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Development and improvement of the Community Centre

Recovery College 2019/2020

Implementation period: 1 January 2019 - 31 December 2020

The **Development and improvement of the Community Centre** is co-financed by the European Union.

Between 2017 and 2018, our organization implemented a project of the Community Center for Recovery (more about the project [here](#)). This is directly followed by “**Development and improvement of the Community Centre**” project, which focuses on extending the existing activities of the Community Center and on developing new activities leading to the integration of people with mental illness into everyday life of society and strengthening social cohesion. The principle of the center is the participation of people with experience of mental illness (the so-called peer lecturers) in the activities they carry out and also public involvement. The content of the community center is based on the concept of recovery, which motivates us to actively participate in everyday life, care for ourselves, learning to manage our difficulties and which leads to a full life with illness.

About the project

🌀 WITH EDUCATION TO RECOVERY

The aim of the activity is to develop the competences of people with mental illness to be involved in everyday life of society through education and preventive action against the relapse of mental illness. The activity is realized within the Recovery College by offering educational courses.

Preparation of courses: When preparing courses, we follow the offer of courses realized within the previous project. Courses for the first project of the Recovery College took place between April and November 2018 and were successfully completed by 53 students. In the period from February to May 2019, repeated meetings will be held with the graduates of the courses, where we will evaluate the current form of the courses in more depth and then adjust them to best suit the future students of the Recovery College. By the end of 2019, four brand new training courses and teaching materials will be prepared. It will be organized within working groups and will be attended by peer lecturers and course guarantors who will guarantee the professional quality of each topic.

Conducting courses: The training program will include a total of thirteen courses aimed at promoting mental illness recovery, the central theme of which will be to strengthen self-confidence and confidence in one's own skills and abilities. The courses will be designed interactively and will contain both theoretical blocks and practical exercises. The courses will take place between May 2019 and November 2020.

Courses Overview:

Hearing voices: Hearing voices is a more common experience than many people realize and is not necessarily a sign of mental illness. However, this can be a very worrying experience, both for the person who hears the voices and the people who care for them. The course will include reflections on



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the causes of hearing voices, how to work with them, and strategies on how to learn to manage voices and live a full life in society.

Photo Story: The course will provide an opportunity to learn the new skills needed to engage in everyday life through self-expression. Students will photograph and subsequently create collages on the themes "I", "my story", "who I am", etc. The course will have two parts: (1) taking pictures and (2) composing them into a meaningful whole. Students will learn the basics of photography, develop their creative potential and ability to reflect their life story (life situation).

Safety Plan: The course will focus on creating a Safety Plan and therefore on how to identify and deal with an emerging crisis. Students will discuss issues with teachers to help them get to know themselves better and find strategies to mitigate the impact of the difficulties on life. They will also pursue a healthy lifestyle and improve their mental condition.

Recovery Group: An intensive course aimed at exchanging experiences, delivering hope and support in achieving recovery goals, developing social skills, and getting to know oneself. The group of students will meet once a week for three months.

Recovery: Have you heard that even with mental illness you can still live normally? Is it possible to recover from a serious mental illness? Come listen to the recovery and "how to do it". The course is led by two lecturers with experience in recovering from mental illness.

Self-management: Good self-management is a prerequisite for successful recovery. The course is conducted in the form of awareness and development of students' own management mechanisms. The principle is to promote self-confidence and perseverance in working on oneself.

Story of my Recovery: The course is in the form of a focus group focused on the topic of recovery in the story of students and sharing experiences. The principle is to deliver hope and strengthen skills for social inclusion.

Finance as Part of Recovery: In the course, students learn about what they can do to improve their financial situation, how to avoid financial difficulties, and how to handle finance when they are not well. The course will therefore focus on your own financial situation and how the financial overview can contribute to our recovery.

Self-presentation: The course deals with openness to the environment. There is a variety of options and strategies for how, when, to whom, and to what extent. The course explains these processes and encourages students to influence their self-presentation without being stressed.

Mental Health on the Internet: Mental illness is often accompanied by reduced socialization. Being in good contact with people is part of a mental illness recovery. The course supports participants in a real perception of social networking environments and basic rules of security in internet communication.

Stigma and Self-stigma: Prejudice, the social stigma of mental illness and the self-stigmatization of people recovering from mental illness have a significant impact on social coexistence, which often entails discriminatory behavior. The course supports students in recognizing the issue of stigmatization and in a proactive approach in overcoming it through their own behavior.



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Interpersonal Relationships as Part of Recovery: Interpersonal relationships, especially close ones, are one of the most important aspects of successful recovery. The course is also open to relatives of people with mental illness. It promotes mutual understanding and timely help in the close relationship of a person recovering from mental illness.

How to Communicate with a Doctor about Medication: The course is aimed at open communication with a doctor about medication, side effects and possible safe discontinuation of psychopharmaceuticals. It encourages students to communicate openly with doctors, their self-confidence in negotiation, and their ability to better understand possible psychiatrist concerns. The course, together with a peer lecturer, leads a psychiatrist with many years of experience in communicating prescription.

🌀 WORKSHOPS WITH STUDENTS AND LECTURERS FROM FOREIGN RECOVERY COLLEGES ([CNWL Recovery & Wellbeing College](#))

CNWL Recovery & Wellbeing College serves Central and Northwestern London and offers a wide range of training courses for people with mental health problems, their families and friends, as well as helpers. We established contact with this Recovery College abroad in the previous project of the Community Center for Recovery, which included three 3day internships in London from July 2017 to March 2018. They were attended by a total of 24 people including lecturers of our project. The trainees received information about the functioning of Recovery College abroad and the role of peer workers and had the opportunity to attend some training courses.

