

Lifelong learning & Empowerment in Mental Health

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Lifelong Learning in a multi-family group in a psychiatric day hospital

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Start

Past

Now

**EMILIA Setting up of
Research and study group**

**Start training of users. Training packages chosen
by users and training co-taught. Results**

**Identification of need to train families or key
persons. Setting up of Multy-family group**

**1st training sesiones carried out by users for
profesionales**

**Identification of target group for
"Employers Training"**

History of Family group...patients and users

- **“Informal Care” of people with mental illness must be recognized and the difficulties it implies needs to be addressed**
- **Role of families often undermined**
- **Families can play a vital role in the recovery of the patient but they need support from professionals**
- **Aim of group: offer training about mental illness based on the needs of the participants**
- **EMILIA starting point for introduction of group into the Day Hospital**
- **By incorporating Day Hospital activities with EMILIA professionals where able to multitask**
- **The participation of families in the recovery process has changed in the last ten years. Move from by-standers towards active involvement in the process of the illness.**
- **In Spain there has been a parallel movement between associations of families and associations of users. Now they have combined and carried out shared activities. EMILIA has given a further push towards this shared view**

Training Content and method

- Original EMILIA content from Nordland Hospital, Bodo, Norway but changes made to meet local needs
- Pedagogical approach of Lifelong Learning (LLL) applied to training
- Training based on reflection, interchange, shared learning in semi-structures sessions
- Modification of training themes depending on what the group bring to the session

The participants and the trainers

- Open group, new participants incorporated weekly
- The group had changed between 3-8 families weekly. In the beginning the % was 32% Day Hospital and 24% EMILIA
- Generally Main diagnosis: 56 % schizophrenia, 31% bipolar disorder, 13 % schizoaffective disorder
- Trainers: Multiprofessional and users and family experts (Psychiatrist, psychologist, psychiatric nurse)

Aims of the group

- **Train patients/users and families**
- **Coloboration between profesionales, patients/users and families**
- **Create a space for the interchange and sharing of commun experiences through dialogue and discussion**
- **Focus on the groups personal and family strengths as part of the recovery process**
- **Share EMILIA experiences with other users, encourage the EMILIA philosophy of active participation as forming part of the treatment and recovery process**

Example of Typical Group Session

- New members to group present themselves
- Trainer makes 10-15 minute presentation followed by questions and answers
- Work in smaller groups
- Different volunteer chosen in every session to take notes and do a summary for the next session/main group
- Two or three volunteers to look for information about topic for next session
- Evaluation to see satisfaction level and interchange of knowledge every four sessions

Main topics covered in sessions

- **Strategies for dealing with illness/ symptoms**
- **Communication**
- **Guilt**
- **Accepting responsibilities**
- **Trust in those around us**
- **Sharing the moment of illness diagnosis**
- **Learning to control edginess and aggression**
- **Work on assertiveness**
- **Talk about alcohol and drug use/abuse**

Result of EMILIA; Experts by Experience

- Parallel to the multifamily group the EMILIA training has led to the creation of a new role with the Centre Forum; The Expert by Experience (EbE)
- These EbE participate in the multifamily group sharing experience, passing knowledge from one user to another and giving continuity to the lifelong learning process
- The EbE has a tutorial role within the group
- Payment...

Future Plans and Sustainability

- Even though the rest of the EMILIA training has finished in Barcelona, the multifamily group continues
- The incorporation of the EMILIA trained EbE has given a home-made twist to the family group along with offering a sustainable working outlet for the EbE
- Leaving the group open to both original EMILIA members and Day hospital patients and improved not only the quality of life for the EMILIA group but has extended to other patients as well
- The group plans to continue with an increased autonomy

Conclusion

- **Vision of patients/users evolved**
- **Vision of families and professionals modified**
- **LLL has been a step towards a change in traditional training methods and now users have a more active role while professionals are less “vocal”**
- **The LLL methods used in other EMILIA training packages had a positive influence in the Family Group**
- **Double impact of EMILIA; acting as an initial starting point for LLL in the hospital and now acting as a provider of EbE**
- **Work in progress...aiming towards more autonomy within multifamily group**

