

# BAKING AS REHABILITATION

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Did you know that baking is a wonderful way to help rehabilitate people living with a mental illness? Learn more about how this project is being carried out in Italy.



# SIMONA SANTICCHIA

## COMMUNICATION AND FUND RAISING LEADER



I'm Simona Santicchia, and I have been working at the Sisters Hospitallers' Villa Rosa centre in Viterbo, Italy, since early 2021. More specifically, I am the Communication and Fundraising Leader.

Our centre, which is primarily dedicated to mental healthcare, re-launched a baking workshop last May, which makes our residents feel like stars and chefs! It's not every day you get the chance to discover the secrets to the art of baking!

Alongside the workshop's Leader and Pastry MasterChef Virginio Casantini, doctors, psychologists, and nurses are involved in the project and comply with the country's strict health and safety protocols.

With the aim of achieving the best psychiatric rehabilitation possible, participants make biscuits, chocolates, and pastries, and learn first-hand the basics of baking. The experience has true emotional significance and represents a form of expression for patients who bring their own feelings and precious inner worlds to the table with love and creativity.

### **A project that's good for the heart.**

*"We encourage a relational environment where everyone can express themselves in the best possible way. Through these small culinary works of art, residents can express their stories, emotions and dreams, as they rebuild their life day by day"* says psychiatric rehabilitation therapist and project manager, Dr Romina Saioni.

Moments of rehabilitation and free creation like these are essential to promote health and wellbeing among our patients during a period of illness and hospitalisation.

The main ingredients of this art and baking workshop are: thought, feeling, preparation, and taste. The brain and heart work together to rediscover sensory awareness.

