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The CETRAM Community, a Chilean occupational therapy experience towards a social change

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Introduction: present the experience of CETRAM, a non-government organization located in Chile, South America that has dealt with the health-disease concept going beyond a conventional bio-medical approach in persons with neurological disease (movement disorders), and that presently has a social and community experience.

Objectives: identify the contribution of the vision of Occupational therapy as a tool for change, favouring the creation of awareness in this problem, focussing not so much on the disease itself, but on the social conditions that produce the problem, and - consequently - presenting the strategies necessary to produce changes in local practices.

Description: CETRAM, [Centre for Movement Disorders], was jointly created in 2001 by health professionals and groups of users to find treatment and rehabilitation for people suffering from Parkinson's Disease and Dystonia.

We are a group of actors from different areas, disabled people, relatives, friends, health professionals, artists, and an increasing network of organizations that believe in a different social-health proposal, based on the search for well-being, not only through the absence of illness and disease, but also through the right to have a good quality life, to be recognized as a person that is part of society and the struggle against inequality which entails lack of opportunities, poverty and discrimination.

Results: we present the way in which the reductionistic vision of health prevalent in traditional practices is overcome, and how occupational therapy - as from a social and community perspective - has facilitated this change, expressed in the use of four intervention methodologies: Traditional medical care is modified in the direction of so-called "Joint Care" which includes elements of a socio-historical perspective of OT; other tools for change are "Situational Approach" and "Community Leaders". The practice of intervention is centred on the person, his/her real context, using CBR strategies conducted by a trans-disciplinary group. These interventions lead to a practice / policy of vindicating their rights, which is the mission of "Colectivo Habilitar".

Conclusion: The expected goal is social change, "a movement of permanent re-creation of collective existence". "The freedom of being in difference" and occupational therapist like guide of process.