

The social-ecological approach in the treatment of alcohol related problems

Dott.Cristina Giuffredi

Vladimir Hudolin's social-ecological approach considers control of alcohol related and complex problems as promotion and protection of public health, trying to improve the quality life in local communities. *The social-ecological approach oversteps illness in favor of the quality of life concept.*

This approach has a multidimensional point of view and found itself on the idea of human complexity: *every man and woman is in fact a product of a biological, psychological and spiritual complexity.* According to this, at the centre we have the person with his ecological, cultural, economical and religious connections, not only just for bring ill or problematic.

In any quantity alcohol interferes in a meaningful way in human cerebral functions. It changes many different factors such as understanding or the humor tone and most of all inducing dependence like any other psychoactive substance.

The World Health Organization (W.H.O.) clearly affirms that medical science must no promote the use of alcohol because alcohol affects cerebral functions, inducing dependence.

Although medical research deepens the knowledge of neurobiological dependence this still isn't enough to make alcohol related problems totally clear. *Alcoholics, drug-addicts and psychiatric patients cannot overcome their health problems just with a molecular analysis or neurobiological research.* Neurobiology alone isn't able to fully explain the complexity of multidimensional suffering and neither are other science or studies alone like anthropology, genetics, psychology, psychodynamics, sociology, religion, etc..

The treatment

The treatment of alcohol related problems puts the subjects into an aid relation. In which is very important that alcoholics can feel at ease in a favorable context. Within this aid relation, there must be a facilitating situation, based on empathy, authenticity and acceptance. The acceptance involves all people's feeling, but doesn't approve their negative behavior.

Acceptance is the statement of any relation and generates the change. Confidence, esteem and love are the secrets for living with other people in a correct way and to establish health promoting relationships. *Here is the meaning of health promotion: it is our biological, psychological and spiritual health, which generates and promotes itself in other people.*

In the treatment of alcohol related problems it is acceptance that generates the change, and this change generates health promotion and protection.

Now, we cannot elude the concept of individual and collective responsibility towards health and we must collocate it in a ethical frame. In the treatment of alcohol related problems the first step is alcohol abstinence. Abstinence isn't the target but the starting point to begin a change in life style. This change, which must start from ourselves, stimulates a change in the behavior of relatives, community life style and pre-existing social culture. *The change brings people from abstinence to sobriety, meant not only as the choice of not to drink alcohol but in a global sense as responsibility and co-responsibility for all people's health.*

Finally, the co-responsibility concept is like solidarity but meant as sharing the search for the best way of life for everyone.