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CENTRUM PRO ROZVOJ PÉČE O DUŠEVNÍ ZDRAVÍ
CENTRE FOR MENTAL HEALTH CARE DEVELOPMENT

User-involvement in Education

Why - how - challenges and pitfalls

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WHY?

- Democratic principles: people are involved in education that is dealing with their situation – they have key insights
- Human Rights and Quality Rights Initiative
- Better understandings of what lived experiences of mental health issues are about
- More people should have access to academia
- Public money – Citizen Research
- Mental health knowledge & practice is dominated by professional knowledge
- Professional dominance – gives a narrow understanding and narrow evidencebase

WHY?

Bringing lived experiences into education is educating!

«*Nothing about us without us*» - learn from activism and social movements:

- Paulo Freire (1972) “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” : potentials of knowledge in social change
- Recovery – roots in activism & protests against injustice and suppression. In-depth knowledge about society, services & what works/ don’t work
- Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.
- Quality Rights Initiative and Human Rights

Who are people with lived experience

- Students and teachers
- People with experience of mental health or/and substance abuse issues
- Members of service user organisations
- Family members
- People in all ages
- Citizens

HOW?

Learnings from social work in UK - “Building user and carer involvement in social work education”

- National policy claiming that people who use services must be a part of social work education
- This will help future social workers to do a better job
- Financed through General Social Care Council in England, and Northern Ireland Social Care Council in Ireland
 - Recruiting students
 - Education planning, practice & evaluation
 - Examinations

HOW?

In Norway:

- Long traditions of involving people with lived experience & family members in teaching sessions – National guidelines and reports
- ‘Empowerment: meeting face to face creates new in-sights’. Common course for students and service users (University College of Innlandet).
- “Peer worker in mental health education”. Reflection-groups with students in clinical practice (University College Vestlandet)
- Center for Mental Health and Substance Abuse (CMHA; University of South-Eastern Norway) employed 2 persons with lived experience. Engaged in research and education).

How

Experiences from CMSA:

- Important with networking and contact with service user & family member organisations
- Invite students & teachers to share lived experiences
- Starting together in all planning
- Mutual training and evaluation
- Attend payment issues
- Give priority & time to work together

How

- Proper payment
- Talk together and clarify roles and expectations
- Mutual trust and respect between all involved, acknowledge the lived- experience contribution
- Learning opportunities: Creating opportunities to learn from each other, consider new ways to understand and new knowledge to emerge
- Offer support and training opportunities

Challenges

- Finding one's place in academia
- Acknowledging lived experiences
- Payment
- Part time and temporary work

Clarify what expertise we want in the education?

- Living with challenging issues & their consequences?
- Social challenges?
- Loneliness?
- Ways of coping – with the issues, social consequences, services?
- Insights of facilitators & barriers?
- Stigma and power structures?
- Other experiences?

Clarify what expertise we want in the education?

- a particular phenomena of suffering, pain, “symptoms”?
- a particular treatment approach like specific group-therapy, physical activity, medication, being strained, first meeting....?
- being patient/ user at a particular place?
- being user repr from an organisation?
- being peer worker in education?

Our experiences in CMSA....

- Richer education and training by sharing of experiences
- Different discussions – closer to real life situations
- Opens up for more critical questions..*Why this?*
- What is experiences about?
- More focus on change
- Challenges: financing; starting together; real collaboration
- Discussions: experience based knowledge, power, training, supervision; research policies; dissemination strategies, change...

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