



Training program for experts by experience in mental health and addiction care

90 ECTS Credits

WHO IS THIS TRAINING FOR?

This training is aimed at students with patient or client experiences in mental health or addiction care who wish to professionalize their volunteer work or retrain for a career as a peer support worker in mental health or addiction care.

Candidate students are expected to:

- Have experience in mental health or addiction care and be advanced in their own recovery process.
- Be motivated to learn how to functionally use their experiential knowledge to support the recovery of others.
- Be engaged with a patient association or other relevant organization or service, either as a volunteer or a paid worker.

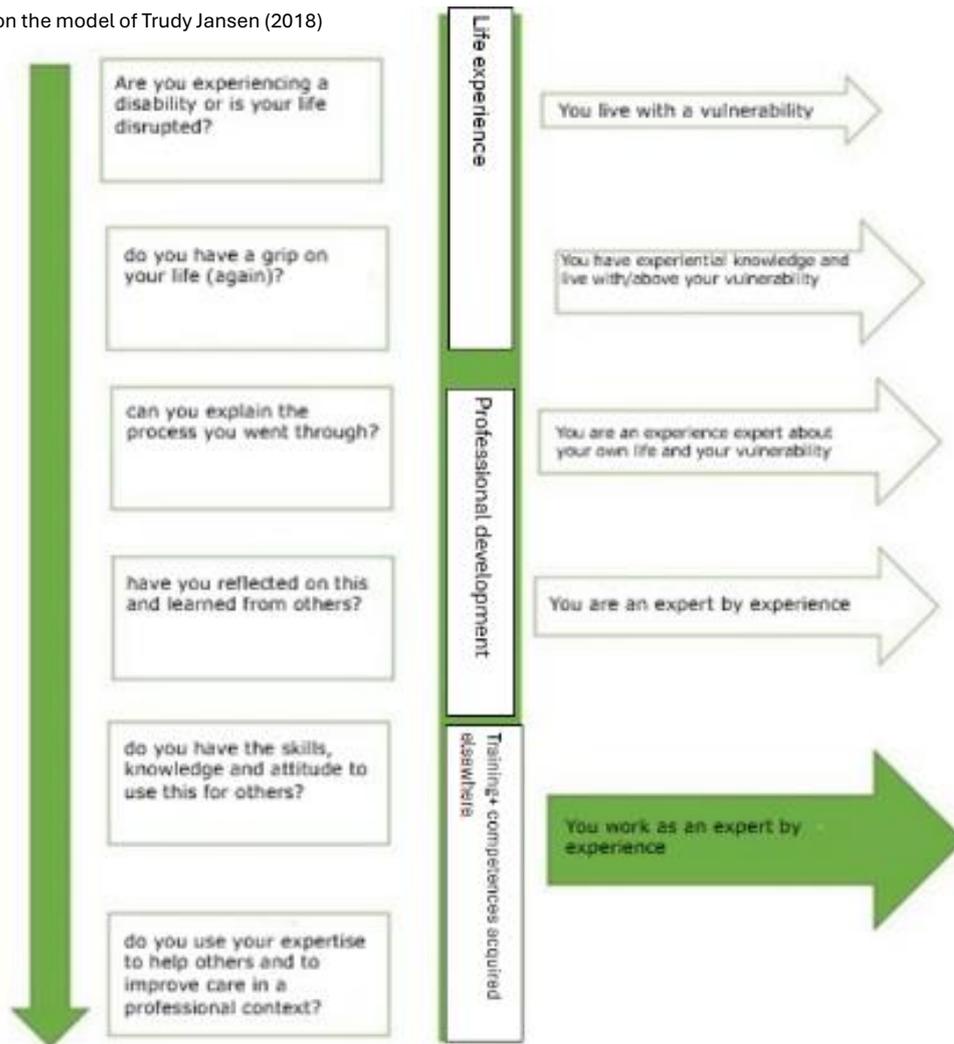
Every person has unique experiences. When these experiences are shared in a safe environment with others who have similar experiences, connections are made, and recognition and acknowledgment can occur.



Not everyone with a psychological vulnerability is an 'expert by experience' or a 'peer support worker.' The concepts of experiential knowledge, experiential expertise, and peer support worker need to be distinguished.

Experiential expertise is built through experiential learning. This involves a personal growth process that can be acquired through education/training or another unique trajectory. This conscious processing is necessary to speak of experiential expertise.

based on the model of Trudy Jansen (2018)



A Peer Support Worker/ expert by experience in Healthcare Must Be Skilled In:

- Managing their own body, mind, behavior, and recovery process.
- Interacting with healthcare providers.
- Handling societal reactions.
- Working with clients.
- Professionally using both personal and shared knowledge for the benefit of others.