Two 3-day workshops of students and lecturers from the Community Center for Recovery and CNWL Recovery & Wellbeing College will be held in Prague as part of the current project “**Development and improvement of the Community Centre**”. **The aim of the workshops will be to get to know the functional model of educational and integration programs abroad, which are focused on the development of local communities and the personal potential of people with mental illness, and to ensure their transfer to the Czech Republic.** Workshops with foreign colleagues will share experiences with the involvement of people with mental illness in community life, get to know the models of functioning of the community center in London and Prague and get feedback from participants on the services offered by the Community Center for Recovery. The output of the activity will be the methodology of providing the services of the Community Center, which will significantly support the quality of provided services and at the same time will provide support for newly emerging community centers of this type in Prague and the whole Czech Republic.

🌀 RAISING AWARENESS OF LIFE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

Most people get information about mental illness from the media. This information is generally negative, biased and presented in a way that is acceptable to the majority viewer. **The aim of the activity will be to achieve a change in the social climate in relation to the issue of mental illness and to strengthen social cohesion within the local community.** The activity is aimed at fostering stakeholder dialogue based on providing enough truthful and relevant information to shape non-stigmatizing attitudes, both to the public and to people with mental illness as well as those affecting the media image of mental illness. The following activities are included:



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- © **Workshops for students of journalism, documentary and related fields:** During the workshops, students will be provided with a destigmatization video spot, which informs about the problems of mental illnesses and the lives of people who face mental illness. Under the guidance of an experienced instructor team, they will analyze the material in terms of content and key message and creatively write an article or report about it.
- © **Lectures and discussions in public libraries:** Peer lecturers will lecture and discuss various topics related to life with mental illness in libraries. Twelve two-hour discussions will take place during the project.
- © **Final Project Conference:** At the end of the project in December 2020, a meeting of students, lecturers, and the professional and general public will take place in the form of a 2-day conference. The aim of the meeting is to connect the inhabitants of the local community and increase respect for people with mental illness. Guests from the UK and the Netherlands will also be invited, where Community Recovery Centers are a common part of the mental health services portfolio.
- © **Stopstigma:** The website www.stopstigma.cz has been used since 2004 to raise awareness of mental illness through published texts on mental illness, recovery, stories and works of art about illness, and last but not least by running a unique psychiatric and psychological counseling center with the involvement of peer counselor (a person with mental illness experience). As part of the current project, our activity will be focused on providing barrier-free Internet counseling and developing support in the field of mental health care. Another activity will be to update texts on mental illnesses and publish comments on articles from the daily press on mental health.

© SOCIAL CULTURAL ACTIVITIES OF THE LOW-THRESHOLD CHARACTER

Providing creative space for people with mental illness and other members of the public to meet and supporting participants in creative development and self-knowledge through art. The activity will be implemented through low-threshold activities, namely literary and theater workshops. First run of these workshops took place as part of last year's Community Center for Recovery project.

- © **Literary Workshop** - Workshop for all those interested in literature. Under the guidance of two lecturers, Tomáš Vaněk and Jan Škrob, the participants will, as in the previous year, focus on poetry and prose, write, read, talk about writing and share. Workshops will be held once every 14 days for three hours in one of Prague's literary cafes and every three months there will be a literary evening with readings by the participants of literary workshops. The invitation is always accepted by one special guest (poet, novelist, essayist). The results of the work of the participants of the literary workshops and their own activities will be the basis for the newly created magazine, which will be published every 3 months in electronic form.
- © **Theater Workshop** – Main goals of theater workshop are getting a self-knowledge through negotiation, acquisition and stage performance, and development of healing skills through training for the development of prompt action. The workshop offers space for personal development, self-presentation, work with own pictures and stories, through strengthening of



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interplay, empathy and mutual inspiration, from which the workshop is earned in the preparation of public performances.

🌀 EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The goal of this activity is to assess the impact of the project on the recovery of people with mental illness and on strengthening social cohesion. The evaluation will take place in important steps that will improve the services of the Community Recovery Center.

- 🌀 **Evaluation of the existing 9 courses:** There will be a focus group (2x4hours) with successful course graduates. The content of the meetings will be a detailed mapping of the benefits of individual courses, their form and content and lecturer presentation. Attention will be paid to the thematic continuity of the courses and to the fulfillment of students' expectations. Subsequently, a detailed output and recommendations for the lecturer's team will be elaborated and recommended to be included in the course concept.
- 🌀 **Methodology for the establishment and functioning of community centers to support recovery:** Evaluation of services will take place through repeated meetings of the evaluation team, which will evaluate the outcomes of workshops with students and lecturers from CNWL Recovery and Wellbeing College. The outcomes of the meetings will be detailed recommendations to improve the services and methodology development, which will reflect the principles, processes and principles of the Community Recovery Center.
- 🌀 **Assessing the Impact of Community Centers for Recovery on its Students:** Assessing the impact of training courses on their participants will be carried out through two discussion groups at the start and end of the project. The goal will be finding out, how students are empowered in recovery, in their life roles, self-confidence, autonomy, and how their goals and attitudes change.
- 🌀 **Internet Counseling Assessment:** Internet counseling will be evaluated both in terms of the content of the questions and in terms of the interviewers' satisfaction and the impact on their competences for social coexistence.