

RETURN FROM HOSPITAL: HOW CAN I SUPPORT MYSELF

MODULE 2: COMMUNICATION

Meeting 3: basic structure

HOW TO TALK ABOUT MYSELF AND MY EXPERIENCE OF ILLNESS?

Objective: How to communicate about myself.

Programme	Instructions	Time schedule	Conditions and equipment, notes
Welcoming	Welcoming, introduce the trainers and context of the group (see recommendations for the opening of the session in the Guide for trainers).	5-10 min	
Group agreements	Recall and add if necessary (see recommendations for creating safe atmosphere and group agreements in the Guide for trainers).	5-10 min	



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CENTRUM PRO ROZVOJ PÉČE O DUŠEVNÍ ZDRAVÍ
CENTRE FOR MENTAL HEALTH CARE DEVELOPMENT

<p>Warm up and introduce each other</p>	<p>Introduction of each participant with a ball – throwing a ball to each other and saying our first name.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What is your name</i> 2. <i>Were you present the last time</i> 3. <i>What brings you in / or what you've remembered from the last time?</i> <p>Variants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass an object (pebble, etc.) around the group. Participant/trainer, who holds the object, speaks. Participants answer the questions listed above. • “Silent mail”: We sit in a circle, the lecturer whispers a message to the person sitting next to him, which is passed on in the same way until it gets back to the lecturer. It opens up the topic of communication - we are sending out information, but there is a question of how it will be transformed in the process of transmission and communication. It could easily be that what we are transmitting changes in the understanding of others. 	<p>10 min</p>	<p>Soft ball</p> <p>Variants: small object (for example pebble)</p>
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Main topic
1. part

Objective: Costs and benefits of disclosure of experience with mental health issues.

Introduction to the topic:

Our goal here is to consider what the costs and benefits are of disclosing one's experiences with mental difficulties. We will also discuss strategies for coming out most effectively should you decide to do so.

Today we will discuss 3 tasks:

Task 1 We discuss the idea of IDENTITY and mental health issues so you can decide how you frame your identity. Some people do not want to view themselves as a person with mental illness. This section helps people understand whether and how they identify themselves.

Task 2 We help you weigh the costs and benefits of coming out so that you can decide whether to disclose.

Task 3 Self-stigmatisation: Words are central to stigma. Participants consider how they like to label their experiences leading to stigma: mental illness, mental health challenge, or other term.

Some people agree with stigma and beat themselves up as a result.

Introduce the topics and ask participants if they have questions or situations, they would like to discuss for themselves.

25 min

Flipchart (or big sheet of paper), markers

Workbook: worksheet 1
(talk with others about illness or not)

Exercise: Draw a square on the flip chart and divide it into 4 boxes - internal and external, YES and NO.

1. INTERNAL: Do I think of myself as someone who struggles with mental illness? YES/NO.
2. EXTERNAL: How do I talk about myself externally - do I want others to know about my illness? YES/NO.

To talk about illness with others or not? (Worksheet 1)

Look at the stories for two approaches to talking about the disease - one shares publicly, the other lives his life and doesn't talk about the disease.

Use the worksheet to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches.

Note: Not necessary to work with workbook, we can draw the content of the worksheet on flipchart and fill together in one.

Exercise: Benefits and costs of disclosure (Worksheet 2)

There are a variety of reasons why you might choose not to disclose your experience with mental illness. These could be considered costs, or reasons why you may regret disclosing. On the other hand, benefits are reasons why disclosure will help you.

Let us consider the benefits first: The table with examples of costs and benefits (workbook) gives reasons people decided to disclose their mental illness (benefits). After going through the examples, your own reasons for wanting to disclose should be considered and written in the empty spaces (worksheet 2).

Explanation:

Benefits are the reasons why you would want to disclose. Ask yourself the question: “How will letting other people know about my mental illness help me?”

Costs are the disadvantages to disclosing your experiences with mental illness. Several examples of costs are summarized in the table with examples of costs and benefits (workbook). It might help.

Note: Wrote benefits and costs on flipchart and discuss.

Can someone help you with the decision?

Disclosing a mental illness is a difficult decision to make alone. Since there are so many emotionally charged factors to take into consideration, it is hard for a person to calmly and rationally weigh all of the pluses and minuses. You may want to consider the judgment and advice of others before you plunge into disclosing.

Peers who have mental illness, especially those who have disclosed, may offer positive advice or a warning, depending upon their own experience disclosing a mental illness. Those who are advocates and have succeeded in disclosing will likely advise you to tell. Those who have suffered negative consequences as a result of disclosure, such as loss of a job or failure of a broken marriage, might tell you to keep your lips sealed.

BREAK



Main topic
2. part

Objective: Stereotypes and prejudices about people with mental health issues. Stigma and self-stigma.
How I think and speak about myself?

Stereotypes and prejudices

Stigma in relation to mental illness in society: go through the statements in the workbook (stereotypes and prejudice, page 9) and discuss what is and is not true.

Discussion:

- Do you identify yourself with any of the stereotypes or prejudices?
- How do you perceive mental illness? What does it mean to you to have received a diagnosis?
- What do you say and think about yourself? (Talk about whether participants think this about themselves, whether they perceive their illness or addiction.)

Self-Identification is Not a Yes-No Question: We may have mistakenly given you the idea that identifying oneself as mentally ill is a simple, black and white decision: you either group yourself with others who have mental illness, or you don't. Actually, the decision is a bit greyer.

20 min

Workbook
Blank papers A4

On some issues, people may identify with mental illness entirely, while on other issues, they do not.

Ways in which we identify ourselves with mental illness can change over time. Mental illness may have different significance to us depending on whether some disabilities are still present, or whether a person has recently experienced the stigma of mental illness.

Sharing of experience of a peer trainer:

How I perceive myself - evolving over time. / Depends on how one is - when well, stigmas are unacceptable to me, when not well, I identify easily.

Also important is coming to terms with the illness - accepting it.

Sharing the story and examples of how he talks about his illness when people ask him, for example. Offer neutral response options. Make participants to look for their own formulation that would suit them.

Exercise: Card - what I want and don't want to say about myself

Fold a piece of paper - on the outside write what I like to say about myself externally, on the inside write what I don't say about myself to others.

	<p><u>Exercise: Addressing my own self-stigma</u></p> <p>Assertions that stereotypes are very present. Go through statements (what do you think about yourself, page 10) and establish connection between stigma and self-stigma and internalization.</p> <p>Use of statements and scoring! Discuss the results!</p>		
Closing the topic	<p>In this session regarding communication, we talked about identification with mental health problem, cost/benefits of disclosure of mental health problem and self-stigma.</p> <p>Final thoughts from group members.</p> <p>Thanks to the group for cooperation and looking forward to the next one (state when ant the next topic).</p>	5-10 min	
Evaluation	<p>How did you find this workshop?</p>	5-10 min	Evaluation sheets
Goodbye	<p>We will, if possible, personally say goodbye to each participant and thank them for their participation, just as we welcomed each participant at the beginning.</p>	5 min	

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