

# BEYOND THE WALLS: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

*CUIDAR FORA DOS MUROS: ATIVIDADES FÍSICAS E REINTEGRAÇÃO SOCIAL*

*CUIDADO FUERA DE LOS MUROS: ACTIVIDAD FÍSICA Y REINTEGRACIÓN SOCIAL*

✉ José Antônio da Silva Ferreira Junior<sup>1</sup> e ✉ Mauren Assis Souza<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study aimed to describe the strengthening of the deinstitutionalization of collective mental health care through Physical Education interventions at the Psychosocial Care Centers in Uruguaiiana (southern Brazil). **Methods:** Throughout public spaces (e.g., squares and parks), body practices were employed as therapeutic strategies from March 2022 to February 2023, within the context of the Integrated Residency Program in Collective Mental Health at the Federal University of Pampa. These actions were intended to promote users' social inclusion and disrupt the institutionalized logic of care. **Results:** The interventions created new meanings for care in freedom, consistent with the principles of the Psychosocial Care Network and the anti-asylum model, thereby contributing to the strengthening of social bonds, community belonging, and the confrontation of social stigma. **Conclusions:** This experience underscores the role of Physical Education in promoting collective mental health and expanding community-based care strategies beyond institutional confines.

**Keywords:** *Mental Health Services; Body Practices; Mental Health.*

## RESUMO

**Objetivo:** Descrever o fortalecimento da desinstitucionalização do cuidado em saúde mental coletiva gerado por intervenções de Educação Física nos Centros de Atenção Psicossocial de Uruguaiiana/RS. **Métodos:** Foram realizadas práticas corporais como estratégias terapêuticas em espaços públicos, como praças e parques, no período de março de 2022 a fevereiro de 2023, no contexto da Residência Integrada em Saúde Mental Coletiva da Universidade Federal do Pampa, visando promover a inserção social dos usuários e romper com a lógica institucionalizada do cuidado. **Resultados:** As intervenções favoreceram a construção de novos sentidos para o cuidado em liberdade, alinhando-se às diretrizes da Rede de Atenção Psicossocial e ao modelo antimanicomial, de modo a possibilitar o fortalecimento de vínculos, o pertencimento comunitário e o enfrentamento de estigmas sociais. **Conclusões:** A experiência destaca o papel da Educação Física na promoção da saúde mental coletiva e na ampliação das estratégias de cuidado extramuros. **Descritores:** *Serviços de Saúde Mental; Práticas Corporais; Saúde Mental.*

## RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** Describir el fortalecimiento de la desinstitucionalización del cuidado en salud mental colectiva generado por intervenciones de Educación Física en los Centros de Atención Psicossocial de Uruguaiiana/RS. **Métodos:** Se realizaron prácticas corporales como estrategias terapêuticas en espacios públicos, como plazas y parques, entre marzo de 2022 y febrero de 2023, en el contexto de la Residencia Integrada en Salud Mental Colectiva de la Universidad Federal de Pampa, con el objetivo de promover la inclusión social de los usuarios y romper con la lógica institucionalizada del cuidado. **Resultados:** Las intervenciones favorecieron la construcción de nuevos significados para el cuidado en libertad, en consonancia con las directrices de la Red de Atención Psicossocial y con el modelo antimanicomial, posibilitando el fortalecimiento de vínculos, el sentido de pertenencia comunitaria y el enfrentamiento de los estigmas sociales. **Conclusiones:** La experiencia resalta el papel de la Educación Física en la promoción de la salud mental colectiva y en la ampliación de las estrategias de cuidado extramuros.

**Descritores:** *Servicios de Salud Mental; Prácticas Corporales; Salud Mental.*

1 Universidade Federal do Pampa - Campus Uruguaiiana - Programa de Residência Integrada Multiprofissional em Saúde Mental Coletiva. Uruguaiiana/RS - Brasil.

2 Universidade Federal do Pampa - Campus Uruguaiiana - Programa de Pós-Graduação Multicêntrico em Ciências Fisiológicas. Uruguaiiana/RS - Brasil.

## INTRODUCTION

The Brazilian Psychiatric Reform marks a significant milestone in the transformation of mental health care, tied to the country's redemocratization process and social struggles for dignity and citizenship, especially for those historically marginalized by the asylum model<sup>1</sup>. Based on Law No. 10.216/2001<sup>2</sup> and complementary measures, a new model of care has been consolidated, focused on care in freedom, psychosocial rehabilitation, and the guarantee of human rights.

In this context, the creation of the Psychosocial Care Network reaffirms the commitment to territorialized, interdisciplinary, and user-centered care<sup>3</sup>, with the Psychosocial Care Centers (CAPS) serving as the main point of reference. CAPS are structured as alternatives to psychiatric hospitals and prioritize practices of care in freedom, strengthening the connection with the territory and the users' social network<sup>4</sup>.

