

IN, OUT, ACTION AND CHANGE

Action-oriented autobiographical work as a complementary tool to the expert by
experience education

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*“Experience: that most brutal of teachers. But you learn, my
God do you learn.” – CS Lewis*

ABSTRACT

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This is a product thesis done in cooperation with KRAN rf, a Swedish-speaking Christian-based substance abuse service organization and their expert by experience education. The product is a workshop guide on how to work with the personal narrative within the expert by experience education.

The expert by experience education is a training to prepare former service users to engage in service user participation initiatives or make their own. The education is built on guidelines from Mielen Avain.

The methods at the basis for the workshop guide is CABLE (Community Action Based Learning for Empowerment) a relatively new method in Finland currently on the rise as a work method for empowerment and change in the evangelical Lutheran parishes.

Feedback from previous expert by experience educations showed a greater need for structure during the training as well as better support in constructing the own story.

The aim of this thesis is to provide material on how to work with the participants personal stories in an action-oriented way in the expert by experience education as an addition to the existing guidelines.

The product consists of workshop instructions which contain themes and suggested exercises for the process.

Keywords: Expert by experience, service user participation, CABLE, autobiography, personal stories, diakonia

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1 INTRODUCTION

The image of the client in social work and diakonia has a long and interesting history. In the past, a person in need of services was the “pitiful” receiver, at the mercy of the goodwill of the more affluent in society and the charity of the church. The emergence of social security law and the objective right for help paved the way for the more modern negative image of someone who is leeching on society, only taking and giving nothing back. There have always been and always will be people who fall outside society, as Jesus said, the poor will always be among us. But how do we as professionals and society tackle these issues and how do we view the people using the services?

The current trend in social services and diakonia is that of empowerment, sustainable change and breaking of stigma. Needing help is no longer supposed to be a dirty secret or a personal failure, but a part of being human. The fact is that most people need help at some point of their lives.

There is a growing interest of service user participation in social services and health care. This is based on the idea that the service users perhaps are not the problem but rather could be part of the solution and that they have valuable knowledge of the field through their lived experience.

As an answer to this interest, trainings such as the “expert by experience education” has come forwards. The expert by experience education prepares former service users to take part in service user participation initiatives or make own, work in the services in question, hold lectures in schools and to speak out in media. Experts by experience are on the rise in several areas such as mental health care and substance abuse services but also more recently in integration services.

When working with the own experience as a resource and base for knowledge it is important to have thoroughly gone through the life story.

Based on evaluation of previous experts by experience trainings there was a need for tool working with the personal narrative.

This is a product-based thesis made in cooperation with KRAN rf, an organization in the Swedish-speaking substance abuse services in Finland. The product is a set of workshop instructions that are meant to be used in the expert by experience education.

The goal was to develop a workshop in autobiographical work, the description of the personal narrative, aimed to gain deeper insight to the experience. The product was developed and evaluated during the expert by experience education 2017-2018 and has been presented to the employer in the form of workshop instructions.

The instructions for the autobiographical work are based on CABLE (community action-based learning for empowerment) a current trend for participation and inclusion in diakonia in Finland.

Empowerment means giving the power, as well as the responsibility, back to the individual. Having service users prepared and ready to tackle challenges in life and in the community turn them from being pitiful receivers or leeches on society into important and valuable parts of the solution.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the thesis was to provide the organization a concrete work tool for autobiographical work in for of workshop instructions. In reaching this aim a modified version of the CABLE process was implemented during the expert by experience training 2017-2018, this attempt was evaluated, and the process written down in form of instructions.

As stated, the workshop is based on the CABLE process and consists of four parts.

1. "IN" – Group building and construction of the base narrative.
2. "OUT" – defining the self in relation to society and defining personal strengths and resources.
3. "ACTION" – Goal setting and project planning.
4. "CHANGE" – Project execution (sharing with the world) defining a personal plan for further action and change.

The first part is focused on building the group and cultivating trust, as the participants will share personal feelings and facts about themselves they need to feel safe and free to do so. Included in to this part is the actual biography work, here the participants systematically go through their childhood, youth and adult life.

The second part focuses on defining personal strength and the participants examine themselves in relation to the community and larger society. A personal reflection on values is included. The third and fourth stages are focused on change and project planning as well as personal and professional goal setting.

The objectives of workshop are that each of the participants will:

- Get experience in groupwork and sharing their feelings and process.

- Write out and share their life story from appropriate perspective and become aware of its theme and message.
- Formulate their personal values and the values of the group. Formulated their own strengths.
- Define some goals in their lives and as experts by experience as well as a plan to work towards the said goals.

As a result of this it is the hope that the participants would become confident in using their experience in their work and have a clearer image about who they are as experts by experience.

These objectives of the workshop are supported in research. Newlin et al conclude in their literature review, four most efficient methods for working with clients with mental health and substance abuse background to promote social inclusion (Newlin, Webber, Morris & Howarth 2015, 167-172):

- Strength-based approaches – defining and articulate personal strengths and assets.
- Social skills development – with focus on problem-solving, communication skills and activity planning.
- Goal setting – Have been proven especially efficient in relation to social inclusion
- Peer support – peer support might decrease perceived stigma, increase wellbeing through new friendships.

These methods are covered in the workshop instructions, the first phase is focused in group building include social skills, problem solving and communication. In the second phase when participants work on their life stories the peer-support play a significant role. Phase three deals with defining skills. The

fourth and final stage, project planning and completion, include all the above: peer-support, goal setting, social skills and the participants get to use their skills in action.

3 BACKGROUND

KRAN rf has arranged the expert by experience education twice before. During the 2016-2017 education, a pilot version of the workshop in autobiographical storytelling was introduced as a voluntary element of the last two months of the training. The results and feedback were positive from both educators, participants and organization. Former and current participants of the training expressed that it would be beneficial to have this kind of work from the beginning and throughout the training period. (Ström-Rantamäki 2017.)

The main reason for this workshop in autobiographical storytelling as an addition to the expert by experience education is the perceived and expressed need for additional support in constructing the life story. Constructing and sharing the life story is a part of the guidelines for the training, however there was a will and need to have this process run continually and parallel all throughout the six months of the training.

