ABSTRACT

ONTOLOGY CONTROL OF WOMEN IN MENTAL HEALTH LAND: A COLLABORATIVE EXPLORATORY STUDY

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This presentation is based on a qualitative research project looking at everyday life for women with mental health problems. The first phase of this study explored what women think about and what they do, and included their fears and worries, as well as their reflections on what helps. A total of 36 women were involved in this first phase, and information was gathered using informal, semi-structured interviews in a variety of informal settings, usually including the women’s homes. All of the women were interviewed at least two times, and 10 of them were also visited during a stay in a mental health hospital. The second part of the study involved follow-up focus-groups, organised around the following themes: violence and abuse, family-life, worries about what is real, and recovery strategies. Several of the women were involved as co-researchers during the research process, including design, information gathering, analysis, as well as dissemination of findings and follow-up action plans. The central findings from this study will be presented, and discussed from a gender perspective. It is argued that people (especially women) with mental health problems are largely disabled by society, and that within the culture of ‘mental health land’, issues of gender and reality-control deserve closer scrutiny.