

Briefing on the Danish project: Recovery Orientation

Three year development project on user and relative needs for recovery

Introduction

This three year development project on users and relatives needs for recovery orientation began in March 2003, and is being carried out by Landsforeningen BEDRE PSYKIATRI (National association of relatives to the mentally ill), and Landsforeningen af nuværende og tidligere Psykiatribrugere (National association of past and present mental health users). The project is financed by the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs. The project will be completed by December 2005.

Development project's Aim

The aim for the development project is to reach a formulation of users and relatives' needs for a recovery focus, as a way to further the development of the treatment and support activities, as well as general community attitudes to people who experience serious mental health problems.

The requirements will be formulated on a system level, in regards to treatment activities, to support and rehabilitation, and will additionally focus on information and rights.

The development project will place Landsforeningen BEDRE PSYKIATRI and Landsforeningen af nuværende og tidligere Psykiatribrugere (LAP) in a position to ensure that users and relatives needs begin to influence the development of a recovery focus, which will presumably will become an influence from now on, and can therefore be seen as a necessary supplement to the focus on recovery which is unfolding within the boundaries of the professional practitioners.

In addition the project can be seen to have a range of underlying and inbuilt connected aims. These include:

- To strengthen users and relatives empowerment – so that they to a greater degree are able to ensure that users' and relatives' perspectives are heard and taken seriously in the coming year's debate on the implementation of a recovery perspective
- To train interested members of the two associations to carry out and analyse individual and focus group interviews, and in that way to ensure that the knowledge and experience that is collected and developed in the project becomes the associations' property.
- To strengthen and develop the ongoing good collaboration between the two associations, so that both nationally and regionally there is a shared development process where the members of the two associations meet and work together across the sectors.

The development project

The development project works on several parallel levels with reaching a formulation of users and cares needs for a recovery orientation with the conclusions being presented in a discussion paper. The project contains a qualitative study which will

be undertaken by the project leader in collaboration with an interview team from the two associations, who will be trained beforehand in interview methodology. The results from the qualitative study will be used to qualify the process underway, and secure that the associations' perspectives are highly knowledge based.

The development project consists, in the first instance of completing a group interview in focus group style of members from the two associations. There follows two to three focus groups of users, and two to three of mixed relatives, to ensure both geographical broadness and breadth in regards to other background variables. The focus groups will aim to uncover:

- Important factors in users and relatives experiences of what has helped and hindered possibilities for recovery.
- How are the factors expressed?. Only with weight placed on the concrete and dense descriptions of situations of how these factors are appear, can we have a better understanding of their context and virtual ingredients both in regards to enabling or blocking recovery.
- How do these factors interrelate, and which role do they play in underpinning/ working against the recovery process?

The worked up group interview will be discussed afterwards with the steering group and with the broader membership of the associations. The preliminary conclusions will be tested and further developed with a study of a mixture of users and relatives who are not members of the associations. (see next point)

The results from the interview study will be placed before all focus group participants in a regional conference, blending both associations. The conference will be used as the normative for the definitive discussion paper which will be completed by a small editorial group with representatives from the two associations, with the project leader responsible for the documentation process. The final discussion paper will be distributed after acceptance by the two associations' national leaders.

The study

The aim of the study is to test what are the users and relatives experiences of actual/ current practice in regards to supporting the individual person's possibilities for recovery, and how these compare to the recommendations and ideas generated between the focus groups. The study will be followed by individual exploratory interviews focussing on the three same themes as the focus groups with the associations' members.

This study will be based on about 30 respondents, of whom half are users and the remainder are relatives. Respondents will be a mixture of non association members, recruited through contact with the treatment and social psychiatry sectors. The recruitment form has been chosen to uncover the different experiences (both positive and negative) of those who have and have not chosen to be active in the associations.

The respondents will be chosen with a view to background variables such as gender, age, place of residence, business and educational background, social conditions together with substance use complications. Furthermore, consideration will be taken

to the variety of treatment and support received by the respondents and their relatives.

The Association's role in the development project

The development project will be a collaboration between BEDRE PSYKIATRI and LAP.

The associations cannot themselves influence the results or analysis of the study, but do have influence on how the results will be interpreted and utilised in the developmental process which will result in the discussion paper on users and relatives' needs for a recovery perspective.

The associations will share secretarial responsibilities for the project; in that BEDRE PSYKIATRI will be providing book keeping and accounting, and LAP will be providing secretarial assistance to the project leader, interview team and steering groups.

Steering group

A steering group has been established with three representatives from each of the two associations, together with two participants with professional and or methodological expertise, who follow the running of both the two studies and the development project in general. The steering group will meet three to four times a year during the project, and will moreover hold running correspondence by mail.

The primary task of the steering group is keeping the study on track in regards to the agreed aims, hereunder at being advisor when it comes to the ongoing adjustments that can come up in the course of events. In addition, the steering group will play an active role in the following up of the whole developmental process, including the establishment of the necessary and ongoing dialogue with the two associations' members together with ongoing reporting to the two associations' leaders.

Interview team

There have been selected a group of six interested members from each of the two associations who have the task of working with both the carrying out and analysis of individual and focus group interviews.

The group is being trained in two seminars with external and well qualified educators in qualitative study methods and interview techniques. The group members commit themselves to active membership, and are paid in proportion to their work contributions.

Project leader

Pernille Jensen is employed over the whole project period as a project leader on a consultancy basis. She is responsible for the planning and follow up of all activities which have been described in the project brief. This includes ensuring recruitment of the users and relatives who will participate in the interview team, recruiting of participants to the focus groups and respondent for the individual interviews. She will function as secretary and coordinator for the steering group and interview team, and together with interview team is responsible for the carrying out of the focus groups and individual interviews.

The project leader will plan the contents of the regional conferences, write the final report, and together with the editorial panel consisting of representatives from the two associations, will formulate the discussion paper with which the development project will conclude.

The development project's products

The primary result of the development project will be the discussion paper collating the associations requirements/demands for a recovery focus. Furthermore, the development project and the conducted studies will be produced in a report in a book format. The report will contain an account of the chosen method and problems, and also broader extracts of interview material, organised in regards to the identified factors and categories.

More information

More information can be found on the Project recovery–orientation on the homepage: www.recovery-orientering.dk. The information here is only in Danish.

For further information or contact with the project please mail: info@recovery-orientering.dk or to the two auspice organisations: info@bedrepsykiatri.dk or lap@lap.dk