Another reason was to increase the “selling power” of the coming experts, during the pilot project all the participants who finished the project went on to have paid gigs sharing their story, which in turn is beneficial to KRAN rf.

The participants are asked to become experts on their experiences. To become an expert analysis and clear knowledge of the subject are needed. The participants will go on to help others and for that task they need to be clear on what they know and what they have learned from their experience. They may go on share their story publicly in different awareness initiatives. In the case of public sharing, being clear and prepared on what to say is also a question of protecting the privacy and integrity of the participant.

4 THEORY AND KEY CONCEPTS

This chapter will discuss the concepts of expert by experience in Finland and their equivalents in Sweden. Service user participation in mental health and substance abuse services will be described as well as some of the positive and negative aspects of the phenomenon.

4.1 Experts by experience in Finland

The first organization to officially train experts by experience in Finland was Tampere center for adult education in 2001. Unofficial training sessions and projects however has taken place in different areas of Finland since the 1990's. (Rissanen, Sinkkonen, Sohlman & Kurki 2015, 5.) Later, the training of experts by experience spread to Southern Ostrobothnia, and in April 2010 the local hospital district organized a training. During their education, several participants participated in the adult psychiatric ward's daily work and held groups together with professionals. After training, the workers experienced that it had a positive effect on the general attitude towards mental and drug related diseases. (Holm & Lukkarila 2014, 14.)

The tasks and mission of experts by experience in the work field is somewhat vaguely defined as they may vary from workplace to workplace. Workplaces could include various social and health care organizations, such as hospitals, health care centers and schools. Congregations, universities, and high schools may be interested, especially those who train future social and healthcare professionals. Experts by experiences can work towards changing the general attitude and prejudices that exist regarding mental illnesses and addicts for example through media. In work places they may serve as assistants, supporting a group leader and serve as a gateway between the patient and the care provider. (Holm & Lukkarila 2014, 36).

In 2010 a project called “Mielen Avain-Hanke” (the key to the mind – project) was launched with the task of producing recommendations on how to conduct the expert by experience education. The goal was to unify the content of expert by experience training and promote good working practices (Rissanen et al. 2014, 6).

Mielen avain guidelines divide the expert by experience education in into four modules. The first deals with the importance of experience expertise and here the participants should be introduced to the idea of the own narrative. The second module covers theory of substance abuse and mental health problems. In the third stage the focus is on clarifying their own personal role as experts by experiences. The fourth module focuses on helping the new experts to network and get into the work life (Holm & Lukkarila 2014, Rissanen et al 2014, 6-8).

The guidelines by Mielen Avain include recommendations concerning leaders, groups size and selection process in addition to the order and content of the modules.

The first Mielen Avain training took place in Lojo 2013-2014. The participants of this education were interviewed by Holm and Lukkarila for their thesis on the subject. All participants considered the training being of high quality. Several of the participants also felt that the education had been beneficial for their personal rehabilitation. The possibility to share the own story with other participants in the education was perceived as therapeutic and as an important part of the training. (Holm & Lukkarila 2015, 31.)

The participants also expressed that more time, help and support in reviewing your own story and practicing storytelling would be beneficial. Some wished that they would have gone into personal stories at a later stage of education so that the participants would have known each other better before sharing personal matters (Holm & Lukkarila 2015, 33).

4.2 Service user participation and empowerment

The world health organization has published several statements on service user participation and empowerment. They describe the process of empowerment as one of change at several levels (WHO 2010, 1). Research on the effectiveness and impact of service user involvement has shown that the bridge between theoretical ideas of empowerment and real power to change has been hard to realize (Omeni, Barnes, MacDonald, Crawford, Rose 2014, 3).

This has been reflected in the Finnish context and it has been expressed by experts by experience that they had noticed a negative attitude and prejudice to their activities. The staff at health centers had been apparently interested but came up with various apologies for why they could not use the experts by experience. Some interviewees noticed that the initiatives started too fast and therefore caused resistance. They also noticed that the actual term “expert by experience” was not familiar and would require more precise definition (Ropponen 2011, 55).

In other words, both the service user/ patient as well as the organization/service provider and in some extent the society at large need to have a shift of knowledge, agency and attitude. Empowerment is closely tied to knowledge, of the own situation, systems and concepts. This knowledge and understanding leads to greater autonomy and accountability and in extension social inclusion and mental wellbeing. (WHO 2010, 1.)

This need for shift of attitude and praxis on several dimensions is visible in research on service user participation. One reason for the difficulty in achieving real empowerment in the service users participating in the work life is the relatively low status of the service users participating as well as the trust of their input. This may also lead to a lower sense of self-esteem in the service user and contribute to further mental health issues. However, this idea of doubt in the contributions does not emerge out of nowhere, just because someone has used a service does not necessarily make them appropriate or able to contribute to the

service. This is one of the reasons trainings such as the expert by experience education are important. Both to strengthen the actual knowledge of the service users as well as reassuring the employees that they have gone through a process to gain understanding also about their side of the work and the structure and laws they work within.

Other negative aspects of service user involvement include the question of representativeness, it is not correct to assume that the people who choose to become involved in service user initiatives necessarily speaks for a whole and diverse service user/patient group (Omeni et al. 2014, 14).

The expert by experience education and the workshop in autobiographical work supposedly prepares the participant to face and minimize several of the challenges presented. Thorough examination of the own experiences and actions in addition to increased theoretical knowledge should help the participants to have a greater sense of what can be affected and realize what responsibilities the service users and patients have themselves.

Sense of control over one's life is vital to mental wellbeing and includes a process of assuming responsibility over choices and actions. WHO has articulated four dimensions of empowerment as follows: Self-reliance, participation in decisions, dignity and respect and belonging and contributing to a community (WHO 2010, 7).

Research on the perceived impact of service user involvement in mental health services showed that 70% of the workers asked reported positive effects and benefits after involving service users in the organization (Omeni et al. 2014, 11).

4.3 The Ambassadors in Sweden

In Sweden exists an initiative similar to the experts by experience, where individuals with experience with mental health issues receive training and then go on to be “Ambassadors”. In 2009 the Swedish government gave a task to the National Collaboration for Mental Health to reduce stigma surrounding mental health. In response to this the 5 year campaign called “Hjärnkoll” partly inspired by a similar British anti-stigma campaign “Time to change” was made. The aim of Hjärnkoll was to work towards equal rights, and prevention of discrimination. (NSPH 2013, 5.)

