Shaping conditions for recovery:
a narrative on a homeless man with severe mental illness
in a modern welfare state

Coline van Everdingen MD[1], Peter Bob Peerenboom PhD[2], Harry Gras nurse[3], Philippe Delespaul PhD[1,4]

[1] Department of Psychiatry and Neuropsychology, Maastricht University, Maastricht, The Netherlands

[2] Tangram Health Care consultancy, Doetinchem, The Netherlands

[3] Harry Gras Health Care consultancy, Montfoort, The Netherlands

[4] Department of Adult Psychiatry, Mondriaan Mental Health Trust, Heerlen, the Netherlands

Correspondence: Coline van Everdingen

coline.vaneverdingen@maastrichtuniversity.nl

+31 6 57358976

Abstract

The shaping of conditions to enable recovery at the intersection of severe mental illness and homelessness remains challenging. Therefore, the local public health services in a city were enriched with a specialized team (S-team). An ethnographic policy evaluation was conducted to identify the essentials. This paper uses the narrative of a homeless man who experiences psychoses for an in-depth analysis. The voices uncover the power dynamics in careseeker – caregiver interactions. The results expose the 'what' and 'how' of the S-team's approach, showing how the approach resulted in dynamic collaborative networks. System skills allowed to develop robust, integrative strategies and shape conditions for recovery. The results were evaluated in the light of human rights and show how metaphors can contribute to network learning. In all, this in-depth analysis illustrates how 'golden socio-ecological system rules' can contribute to transformative change and promote recovery in marginalized populations with interdependent needs.

Keywords: severe mental illness, homelessness, narrative, human rights, transformative change, socio-ecological system approach, recovery