

Training: a workshop on communication to improve appreciation of training to become a nurse

Dr. Antonella Padovani, Imola Nursing School director:

This path begins on May 1995, when a budding Director 100% idealist/optimist decides to meet all the students' classes, to talk with them about the practical training experience.

The students with passion and diligence accept to fill this free space, available to the expression of their own past, with collage panels built by small workgroups: photos and pictures cut out from magazines, with meaningful images of consumed shoes, a washmachine running a student in the spin cycle, question marks painted on uncertain faces, young people groups in a green park opposing to photos of a hospital entrance, recurring words cut out from newspapers: *death, stress, conflict, autonomy, future... , who will be I?, deprivation of free time.*

The dialogue with the students is deepening, and the Director realizes that the excellent performances of the Nursing School students have been expensive, too much expensive, from the point of view of the emotional sphere and of psychophysical stress.

My target as a Director becomes a gamble: we must find together a way to live well in the practical training, improving the current educational paths.

The project was including several interventions: about organisation of practical trainings, about motivation and training of the traineeship teachers, about tutoring, but... Something yet missed.

I wasn't fully satisfied, because the debate space about traineeship, weekly planned as a verbal re-elaboration space of the single personal experiences lived in the "on field" learning, it seemed to me useful for an elaboration about technical practices and knowledges (the *know how*), but difficult to manage for the work about the *know be*.

Always those images: the student in the washmachine, mixed with ache, scare, death, conflict, anxiety, patient's relatives requests, and more...

Here there have been a lucky meeting, a love on first sight between an actor and the Nursing School. The actor submitted us several projects, that he had achieved in another Nursing School, about communication, know be, personal professional past, about unconscious: we understood that if we had

working together (Director, unit coordinators, Psychology teachers), it would be possible give to the students several instruments and skills, for become able of reading themselves in action, for stress control, for feel themselves better in the work and at last... stop the washmachine.

Fabrizio Bonora, actor and director:

Theatre and Nurse training: is it so strange?

I must do a little introduction, before to illustrate the work done in the Imola Nursing School, spending some words about the path that drove me to conducting the trainer profession in healthcare field, complementarily to my theatrical work.

When, in 1978, I began my traineeship of actor, there was many theatrical experiences housed in the Psychiatric Hospitals, experiences which involved the staff. It was for them an upgrade training: the target on that time was to breaking a lot of walls (ideological and materials), into a “total institution” on the way of abolition, in a time whose was possible to shoot in the heap of problems, with the certain of strike something anyway.

It's a pity, but most of those experiences don't have obtained to go over the sensational, without fix several big holes concerning the specific daily work of the nurses, restricting -furthermore- the action field to the only psychiatric operators (but, at that time, it couldn't been different).

Although I was working in those experiences mostly as novice, my training and education got an unerasable imprinting toward all what concern the social function of theatricality, of how its can be an active part, and not a simple frame of this heap of little or big happenings which is the daily life.

So, a not very budding actor felt the needing of be there where there are to listen the ordinary tales of the ordinary suffering, beginning from a drug addicts community in Umbry (central Italy), passing through a Public Drug Addicts Service, several Public Hospitals and Nursing Schools.

In the Imola Nursing School, I had to project two different paths: with the students of 3rd year, having 40 hours as Psychology teacher, I used a plan very similar to the upgrade workshops for operators already in service, employing the first two of the four lesson hours to the analysis of the basic elements by the helping relationship and the conflictual situations, through

short simulated work situations and theatrical games referred to the Strasberg's Method.

Furthermore, a work on the studies about social interaction of Goffman, and a deep study about the three communication modality, pursuant to the Pragmatics of Human Communication by Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson.

The second part of our meetings was committed to a debate about themes that I submitted through simulated work situations played by the students. Each theoretical teaching has been verified both in the traineeship and in playing, with a level of engagement always very high for all the presents, who more times overlook the *all at home* bell for don't stop an unfinished debate.

