are multiple such as: determining to sign some papers without receiving any money, selling through false estate agencies, underestimating or cheating the elders with a low discerning capacity.

Imprisonment brings about, in many cases, the divorce or gives rise to the impossibility of paying the rent and the upkeep of the house or to the loss of the job. In this situation, since they cannot find a place to work and a house with a small rent, they come to enlarge the number of homeless persons.

In spite of the fact that these causes are separately recorded, they do not act on their own but they are interrelated. Thus, they reciprocally interact and appear in the majority of the cases in which two or

three causes may interact together. For instance, the loss of the job results in the lack of financial resources, family conflicts, divorce of the loss of the house. Imprisonment, in its turn, leads to divorce or to the impossibility of paying the rent which leads to the annulment of the renting agreement.

The first two observations may lead to the conclusion that the state of the homeless persons is favored by two types of factors:

1. external, environmental-the loss of the job, the lack of the financial resources to pay the tenant's expenses or the repair of the damaged buildings, the selling of the house, the fact of not ever having a personal house, the state of the orphan or abandoned.

2. internal, of personality-individuals who can be easily influenced, malefactors, mental disease, limited internal resources.

3. Categories of Homeless Persons in Braila

The welfare worker admits the fact that being a person in a crisis situation does not necessarily mean that h/she is a homeless but finds him/herself in social and straitened circumstances related to housing.

The heterogeneity of the public makes the characterization of the standard portrait of the homeless person impossible and furthermore the outlining of a typical trajectory of reinsertion which would follow the string from the street to the private house getting through the emergency services, reception houses and overnight shelters.

Moreover, resorting to categories of beneficiaries we may have a useful representation of the necessity or adequacy of particular services to different types of needs.

I shall attempt to present a typology that relies on different types of factors (age, gender, problems).

➢ Isolated women-this particular category encompasses two other representative cases; on one hand, elder women accompanied by youngsters and, on the other hand, the very young mothers;

➢ The families with many members-are very vulnerable because, on one hand, the centers specialized in granting emergency social services are in a small number and do not have adequate infrastructures to shelter them, on the other hand, the condition of the property rental market does not allow them to identify a house suitable for their structure and resources.

➢ Adult youngsters-is another category whose presence is constant in different services. The invoked argument to explain this phenomenon takes into consideration the degradation of the socio-economic context which includes mostly the youngsters, mainly the ones with lower qualification. This category also encompasses the youngsters coming from the institutionalized employment system who, once coming of age, do not attend courses and are excluded from the system of social protection.

➢ The elders-a category for whom the reinsertion process proves to be extremely difficult, especially because of the health problems. On the other side, there are missing structures for the welcoming and insuring the adequate treatment for their particular problems.

➢ Persons with psychiatric disorders-the welfare institutions are increasingly confronted with the presence of the beneficiaries having psychological or psychiatric problems which cannot be dealt with because they do not have the necessary abilities. They are sent to the sector of welfare work

through the sector of mental health which considers that their problems they encounter belong to the social sphere. There are also beneficiaries who get out of the psychiatry hospital or in which the psychiatrists suspect that their condition does not require hospitalization but a mere ambulatory investigation.

The construction of categories proves to be indispensable. For the professionals, it allows the defining of the institution's project and the adaptation of a professional practice to the characteristics of the beneficiaries. In the case of public authorities, this typology allows the adaptation of the social politics and the establishment of the priorities of action.

II. Trends of Development of Social Services Conferred to Homeless Persons in Braila

II. 1. Actions for the Needs of the Persons in Social Emergency.

II. 1.1. Action in Social Emergency.

A. On Defining the Emergency Situation.

In the case of emergency situations at least one of the basic needs of human kind is not satisfied: to feed, to warm up, to wash, to sleep in a secured place, to be in a satisfying health condition.

B. Identifying the Needs Specific to the Emergency Situation.

- the need for food;

- the need for shelter;

- the need for security;

- the need for medical assistance;

- the need for adequate clothing, a protection against the cold;

- the need to be considered a human being.

C. Necessary Services

- consulting room;

- emergency shelters;

- services of out of doors socio-medical assistance;

- services of information and guidance;

- distribution of clothes and warm food during winter;

- services of hygiene (laundries, showers);

- medical assistance on conditions of infirmary.

D. On Defining the Getting out of the Emergency Situation

Getting out of the emergency situation means that a person is assured the decent surviving living conditions (the respect for the human dignity) and the physical and mental integrity are not threatened.

