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What Counts as Knowledge in Mental Health Care?

Shaping Methodological Stances In a Live 'Reflexivity Lab'

Abstract

The dominance of quantitative paradigms in mental health care has narrowed how mental health problems are understood, often privileging standardized evidence over contextual, experiential, and interpretive knowledge. This raises epistemological questions about what counts as valid knowledge and how different forms of expertise can be integrated in practice.

The Qualitative Research Collective GGZ (KOG) brings together researchers, clinicians, and experiential experts to broaden epistemic approaches to mental health, fostering qualitative inquiry, and create spaces for epistemic dialogue between scientific, clinical, and experiential knowledge.

KOG takes reflexivity as a key entry point for rethinking the foundations of mental health research and practice. Reflexivity is well established in qualitative methodology as a cornerstone of research quality, yet its enactment often remains implicit. We argue that reflexivity is not limited to qualitative research, but essential for responsible knowledge production across paradigmatic approaches.

In this presentation, we invite the audience to engage in a 'reflexivity lab': a shared exercise to examine our own epistemic stances, their alignment with default approaches to research and practice, and their implications for clinical decision-making and care. Together, we take the lead in shaping methodological approaches that move the field forward to do justice to the fundamental clinical task.