Progress is made in educating service users and Jönköping university are now the first in Sweden to provide a course granting ECT-study points for a course aimed at strengthening the power and knowledge of the patients (Jönköping University). This is good as a university course has real weight and could be a step towards getting the title expert by experience protected and held in higher regard.

At the core of the Hjärnkoll initiative was the personal experiences of sufferers prepared to speak out with their own name and face. In 2014 they had 350 trained ambassadors with a range of experiences within the mental health field who went on to share their stories in workplaces, hospitals, different happenings in the streets as well as in the media. (NSPH 2013, 6.)

One of the important things was that the ambassadors came out with their own name and face, as hiding the identity is supporting the image of a shameful secret rather than breaking stigma. In addition to this it is important that the ambassadors met people face to face, this meeting could create real change in preconceived ideas of mental illness. In relation to the campaign the National Collaboration for Mental Health made several studies on the effect and impact of the project and they claim that the outcome was positive, mainly in making the discussion of mental health more nuanced and increasing awareness of what different diagnosis might mean for a person in practical terms. (NSPH 2013, 7.)

5 METHODS

In this chapter the methods that create the base for the product will be presented. These are mainly gathered from Christian work and underline the diaconal nature of the thesis.

5.1 CABLE

Community action-based learning for empowerment (CABLE) is a method and approach with its emphasis on the ability of the worker to empower and allow increased participation and active responsibility of the clients. This approach challenges the traditional power structure of the church and social services as helpers and clients as receivers. (Porkka & Pentikäinen 2013, 38.)

CABLE developed through a process of network building in Finland partly through Diakonia Opisto and Church Training College in Järvenpää in the 80's (Porkka & Pentikäinen 2013, 36). In the beginning it was planned to be used as a way to train new deacons for the ELCF, making them ready for future challenges.

A cooperation between Järvenpää and William Temple Foundation in Manchester started and a few years later Diakonia University of applied sciences was founded. The method continued to develop and in the early 2000's the exposure-method was introduced as a result of a cooperation with an organization in Rotterdam.

In 2005 an international CABLE-project was started with the aim to reach marginalized groups. In this project the CABLE-process as it looks today was articulated and put to practice in several countries all over the globe. (Paul, Söderholm, Åkerlund 2017, appendix 5.)

The purpose of the CABLE process is to achieve lasting positive change. True empowerment comes when the participants realize their strengths and abilities

and how they can be implemented to improve their own life's the in extension the society. For this reason, one of the core methods is different exercises to define the strengths and opportunities of the participants. (Paul et. al. 2017, 8.)

The CABLE process is divided in to five stages: In, Out, Exposure, Action and Change (Sandelin & Ahman 2017, 8). It is these stages that lay at the base for the workshop in storytelling. The first phase "IN" focuses on looking inwards to the own identity and history. The own narrative and how one's own story effects ones perception of the world and the self, as well as identifying strengths. In this beginning stage effort is also being made to build the group and create a good environment for cooperation.

The second stage "IN AND OUT" deals with the individual in relation to the society and community they live in. The third stage "OUT AND EXPOSURE" includes the exposure element in which the participants visit a place and observe it with as neutral mind as possible. They answer the questions "what did I see, what did I hear, what did I feel", they should at this stage refrain from making explanations and assumptions as to why they feel they way they do or notice certain things. (Porkka & Pentikäinen 2013, 88.)

In the fourth stage "ACTION" the participants define areas for improvement and what how they can contribute to this positive change and a project plan is made to realize this change. In the fifth stage "CHANGE" there is an evaluation, what elements worked, and which did not and what improvements could be made (Paul et. al. 2017, 8.)

CABLE is grounded in the thought that marginalized people or individuals experiencing difficulties have the capacity and power themselves to create lasting change in their own lives as well in the society. This process ideally makes the participants aware of their strength and capacity to act. Any change requires these steps in one form or another; examination of the situation and resources, defining what to change and how, action and evaluation.

As stated, the CABLE process serves as the base for the workshop instructions. The workshop follows the same order and logic, there are however a few differences. For the first step “IN”, where the personal story is processed the CABLE guidelines recommended to spend 9-12 hours on divided into 2-3 meetings, in the workshop instructions the recommended time for this phase is 5 weekends, i.e. 10 half days of the expert by experience education, the time between the weekends, about two weeks, the participants have homework where they have ample time to process and analyze the different stages of their life story.

The second phase “IN & OUT” 2-3 hours recommended for CABLE, in the workshop the recommended time usage is 4 half days, in addition this phase is changed in the workshop to simply be “OUT” and cover the exposure assignment which in CABLE is a phase on its own. The exposure assignment is tailored in the workshop to be relevant to the education, they are asked to choose a location for the exposure where the participants will be or could possibly be working in as experts by experience.

The third stage (fourth in CABLE) “ACTION” has a recommended time of 3-4 hours in the CABLE guidelines and in the workshop instructions the recommended time is 4 half days. The action-phase in the workshop instructions is focused on what positive change achieve utilizing their life experience and is tied to their future roles as experts by experience. In the CABLE guidelines it is in this stage a project is planned and executed. In the workshop this stage only deals with project planning. The project in the workshop is limited to an event on the graduation day of the expert by experience education and must utilize the life stories in some way.

The final stage according to CABLE handle evaluation, as the project then already would have been implemented. In the workshop instructions the final stage include preparation and execution of the project. Evaluation according to the workshop instructions has been done continually throughout the process. (Paul et. al. 2017, APPENDIX 3 THE PRODUCT.)

5.2 Use your talents

Use your talents is a practical and concrete tool for empowerment that has its origin in the Malagasy Lutheran Church in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Participatory methods and true empowerment are the core ideas of the “use your talent”- project and the participants are seen the resource, not the problem, similar to the expert by experience education.

The word diaconia has within the framework of the project been reformulated to mean development. A modern and useful twist.

