

## **Training workshop on Peer Support Workers in mental health: State of knowledge, inclusion experiences and conditions for success**

Peer Support Workers (PSWs) are emerging work force, internationally and in Canada, which leads to innovative recovery-oriented practices of social and civic inclusion. As part of a project funded by the European Union, several European countries have come together to share their good practices and, for the first time, Quebec is invited to take part in the reflection.

In this context, we have set up a training workshop on PSWs to which mental health practitioners and community workers are invited in order to identify innovative and applicable methods of integrating PSWs in different contexts of care and services. International in scope, it will be held simultaneously with teams from various countries: Belgium, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy and Quebec.

### **What is a Peer Support Worker?**

PSWs are people who have personally experienced mental health or addiction problems and who are far enough along in their own recovery journey to help, once trained in the practice of peer support, other people with a similar experience. PSWs can offer psychosocial support and counseling services when hired to perform such a specific paid function, as now recommended by recovery-oriented good practice guidelines (van Vugt et al., 2012; MHCC, 2015). Peer support focuses on how people in distress can regain more proactive control over their lives (Vanderplasschen et al., 2013). This approach is characterized by highlighting the strengths and capabilities of these people, fulfilling and meaningful social roles, and mobilizing formal and informal support networks. PSWs also embody positive examples of recovery for caregivers and facilitate communication between them and the person using their services (MSSS, 2022). As for Family-PSWs, these are members of the entourage of people living themselves with a mental health problem or addiction. They offer support, listening and information to other members of the entourage who are experiencing situations similar to those they have experienced.

### **Date and time**

February 25<sup>th</sup> 2022, 3PM-5PM (CET)

### **Activity format**

- Activity presented online, via Zoom
- Participants from various countries: Belgium, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, and Quebec (Canada)
- Language of the main presentation: English
- Duration: 2 hours

## Learning objectives

At the end of this activity, participants should be able to:

- Identify current recovery-oriented practices to support the social and civic inclusion of people living with mental health or substance use disorders.
- Propose specific roles and functions to PSWs in complementarity with other providers to strengthen the achievement of the social and civic inclusion objectives of existing practices.
- Suggest means and recovery-oriented methods of organizational support for the associative and professional life of PSWs.

Subgroup discussion points:

- In preparation for the sub-group discussion, participants should also listen to this 10-minute video with Anna Maria Palmieri, Fondazione Don Luigi Di Liegro, Rome : <https://youtu.be/zVI5J3bou2c>
- What current recovery-oriented practices do you know of in your organization that are in place to promote social and civic inclusion?
- What do you think PSWs could do differently to strengthen the achievement of recovery, social and civic inclusion objectives of existing practices?
- What are the obstacles and facilitators to the integration of PSWs in your organization and how to overcome them?

In plenary, the same three questions will be repeated and participants will be asked to answer them again, but in the light of what they have learned from the reports of each sub-group.

Technical arrangements:

- Recording of presentations and post-training editing
- Repartition into sub-groups – list of participants in advance to schedule the groups
- Put the discussion questions in the chat and present them before separating the groups

Speakers:

- Dr. Jean-François Pelletier, PhD. PSW, Assistant Clinical Professor at Yale University and Scientific Advisor for Peer Training, Canada Research Chair in Partnership with Patients and Communities, Head of Peer Support Worker Training at the University of Montreal.
- Isabelle Hénault, Graduate PSW of the 2018-2019 cohort of the University of Montreal, Director of the Quebec Association of Peer Support Workers

Content	Speaker	Length
Introduction Welcoming words	Dr. Luigi de Benedictis, psychiatrist, Montreal Institute of Mental Health	5 minutes
State of scientific knowledge on peer support workers (PSWs)	Jean-François Pelletier, PhD. PSW, Assistant Clinical Professor, Yale University	20 minutes
Testimony of a person in recovery and PSW	Isabelle Hénault, PSW, Quebec Association of PSWs	20 minutes
Small group discussion (by country/language, see List of participants)	Instructions Sub-groups with a designated reporter for each sub-group	40 minutes
Plenary (return to main group)	Reporters from each sub-group	25 minutes
Conclusion	Jennifer Dahak, Counsellor for best practices in mental health, Montreal Institute of Mental Health	10 minutes

**Zoom link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUkcGurT4sHNWvsCUxloyUOG-3pBl1r94T>

**Password:** 1234

**Meeting ID:** 819 5863 5661

**List of participants**

**Belgium: 4 participants**

**Croatia: 10 participants**

**France: 4 participants**

**Greece: 4 participants**

**Italy: 3 participants**

**Canada: 10 participants**

## References

Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2015). Recovery Guidelines. Repéré à : [https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/MHCC\\_RecoveryGuidelines\\_ENG\\_0.pdf](https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/MHCC_RecoveryGuidelines_ENG_0.pdf).

Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux. (2022). Plan d'action interministériel en santé mentale 2022-2026 : S'unir pour un mieux-être collectif. URL: <https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/document-003301/>

Vanderplasschen, W., Rapp, R.C., Pearce, S., Vandavelde, S. & Broekaert, E. (2013). Mental Health, Recovery, and the Community. *The Scientific World Journal*, 926174. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1155/2013/926174>

van Vugt M, Kroon H, Delespaul P & Mulder C. (2012). Consumer-Providers in Assertive Community Treatment Programs: Associations With Client Outcomes. *Psychiatric Services*, 63(5), 477–481.