

Henry V by William Shakespeare

A group of Veterans in our addiction program asked to put on a production of *Henry V* for the other homeless Veterans living at the Bath, NY Veterans Administration Medical Center Domiciliary.

These Veterans had themselves once been homeless and in residence at the Domiciliary program and have now formed an active community taking care of each other.

Playing Shakespeare has been an important part of the recovery process.

We are now in rehearsal with a production planned for the late winter/early spring 2015.

Our shared vision and purpose for this production is as follows:

Why a production of *Henry V* put on by Veterans for Veterans at the Domiciliary?

To bring hope through a new telling in the present moment of an old shared story.

What is that old repeating shared story?

The cycle of Detox to Domiciliary to Community to Detox to Domiciliary... Where is the most vulnerable part in this cycle?

The transition from the Domiciliary to the Community.

Here one has made a decision to make a life in the Community and meets obstacles to this aim.

This is where new support and a new story needs to come into play.

What is the parallel between this old story and *Henry V*?

Before *Henry V* was King he was Prince Hal and he was in the same old story.

When he became King he made the decision to go to France to reclaim his birthright.

Reclaiming France = Reclaiming a life in the Community.

But now he is in the company of his Band of Brothers and Sisters.

However, with each step towards his goal of reclaiming France, he meets push back from the French.

Push back from the French in this play comes in the form of the messenger of the Dauphin.

The Dauphin is the son of the King of France.

The Dauphin is the same age as King Henry V.

The Dauphin has only known King Henry as Prince Hal.

He has never met the changed man.

The messenger always trash-talks the King to put doubt into his mind that he isn't able to do what he has made up his mind to do.

The messenger always bears the message: "You're not the King, you're that other guy who can't do this".

In each of these situations, the King remembers himself and rallies his Band of Brothers and Sisters to take the next step.

Each time they succeed against all odds, because they act together, helping each other.

In doing so they achieve the greatest victory in English history, that of the Battle of Agincourt.

They reclaim France.

They reclaim a life in the Community as a Band of Brothers and Sisters.

Shakespeare as Medicine ®