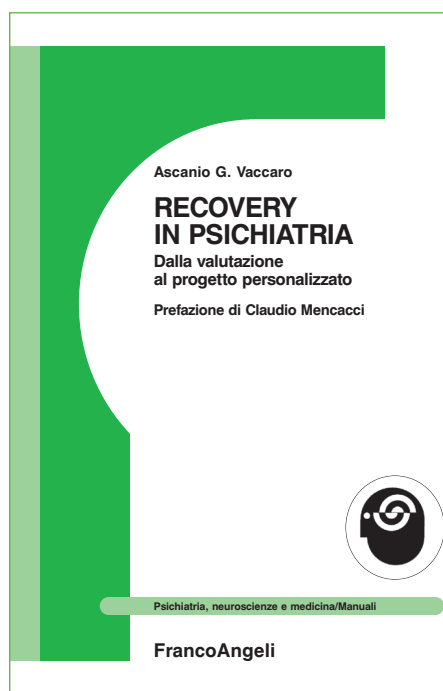




## Book Review

### Recovery in psichiatria



*Recovery in psichiatria* (Recovery in Psychiatry) is a 2020 book by Ascanio G. Vaccaro. It is the result of a 35-year long theoretical and practical experience, having its origin in the 1978 Basaglia Law. Since then, in fact, the fundamental concept that took hold in Italian psychiatric care was that the mentally ill need to be taken care of, instead of being interned or institutionalized for life: hope took the place of hopelessness. The old psychiatric institutions not only did not care for or care about the patients, but they aggravated the mental diseases and made them chronic.

In recent years, the objective has become the full functional recovery of the patient. What such care consisted – and still consists – in, are psychopharmacological interventions, psychotherapy and, above all, psychosocial rehabilitation. The book's natural outlook on these practices is of cognitive-behavioral nurture, privileging transparent, reproducible, and thus exportable, techniques and procedures: what is commonly known as the evidence-based approach. This naturally needs to be distinguished from pseudo-therapies such as generic recreative and/or occupational activities, which were already in use in asylums: painting with colors is not, in and of itself, chromotherapy, listening to music is not enough to speak of music therapy, and so on.

The main targets this procedure focuses on are patients affected by chronic psychosis and, in particular, by schizophrenia: the bulk of the study consists in a clear description of what should be done, who should do what, and with which procedures and codifications, in prospect of full recovery for the patient. Such procedures, over the course of the 35-year long practice, have returned encouraging results and proof of effectiveness, both under a naturalistic profile and under one of scientific validity, in cases of *prima facie* far apart diseases, such as autism, intellectual disability, multiple personality disorders, bipolar disorders and schizophrenia.

For this purpose, it is stressed as greatly important to make a fundamental switch in the carer's epistemological approach: from linear causality (a direct cause, for a direct effect) to a multifactorial, multimodal explanation. In other terms, there is no such thing as the cause of schizophrenia, the cause of autism, or of personality disorders. There exist a set of risk factors that contribute to the determination of the disease, which have an impact on vulnerabilities concerning the patient's genetics, epigenetics, biology, psychology and environment. Because of this, the first part of the study examines the multimodal model, whereas the second describes in detail the appropriate protocols of habilitative and rehabilitative intervention.

In order to attain full functional recovery, then, the team needs to follow a multifactorial model, and to be multidisciplinary in nature: the different professionals integrate each other's work, but don't overstep their field of competence. Parent training courses are seen as noteworthy in this process as well: a number of meta-analyses of international relevance have shown them to be effective in reducing up to 70% of hospitalizations and of acute severe crises; it is thus suggested that this procedure is quintessential to the possibility of social reintegration of the patient.

The book is primarily addressed at psychiatrists and, even more so, at

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medical directors of psychiatric rehabilitation centers: it displays a full program of psychosocial rehabilitation, which will necessarily need adjusting according to the specific conditions of the facility and to the available resources, including the different professional roles. If the reader is looking for a clear, evidence-based program for the arrangement of properly rehabilitative group activities, up until the attainment of full functional recovery, they will find what they need to start from scratch or to bootstrap programs that are already ongoing in a rehabilitation center aimed at the social reintegration of individuals with serious disabilities.

That said, the book was not exclusively written for psychiatrists and rehabilitation center managers, but also for general practitioners, psychotherapists, psychologists, nurses, social workers and especially educators; finally, it will also speak to the layperson who wants to accustom themselves with unusual, but highly significant, matters.

Ascanio G. Vaccaro

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