Peer support workers are experts by experience who use their experiential knowledge and expertise professionally. To become a peer support worker, you must meet certain requirements. You have essentially 'skilled' yourself to apply your own experiences and those of others in a specific (professional) practice.

PROGRAM INFORMATION - 90 ECTS Credits

Social work	Specific expert by experience/ peer support work	
Understanding Human and Society (Conceptual Learning Line)	Exploring and Deepening the Field (Conceptual Learning Line)	Workplace Learning (Experiential Reflection Learning Line)
General Psychology (3 ECTS) Organizational Studies (3 ECTS)	Identity and Field (3 ECTS) Professional Ethics (3 ECTS) Law and Policy in Mental Health (3 ECTS) Developmental Psychopathology (5 ECTS)	Professional Practice 1 (10 ECTS – 150 hours) Professional Practice 2 (14 ECTS – 300 hours)
Skills Training (Skills Learning Line)	Skills Training (Skills Learning Line)	Workplace Learning (Integration Learning Line)
Oral Communication (3 ECTS) Written Communication (3 ECTS) Mediation (3 ECTS)	Social Agogic Skills (3 ECTS) Basic Psychosocial Assistance (6 ECTS) Advanced Psychosocial Assistance (5 ECTS) Recovery-Oriented Work (6 ECTS)	Project Work (8 ECTS) Integration Test for experts by experience in Mental Health (6 ECTS)
Grasping Study and Career (Management Learning Line)		
Self-Care (3 ECTS)		

General

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN AND SOCIETY

General Psychology (3 ECTS): You gain insight into important psychological basic processes: sensation, perception, conditioning, intelligence, emotion, motivation, personality. These basic processes are further elaborated into more complex situations: looking at yourself and the world, thinking about yourself and the world, problem persistence, and problem-solving.

Organizational Studies (3 ECTS): You can only follow this course unit if you have passed Professional Practice 1. You learn to look at an organization purposefully. You gain insights

and skills to analyze the organization and draw up an organizational diagnosis. You get acquainted with theoretical frameworks on organizational change and several techniques to work on organizational change.

SKILLS TRAINING

Oral Communication (3 ECTS): You gain insight into your communication profile and develop a communicative attitude. You learn to communicate more effectively in the work setting. You practice speaking, listening, and standing up for yourself. You pay attention to specific communication problems such as speaking from differences (culture, gender, social background, etc.).

Basic Written Communication (3 ECTS): You gain insight into the process of written communication and learn how to systematically prepare and execute a written message. You learn to develop a communication strategy and draw up a writing scheme. You do many writing exercises around working with paragraphs, report and letter writing according to BIN standards, etc.

Mediation (3 ECTS): You learn to intervene in a conflict in a mediating way. You gain insight into the history and ideology of mediation and understand how mediation relates to other methodologies. You learn to look for connections where there seems to be only differences and to position yourself as a process facilitator. You learn to invite, stimulate, and help people find their own solutions.

Specific expert by experience

EXPLORING AND DEEPENING THE FIELD

Identity and Field (3 ECTS): This course unit focuses on the “what and how” of experiential expertise and the role and function of the peer support worker. The starting point is “Recovery is something you do yourself, but not alone.” Attention is paid to recovery and the personal story of the students. Themes include models of recovery-oriented work, dealing with stigmas, and using experiential expertise in the mental health and addiction care sector.

Law and Policy (3 ECTS): In this course unit, you get acquainted with the general legal framework within mental health care, coercion and pressure in care, internment, professional secrecy, and reporting obligations. Additionally, you gain insight into the organization of mental health care in Belgium, Flemish and Federal competencies, the socialization of care within Article 107. There is also specific attention to gaps in care, current themes in mental health care.

Professional Ethics (3 ECTS): Introduction to ethical frameworks from which ethical issues can be considered, such as dealing with self-determination, freedom, consent, and coercion. The following ethical issues will also be addressed: professional secrecy, privacy law, dealing with patient rights, intrusive care, moral decision-making, sexuality, meaning, and hope.

Developmental Psychopathology (5 ECTS): You can only follow this course unit after General Psychology. You gain knowledge about various psychological disorders (such as personality disorders, addiction care, bipolarity, dementia, etc.). You learn some important developmental dynamic concepts to better understand the origin of some psychological disorders. You learn how to deal with various psychological complaints as a peer support worker and what possible treatments and therapies exist around this.

