

# PEER COUNSELLING



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

Project No. 503575-LLP-1-2009-1-LT-GRUNDTVIG-GMP

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INNOVATIVE METHODS AND PRACTICES TO FACILITATE SOCIAL INCLUSION

# Peer counselling

- Peer counselling consists of mutual work and reflection of practical experiences/questions referring to the own task assignment.
- Employees of the same or similar work area advise each other.



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# Peer counselling aims at

- inducing emotional relief,
- increasing ability to act,
- generating structures for self-help, and
- making use of collegial support.



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# Peer counselling

- The counselling is based on structured dialogue.
- One participant offers a case study.
- In a second step the others reflect and scrutinize the issue.
- For an optimal performance it is recommended to build homogenous groups for reflection of 4-6 participants.

# Compendium for peer counselling

- **Basic rule: confidentiality**
  - Everything that is contributed by the group stays in the group. It is not allowed to pass any information to third parties.
- **Frequency of meetings**
  - Please agree with your team members about the frequency of meetings. We suggest one meeting per month, if desired several times. At the beginning there should be a meeting about general conditions between the participants.

# Compendium for peer counselling

- **Size of group**

- It has been proved that an optimal size of group consists of four to six people. Due to that the group is big enough for collecting ideas and suggestions. In addition it is small enough to create an atmosphere of trust, to be able to make appointments, and to ensure enough time for every participant issue.

# Compendium for peer counselling

- **Facilitator**

- In every meeting there should be assigned a facilitator. She cares about aspects like structure, time limits and goal-directedness.

# Structure of cooperative working

- **1: Introduction (5 minutes per person)**
  - The session starts with a mutual update about the current state. Everyone reports about intended steps. Leading questions might be:
    - o What has happened since our last meeting? Which steps were made? What external information had been processed? Which challenges and opportunities had been emerged?
    - o What did I achieve? How did I succeed? Which tasks still have to be done? In which points am I satisfied or dissatisfied? Refer to achieving my goals: where is my position on the way now?



# Structure of cooperative working

- **Phase 2: Support**

- This part contains the main work of every meeting. Usually one team member asks her peer members for support in a specified case.

- Procedure:

- a) One team member, the "case member", introduces her subject. (10 minutes)

# Structure of cooperative working

Leading questions might be:

- o Which problems do I see recently? What particular challenges have to be accepted? Are there any examples of how the situation can be described clearly?
- o How do I feel in this context?
- o What background information is important? Which causes do I suggest for the situation? Which solutions did I already try?
- o What precise request do I have referring to my team members?



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# Structure of cooperative working

## b) Technical inquiries (5 minutes)

The team members ask questions to understand the situation.

## c) Analyses of problem (15 minutes).

The team members collect ideas about the described issue.

# Structure of cooperative working

Leading questions might be:

- o Which pictures and associations do I have referring to the issue?
- o Which connections to other aspects do I identify?

The case member takes in a passive role. She listens carefully, puts her seat on the back, does not comment anything, and makes notes of the contributions.



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# Structure of cooperative working

d) Feedback by the case member (10 minutes)

The team members ask questions to understand the situation.

Leading questions might be:

- o Am I able to make use of the ideas referring to my analyses of problem?
- o How supportive did I perceive the others?

# Structure of cooperative working

## e) Suggested solution (15 minutes)

The colleagues collect their suggested solutions. Please consider spontaneous and "irrational" ideas too!

The case member again sits outside the discussion, does not comment on anything, and makes notes to perceived important aspects.



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# Structure of cooperative working

f) Feedback by the case member (10 minutes)

Leading questions might be:

- o Can I cope/work with the suggested solutions?
- o Which suggestions will be taken?
- o How supportive did I perceive the others?

# Structure of cooperative working

- **Phase 3: Conclusion (10 minutes)**

Short feedback by every team member.

Leading questions might be:

- o How can I identify with the described issue?
- o What do I know about it?
- o How did I feel during the session?