



Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de l'Estrie – Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke



Institut universitaire de première ligne en santé et services sociaux



École de travail social



Partners in knowledge

“Associions nos savoirs”

For the inclusion of patients and social service users in initial training and continuing professional development in the health care and social services fields

Introduction

Professional practices in the health care and social services fields must better meet the expectations of society in the 21st century, with the involvement, recognition and inclusion of the persons on the receiving-end of services themselves. For this purpose, one vector for change is essential: including the expertise of patients and social service users in initial training and continuing professional development.

“Partners in knowledge” is the result of the work that has already been done for a number of years by an international group of stakeholders active in the health care and social services fields. It is a follow-up to the 2015 Vancouver Statement which laid the foundation for a citizen-based approach to involvement in professional training but which was focused mainly on health care.

“Partners in knowledge” has taken this further to adopt a pro-active, cross-cutting approach to go beyond the usual regulatory-based references and professions. Our hope is that this

statement will contribute to full-fledged democratic progress, providing greater understanding, fraternity and solidarity.

We, as stakeholders active in the fields of health care and social services¹, have seen and hereby recognize that:

Whereas the involvement of patients and social service users in initial training and continuing professional development improves the quality and effectiveness of care and support provided;

Whereas this has been demonstrated through the results of international research. By giving professionals access to the experiences and knowledge of the reality behind situations that persons face, this type of involvement develops their attention and capacity to listen to others, fosters shared decision-making processes on care and support, and further contributes to the empowerment and the dignity of these persons²;

Whereas the countries where this involvement has been developed benefit from clearly established public policies and resources for implementation;

In spite of a legal and regulatory framework in France³ designed to promote the involvement of patients and social service users, there is still a real gap between intentions and official discourse on the one hand, and actual practices in the field on the other hand. In addition, the provisions related to such involvement apply little to initial training and continuing professional development which will require a true cultural revolution;

Whereas one of the reasons for this situation is our difficulty to foster, recognise and mainstream initiatives with demonstrated added value;

¹ The word “stakeholders” used here is meant to include: patients and social service users, family members and carers of patients and social service users, members of non-profit organisations representing patients and social service users, students, researchers, educators, elected officials, stakeholders involved in financing or organisation of training, training professionals, health and social care services professionals, volunteers, citizens concerned at all levels, etc.

² Scientific references available at: www.associationsnossavoirs.fehap.fr

³ Reference here, *inter alia*, to French Law dated 2 January 2002 on reforming social and medical-social action; French Law dated 4 March 2002 on health democracy; French Law dated 11 February 2005 for equal rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of persons with disabilities; French Law dated 26 January 2016 on modernization of the health care system.

Aware of the resistance that persists, but convinced that we can and must overcome this resistance, we hereby express our desire to:

1/ Uphold our conviction that health care and social services cannot be designed without taking into account the experiences and feedback of persons who benefit from these services. For this purpose, the involvement of these persons is inseparable from both health care and social services.

2/ Allow health care and social services professionals to strengthen and give renewed meaning to their profession and their commitment thanks to this involvement.

3/ Promote the role and involvement of patients and social service users in training, by relying on their own capacities and resources and those of their communities (families, friends, associations, movements, neighbourhoods, territories, etc.).

4/ Recognise the legitimacy of their involvement in all stages of the training process, including the specification of professional skills reference criteria, standard training curriculum, design of training programmes, involvement and evaluation at all levels of educational programmes.

5/ Share our conviction that their contribution to training systems will make it possible for a new type of relationship to emerge that is better balanced and thus more profitable for the persons themselves, for the professionals serving them as well as for their communities.

6/ Assert that their involvement will foster the improvement of the positions and practices of professionals.

7/ Support the development and involvement of patients and social service users in training as this is also an opportunity for them to acquire new skills, to receive legitimate recognition and consequently to develop greater empowerment both for themselves and for their environment.

Support for all stakeholders will be necessary⁴ in order to be successful with this very demanding cultural change for the persons concerned, for organisations and for the community.

⁴ For this purpose, *Associations nos savoirs* (Partners in knowledge) will publish an action plan in November 2018, available on our web site: www.associationsnosavoirs.fehap.fr providing references on all of the available studies and tools in this area to date.

Join the initiative of the Steering Committee of “Associations nos savoirs”:

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And our initial signatories:

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