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Recovering Voices

in mental health, families and anthropology

Rowan McCormick
2009
Recovering Voices

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Rowan McCormick
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Abstract

This essay discusses some experiences of families, carers and people with experience of mental ill-health and recovery in New Zealand, focussing on ‘recovering moments’ in social exchanges, families, mental health settings and in anthropological research. It draws comparisons between phenomenological approaches in anthropology and practices promoted in recent mental health recovery philosophy, with a particular focus on the production and exchange of particular local expertise, much of which resists academic appropriation or definition. The value, currency and relevance of these ‘recovering voices’ relates to their being privileged, validated and transmitted in ethical exchanges in a range of social settings that exemplify aspects of Marcel Mauss’ discussion of the act of giving, receiving and repaying (1980:34).
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Contents

Introduction - 5

Part One – Recovering Voices - 9

1. An Archipelago of the Mind - 9
2. Privileged Voices - 14
3. The Recovering Moment - 16
4. Voices Beyond Words - 18
5. Changing Perceptions in a Fractured System - 22
6. Maps and Plans - 26
7. Signposting Experience - 31
8. Ethical Exchanges - 54
9. Engaging Interviews - 63
10. Discussion - 72

Part Two – Local Expertise - 76

1. Recovering Voices - 76
2. Anecdotal Evidence - 82
3. The recovery Project - 87
4. Anthropology in the Middle - 90
5. Ritual Exchanges - 95
6. Discussion - 98
7. In Conclusion… - 104

Part Three – Being As Family - 105

1. Introduction - 105
2. Recovering Families - 106
3. Getting Beyond Words - 110
4. Entering Houses - 114
5. Being at Home - 118
7. Being Medicated - 137
8. The Gift - 144

Conclusion - 149

Appendix - 153

1. Information sheet - 154
2. My Year Recovering Voices - 156

Bibliography - 158