

Course description

Name of the course: Experts by experience and peer support in the human services

Instructor: Katalin Gyöngyösi

Aims:

The course provides students an opportunity to explore the possible uses of experiential knowledge (knowledge stemming from lived experience) in the human services, especially in the social and health services. Students will acquire a core theoretical understanding of the topic and get familiar with concrete examples, through hearing and reading about documented practices, and, in the first place, by meeting Hungarian experts by experience, peer support workers and other professionals cooperating with them at field visits. Another, indirect goal of the course is to give insight into several fields serving – eventually the same- adult clients, support students' preparation for cooperation and teamwork within and across services/professions, thereby shaping their developing professional identity.

Learning outcomes and competences:

Participants of the course...

Knowledge:

- are aware of the interpretations and fields of application of experiential knowledge.
- understand various forms and modalities of expertise by experience/peer support in the human services.
- can describe cases (good or promising practices) of expertise by experience/peer support.

Skills:

- analyse the potential and the challenges of the involvement of experts by experience/peer support workers in their own field and (future) professional work.
- run meaningful professional discussions with experts by experience and potentially cooperate with them on a joint task (project)
- are able to compare and contrast the operation and specificities of their own field with others and identify common objectives and opportunities for cooperation.

Attitude:

- recognize and respect the added value of experiential knowledge in the human services.
- be reflective of the characteristics and boundaries of their own professional knowledge acquired through education.

Autonomy and responsibility:

- cooperate with experts by experience and professionals from other fields as partners.
- are able to acknowledge the power aspects of their (future) professional role and take responsibility for handling them.

The content of the course:

Topics:

- Experiential knowledge as a resource: definitions, related concepts (e.g., peer support, expertise by experience, recovery, co-production)
- Selected fields of application, in international and Hungarian context: addiction, mental health, disability/rehabilitation/Independent Living, homelessness/poverty
- Experts by experience, peer support workers in the human services: profiles, tasks, training, work modalities

- Cooperation and teamwork with experts by experience, peer support workers
- Good/promising practices, examples
- Awareness-raising programmes and advocacy: case studies, methodological aspects

Teaching and learning methods:

- Introductory presentations by the instructor (theoretical background, international and national context), short presentations by students based on selected group readings and relevant practices, preferably from their countries/regions, followed by class discussion.
- Viewing and analysis of videos on experts by experience
- Short field visits to Hungarian organizations providing peer support or other programmes involving experts by experience (in Budapest)
- Meetings and structured discussions with experts by experience from various fields (addiction/mental health, disability/independent living, homelessness/poverty), in class / during field visits

System of evaluation:

Active participation in in-class discussions and field visits, a minimum of 1 short oral presentation in class (individually or in pair/group), individual reflection notes prepared after field visits, written assignment or project work possibly in cooperation with experts by experience.

Relevant literature:

1. Barker, S. L., Maguire, N., Bishop, F. L., & Stopa, L. (2018). Peer support critical elements and experiences in supporting the homeless: A qualitative study. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 28(4), 213–229. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2353>
2. Fusar-Poli, P., Estradé, A., Stanghellini, G., Venables, J., Onwumere, J., Messas, G., Gilardi, L., Nelson, B., Patel, V., Bonoldi, I., Aragona, M., Cabrera, A., Rico, J., Hoque, A., Otaiku, J., Hunter, N., Tamellini, M.G., Maschião, L.F., Puchivailo, M.C., Piedade, V.L., Kéri, P., Kpodo, L., Sunkel, C., Bao, J., Shiers, D., Kuipers, E., Arango, C., & Maj, M. (2022). The lived experience of psychosis: a bottom-up review co-written by experts by experience and academics. *World Psychiatry*, 21(2), 168–188. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20959>
3. Magasi, S., & Papadimitriou, C. (2021). Peer Support Interventions in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation: A Framework to Advance the Field. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, 103(7), 222–229. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2020.09.400>.
4. Gillard, S., Fotser, R., & Sweeney, A. (2021). Experiential knowledge in mental health services, research and professional education. In McLaughlin, H., Beresford, P., Cameron, C., Casey, H., & Duffy, J. (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Service User Involvement in Human Services Research and Education* (pp. 41–53). Routledge.
5. Rác, J., Kassai, S., Pintér, J.N., Benedeczki, P., Dobó-Nagy, Zs., Horváth, Zs., & Gyarmathy, V. A. (2015). The Therapeutic Journeys of Recovering Helpers – an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 13(6), 751–757. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-015-9560-3>

Further required reading is part of every course syllabus.