II. 1.2. Post-Emergency Actions

a. On Defining the Post-Emergency

The Post-Emergency represents the period of psycho-physical recovery and of restoration of the social status (identity cards, the contact with the relatives, acquaintances, connections established with welfare workers) in which that person has the possibility of reassessing and remodeling a purpose for the following period.

b. Objectives

- the existence of proximity services of psychosocial and medical assistance;

- the existence of some day services with unconditioned access;

- the access to information;

- the existence of certain networks of social support.

c. Specific Activities

- unconditioned services of social, psychological and legal advice

- services of medical assistance

- - day centers (where the idea of interpersonal contact and the valuation of social utility should have the precedence)

- night shelters

- social eating-halls

- workrooms for recovery and professional ability

- workplaces in accordance with the resources of the homeless persons

II. 1.3. Actions Aiming the Social Reinsertion

a. On Defining Reinsertion / Personal Independence

Social reinsertion is defined by:

- a person's capability to provide by his/her own basic needs (shelter, home, social contacts, health care);

- a person's state of being useful simply by being a supplier of resources, not only a consumer.

b. Objectives

- the access to all the public services;

- socio-professional reinstatement (the existence of workplaces in accordance with the needs of the homeless persons;

- legal protection;

- information concerning the social rights and services.

c. Types of Services

- social housing;

- residential day centers;

- workplaces under protection.

II. 1.4. Forewarning the Phenomenon

a. The Existence of a Social Observer: Monitoring the Evolution of the Phenomenon

Two of the most important characteristics of this social phenomenon are dynamics and its complexity. The more ample they are the more the interventions modalities are not well structured. In order to develop adequate services in accordance with the real needs of the beneficiaries, one may need knowledge of the evolution tendencies of that particular phenomenon, of the changes that may appear from one year to another within the structure of the population of the homeless persons and the provided services.

In Vasile Miftode's view, "the preventive system that refers to the anomic facts, deviation, delinquency and criminality includes the totality of prophylactic measures aimed at the individual or at a community which would prevent the deviant behaviour, the causes and the circumstances that may generate them".

Moreover, the author deems that the intervention and social control mechanisms in the sphere of prevention and anomic phenomena are:

1.   The socio-domestic insertion of the individual whose basis is laid through a norm of "primary socialization".

2.   The socio-professional insertion, that is to say, the integration of the individual in "a useful activity", in conformity both with the personal aspirations and with the societal exigence

3.   The socio-prophylactic intervention in harmful and degraded social milieu and in "public spaces" that are real foci of physical, moral and behavioural infection.

4.   The insurance of a permanent social control, especially during the period in which the personality of the individual (family, school, community etc.) is built.

The family and street climate should be the focus of every social actors but especially of the institutions that have the task of building the personality of the individual. In terms of the educational climate, the individual has practically a normal social behaviour or, in other cases, an antisocial one. That is why the job of the welfare worker should be accomplished on the field, in disfavored or marginalized areas.

Applying "counseling, mediation or negotiation strategies", the welfare worker will attempt to diminish the "tensed family environment" or harmful one (generated by the excessive drinking, smoking, etc.) or "the street, deviant" backgrounds (street groups) by cooperating with other professionals, in interdisciplinary teams (sociologists, psychologists, doctors etc.). The interdisciplinary teams will be capable of identifying the pre-deviant behaviours or the behavioural disorder through socio-psycho-socio-medical observations, before displaying an antisocial behaviour.

b. Identifying the Risk Factors

The population in Braila is 237.276 persons, in accordance with the latest census. Such a population brings about a series of specific socio-economic problems. The fact must be mentioned that a numerous population presupposes, despite a small social distance, a great social distance. This problem is linked to the one related to the dynamics of the role-status that every individual must play. The Romanian economic situation also reflects itself at the municipal level. The decreasing of the occupational degree of the population that directly or indirectly brings revenues in the budget of the local community generated an even greater pressure towards the local authorities, which are

determined to deal with diverse requests regarding the solving of the social situations of the individual. Naturally, solving the aspects of social nature presupposes the existence of particular stable financial resources.

The behaviours associated with the phenomena of economic nature, such as alcoholism, prostitution, wandering, the loss of the house, the increasing rate of divorces. The period of transition gave rise to a series of problems of social and economic nature (the loss of the job, the reform of the system of the minor's assistance, the leaving abroad of the parents, the traffic of persons) which have become causes of the phenomenon entitled 'street children". The Family foundation, a nongovernmental organization, authorized on the assistance of the child assists in emergencies a number of 44 minors of the age between 12 and 18, potential youngsters and adults of the street.

