

Benefits and barriers expressed by experts by experience

Benefits (added value):

- The use of experiential knowledge ensures diversity and is an absolute added value to broaden students' perspectives.
- A better understanding of the importance of partnerships and co-production. All humans can be hit by difficulties in life and the understanding that you can be open about this is important. Also, professional social workers and students carry these experiences and by talking about it those experiences can be destigmatized.
- Students learn to see persons behind the problems. To offer the opportunity to come into contact during their university career with the realities they will encounter at work, learning early on that they are always facing people and not problems.
- Add examples, tell stories and real lives to the theory taught by the lecturers.
- Show another point of view to students: they study the professional one, but there is also the practical, experience-based point of view from the other side.
- The experience lived in the same socio-cultural context as the students, the power to interact with professionals who have been where you are going to be. I consider that it is a great wealth for the student, to improve and not fall into mistakes that they may have made, and for the expert, it is to teach everything they have learned, not only from books, but also from their experiences.
- Feedback from students tells us that our participation is the most important for their learning. External examiners include in their feedback that the high level of participation of people with lived experiences greatly enhances the quality of teaching materials and content.

Barriers:

- Structural problems: Involvement of experts by experience on a voluntary basis? Then we cannot demand the same obligations. Paid involvement? how to pay? Draw up a contract? Etc.
- A good framework from the higher education institution is often missing. This would also have a well-defined competency profile for the expert by experience as well as a well-defined range of tasks.
- The limitation of time: to establish a relationship with the students, create a trusting relationship especially with the more introverted students, check whether the students have understood and memorised, to deepen the experiences it would be opportune to meet the same students several times. A person's life does not end in two hours.
- There could be more activities on Saturdays to facilitate experts by experience working during the week