

EUROPEAN ACADEMY ON YOUTH WORK - WORKSHOP REPORT

Culturehouse Experience

Marko Haimilahti, Markojuhani Rautavaara and Liisa Sippola:

Finland, Social pedagogy foundation (Culturehouse Lohja)

Contact: marko.haimilahti@sosped.fi

TOPIC DISCUSSED

Effects of stigmatisation in the case of promoting mental health and the development of mental health services in Finland. New ways of reducing stigma and increasing interaction between people. Experiential / functional activity for participants.

METHODOLOGY

First we showed a powerpoint presentation related to stigmatisation and discrimination and their negative effects on the promotion of the mental health of the population and the development of mental health services for young people.

After the presentation, we developed and carried out a 'creative action' and defined its effects when promoting different approaches to increasing interaction between different people and groups. We used the British psychoanalyst Winnicott's definition of mental health: mental health is the ability to use creativity. Increasingly, we need different and creative approaches to promoting interaction between different groups and people. Sometimes even without words. We need creativity also to find new solutions to the challenges and problems we are facing in our lives.

Next, we shared our ways and practices of supporting people's mental health by using art & culture, a solution-focused approach and communality activities. We gave the participants two solution-focused exercises during the workshop: their tasks were to name some strengths that they have, and to remember concrete situations where they used their skills and strengths for the best of a community. It is really important that our skills, strengths and capabilities are seen and recognised. Therefore, skills and strengths were our focus.

Finally, we invited the participants to create a 'sound world' to join the greetings that customers of our Culturehouse had made for them, in form of a collage of photos, prior to the EAYW. These greetings had been recorded as an imovie about the theme of communality. They consisted of pictures of Culturehouse activities, such as nature tours, concerts etc.

During the EAYW workshop, we invited the participants to play various instruments, such as a Finnish traditional instrument called Kantele, circle drums, chimes, "wind tubes" and a guitar, at the same time as they were watching the video greetings from our rehabilitees. Their task was to join this imovie through music.

We recorded the workshop participants' sound world and added it to imovie. The result was a mutual art product (like a bridge) between Culturehouse rehabilitees and EAYW participants. Furthermore, it was one way of gaining experience of creative interaction. At the end, we showed this product to the workshop participants, and when we had come back to Finland, also to the customers of Culturehouse.



KEY ISSUES RAISED SUCH AS CHALLENGES

How do we face mental health issues and people who are suffering from mental health problems?

Can we see their resources and strengths, or are they just passive objects of help / measures?

Can we see what kind of effects stigma has in our environment?

How can we use art, communality and culture for the best of people's mental health?

WE WANTED TO ENABLE OUR PARTICIPANTS TO EXPERIENCE A CREATIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT PROMOTES HOPE, LEARNING AND RESPONSIBILITY.

INNOVATIVE RESPONSES TO THOSE CHALLENGES

Solution-focused approach – What you look at, will grow. If we look at our weaknesses, problems etc., they will grow. If we look at our resources, opportunities, skills etc., they will grow.

We were also talking about hope and future. Through our mutual art product, we implemented a concrete example of creative interaction between so-called "normal" people and marginalised / isolated people who are suffering from mental health issues and stigmatisation.

With this art product, we also wanted to promote communality and inclusion. We wanted to enable our participants to experience a creative environment that promotes hope, learning and responsibility.

KEY TRENDS IDENTIFIED (COMMONALITIES BETWEEN COMMENTS/ PARTICIPANTS)

Low threshold activity, reduction of stigma, whose ideas is the action based on?

Low threshold activity: 18-35-year-old people who feel that they need support for their mental health, no admission note needed.

Reduction of stigma: Activities extend to the surrounding society; they are not only happening in Culturehouse. They are free and open for all: concerts, art products (publications, albums etc.), exhibitions, annual Pajafest- empowering culture festival, groups led by peer tutors outside of Culturehouse.

Action based on (inclusion): based on participants' interests, resource-focused / solution-focused approach, peer support / peer training

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

- *"Thanks for letting us peek into your work and having this really nice musical experience!"*
- *"I'll try to learn and apply some of your practices in my local community environment. I really enjoyed your workshop, which was very frank and emotional."*
- *"Funky to begin with but absolutely thrilling at the end. Congratulations for a job well done!"*
- *"Really inspiring and sensitive experience. Thank you guys!"*

LINKS TO FURTHER RESOURCES OR INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT AVAILABLE ONLINE



- Sound world created during the workshop:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SzpS6oBZhMc>



The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily express the official view of the European Commission or the partners behind the European Academy on Youth Work. Reproduction of texts and pictures is authorised.

*Published by MOVIT, Ljubljana, Slovenia
October 2019*

Design and layout: AIKO, Maja Cerjak s.p.

*More information about the EAYW:
www.eayw.net*