The word” talent” has also been reformulated and in this context means” what you have received from God” and the idea is that the with abilities and resources one has comes a responsibility to share with others, the greater the talent, the greater the responsibility. (Haus 2017, 17.) Talent in this context is originated from the word talent, a coin, of significant worth, a talent then here simply means something you have of great value.

Use your talents has so far been used as a tool for parishes, its methods and approach are however applicable for smaller groups such as the target group for the workshop. The idea is that development and change should come from the grassroot level, and that people should get together to solve their own problems (Haus 2017,18.) This is an empowering thought, as the power is put back to the people and with this power comes responsibility.

Also, the focus shifts from offering money to people to solve their problems but rather offering training and possibility. This is what the workshop is doing in a concrete way, the organization supports financially not individuals but the training and its premises.

One of defined main points of use your talents are: Start with the resources. In the autobiographical workshop it is encouraged for the leader to inquire about the skills and interests of the participant and allot time for them to share these skills

with the other participants. It is important to emphasize what the participants do have, not what the problem is or what they are lacking. Personal experience as a service user could for example mean that they have knowledge and practical advice for people who are in the same situation. This is what should be put forward, not simply explaining what their experience is.

Two other main points are sustainability and ownership (Haus 2017, 20): This is also taken into the workshop in an early stage. The process is their own and the material they create is for their own use.

The Madagascan country coordinator Andriambonimihanta writes in his article on the development of use your talents in Madagascar that the history of the relationship between state and citizens needs to be taken into account. Although the Nordic countries such as Sweden and Finland have a vastly different history from Madagascar there is one similarity; the citizens have expected and seen it as the task of the leaders/state to provide them everything they need. This makes the people receivers with minimal responsibility. (Haus 2017, 27.)

In Madagascar this history is tied with colonialization and presence of missionaries, it could be argued that in the Nordic countries the historical reasons for the helplessness and paternalistic view of people is connected to the welfare systems and the church.

Pastor Kisemei defines in his article “The four laws of Gods blessing in relation to using our talents”. These four laws according to his perception are firstly that our blessing and talents should flow to others. This is also one of the core ideas with the workshop and the expert by experience education, in the process the participants seek to define their talents /skills/ knowledge in order to being able to extend them to others. The second law is “when we bless other through our talents, God takes care of our needs”, this could be interpreted as the sense of meaning it gives to be a part of something and to feel that one is useful, also in being an active part of society a greater sense of self-reliance and power is fostered.

The third law explains how “blessing others through our talents will come back to us” this can be seen as the community development part, strengthening the individual who in turn improves society which in turns become a better society to live in.

The fourth law is based on Luke 12 “much is required from those whom much is given, for their responsibility is greater” and explains how the more blessed we are, meaning the more skill, knowledge and resources we have, the more we are expected and required to be of service to others and so to society (Haus 2017, 43.)

5.3 Group work and team building

This chapter is related to the development of the first phase focused on establishing a well-functioning group.

Multitudes of research has been made on groups and group dynamics in social work. Researcher Roselle Kurland found in her extensive work that six aspects are vital in the planning process to establish a successful group: Need, purpose, composition, structure, content, and pre-group contact. (Carson, Lewis, & Fritz 2004, 52)

The need of the member means to clarify the reason for why the person needs or should be in this particular group, in the case of the autobiographical workshop and the EE-Education this need is established though application process and interview. The criteria for applying is that the person has had experience within the substance abuse area and/or mental health issues either on their own of that those things afflicted a family member and is willing to use this experience to help others and/or to improve services and policy (KRAN rf).

Purpose refers to the meaning and goal of the group and participant, these two should clearly be in line with each other and be defined in the beginning (Carson et. al. 2004, 54). The purpose of the autobiographical work is to gain greater

knowledge about their experiences as well as being able to share their gained wisdom in a way that is beneficial for them and others.

The heterogeneity or homogeneity of its members explains the composition of the group. In the mielen avain guidelines it is stated that it is desirable to strive to have many different experiences of the members under the criteria stated above (Rissanen et. al. 2015). The structure of the group describes the practical facts, number of meetings, rules, meeting place and such. As according to the guidelines these should be made clear in the beginning and rules and values of the group should be established together with the group on the first day (Rissanen et. al. 2015).

Content refers to activities and methods used to reach the group and individual goal. The what, how and why of each session will be defined and shared with the participants when starting. Pre-group contact is how one is contacting, choosing and preparing the members for the coming commitment, research shows that when comparing groups who had a pre-group interview and those who did not showed that those who had contact before had higher attendance and completion as well as clearer sense of purpose. (Carson et. al. 2004, 56.)

Group cohesion is the phenomena of attraction and impact the group members have on each other, this exist in both negative and positive groups and can be a strong force either for good or bad. It is important to strengthen this cohesion and tie it together with the common goal of the group rather than becoming an end itself. (Carson et. al. 2004, 57.)

Different exercises to build and strengthen the group are an important part of the workshop. In implementing team-building activities it is important to prepare the activity before, explain the activity to the participants and make sure they understand the purpose and actions before starting. After the activity, there will be a debriefing and restate the use of the exercise to the group-purpose. (Miller 2007, 5.) This way of working of being open and transparent with all exercises is to be favored throughout the process.

6 THE ROLE OF MEANING IN THE PERSONAL NARRATIVE

“Narratives are socially and culturally conventional mechanisms by which individuals organize and represent their past experiences” (Sales, Merrill, Fivush 2013, 98).

To find a sense of meaning in past experiences, especially difficult ones, is a vital part of the process of becoming an expert by experience. It is also here the CABLE process starts, in the own story and mapping out who I am and why I am that way. Suffering as a transformative force is one of the key components of Christianity and a necessary step in becoming more like Christ.

Christ suffered, there is no question about that, but he did not suffer needlessly. As he took on the sins of the world his sacrifice redeemed the whole world and was of cosmic significance in the new covenant.

There is an idea in Christianity that we should strive to be more like Christ, follow his example. This comes up several times, for example in 1 Peter 2:21 “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps” (NIV).

What is it to take on the sins of the world? Perhaps to admit, that it is our problem. Everything and everyone’s problems is our problems and responsibility, to “carry each other’s burdens”.

