

Nurse's Professional Space: Psychiatric Outpatient Clinic of Ottawa's Montfort Hospital 1976-2002

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Abstract : After the Great Depression, the number of admissions to psychiatric facilities saw a significant increase. This increase, coupled with the arrival of new antipsychotic drugs, prepared the ground to the psychiatric deinstitutionalization movement in North America. Community services became an essential part of care where the role of the nurse also became crucial in the management of patients. Looking through the archives of the Department of Psychiatry at the Ottawa Montfort Hospital, this project aims to assess the role of the nurse in a multidisciplinary team in a period of psychiatric deinstitutionalization. This research focuses on the different roles of the mental health nurse during the second half of the twentieth century. The case study, used as a methodological approach allows in-depth analysis of the journey of a female patient with long hospital course. The analysis of the document 'psychiatric evaluation' on the medical records of outpatient Montfort Hospital – where, on a regular basis, different health professionals of the multidisciplinary team write their notes – allow us to better understand the difficulties of the patient, their problems, their family and work relationships and the evolution of their self-esteem, but most importantly, it allows us to identify the importance of the different nurse's roles in the team and in the mental health setting. This project therefore reveals that the nurse occupies a larger professional space than the other professionals in the multidisciplinary team and highlights the role of mental health nurses with patients and their families and their leadership role within a multidisciplinary team.

Keywords : mental health, nursing, deinstitutionalization, professional space

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