

Skript Rampe? Reicht! Season 1, Episode 3

tier: ramp?

SR: enough!

tier: 20 minutes podcast about

SR: today it's about living and how difficult it is with various disabilities and mental illnesses.

tier: I'm simo tier and I'm currently making plans for the future.

SR: I am SchwarzRund and I'm still working on the novel, it will now be like this for a long time and I'm studying very intensively.

tier: mmm

SR: yes, today we're talking about the subject of housing, this will be episode one of two in the first season and today we want to look at the situation outside of the living spaces and then next time we'll go inside, so to say.

tier: oh yes that's a good summary

SR: yes, I hope that's explaining it reasonably. today we'll specifically look at mental illnesses and disability. we'll leave queerness a bit out today

tier: (laughs) oh dear!

SR: (laughs) oh god, oh god Monkey (dog): * barks *

tier: yes, Monkey doesn't agree

SR: contrary to the wish of the dogs, the background is that it needs to be involved in a different way and I hope that maybe we can talk about that in season two.

tier: mm, yes definitely!

SR: certainly.

tier: that's also not a small topic, that's why, regardless of disabilities, for example almost everyone in Berlin is struggling with the subject of housing.

SR: Oh, yes

tier: for everyone it's already difficult enough

SR: yes, it is actually currently difficult to find living space for everyone, even those who we usually describe as the most privileged are landing on the streets now, even though they have a good income and everything corresponds to what society wants from them, so to say (laughs). I'll quickly tell you what my relationship with the topic is: I've been quite on-off for a long time when it comes to homelessness, but haven't experienced unsheltered homelessness. some of my ex-relationships have had experiences with unsheltered homelessness, especially in adolescence. that's why I've been confronted with this topic many times. my parents have had a lot a lot of experience with unsheltered homelessness in Germany.

tier: in contrast, if I tell a little about myself, I'm very privileged, in my family the generation of my parents is very well off, but generation before them was very poor, so within my cultural context it's a bit more complicated than I'll say in normal potato (German) context, but my life's also more precarious than the generation of my parents, and I've also had several experiences with homelessness but not with unsheltered homelessness because I've been lucky in the situations where I lost housing, that me and my animals could always stay with friends.

SR: Exactly, these are two differences that we will talk about a bit. you've just heard it now, it used to be that both of us were homeless at times, that's now something that we are not going to elaborate on now, but we currently very privileged when it comes to housing, so homelessness won't really be an issue anymore. animal: yes!

SR: except for the factor of mental illness, if that arises. animal: for example, yes.

SR: I don't think I want to say anything more more about that, maybe there will be more in the second part. today it's more about the situation of generally people with mental illnesses and yes, what is the topic homelessness / unsheltered homelessness? what's a trope you've heard over and over again about Germany and homelessness? like a standard sentence that is often said?

tier: interesting question. Do you mean in Germany or what people outside of Germany say?

SR: no, more in Germany.

tier: okay. yes, that's probably a big difference. I have the feeling that the conviction here still is the typical: "it's your own fault"

SR: oh yes, oh yes, that is an important point, yes

tier: because were supposed to have a well functioning welfare state and it can't be that anyone is left behind.

SR: yes, that is exactly the trope I want to focus on in a bit. neither of us are specialists regarding this topic and that's why I have taken a bit of time to do some research and I will mainly refer to an interview with Stefanie Schreiter. she is the head of the clinic for psychiatric illnesses at the hospital Charité in Berlin, with a focus on the so-called bipolar "disorder". I don't personally know how she is, I have never met her or spoken about bipolar with her, but I found this interview very convincing. it has won a few prizes because she is a researcher and has worked on on homelessness and health and that's why her article is exciting for us today. in this article - which can also be found in the show notes - she talks very specifically about Berlin and states that over 60 percent of homeless people, that's a summary of all sheltered homeless and people who live directly on the street, over 70 percent of them have acute mental illnesses

tier: wow!

SR: and almost everyone remain without help, so almost everyone will not be treated, medicated, receive trauma treatments and so on and so on. it gets even more blatant when we look at non-acute mental illnesses, but for example mental illnesses that have occurred in the past and that's over 90 percent!

tier: okay, these are really crass numbers!

