

“I Gruppi di auto-aiuto”, C. Laterza, M. Carone, O. Todarello, pubblicato sulla rivista “Medicina Psicosomatica”, volume 55-n° 4- Ottobre/Dicembre 2010.

According to the WHO, self/mutual help consists “in a series of measures adopted by non-professionals in order to promote, safeguard and recover health intended as complete physical, psychological and social welfare of a particular community”.

They are organized within “voluntary organizations usually formed by small groups of participants sharing a common aim and adopting new strategies to face situations, to express self-determination, to humanize health care and improve the patient’s health conditions”.

Besides, with regards to the WHO’s program, the objective “Health for All” means not just wide and equal distribution of medical and social services over the territory but also the need, in the future, to activate and encourage the participation of the citizens to their own health care.

The self/manual groups are based on a face-to face interaction and they are composed by members who share similar health conditions, background, uncomfortable situations, common experiences in general.

The concrete achievements of self-help very often appear to be an effective remedy against the inadequacy of other health services, acting as a complementary alternative.

Various researches conducted so far conducted in this field, seem to show the efficiency of the following self-help groups: Groups that control undesirable behaviour, Group of disabled persons or affected by chronic diseases, Groups of relatives of persons affected by serious problems and Groups of people going through a period of crisis.