Extramural care, understood as therapeutic practices undertaken outside institutional physical spaces, emerges as a fundamental strategy to combat stigma, promote citizenship, and strengthen community belonging<sup>5</sup>. In this context, the Physical Education professional, supported by Resolution No. 230/2012 of the Federal Council of Physical Education, operates in a multidisciplinary way in promoting mental health, particularly through physical practices that contribute to social reintegration and user empowerment.

Research has shown that regular physical exercise positively impacts mental health, effectively reducing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress, as well as treating severe psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder<sup>6</sup>. In this context, the role of Physical Education in CAPS contributes not only to physiological aspects but also to building new meanings for care in freedom.

Despite evidence of the benefits of physical practices on mental health, there is a scarcity of studies specifically exploring the role of Physical Education in the extramural context, particularly the practices developed in CAPS. This gap highlights the need to share experiences that enhance understanding of the role of Physical Education in promoting collective mental health and strengthening care in freedom.

This work aims to describe the strengthening of deinstitutionalization of collective mental health care generated by Physical Education interventions in the Psychosocial Care Centers of Uruguaiiana (Rio Grande do Sul State). Specifically, it sought to highlight the approach of extramural care in CAPS through therapeutic Physical Education interventions and reaffirm the process of deinstitutionalization of care through access to social and community leisure spaces.

## METHODS

This is a descriptive report based on the experience of a resident physical education professional affiliated with the Multiprofessional Residency Program in Collective Mental Health at the Federal University of Pampa, located in the municipality of Uruguaiiana/RS. Activities were conducted from March 2022 to February 2023 at CAPS II "Asas da Liberdade" and CAPS AD "Recomeçar."

Interventions were held weekly during morning and afternoon shifts, involving therapeutic workshops, groups, and health education spaces. The activities had an

average duration of 90 minutes and covered bodily practices, sports, leisure, and culture. The selection and participation of users were linked to the Singular Therapeutic Project. Approximately 35 individuals actively participated, including 21 men and 14 women, of various ages. It is worth noting that adherence to the interventions could not be precisely quantified, given the vulnerability of the participants and the voluntary nature of the offered activities. Participants were being monitored for various disorders, with the most common being ICD F10-F19, F20, F31, F32.

Records of activities included descriptive evolution in the clinical records of users, as well as in preceptorship meetings and case discussions within the multidisciplinary team and in a training academic space. Subsequent data analysis considered these records.

## RESULTS

The interventions prioritized collective activities in public spaces such as plazas, parks, sports courts, and cultural spaces, aiming to overcome the inadequacy of suitable physical spaces at the CAPS, whose infrastructure is oriented towards the outpatient care model (individual consultation rooms). The practices carried out included futsal, basketball, gymnastics, dance, yoga, guided walking, and functional circuits. The work was supported by other residence professionals and the CAPS team. Accordingly, approximately five activities per week were conducted during the 12 months of immersion in these spaces, totaling about 200 collective attendances recorded in the physical records of each research participant.

Significant user adherence was observed, accompanied by positive feedback on motivation, motor repertoire, and disposition for the activities. Similar results were identified in a study that highlighted the effects of physical exercise on mood, sleep, and well-being in individuals with generalized anxiety disorder<sup>7</sup>.

The use of extramural spaces enabled participants to critically and reflectively occupy these locations, questioning the relationship between spaces and their attributed meanings. Studies have shown that activities within the territory are essential to break from the institutionalized model and promote care in freedom<sup>8-10</sup>.

Therefore, the professional practice described here tends to reaffirm the principles of Psychiatric Reform and the Psychosocial Care Network<sup>2,3</sup> by integrating Physical Education into psychosocial care, contributing to deinstitutionalization and strengthening ties with the territory.

Among various significant experiences throughout the process, one deserves attention. During an activity at Parque Dom Pedro II with CAPS II users, an exchange emerged that brought up a sensitive issue: the occupation of public spaces outside the institutional context. In the midst of the conversation, one of the participants casually commented, “Professor, we only come here when we are with the CAPS.” This simple yet powerful statement opened a space for collective reflection on the right to the city and the use of these spaces beyond the service’s walls. Questions like “Why don’t you come here on weekends?” and “What if you came to walk, play ball, or just have a chimarrão?” were posed to the group, not to obtain ready-made answers, but to provoke thought, stimulate autonomy, and strengthen the sense of belonging.

This moment of listening and dialogue allows us to visualize the potential of Physical Education as a tool for care in freedom, capable of opening pathways for individuals to recognize themselves as active parts of the territory they inhabit.

## DISCUSSION

In the quest to implement care strategies that actualize the process of deinstitutionalization in mental health care settings and strengthen the principles of the Brazilian Psychiatric Reform, new approaches emerge that allow for a unique exploration of the therapeutic service process for users in substitute services<sup>10</sup>.

The use of social and public spaces as therapeutic artifacts in mental health has been explored in works like that of Fonseca and Galassi<sup>8</sup>, where forms of occupation and belonging are problematized, generating a process of claiming citizenship by the users of CAPS. In this regard, our study supports this narrative regarding what it truly means to deinstitutionalize care, what it means to care in freedom and for freedom. Caring in freedom, or caring outside the walls, is only truly possible as we allow CAPS users social protagonism in public spaces, so they may occupy these spaces and feel a sense of belonging to society.

