# Specialist Module with Workshop: the Psychologist in Mental Health Services

## Prof. Giovanni De Girolamo

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

Knowledge and understanding

The course aims to provide theoretical and practical elements related to the theoretical and clinical collaborative pathways between clinical psychology and psychiatry. Italian psychiatry has, in fact, undergone a radical reorganisation in the last 30 years, which has seen the closure of Psychiatric Hospitals and the creation of a Mental Health Department (DSM) network that manages the entire scope of psychiatric care through a network of Mental Health Centres, hospital-based Psychiatric Diagnosis and Treatment Services, and Residential Facilities for patients requiring long-term care. Next to these facilities, there are also Residences for the Execution of Security Measures (REMS), intended for the treatment of offender patients, and Services for Addiction (SerD), the latter in many Regions integrated within the DMH (Department of Mental Health).

More specifically, the course will describe and critically discuss the organisation of mental health services in Italy and the treatment models used, particularly for the assessment and treatment of people with serious mental disorders It will also explore the current understanding of major, serious mental disorders (the spectrum of schizophrenia disorders, bipolar disorders, unipolar depressions, personality disorders, alcohol and/or substance abuse).The main methods of psychotherapeutic and psychoeducational treatment for these disorders will be discussed.

A guided tour will also be organised at a Department of Mental Health in order to meet Psychologist Managers and Medical Managers and allow Workshop students to discuss the role, tasks and functions of Psychologist Managers within the National Health Service.

Ability to apply knowledge and understanding

At the end of the course, students will be able to describe the organisation of a DSM and the various operating units that compose it, such as Mental Health Centres, Psychiatric Hospital Services for Diagnosis and Care, residential facilities, Childhood and Adolescent Neuropsychiatry Operating Units and Addiction Services (SerD). Furthermore, they will be able to appreciate the relevance of the functions and roles performed by Psychological Directors in mental health services, and to understand the skills needed to fill these roles in the mental health services dedicated to treating people (adults, children or adolescents) with severe mental disorders or substance abuse disorders.

***COURSE CONTENT***

1. Module 1

Unit 1

* A brief history of Italian psychiatry
* Asylums and the treatment of the insane: the law of 1904
* Brief history of psychiatric "treatments"
* Law 180 and the network of Mental Health Departments

Unit 2. Keynotes onpsychiatric epidemiology.

- Prevalence of schizophrenia

- Prevalence of affective disorders

- Prevalence of personality disorders

1. Module 2

Unit 1. Mental health services in 2023

* Community assistance: the Mental Health Centres
* The treatment of acute cases: hospital-based Psychiatric Diagnosis and Treatment Services
* Patients requiring long-term care: the Residential Structures
* Strong and weak points of the system

Unit 2. Treatment of offender patients with mental disorders

– The closure of Judicial Psychiatric Hospitals and the new facilities for patients who've committed a crime (REMS).

Unit 3. Treatment of patients with substance or alcohol abuse disorders

- Extent and features of substance or alcohol abuse disorders and characteristics of treatment settings in Italy.

1. Module 3

Unit 1. Mental disorders from an integrated perspective

* The spectrum of schizophrenia disorders
* *Positive symptoms*
* *Negative symptoms*
* *Course and outcome*
* Bipolar disorders
* Unipolar depressions
* Personality disorders
* Substance abuse disorders.
* When do mental disorders arise?

4. Module 4

Unit 1. Common clinical issues in psychiatry and clinical psychology

– Risk of violence and mental disorders: what is the evidence?

– Suicide

– Violence against women and mental disorders.

– How to support and help the children of people with severe mental illness.

***READING LIST***

G. de Girolamo, P. McGorry & N. Sartorius (eds) (2019*). The age of onset of mental disorders. Clinical and ethiopathogenetic implications*. Cham: Springer International.

de Girolamo, G. Picardi, A., Santone, G., Falloon, I., Morosini, P., Fioritti, A., Micciolo, R. for the PROGRES Group (2005). The severely mentally ill in residential facilities: a national survey in Italy. *Psychological Medicine* 34, 1-11.

de Girolamo, G., Barbato, A., Bracco, R., Gaddini, A., Miglio, R., Morosini, P., Norcio, B., Picardi, A., Rossi, E., Rucci, P., Santone, G., & Dell’Acqua, G. (2007). The characteristics and activities of acute psychiatric inpatient facilities: A national survey in Italy. *British Journal of Psychiatry* 191, 170-177.

Jervis, G. (1991), Glossario. In: *Manuale critico di psichiatria*, pp. 230-344. Milano: Feltrinelli.

van Os J, Kenis G, Rutten BP. The environment and schizophrenia. *Nature*. 2010 Nov 11;468(7321):203-12.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course envisages twenty-five hours of work, comprising theoretical explanations, group discussions and practical activities, including a guided visit to a Department of Mental Health, during which students will meet Psychologist Managers and Medical Managers (and possibly other staff) to discuss what a psychologist actually does within a mental health service. A research project will be developed that will serve as a model for a graduate degree thesis.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students' learning outcomes will be assessed on the basis of the written projects they have prepared, covering some of the topics presented and discussed during the workshop; in particular, students will be required to report back on their impressions of the visits to mental health services and meetings with Psychologists and Doctors and to highlight the issues that appeared most relevant to their professional future in the field of clinical psychology. These projects will be accorded a score from 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum) as an assessment of students' ability to understand, analyse and summarise.

A brief multiple choice test will also be devised in order to further assess students' knowledge; a score of at least 80% will be considered satisfactory in each case. To those students who score a lower percentage, additional reading will be proposed.

There is one final mark which is expressed as either PASSED or FAILED.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for attending the course. However, students will be required to show intellectual interest and curiosity for the assessment and treatment of serious mental disorders within public settings, namely mental health services (Mental Health Departments, SPDs, etc).

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.