“Take up your cross and follow Me” (Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23 NIV). What does this mean? it could be interpreted as to voluntarily take on the responsibility of making the world better by carrying each other burdens. To accept that life is finite, and the physical body will die. There will be suffering, it does not need to be meaningless suffering however, if it is done in the name of Christ in an attempt to realize the will of God on earth. The cross also symbolizes death, the death to the self and rebirth in Christ, to take responsibility for yourself and society.

We admit that we are a part in the turning away from God in the confessions of sins, if we admit this honestly and have some insight into what it might mean it should contain a degree of suffering, repentance and in response forgiveness and grace.

It is not only in suffering we should imitate him but in serving. "So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you." John 13:12-15 (NIV).

In the process in going from service users to experts by experience there is a development of taking responsibility not only for the own life but for society and a decision to try to make things better, for themselves, services and service users.

The construction of the personal narrative is partly connected to making meaning of the suffering they have gone through for it to not have been in vain.

Sales et. al. explore in their research paper, the hypotheses that trying to make meaning of past events might actually be detrimental to the mental health and increase depressive symptoms. Their focus is that of adolescents in trying circumstances, the research however can in part be applied in our case as well.

In large, research shows that individuals who are able to see meaning and reflect on past experiences, learn from their mistakes so to speak, show higher level of mental wellbeing. This is connected to the ability to construct a narrative that is coherent and personally meaningful to the individual (Sales et al. 2013, 97).

Making meaning of suffering is one of the functions of religion, research has shown that individuals who see themselves as religious report greater sense of meaning after traumatic events than those who report having no faith (Hall 2016, 220).

Sales et. al. points out that most research showing positive effects on mental wellbeing as a result of narrative construction and meaning-making has been conducted with participants who have had traumatic events as an exception to their daily lives. Not as in for example addicts or people with long-term mental health issues and people with low socioeconomic status where high emotional stress and trauma is a part of daily life. Further they mean that in case of people who have hard lives in general the meaning-making process is different and could have a negative effect to their mental health.

There are theories that the very existence of suffering is caused by an inability to extract meaning out of the situation at hand. For example, when a trauma such as a big loss happens, the person afflicted is momentarily left lost and disoriented in these new and unfamiliar circumstances that is now their life. They must process what has happened and come to terms with what the change means to their life, if goals and direction need to be reevaluated for them to again function and know their direction. A new meaning can emerge, and transformation through suffering has happened. (Hall 2016, 224.)

Research on narratives of recovering addicts has shown that structuring and making meaning of the life story is not always beneficial. Without a sense of ownership as well as a redemptive element in the personal story as well as acceptance of personal change and growth, telling the personal narrative might have a negative effect. (Dunlop & Tracy 2013, 75.)

This is relevant to the narrative work in relation to the expert by experience education as we are dealing with participants with exceptionally difficult life stories. It needs to be taken into consideration when constructing the workshop as to prevent hurting the participants and promote growth. The participants have already in the application process taken a personal decision to make something useful and meaningful out of their past which shows a reflective nature, and this is a protective factor against further detrimental mental health. In starting the expert by experience education, they have supposedly taken a step in admitting

that their suffering has not been meaningless and now should be put to use for themselves and others.

Three indicators of narrative meaning making have been identified

- Coherence
- Inclusion of emotional and cognitive state before, during and after the story, what a person felt, what they realized what they were thinking.
- Reflective insight, a sense of how the events changed them and what they learned. (Sales et. al. 2013, 98.)

The creating of coherence requires not only remembering, reminiscing or reciting to others the past experiences and events but to attach an explanation and evaluation to them. There is also a level of gaining wisdom from past experience, to extract knowledge that will be useful for the future. (Dunlop & Tracy 2013, 66.)

The perceived center of control has been shown vital to the ability to make positive mental health changes in relation to constructing the life story. Individuals who think the control is within themselves benefit more than people who think there is an external point of control. (Sales et. al. 2013, 99.)

This can be connected to the level of acceptance of personal responsibility and not identifying with the victim-role. A victim is entitled to justice, some kind of revenge on the outside, rather than internal change of the own thoughts, feelings and actions. This is interesting from a Christian point of view as forgiveness of others is a prerequisite for forgiveness of the self and the forgiveness of God. As stated in the lord prayer "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us". We are in this sentence asking God to forgive us in the same manner and extension as we forgive them who we feel have wronged us.

We see the same thought in Matthew 5:23-24 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled

to them; then come and offer your gift” (NIV). This may be tied together with the perceived locus of control and the importance of accepting the own part in a situation and taking action instead of claiming the only change should be done from the people around you.

In light of this, taking in to account the spiritual maturity as well as the personal characteristics and beliefs of the person, it is not always beneficial to construct the life story. Individuals who are not open to the idea of personal responsibility and internal locus of control might benefit from simply putting the past behind them (Sales et. al. 2013, 99) and not construct further stories of helplessness and cultivate bitterness and will for retribution.

Research made specifically on how recovering addicts construct their narratives and talk about their past shows that the way they talk about their past and using has a high effect on their mental well-being. The inclusion of the self and the own part in the addiction seems vital for sustainable recovery.

In their article Dunlop & Tracy identify two distinctly different and conflicting levels of autobiographical reasoning and construction. These two are: Focus on personal change in relation to the life story and focus on personal stability.

The focus on personal change is important for the individual to realize that they are moving forward and not standing still in life. The focus on personal stability is important to the sense of identity, what parts of the person that stay the same through trying times and changes, this perspective ties the person to their past and future and creates needed coherence. (Dunlop & Tracy 2013, 66.)

They conclude that the balance between the two levels of reasoning needs to be at an appropriate level and that a too strong focus on self-stability is connected to hubristic pride and aggression while focus on self-change corresponds with feelings authentic pride and mental wellbeing. (Dunlop & Tracy 2013, 75.)

The inclusion of a redemptive element is important in the stories of change and making meaning of challenging life stories. In the case of recovering addicts there is often a defined situation or series of event that is described as the absolute turning point, where the individual has a deep realization and a change in their personality resulting in a decision for sobriety. In research conducted with AA members it showed that those who had redemptive elements to their story after a period of time were in better physical and mental health than those who did not. (Dunlop & Tracy 2013, 66.)

