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MEANINGS OF LIFE EXPERIENCES DURING MANIC EPISODES AS REPORTED BY OUTPATIENTS IN REMISSION IN THE SOUTHEAST BRAZIL: A CLINICAL-QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Background: Psychosocial representations about the manic episode may constitute personal difficulty factors in dealing with the disorder, to relate socially and compromise satisfactory adherence to clinical treatments. It was elected to recall the experiences of manic episode due to its social and individual stigma.

Purpose: To discuss the meanings of life experiences regarding manic episodes as reported by outpatients with bipolar affective disorder in remission.

Method: Research methodology from the Humanities employed to health settings, using clinical-qualitative method, with the technique of semi-directed interview with open-ended questions. The sample was closed by the criterion of theoretical saturation of information. Eight interviews were conducted in a university psychiatric clinic. Data were treated through the qualitative content analysis, with free-floating readings of the corpus - the set of the transcribed interviews - in order to categorization in core's discussion.

Results: Patients whom experienced manic episodes use unique adaptive mechanisms to deal with their psychosocial experiences and emotions. The highlights were the recognized strategies of bargaining, denial, rationalization and escaping when facing the experienced problems.

Conclusion: The recognition of the management of patients' experiences of mental disorder by the healthcare team can better harmonize the professional-patient relationship and develop strategies for greater adherence to the therapeutic and preventive measures for recurrence of the episodes.