

Conference: 11th ENMESH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE MÁLAGA 2015

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Abstract submission details

Number: 152/171

Title: How can Action Research qualify development of a coherent and uniform service for disengaged young adults with poor mental health across sectors?

Type: Individual presentation

Area: 1. From epidemiological research to clinical implementation

Format: POSTER

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How can Action Research qualify development of a coherent and uniform service for disengaged young adults with poor mental health across sectors?

Introduction

Focus has been on creating a good recovery-oriented and targeted treatment and support model for young adults (aged 18-30) with mental health vulnerabilities who are disengaged from educational services.

Aims

The purpose of the study was therefore to adjust and implement the

American network oriented and vocational support model called RENEW [Rehabilitation for Empowerment, Natural Supports, Education, Work] into a Regional psychiatric out-patient unit and a Municipal vocational centre in Denmark.

Methods

Action Research methodology was seen as a prominent way to involve staff from the regional and municipal settings in the process of developing a more coherent and uniform understanding of recovery for young adults with mental health vulnerabilities. The staff was invited to take part in a shared process of knowledge production about how to establish the best possible service for the target group, in order to involve and commit them under and after the research project took place. Through an Action Research approach staff members participated in intersectional dialogue meetings as well as observations of the work with RENEW and focus groups with young adults. By discussing the observations and the outcome of the focus groups in the dialogue meetings, staff reflected on the methodology and their own professional approaches, and made necessary adjustments to the model; e.g. a Group Therapy Module has been added to the original RENEW model.

Results

By using Action Research methodology in adjusting and implementing an American model in a Danish intersectional setting, staffs practical psychiatric and vocational knowledge about the specific target group become a valuable contribution to the adjustment of the model. Furthermore the Action Research creates an opportunity to build an intersectional learning environment with room for professional development and a wider cultural understanding of the different arenas young people with mental vulnerabilities have to engage in.

Conclusions

For the professionals involved, Action Research can help pave the way to understanding of how the target group is approached in different sectors. In that way Action Research has the potential of qualifying the development of coherent and uniform services across sectors for disengaged youth with mental health disabilities.

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