In conclusion, the manner of which the participant works with their experiences and attached feelings and thoughts matter a great deal. This makes the need for the storytelling workshop and guidance in this construction evident.

7 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The process of this thesis and product development started with a smaller version of the autobiographical work in the expert by experience education during spring 2017. This took place in relation to a project management study module including a project placement. This pilot project took place the last two months of the expert by experience education 2016-2017. There the need and relevance for a concrete tool for constructing the life story was made clear, partly through evaluation of the expert by experience education as well as evaluation of the autobiographical work.

The results of the 2017 project which provided support in formulating the life story where good and one of the outcomes was that KRAN rf offered me employment as the trainer for the coming expert by experience education in Turku 2017-2018. When planning the education, I made the decision to incorporate the autobiographical work continually over of the 6 months of the training. This work was evaluated and documented and finally compiled into the product, the workshop instructions.

This first project served as base for the planning of this thesis and the product. One of the most valuable lessons from the 2017 project was the need for a clear plan to provide to the participants with and that too much autonomy and freedom might work against the goal to be efficient and action oriented.

The planning of the thesis as such and therefor the initial evaluation was made and articulated in the thesis proposal 17/5 – 2017. The idea was at that time to create a curriculum for the whole expert by experience education and the deadline for graduation was in December of 2017. This plan needed to be revised to better suit the current need and timeframe. The idea and plan were adjusted into being a workshop on autobiographical work, the product being a set of instructions that coming educators can use as a complementary tool to the existing guidelines for the expert by experience education.

The thesis proposal contained a risk analysis with four main risks defined: Restricted time schedule, possible conflicting views of the student and work life organization as to the content and strategy of the product, students limited knowledge of pedagogy and students limited knowledge of Finnish language as much materials on the subject are in Finnish.

A SWOT analysis was conducted in preparation of the initial project in autobiographical storytelling and it turned out to be relevant to the thesis product development. A SWOT analysis is a tool for assessing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in a project or process. In this analysis the strengths were defined as: Participatory planning, motivated participants, personal interest in success. Weaknesses included that the process is emotionally challenging as well as time consuming. Artistic freedom and use of new tools was mentioned as opportunities and in the area of threats mental and physical sickness as well as insecurity in the education and participants was brought to light.

I chose to build the process on the CABLE method and I divided the study days into sections with themes based on this method: IN, OUT, ACTION (exposure) and CHANGE. In this way I had a skeleton to work with even though the whole planning was not done before the actual training started. The training started on October 13th 2017 and roughly took place every other weekend for 6 months. I used the base planning I had done and systematically planned the hours to be held approximately a week in advance.

Evaluation is a tool to assess the effectiveness of a project or work processes. The first stage is concerned with researching a need and defining a goal. When the goals are set and the work begins it is important so have a way to measure if the current plan is realistic and if practice is producing the desired results. Evaluation is also connected to transparency and accountability for the work. (Green & South 2006, 3.)

An important part of the continuous assessment of the process was that after every day the participants had the chance to express their feeling and thoughts

concerning the content and execution, as well as reflect on their own development. In addition to this a written evaluation was done by a socionom student who did her practical placement during the training. As the feedback was continuously positive the original plan did not need to be altered.

7.1 Product description

The product is an 18-page paper with the translated title “Autobiographical work – an addition to the expert by experience education”. The instructions are written in the same form and format as this thesis. The content is based on the CABLE process and the exercises have been implemented and evaluated in the expert by experience education. The instructions are written aimed at the trainers of and professionals who might be involved in planning the training.

The paper consists of a cover page, table of content, introduction, chapters on structure and timeframe. Then the main text is divided into four parts, “in”, “out”, “action” and “change” as corresponding to the CABLE process. Each of these parts has subchapters containing the recommended exercise for each weekend course held. The paper ends with an appendix consisting of ready to hand out assignments. The paper is in Swedish, which is the language and context in which the work-life organization operate within.

For each phase of life, the participants are asked to make timelines and a written assignment, the timeline is more general and the written assignment more specific. The idea is that during this process the participants produce material that they may use as experts by experience in for example lectures.

The chapter “OUT”, sixth and seventh weekend have exercises on strength, values and the self in relation to society. Example of these exercises are a personal SWOT-analysis and to make a Bronfenbrenner ecological system. Here the participants are also given an exposure assignment, where they are asked to

as neutrally as possible observe a place they are likely to be active as experts by experience in.

Part 3, the chapter on "ACTION" has instructions on goal setting and project planning. The final part "CHANGE" deals with working on the project chosen by the participants and the final graduation day.

7.2 Results and evaluation

The main results are the personal and professional development of the participants process as documented in the evaluation below. The other, more concrete result is the workshop instructions (see appendix 3) on how to replicate this process, which have been handed over to the work organization for future use.

To assess whether the plan and the exercises were effective and appropriate to reach defined goals a specific evaluation was made on the subject. Evaluation questions were formulated on the aims and goals of the workshop stated in this thesis that after completed participation the participants will have:

- Get experience in groupwork and sharing their feelings and process.
- Write out and share their life story from appropriate perspective and become aware of its theme and message.
- Formulate their personal values and the values of the group. Formulated their own strengths.
- Define some goals in their lives and as experts by experience as well as a plan to work towards the said goals.

Four participants answered the evaluation sheet and here follows a summary of the responses.

The question “Do you think you have gained insight into the experience that will be used in your upcoming tasks as expert by experience?” was graded 1 – 5 with one being “No, not at all” and five being “Yes, absolutely”. On the question 100% answered five, “yes absolutely” indicating that the overall concept is relevant and effective.

Three questions concerned the group work process: If they thought that the group spirit had been good, if they have felt confident and safe in sharing personal feelings and facts about themselves in the group and if they thought the group exercises they had done were effective in getting to know each other. On all these questions 4 out of 4 participants answered 5 “yes, absolutely” again indicating that the process and exercises were effective in reaching the goals.

In evaluating the degree of experienced peer support 100% answered 4 or 5 with 5 standing for “yes absolutely” on the 1-5 scale. The questions asked was how important the peer support was for the process and how good the peer support in their group has been.

