



March 10th 2023 - Focus Group Empower.Ment - Leiden, Holland
15 delegates

The importance of language

Language shapes reality:

- „This is very true. The way people express themselves and when they use words as 'crazy', 'insane' is a real problem. It's stigmatizing and hard to overcome'
- On using terms "they/them" to be more inclusive in texts is heavily discussed, as a lot of the delegates feel this is 'a new stigma' from a woke perspective
- The group agrees that avoiding using the word "patient" or "client" is an improvement. Using the term "service user" is not very well liked. After a fair discussion the preference is 'expert by experience'
- There is also appreciative mindset for 'how you feel and what feelings are developed by lived experiences
- It's hard to use lighter terms and/or different terms because medication and or treatment is aligned with certain words: It's agreed that "people with mental health challenges are much more than those challenges"

What is recovery?

Different dimensions of recovery

- The definition of recovery given was liked by the group: *Recovery in mental health refers to personal recovery, which is about living beyond mental health challenges, including finding hope and meaning in life, re-establishing identity, and taking responsibility for your own journey*
- *Without hope, no recovery: It's an essential part of any journey of recovery*
- Very important that the person is allowed to make their own choices for his/her wellbeing and personal recovery
- Living through the experiences again and again helps with the healing process
- Sometimes I was lost in treatment, I did not feel I was steering my own recovery. If this is the case you still have to begin your recovery journey

have a friendly

USER EXPERIENCE

What is empowerment?

- Empowerment is a key factor for recovery
- In the group are a lot of people who want to empower themselves and others, by using their expertise of lived experiences for both for them and others.
- There was also a big discussion on how many people in recovery are actually good mentors or trainers to empower others: Living through your own experiences does not make you necessarily a good coach/trainer
- *'Choosing to work on yourself is a self-empowerment journey'*

What are mental health challenges?

- Physical health and mental health are connected!
- *'Everyone feels sad, unfortunate or really bad and the more lived experiences you have gone through, the more impact this has on your own life. It's how you deal with traumas and the right time to open up, getting the time to be left on your own devices which will lead you accept who you are and to 'be yourself': That's all you can do!'*
- *As persons going through a crisis experience I can state that approach used must be tailor made, although this is easier said than done. It all depends on the quality of support to handle a crisis in a good manner*

Snapshot Dutch Focus Group

March 10th 2023



EMPOWER.Ment
FOCUS GROUP
EMPOWER.ment Project

Second Focus group about the 103 platform content

10TH MARCH
LEIDEN, THE NETHERLANDS

HOW WE TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!

How we Talk about Mental Health matters - Part II



March 10th 2022 - Focus Group Empower.Ment - Leiden, Holland
15 delegates

How can I support?

BELIEVE
IN
YOURSELF



- As someone who lived through some experiences, I know what kind of elements on someone's recovery are necessary
- It's important to give someone structure when you support someone who has a lot of challenges
- You have to make sure the basic needs are covered when you support someone who goes through a difficult time
- Supporting someone to take care of him/herself is the starting point: Taking care of yourself is elemental, only then you can also take care of others. This is actually a message for both supporter and person with mental health challenges. When you find that balance between quality coaching and getting someone outside the comfort zone for healing purposes
- The most important boundary not to cross is keeping the trust in the relation to the one supporting you

What is inclusion?



- In the discussion there was no feedback regarding integration.
- Inclusion was defined by the Dutch group that an individual person can participate, engage and empower
- How we talk about inclusion matters. The group is not really happy about some 'inclusive language'. Inclusive language, avoids terms, phrases, or expressions complicates the approach for people with mental health challenges. It's already very difficult regarding the words used, expressing freely, without judgement, avoiding labels
- You can also include people in a non-verbal way

What are our values?



- Values and beliefs are important: Rolemodels like your father or mother or other famous heroes are shaping your own beliefs and personal mindset
- Your values make you the person you are: If you can rely on your personal values than your personal recovery path becomes more easy for you as a person.
- Rolemodels have been discussed, among others: Leonardo DiCaprio (obsessive-compulsive disorder), Lady Gaga (PTSD), Adele (postpartum depression), Miley Cyrus (depression) and Carrie Fisher (chemical imbalance), Nicki Minaj (depression), Dwayne Johnson (depression)

Personal Path of Recovery

Some quotes

- "It's been very important that I was allowed to make my own choices for my wellbeing and personal recovery"
- "It all began with understanding bits and pieces of my own journey, feeling comfortable telling other people about the path I was walking, to be able to be honest about my difficulties and challenges without always looking for the ultimate answers"
- "Honesty about your own problems, issues and expectations helps to walk your own path"
- My personal path in an ongoing journey: I will always be recovering, but that's fine when you embrace your lows, because you know the highs are there too"



Am I safe around a person with mental health challenges difficulties?

What is mental health?

A couple of definitions are given for mental health challenges:

- Lived experiences that impacts your self-care
- Negative experiences which impact you as a person
- It's clear that mental health and physical health are closely connected:

There is a lot of discussion in the group that it's hard to have a say about the approach and medication regarding mental health challenges, although all participants say they don't feel just a subject

The group finds it hard to understand that people with severe mental health challenges are usually treated with medicine. Some sort of "therapy" must be always considered first

There is some worry about stigma that people with mental health challenges are usually aggressive and unreliable in their behaviour. Extra explanation should help battling this stigma

