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PEER2PEER

A ROUTE TO RECOVERY OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS THROUGH PEER SUPPORT TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

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CONTEXT

Mutual support based on lived experiences in the field of mental health plays an important role in recovery. However, the employment of peer support workers in mental health services is a recent development. The literature demonstrates that peer support workers can lead to a reduction in admissions among those with whom they work. Peers that are employed to provide support in services, the peer employed in the support role is generally considered to be further along their road to recovery (Davidson, 2006).

In the UK, mutual support while playing an important role in recovery also offers a recognised employment and career pathway, promoting both independence and a working future for people with mental health issues. In Italy, psychodrama and video therapy are used as methods to facilitate the integration or re-integration of people with mental illness into the workplace. Recognising the importance of both of these two innovative approaches, PEER2PEER was created to share these skills throughout our partner organizations in the UK, Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Spain, The Netherlands and Romania. Peer2Peer is a multifaceted vocational training which focuses on enabling the provision of peer support for the target group of people suffering from mental illness.

OBJECTIVES

- To establish and test an innovative model of vocational training by adapting and integrating psychodrama and video therapy sessions into peer support training methods.
- To improve accessibility to employment for people with mental illness. Peer2peer will train them to become qualified peer support workers with specific focus on developing their cognitive, social and communication skills.

ACTIONS

- To produce a set of training tools required for the implementation of a mental health peer support program. These tools will include a curriculum manual with educational methodologies and techniques, and didactic videos with practical examples.
- To carry out two piloting courses which would involve 180 people with past experiences of mental health issues to test the Peer2Peer's methodologies and curriculum in Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Spain, The Netherlands and Romania.
- To disseminate and share this innovative approach using an informative web-platforms, organising conferences and training demonstrations addressed towards professionals working in the field of mental health support.

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