In evaluating the overall learning process, the participants were asked to estimate their level of insight into the own story in the beginning and current state of the process.

The statements posed were “My insight into my life story was at the beginning of the process...” and “My insight into my life story is now...” with the options “bad”, “ok”, “adequate”, “very good” and “excellent”. Three participants estimated their insight at the beginning of the process as being “ok” and one as “bad”. Their estimation on their insight at the time of the evaluation was “adequate” for one and “very good” for three. This is a clear indication of progress in all the participants.

On the question if they felt that they had systematically gone through their childhood, adolescence, and adulthood they all answered 4 or 5 with 5 meaning “yes absolutely”.

They were asked if they thought they had the chance to explore and define their personal strengths, all participants answered 4 on the 1-5 scale used.

The next question asked was if they thought that have gained insight into who they are in relation to society, also here three participants answered 5 and one 4. All the participants considered that they had a chance to reflect on their own values during the process and thought that they had gotten the opportunity to set up goals for themselves.

The next section of the evaluation was concerned with the content of the workshop. The evaluation showed that all the participants considered that it was clear what they were doing and why, that the content was well planned, that the course was set up in a way that promoted participation by all and that the workload was appropriate.

This feedback clearly shows that the work method, process and exercises used are effective in reaching the goals.

7.3 STATEMENTS

The work life organization KRAN wrote a statement (Appendix 4) after the completion of the expert by experience training 2017-2018 and receiving the product the instructions. The statement confirms the need for the product as well as the apparent success of the implementation. They agree that the appropriate themes are being brought forward in the material and that thorough knowledge about the own life story is vital to becoming a successful expert by experience.

They do call attention, to the small number of participants and that it is unsure if the results would be as successful in a larger group. They conclude by saying that the product will work as a good complementary tool and inspiration when planning the training.

Åbo Underrättelser, the local newspaper, attended the graduation ceremony, which also was the implementation of the expert's final project. The experts by experience performed a one-hour storytelling session based on the material they had gathered during the training. The title of the news article was "the importance of destigmatizing mental health problems and addiction" and the journalist wrote that "you can clearly tell that the new experts really have learned how to formulate experiences into stories that can be shared and understood when [the experts] share their stories it is captivating, thought-provoking and from time to time humoristic"

One of the experts says in the article that "We have taken back the power over our story and formulated both our unique and common experiences into stories that can be shared. Shared with others to hopefully strengthen, support and guide others who like us have experiences in addiction and mental health problems." (Åbo Underrättelser).

8 DISCUSSION

The use of the CABLE method proved efficient and indeed led to participation and what appears to be sustainable change. Participation in public and political affairs is one of the human rights defined by the United Nations and an important step towards empowerment of marginalized individuals (OHCHR). All the participants were offered employment during or after the training and several newspaper articles were written offering them a platform to speak in the public arena. These developments seem to be a step towards empowerment and a step away from the image of the service user as someone who is not contributing to society. The view in this case really seems to have shifted from a pitiful receiver of services to a resource of knowledge and an addition to the workforce.

The CABLE method worked in favor of the autobiographical work for several reasons. Its structure of starting with the self, extending to society and at the end implementing a project was highly suitable for the training. Partly because it made the participants less of students the more the process goes on and increasingly takes on the role and responsibility as facilitators. At the end project, the graduation day the participants were independent and the trainer could with confidence greet them as colleagues in the social work field.

As expressed by the work-life organization the material can be used as a tool for planning future training. One of the challenges I faced as a trainer was the lack of material, space and time for planning the education and material such as this would have made the process easier. It is my hope that the workshop instructions, as well as this thesis, will aid future trainers in the work "behind the scenes".

8.1 Ethics

As in any work dealing with people the question of confidentiality is key. For the evaluation and feedback to be used from the participants a signed agreement was made (see appendix 1). In addition to this agreement, it was explained that

the thesis will be published and open for anyone to read. As it is stated what education under what organization and what year is being used it is not 100% anonymous. An effort was made to not single out any answers and make them easily distinguished.

Another ethical concern, which lays at the base of the whole work is the responsibility of the trainer to prevent the participants against sharing their stories in a way that they will regret, damage their reputation or in other ways violate their integrity. It is a fine line the experts are walking when coming out with their experiences, diagnosis and past substance abuse. The participants have full autonomy and own their stories, they are free to share however they want to whoever they want. The important thing here is that they are aware of what they are sharing, what meaning and message they are sending out and the possible consequences it might have. The responsibility of the trainer, therefore, does not lay in controlling or editing the stories of the participants but to have a continuous conversation with them and together reflect on the content and message of the stories.

8.2 Professional development

The results, both the progress of the participants and the completion of the actual product has great value and meaning in my professional and personal development. It is a privilege to see people grow and develop, and indeed grow with them.

One of the risks defined in the initial process was that work with the personal narrative could be emotionally challenging. This did prove to be true, but as stated in this thesis several times it is in the challenges real change and renewed wisdom is found. This process also becomes part of my own narrative and culminates in the exchange of roles from a student of social work to an accredited professional.

One of the personal challenges in this process was the fact that I both wrote the thesis and acted as the trainer for the education alone. I did have the support of my thesis supervisor and received assistance from the work-life organization in practical arrangements but in the end the actual work with the clients, the planning and implementing of the process was up to me and me alone.

The completion and success of the process has given me the confidence I need to leave my study years and enter the work life.

In my professional role, I have become a more organized and confident group leader and lecturer. The support and love I have gotten from the participants have made a positive difference in my personal development as well as given me room to experiment and take chances in my professional work has resulted in useful lessons and knowledge.

The most valuable lesson I have learned in this 6 months with the participants is to plan well, trust the process (and God) and let the participants unfold freely and at their own pace. I learned to listen better and give more space and the importance of not having an agenda when working with humans.

9 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

In conclusion, the aim to develop a tool to deepen the understanding of the personal narrative was reached. The participants during the 2017-2019 training have expressed in evaluations and statements that they have gained personal and professional growth through the process. On the question of reliability, one factor that should be brought to light is the small group participating in the training, four out of five participants completed the training and took part in the evaluation. I believe that the small group contributed to the success of the process, it is unsure if the results can be applied to a larger group. One of the strengths of this group and process were that every single participant got ample time and space to share their stories.

