

EMPOWERMENT

THE USERS PERSPECTIVE

Enusp

European Network of users, x-users and
survivors of Psychiatry

Judy Chamberlain

..how to measure?

- Do you have decision-making power?
- Do you have access to information and resources?
- Do you have a range of options from which to make choices ?
- Are you Assertive?
- Do you feel that you as an individual can make a difference?
- Have you Learned to think critically, unlearn conditioning, see things differently?
 - ▣ Learned to redefine who you are ? (speaking in your own voice)
 - ▣ Learned to redefine what you can do?
 - ▣ Learned to redefine your relationships to institutionalized power?

A working definition of Empowerment – Judy Chamberlain

- Learned about and expressing anger?
- Do you not feel alone?; Do you feel being part of a group?
- Do you understand that you have rights?
- Are you able to effect change in your life and your community?
- Have you learned skills (e.g., communication) that you defines as important

A working definition of Empowerment – Judy Chamberlain

- Have you changed others' perceptions of your competency and capacity to act?
- Have you come out of the closet?
- Do you experience Growth and change that is never ending and self-initiated?
- Have you increased your positive self-image and overcome stigma?

Judi Chamberlain. A Working Definition of Empowerment. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal Spring 1997. Volume 20 Number 4

Empowerment in the User-movement



- "On our own" Judi Chamberlain
- Empowerment Center Boston
- More than 700 user-run projects
- Lots of examples from Europe too
- Empowerment as a basic concept for us
- There could be build a list of best practices of user-run alternatives alongside the professionels projects

Capacity building

- 10% of mental health problems can be dealt with through medication/pathology
(Doctor Marseli- the Madman next door)
- 90 % is about how to manage and how to get the whole life you want
- Therefore empowerment have to focus on building up the users capacity to combat discrimination,opression, inaqualities, stigma and exclusion – in other words
- Empowerment through capacitybuilding

Capacity Building definition



- “... the process by which individuals, organisations, institutions and societies develop abilities (individually and collectively) to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives.”
- *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) definition*

Capacity building



- “The strengthening of people’s organisations, voluntary agencies and other socially beneficial institutions is integral to the practice of development.”
- *The Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC)*

Turningpoints



- We have build a project in Copenhagen
- Its based on Empowerment – to fight the learned helpnesness – give people hope back and improve their competencies
- It has 4 basic corners and are all about making empowerment happen in praxis-
- Apart from selfmanagement its purpose is to work together to get the life the individual wants

4 Corners of praxis



Priorities



- Real and sustainable change first comes when the target group are strong enough to play a significant role in all areas.
- Therefore Empowerment includes empowerment of users own organisations and projects, thereby making them strong enough to run own psychosocial rehabilitation services and much more.

Indicators



Quantitative indicators:

Improvement in areas of:

- Income
- Work
- Housing
- Education
- General living Conditions
- Mortality etc...

Qualitative indicators:

Improvement in areas of:

- ▣ influence
- ▣ Acces to information
- ▣ Degree of recovery
- ▣ Re-defining yourself
- ▣ See Chamberlains list.....
- ▣ Etc.....

Last words



- “Own spaces” - Professionals may not think about it but they have free space where they are not together with us – conferences, qualitative development, education and so on – we would like the same.
- Empowerment should be a guiding line in all Work in mental health- an approach from top to bottom.

Convention for the Handicapped



- I think we should make empowerment of users and carers in accordance and in coordination with the implementation process of the convention for handicapped. Its in many ways the same goals we try to achieve.
- Erik Olsen ENUSP