In addition to the simulated situations, I proposed several "guided images", with a technic that might remember to the Autogenes Training of J.H. Schultz. This practice too with the aim of bring to light themes and sensations which, although being part of the daily life of nurses, have the fate to be putted aside because "it is irrational", "my colleagues would say me I'm silly", "I think about myself that I'm not enough strong", "I was thinking of be the only one to feel myself so", and more.

It's a surprise the discovery that a lot of malaises lived as individual inabilities are -instead- a common heritage, coming from the objective situation of the nurse's work: likewise comforting has been for the students to know that also staff operators, who were working from twenty -and more- years, during the upgrade workshop told to have lived the same sensations of impotence, inadequacy, of "be wrong".

Once reached this awareness level, the following step is the research and the identifying of instruments that allow a balanced sharing of the problems tied to the "know be": the arrival point is the creation of the "peers's group" as space of reciprocal listening and support, excellent instrument for the prevention of stress and burnout.

A different approach has been used with the students of the 1st year, given the perspective to follow their evolution during all the triennium, proceeding step by step with their experiences and problems in the traineeship. It's possible to stimulate growing a kind of internal maieutics, in which (in the mostly of the first year) I not try to saying to the students what they must looking for and where.

Rather, the way is to bring at surface an attitude to reciprocal listening during the operator/patient and operator/operator interactions, working during the lessons whether about the verbalisations and about the more elemental kind of communication (including the physical contact) giving to each the time and the space to decide not only how and when to express anxiety or doubt, but also when propose solutions and how support the birth of the peers's group as referential space.

I'm realizing of how this description could appear vaguer than that of the previous path, but I believe essential to guide the students in a pre-didactics phase (which coinciding with the observing traineeship time), like to the children of the maternal schools it teach pre-reading and pre-writting, in which the practice has the preeminence on the theory, although without erase it, of course.

The themes of study are the same in both paths, but while in the first case the 40 hours were a kind of vademecum for people that anyway, have already builded their idea about the nurse's professional life and is going to sailing in open sea, into second we have a bigger chance to work about the birth and growth of the group in a more protected and gradual situation, fueling the reciprocal trust mood, without yet lessen the importance of the many aches and problems which the nursing profession includes.

It's a plan which allowed to the students a take of possession of the debate space done without any scare of burn themselves caused by an excess of frankness, showing all their emotional heritage, their longing of be active players in their own training, with behaviors alike to those of their colleagues by 3rd year.

A special thank to: Antonella Padovani (Director), Lucia Bertozzi and Claudia Visani (3rd year coordinators), Viviana Pelliconi and Ivana Nanni (1st year coordinators), Licia Vasta (psychopedagogist). Thank you, for have been my travel mates.

Dr. Antonella Padovani, Imola Nursing School director:

The evaluation

Which results have been reached?

For us, teachers and didactical staff of the School, it has been an exciting experience.

At last an help for our anxieties, a point of reference for the management of the class group, a, involvement of all for the wellness of all.

For the 3rd year group class it represents the experience of the peers's group that can support each one to defend its own role, own professionalism, and to go over the frustration given from the fight between ideal and real in the socialisation of the work.

The evaluation of the students have been extremely positive, under the points of view interest, involve, usefulness: *"lessons usefull to improve the work", "Downplay...", "Play acting...", "Debating together...", "It needs more hours...", "It's a pity this lessons so late, at last somebody help us, and with him we try what can be our behavior with a terminal ill"*.

Thank you... and good wishes for the work with the next class groups.

The students of 1st year began recently this path, but the communication workshop in their evaluations is currently *"excellent as outburst chance", "liberating space", "expression of our own troubles in a protected space", "learning from the class mates", "opportunity of dialogue"*.

So, from this year we can say to have a new and "special" trainer more, and to have planned -together the students - training paths in a positive group mood and reassuring.

And this enterprise is only at the begin.