SKILLS TRAINING

Social Agogic Skills (3 ECTS): You learn to see yourself as a facilitator for agogic change processes, supported by insights into emancipatory work and strength-based and connecting work. You learn about self-management, stress management, and time management. You learn to set personal learning goals and reflect on yourself. You gain insight into power as a neutral concept and empowerment as a paradigm for the strength-based basic attitude in contacts with clients. You get acquainted with working with healthcare providers and organizations and discover change strategies at the societal level.

Basic Psychosocial Assistance (6 ECTS): You can only follow this course unit after Oral Communication. You learn to communicate client-centered in a strength-based and recovery-supportive way. Basic models such as connecting communication and solution-focused work are covered. In this unit, you practice the methodologies of motivational interviewing and coaching, assertiveness, and dealing with intense emotions.

Recovery-Oriented Work (6 ECTS): You can only follow this course unit after Identity and Field. We build on the knowledge and skills from the course unit Identity of the Peer Support Worker and delve deeper into experiential expertise regarding clients and healthcare providers. The unit covers the recovery approach and recovery-supportive care, empowerment and the strength-based approach, presence, societal participation, and social inclusion. The focus is on methodical work as a peer support worker and is based on the SRH methodology, sociological insights, and general principles of solution-focused and strength-based work. There is specific attention to inclusion and participation, social inequality, emancipation, diversity, exclusion, stigma, etc.

Advanced Psychosocial Assistance (5 ECTS): You can only follow this course unit after Identity and Field, Oral Communication Skills, Social Agogic Skills, and Professional Practice 1. You get a broad initiation into a thinking and working model for peer support workers from the system theory. This theory focuses on the influence between people in understanding and interpreting human behavior. Through frameworks, cases, and exercises, you integrate the system vision into looking at individuals/families and analyzing your own work context.

WORKPLACE LEARNING

Project Work (8 ECTS): You work on a real assignment or activity commissioned by an involved organization in the social work field. You do this in a project group with other students. You learn to set up a project in a planned manner. You practice planning and working from an open objective and applying methodological models and didactic work forms. In doing so, you learn creative problem-solving thinking and creatively shaping problem solutions.

Professional Practice 1 (10 ECTS): This course unit is only accessible to students after Self-Care, Identity and Field, Oral Communication, and Basic Psychosocial Assistance and Professional Ethics. Through a 150-hour internship in the mental health or addiction care workplace, you get acquainted with the function and tasks of a peer support worker. The intention is that you work observantly and beginning participatively in a service, network, organization, hospital, etc. During individual and group supervisions at school and via reflection assignments, you reflect on the experiences and insights gained and learn to develop skills and an appropriate professional attitude.

Professional practice 2 (14sp)

This course is only open to students who have passed Occupational Practice 1 and, in addition, the courses Recovery-oriented work, System-oriented work, Project work.

Through a 300-hour on-the-job internship, you increase your expertise, professional and systematic acting as an experience worker. During individual and group supervisions at school and via reflection assignments, you reflect on the experience and insights gained. You preferably take this unit in combination with your integration test

Integration test (6sp)

The integration test is the final assessment of your training pathway. It is situated on the integration track: you process and integrate experiences, reflections, concepts, vision and skills. The final project is also closely linked to your own practice in the field. It is therefore started in parallel or after completing the last block of professional practice (2). The integration test is a personal assignment at the end of your study program. You go through the following steps:

- you start from a problem or question that is linked to your practical experiences in the professional field
- you analyze the problem or question, highlighting it from in-depth literature and from units from the program
- you arrive at a well-founded recommendation for dealing with the problem or question
- You incorporate the problem or question definition, analysis and recommendations in a written paper or thesis
- you present and defend your thesis before a jury in the presence of fellow students.

Grasping your study and career

Self-Care (3 ECTS)

In the course unit on self-care, we will seek targeted tools and resources to enhance your self-knowledge and self-insight, enabling you to fully take control of your own study career and professionally use yourself as an instrument. You will follow the self-care course at the start of your training.

PREPARATION ENTRY INTERVIEW

Before you can enroll as a new student, we invite you to an information session followed by an entry interview about your motivation and expectations and the school's offerings. For the entry interview, make an appointment with the program coordinator.

Preparation for the entry interview:

- Why do you want to start this training?
- Do you think you are far enough along in your own recovery process to learn how to functionally use your story to support the recovery process of others? Motivate why or why not.
- Describe your 'ideal job' as a peer worker. What do you want to do in the field?
- Who or what are the support sources in your life?

Send this preparation to the coordinator one week before your appointment.