The socio-economic situation in Braila displays a gradually decrease of the financial resources. This fact implies the increase of the unemployment rate in a voluntary or involuntary manner (self-redundancy) and the decrease of the living standard. The loss of the job involves tensions inside the family, the increase of the divorces rate and of the persons got out of the house. The direct outcome of this situation is due to the existence of young confused persons as well as of the aggravated family conflict situations.

The gradual degradation of the economy led to the stratification of the society, the largest area being represented by the population exposed to the phenomenon of pauperization. As an outcome of this situation we are facing with groups of people who are confronted with difficulties in satisfying their basic vital needs because of the lack of the resources and the low incomes. In this case, these groups of persons reach very easily the area of the social exclusion.

The street is the area which covers and shelters a particular type of population which is the outcome of the functioning of a deficit socio-economic system. The street is a stage whose setting is continuously changing. It also offers the possibility of earning one's living without working but beyond the legal limits. With no decisive intervention in this setting, there is the danger of propagating the social flaws to the *sensitive* and *contagious* population of such behaviours, that is to say the youngsters who reached the age of 18 and left the system of social care. There is also the risk that this type of population becomes the permanent *clients* of the social services for adults-medico-social centers, shelters for the elders or permanent beneficiaries of the labour conscription of social nature offered by the mayoralty consuming vital resources of the local community. The organization of the emergency social centre may be diminished.

The increasing number of families in the street poses new questions addressed to the services of social care, the more so as nowadays we cannot discuss about a network of reception and assistance of such social cases.

The particular social problems represented by these families tend to complicate the setting of the social groups that are marginalized and socially vulnerable. The children of these families will represent the future population who lives at the periphery of the society. From this perspective, a prevention method would be the building of certain piles of social services, medical, psychological and educational-cultural that may offer the opportunities of development and socially desired patterns of surviving.

The main objectives in psycho-social assistance of the homeless adults are:

> **The reconstruction of the social behaviour markers**-the social isolation specific to those who live in the street reduces up to the cancellation of the capacity to relate to socially desired surviving norms.

> **The reconstruction of temporal markers**-having to obey the working programme (a particular day, between a time interval)-in the street time elapses differently, just on the line of differentiating between day (light) and night (darkness).

> **Assuming the reciprocal responsibility**-the lack of social identity (papers, stable adherence, belongingness to a particular group) fades away the feeling of the responsibility towards self and the others.

> **The rebuilding, improving and maintaining of the abilities of human interaction**-the human personality and psychological normality are also appreciated in accordance with the quantity and quality of the interpersonal relations to be developed which are very difficult to achieve by the homeless persons.

> **The increase of self-esteem and confidence in one's own capabilities**-by means of the achieved results within the social reintegration programme (the emotional trauma and failures in the attempt of asocial reestablishment devitalizes one's self image and underestimates the confidence in oneself.

> **The activation of personal resources with a creative substratum** which are transposed in the reality of flexible adaptation to the hardships of street life-through the involvement in diverse activities and the development of the creative capacities, these particular persons have a more realistic perception of their own resources and, eventually, they optimize their potential of social reinsertion.

The steps to follow must consider the insertion of those particular persons in a programme of both regular activities and social support. An emphasis should be laid on both the activities of occupational therapy and the protected workshops where the respective persons may become useful for the community again.

The essential role of the professionals who work with this social category is to bring its contribution to the relearning process of the social cohabitation rules. It is for this reason that the relation with the beneficiary is of utmost importance not only the providing of services (the administrative aspect) without any emotional involvement on the part of the specialist (the relational-humane aspect).

The risk occurs in the case of a dependence upon the social protection services without any therapeutical benefit. The relation with the person in difficulty must be from the very beginning extremely correct, based on clearly established rules or statements permanently recalled and obeyed by both of the partners involved.

4. Conclusions

The fact must be mentioned that one must avoid both any action that might lead to hard to achieve expectations concerning the work with the beneficiary of services and the idea that s/he might be supported endlessly in any circumstances and without any obligation on his/her behalf.

Consequently, the message must be clearly conveyed and the welfare worker has the responsibility of permanently assuring him/herself that it has been correctly understood and, if such be the case, s/he

may reinforce the remaking process through the elaboration of some contracts of service provider concluded between the beneficiary and the provider.

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