SR: that's almost every person!

tier: so everyone has been more or less in touch with mental illnesses and that has probably played a very large role in people losing their apartments.

SR: Exactly, and that's very interesting to look, how do I say that now, how we are dealing with the question of blame. because that actually relates to how we deal with the question of blame when it comes to mental illnesses! so are people to blame for their mental illness? that would be the first question & the second question would be, if we answer one with "no, people aren't to blame for their mental illness!"

tier: that would be good!

SR: are people therefore never to blame for the consequences that might arise from their mental illness? and there gets more difficult. and then question three follows: if we say that sometimes they have to take responsibility and sometimes not, the question would be: how severe is the social punishment allowed to be?

tier: I think it would be really good to separate a bit between the private and the public: what about the family, what about the friends and like that, and then actually with the welfare state, which is supposed to be there for us, it would have to then intervene. I should say unconditionally, when it comes to such a very weak group like people who are going to acute crises which makes them lose their apartments.

SR: exactly, or that they aren't able to find a new apartment because of the crisis, are struggling with the move, are not getting their bureaucracy things in order, etc. What exists for this is the approach Housing First, have you heard of that?

tier: no

SR: ok, Housing First is an approach from the USA that says: no matter what a person is struggling with: addiction, debts, mental illnesses, physical diseases, etc, that housing must always be the first thing to stabilize lives.

tier: that sounds very good! and so understandable with our experiences, because when everything is very unsafe and then you have no apartment, then everything else doesn't work, or becomes an incredible amount more difficult!

SR: exactly! and there the overlap with physical disabilities appears it's of course a bit shitty to separate the two, but living on the street is really very harmful for one's health. it's one the hardest things the body can endure, which just has to do with a social structure. if you don't have an

apartment, if you're completely without shelter, it is basically preprogrammed that you will become seriously ill. for example if you get injured and can't take care of the injury, you could get severe inflammations and severe pneumonia and so on In an interview, which I really want to recommend (we'll link it for you), it relates to hawaii, it's about that many homeless people even try to migrate to warmer countries, although they continue to be homeless there, simply because the health risks massively decrease because of the warmer temperature. so alone this cold versus warm- issue makes an incredible health hazard. Which means sometime, it's kind of this hen and egg-question, but at the latest when people end up on the street, the probability is very high that you will get a psychological crisis. which means that the risk of becoming mentally ill and thereby becoming chronically affected or disabled is higher. Meaning once again, a huge social group that would be tangible could be supported, but won't be because we are so stuck in the question of blame and in this hen and egg question.

tier: yes, yes

SR: and Housing First is a big answer to this, which then again is related to addiction, because if you can't take medication for your mental illness and are physically ill, you...

tier: ...self medicate!

SR: exactly! (laughs)

tier: and that's also a topic where everyone is very, very eager with the question of blame. we all know this scenario: if someone's homeless and an addict and is asking for money in the streets, many people in Germany are like "don't give them any money, because they'll just use it for addictive substances."

SR: another thing that has been researched in Berlin, Hamburg, and Munich I think, I will see if I can find it, take it with a pinch of salt if I can't find the source, going cold turkey on the street is one of the most dangerous things one can do! you don't have any protection from the weather, you have no shelter, you have a high risk of injury, your body will be on massive strain because of the detoxification. all of this the plus living on the street equals a very dangerous combination! but there is a problem with this Housing First-concept and that is that some mental illnesses can be quite incompatible with living with other people. I don't want to name any diagnoses now, but there are mental illnesses where an insight of one's illness isn't necessarily part to the diagnosis. that sounds a bit complicated, if you have this mental illness, you are not aware that you have it, or you're not permanently aware that you have this mental illness. it might be because of nerve damage or, or, or .. and if these illnesses come together with so-called second worlds that people build for themselves, I mean another reality, it can lead to the endangerment of other residents. and there we again arrive to a bit of a problem: because people that are actually then expelled from housing in this scenario are also mentally ill. So we then come to if we help one person with a safer situation through Housing First, which is a totally sensible approach, however another person might be put at risk. and there we'll notice again that the answer is not that simple.

tier: that's right, it's somehow an approach which would be good to start with, but once again which can't give an answer to everything.