Linked to this, Furtado et al.<sup>9</sup> assertively address the social relationships constructed between users and the spaces outside CAPS, the social stigmas and cultural and historically assigned imaginations to service users, and the impact this social configuration has on how these users identify themselves in society and, consequently, in their right to exercise citizenship.

Correspondingly, the interventions from Physical Education shared here echo essential reflections regarding out-of-institution care and its contributions to the psychosocial care of these individuals. Furthermore, the approach utilized is promising in health attention within CAPS, as it is understood that mental health care is constructed beyond institutional and conventional service settings, such as medical offices, and begins to explore external spaces and possibilities.

In addition, such practices reaffirm a commitment not only therapeutic but also political with care in freedom, confronting stigma and reinforcing citizenship. It is important that actions like these continue to be strengthened in the daily routine of services and incorporated more broadly into local policies, ensuring their continuity and expanding their impact on the lives of the people served.

## CONCLUSIONS

Our study highlights the importance of out-of-institution activities in collective mental health care and promotes the perpetuation of non-asylum therapeutic interventions integrated with medical and multidisciplinary assistance in the Psychosocial Care Centers. Furthermore, the scarcity of regional scientific materials for the theoretical-methodological scope and the inconsistency of users in CAPS are limiting factors in constructing the results.

Additionally, the fluctuating adherence of subjects to the Singular Therapeutic Project, the vulnerabilities of users in treatment, the insufficiency of materials and

spaces, and the lack of encouraging local policies are factors that influence the findings presented here.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank the Ministry of Education and Culture for the scholarship granted to the first author.

## REFERENCES

1. Tenório F. A reforma psiquiátrica brasileira, da década de 1980 aos dias atuais: história e conceitos. *Hist Ciênc Saúde Manguinhos*. 2002;9(1):25–59. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-59702002000100003>
2. Brasil. Lei nº 10.216, de 6 de abril de 2001. Dispõe sobre a proteção e os direitos das pessoas portadoras de transtornos mentais e redireciona o modelo assistencial em saúde mental. Brasília: Senado Federal; 2001. Disponível em: [https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/leis/leis\\_2001/l10216.htm](https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/leis_2001/l10216.htm)
3. Brasil. Portaria nº 3.088, de 23 de dezembro de 2011. Institui a Rede de Atenção Psicossocial no âmbito do SUS. *Diário Oficial da União*. 2011 dez 23. Disponível em: [https://bvsm.s.saude.gov.br/bvs/saudelegis/gm/2011/prt3088\\_23\\_12\\_2011\\_rep.html](https://bvsm.s.saude.gov.br/bvs/saudelegis/gm/2011/prt3088_23_12_2011_rep.html)
4. Leal BM, Antoni C. Os Centros de Atenção Psicossocial (CAPS): estruturação, interdisciplinaridade e intersetorialidade. *Rev Aletheia*. 2013;(40): p.87-101. Disponível em: <http://www.periodicos.ulbra.br/index.php/aletheia/article/view/3344/2484>
5. Reubens-Leonídio, A. C.; Carvalho, T. G. P.; Santos, A. R. M. O fazer do profissional de Educação Física no Centro de Atenção Psicossocial: uma análise do cuidado a partir da Política Nacional de Humanização. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências do Esporte*, Brasília, v. 43, e009320, 2021. Disponível em: <https://www.scielo.br/j/rbce/a/8yNHq7ykb4RYg9qw6dYfLrk/?format=pdf&lang=pt>.
6. Barros MKS. Efeitos terapêuticos de um programa de atividade física em indivíduos com esquizofrenia: do comportamental ao biológico [Tese]. Santos: Universidade Federal de São Paulo; 2019. Disponível em: <https://repositorio.unifesp.br/items/5672c891-9bbd-463b-a86c-11c6f3cc4e3a>
7. Alves ALS, Castro CBL. Efeitos do exercício físico no transtorno de ansiedade generalizada. *Cadernos ESP*. 2024;18:e1533. DOI:10.54620/cadesp.v18i1.1533
8. Fonseca RMAM, Galassi AD. Práticas de cuidado extramuros nos Centros de Atenção Psicossocial Álcool e outras Drogas: a ocupação cidadã. *Interface (Botucatu)*. 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1590/interface.200369>
9. Furtado RP, Souza MF, Martinez JFN, Rabelo NS, Oliveira NSR, Simon WJ. Desinstitucionalizar o cuidado e institucionalizar parcerias: desafios dos profissionais de Educação Física dos CAPS de Goiânia em intervenções no território. *Saúde Soc*. 2017;26(1):183–95. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-12902017169101>
10. Martins AKL, Soares FDS, Oliveira FB, Souza AMA. Do ambiente manicomial aos serviços substitutivos: a evolução nas práticas em saúde mental. *Rev SANARE Rev Polít Públicas*. 2011. Disponível em: <https://sanare.emnuvens.com.br/sanare/article/view/140>