

PRoF Award abstract – Call 2018

Deadline for submission: Thursday March 1st 2018 (12 o'clock noon)

Please send to: PRoF-Award@uzgent.be.

ComMentH – Competences of Caregivers in Community Mental health care

1. Research Outline

Acronym	ComMentH (Competences Community Mental Health Care)
Project name in English	Development of mental health care in the community: competences of caregivers in transition
Pitch (1 sentence)	What competences do caregivers need in the community based mental health care model of the future?
Executive summary (max. 10 lines)	
<p>At current the Belgian mental health care system is in transition from an institutional model into a model of community based care (artikel 107). Caregivers will function increasingly in the patients' natural living context. Contrary to institutional care there is no 24/24 permanence, neither direct support by colleagues on the floor. Instead care activities must occur in prearranged appointments that are limited in time. Since the beginning of 2017 at the faculty of Education, Health and social work of the University College Ghent a practice oriented multidisciplinary research project of three years is running. The main goal is to identify how education and care organizations can support the (future) care professionals and other people involved in the community to function as good as possible in the multidisciplinary and community based mental health care.</p>	

2. Cause and context of the research

At current the Belgian mental health care system is in transition from an institutional care model into a model of community based care. The overall objective (Artikel 107) is the reduction of both the number of admissions and the length of stay in psychiatric hospitals and the development and implementation of community based care interventions

Most psychiatric hospitals are located outside the community, patients are admitted and taken care of in a 24/24 permanence system by all kind of professional caregivers who execute their professional roles according to their own discipline within the boundaries that are drawn by the management. Institutional admissions means that relatives function as patients' temporary visitors on the wards.

In community based mental health care almost the opposite situation is true: caregivers are contemporary visitors themselves in the biotope of the patients' living context. Generally there is no 24/24 permanence, neither direct support by colleagues on the floor. Instead care activities, including observations, therapeutic interventions, solving practical issues, coaching, medication management, working with family and peers etc. must occur in pre-arranged appointments that are limited in time. In community care, boundaries between the traditional disciplines (nurses, social workers, occupational therapist, etc.) are less sharp delineated. For instance in psychiatric home care tasks are identical for each team-member and this irrespective of the discipline. Loss of role identity is only one potential side effect for caregivers, besides many other not yet scientifically objectified issues linked to professional identity, competences, lack of knowledge and skills etc. can be expected.

Today no framework exists to coach experienced institutional caregivers during the transition into the new formats of multidisciplinary community based mental health care. Neither in schools, university colleges and universities students are intensively prepared to handle the complex professionals challenges in the community based mental health care of the future. In the working field caregivers swap from the "safe" institutional work to the rather "unpredictable" community mental health.

In addition it should be noticed that the inclusion of people with mental health problems into the community care also leads to a shift of responsibilities in society. . In the first place relatives that are living together with them (children partners etc.) , but also more broadly others in society such volunteers, buddies etc. and other professionals (teachers, police, ...) will need support for training in order to develop certain additional competences and attitudes.

Since the beginning of 2017 at the faculty of Education, Health and social work of the University College Ghent a practice oriented multidisciplinary research project of three years is running. The main goal is to identify how education and care organizations can support the (future) care professionals to function as good as possible in the multidisciplinary and community based mental health care. (1) Two researchers with work experience in mental

health are observing and investigating competences of caregivers in the work field by participatory observation, (2) they interview managers of mental health institutions and other involved organizations (3) they interview academics and other experts from the field (4) they interview caregivers of all disciplines in all different types of mental healthcare (5) in cooperation with students from all disciplines they interview patients to learn what competences they find essential (6) they screen the curriculums of the current education in nursing, social work, orthopedagogics and occupational therapy and formulate improvement proposals on base of the results of previous interviews

3. Innovation results achieved

As practical output we intend to develop training modules in which competences can be learned to professionals as well as informal caregivers (volunteers, family, police etc.). Besides we will develop an online tool that allows users to explore their own competences in order to improve their knowledge, professional skills and attitudes needed in the community based mental health care. As a result of this online assessment, suggestions for training modules, available online tools and other relevant referrals will be online accessible on the website.

Currently the project is half way. About 28 transcripts of interviews of managers and experts have been analyzed, 7 working places have been observed 38 caregivers from different disciplines have been interviewed and transcribed , 50 clients included in community mental health care will be interviewed in the coming weeks. Based on a competence mindmap that has been build up out of the results of the interviews and observations the online tool will be developed in cooperation with IT professionals.

4. Link to the PRoF values

Actually, because of the scope of our project, all eight PRoF values are inherently represented both in the modus operandi of the research activities as well as in the output of the project (online competence tool and trainingmodules). Our project contributes to the improvement of community mental health care in many aspects. De facto, many vulnerable people of all kinds that reside in the community will benefit from a better understanding and treatment by professionals and non professionals. The increase of mental health problems in the Belgian society nowadays are well known: depressions, addiction, dementia, burn-out, anxiety, stress disorders, etc. By the improvement of professional skills, knowledge and attitudes we aim to increase the awareness for all aspects in the bio (e.g. medication) psycho (e.g. evidence based therapeutic interventions, respectful approach) social (e.g. targeted referral, pressure by work, sick family members...) domains of patients and the people connected to them. Our projects supports professionals to integrate their specific disciplinary competences and at the same time to collaborate with non-professionals. Weaving qualitative multidisciplinary competences of professionals with experiences of

patients and their environment are a way to broaden networks and connections with other people. We consider this as a remedy to empower patients and people in their environment.

5. Applicable IPR rules

Intellectual property of this project is subject to the legislation of the University College Ghent (Hogeschool Gent), funder of this project (Projectmatig Wetenschappelijk onderzoek)

6. Information on the partners

The research project is under supervision of a steering committee existing of professionals and academics in the field of mental health care. List of members can be requested at stefaan.desmet@hogent.be. Besides the above mentioned respondents and cooperating organizations are the natural partners in this project but no members in this project.

Note:

If your project is selected as laureate for the Award Symposium, a powerpoint presentation that reflects the project as suggested will be required (in advance), including a future plan how the funding will be used.

If your project is selected as the winner of the Award, you will be invited to present the results achieved thanks to the award during the Award Symposium of the next year.

Addendum: Contact information

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