SR: there is no flat rate approach for such a wide range of needs and that together with capitalism is very very difficult. because at the end of the day more mentally ill people end up on the street. and that's exactly what we wanted to talk about. so that was at first a little bit input, we have linked a few sources for you if you want to go further into the topic. it is very important to us to say: the question of balme is really irrelevant for now, because at the end of the day these are forms of social punishment that we've actually decided aren't suitable in the twenty-first century anymore. because food, water, and shelter are basic needs and the deprivation of these does should not constitute punishment. So that there are things like rights for termination, and so on, and so on for homeowners are in themselves actually absurd! that doesn't mean that they shouldn't be protected, it just means that they aren't good forms of protection, because of the basic needs.

tier: I find it extremely "exciting", in quotation marks, that like when you actually get away from focussing on the blame, but perhaps more on the crises that people may have. not only how the crises arise, but how such a crisis situations can be incredibly aggravated if the safe living situation

no longer exists, what effects that would have.. and I have the feeling that so little attention is paid on how socially "being different" very quickly is constructed as "these are the folks who can't handle their stuff", they end up on the street and it's not looked at why people are struggling because it is simpler, to put it bluntly, to take care of bureaucratic matters when you have a home where you can fill in forms for example. and to look at the jobcenter: if you don't have a flat, the jobcenter always needs an official address where you can receive mail and if that's not already .. really, it's not about several steps, only one step is needed and you're out! I think that's the crucial thing and if you've never been in this situation where that either had happened to you, or there's a risk that it could happen, it's so easy to detach yourself and say "okay that person hasn't managed anything at all and has let everything slide" but and no, one thing is enough.

SR: yes, and even if the person has let everything slide, then the question is again: is that the appropriate response? I think it's still like this two-part thing: on the one hand I actually think there needs to be more chances to learn how to be an adult! I think there is almost no such thing, like how to actually fill in forms in another language and how do I teach my parents that I can't care of them 24/7 anymore, because I need to secure my own living situation.

tier: or to learn bureaucratic german would be quite good thing, especially for migrated people, I think that would be necessary.

SR: exactly, and on the one hand it's this huge part where one could say okay, we need to be really intensely working on the learning part, but honestly the important part is: why does it all have to be so complicated?

tier: oh yes!

SR: so why is it all so dependent on the form? and for whom is the form accessible at all, and who must bend themselves out of shape in order to match this form, and so on, and so on. and there we're reaching more into these two other levels that we otherwise very actively address: queerness and Blackness. Because if you are Black you will be not considered in the basic understanding of "this person may live here", that is massively centered when looking for an apartment. because "what does she want here anyway?!" and why should I give her an apartment? "(sarcasm), there is actually a racism problem with the housing market. and with queerness, that's the thing if, for instance, you have to use your deadname again and again, or your construction of family simply doesn't meet the norm and doesn't fit on the forms, or your family, i.e. your family of origin, is queer and therefore may have had to endure all these systematic oppressions already and so on and on. so there are simply a lot of aspects considering to how good or bad you are with dealing with something like that.

tier: yes

SR: that's a topic that we also want to go into what we do will possibly discuss in the second, third, or seventh season, the question of physical barriers and looking for accommodation.

tier: yes!

SR: We'll definitely be looking for an expert interview or a person who wants to speak to us

tier: oh that would be great, yes because that's yet a completely different topic

SR: and that's why we want to dedicate to, as you can see it is very entangled because Housing First! (laughs) we would like to devote several follow-up episodes to this subject, in this season there will be two, and it will continue in two weeks with the next episode!

tier: yes, like SchwarzRund indicated it's about us looking more inward when it comes to housing and how we are dealing with it.

SR: exactly! we have different sources for you as mentioned earlier, I want to name one more source as an extra treat: a podcast simo introduced me to called "You're Wrong About", they have a great episode on the subject of homelessness, and they go into much more detail about this Housing First research.

tier: you can find out more about this and more on youtube, ramprecht.de, or through our individual social media accounts

SR: I'm SchwarzRund and you can find me everywhere as @schwarzrund

tier: and you will find me as a simo underscore tier, sometimes with another underscore at the end..

we are:

SR: bipolar

tier: crazy

SR: disabled

tier: autistic

SR: Black

tier: trans

SR: femme!

tier: oh yes, femme! (both laugh)

SR: queer

tier: and this podcast

SR: is it as well!