The stories and material the experts produced during the process are hope-inspiring and they are well balanced in clarifying the past and impact of the mental health illness or addiction without going into horror stories or exposing too much private information. The methodical work with the narrative focusing on meaning and coherence seem to have worked to preserve their integrity and give a professional impression.

The usefulness of the product can be questioned as if was designed for a very specific purpose and in its current form it is unsure if it can be used as a stand-alone product for autobiographical work. The process of the expert by experience education with the themes and lectures on mental health issues and substance abuse where an important part of the personal and professional development of the participants. Another recommendation for further work is the implementation of the workshop instructions with the next expert by experience group. Evaluation should be made and there is plenty of space to develop the product further, it could also be altered to be able to work as a stand-alone product for other targets groups.

The CABLE process and its clear stages, as well as its action-oriented and strength-based approach, proved to be a successful work tool. It is my hope that this thesis can inspire to further experiment with the CABLE method and let it grow into new forms and areas of usage.

The “selling power” of the experts was indeed raised and all of the participants went on to be offered employment and/or gigs as experts by experience, an unexpected success that shows the interest and need for them in the social and healthcare sector. The results, mainly the success and positive progress of the participants but also to some extent the actual product, has value in the field of service user participation and more specifically the experts by experience in Swedish speaking Finland.

Several of the experts did, however, experience the work they got as taxing and needed to cut down soon after starting. Here we have an important lesson to learn and an excellent opportunity for further work. One thing that would be important, and a recommended part of the CABLE process is to have a follow up a few months after the process. Another idea would be to have contact with the workplaces and develop material to make the employment process easier and more fruitful for both parties. Although the experts are professional one should not forget that they do have issues, such as diagnosis of their own, that might require special arrangements. They are experts on their own experience and may communicate hope to service users in bad condition, but they have not had any training or experience in treating people in acute crisis. It is important to not put the experts in to demanding circumstances such as work independently with acutely ill patients. Supervision and guidance are important, and it is more appropriate to see the expert as an assistant to a professional, such as a doctor or social worker when dealing with demanding clients/patients. The experts, if working independently with client work should be paired more stable service users. Working with people, especially in mental health care and substance abuse services is demanding, even for people with occupational degrees. The experts are a compliment to the professionals and should not take over existing tasks but provide new perspectives.

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APPENDIX 1 AGREEMENT OF USE OF EVALUATION

**Avtal om användning av insamlade uppgifter vid KRAN:s erfarenhetsexpertutbildning oktober 2017-april 2018**

Under erfarenhetsexpertutbildningens gång samlas feedback in regelbundet av deltagarna. Uppgifterna kommer att användas i utbildare My Ström-Rantamäkis slutarbete vid yrkeshögskolan DIAK och för utveckling av KRAN:s erfarenhetsexpertutbildning. De insamlade uppgifterna behandlas konfidentiellt.

Jag ger härmed mitt samtycke till att min feedback behandlas och används i enlighet med det ovanstående.

Datum och ort

Underskrift och namnförtydligand

APPENDIX 2 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Questions 1-12 was graded on the scale 1-5 with 1 meaning “No, not at all” and 5 meaning “Yes, absolutely”

1. Do you think you have gained insight into the experience that will be used in your upcoming tasks as an experience expert?
Answers on scale 1 -5

2. Do you think the group spirit has been good?
Answers on scale 1 -5

3. Do you feel that you have been safe to share personal feelings and facts about yourself?
Answers on scale 1 -5

4. Do you feel that the group exercises we have done have been efficient for you to get to know each other?
Answers on scale 1 -5

5. How important do you consider the peer support to the process?
Answers on scale 1 -5

6. Do you think that you had good peer support in the group?
Answers on scale 1 -5

7. How important do you consider the morning and afternoon reflections to be for the process?
Answers on scale 1 -5

8. Do you think that you have been able to systematically go through your childhood, adolescence and adulthood?

Answers on scale 1 -5

9. Do you think that you have had the chance to define and explore your strengths?

Answers on scale 1 -5

10. Do you think that you have gained larger insight into who you are in relation to society?

Answers on scale 1 -5

11. Do you think that you have had the chance to reflect on your personal values during the process?

Answers on scale 1 -5

12. Do you think that you have gotten to formulate goals for yourself?

Answers on scale 1 -5

The learning process: the questions 13-14 were asked with the options to answer "Bad", "Ok", "adequate", "good" and "excellent"

13. My insight into my life story was at the beginning of the process...

14. My insight into my life story is now...

Questions on evaluating the skill and responsiveness of the educator, 15 - 22 the possible answers were "do not agree at all", "do not agree", "no opinion", "agree" and "totally agree"

15. The educator was an efficient lecturer

16. Presentations were clear and organized

17. The educator made things interesting

18. The educator used the time with the group efficiently

19. The educator was present and helpful
20. The educator could give constructive feedback
21. The educator gave room for reflection and comments

Question 22 – 25 on the content of the workshop. The answers possible were: “do not agree at all”, “do not agree”, “No opinion”, “agree” and “totally agree”

22. It was clear what we did and why
23. The content of the workshop was well planned
24. The workload was appropriate
25. The workshop was organized in such a way that everyone could participate

The questions 26 – 29 had voluntary option of writing an answer freely

26. What parts of the workshop were most useful?
27. How could the workshop be improved?
28. Voluntary comment

APPENDIX 3 THE PRODUCT

SJÄLVBIOGRAFISKT BERÄTTANDE

Ett tillägg till erfarenhetsexpertutbildningen hos KRAN rf

My Ström-Rantamäki
Utbildare för KRAN rf:s
Erfarenhetsexpertutbildning
2017–2018 i Åbo

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1 INTRODUKTION

Det här dokumentet är ett resultat av den tiden jag spenderade med de blivande erfarenhetsexperterna i Åbo 2017–2018. Det var en ära att fungera som deras utbildare och jag skulle säga att de lärde mig mer än jag någonsin lärde dem. När jag fick uppgiften att hålla i och planera den kommande utbildningen insåg jag att det fanns ett behov för material till kommande utbildare med vägledning och förslag för hur man kan gå tillväga för att planera både de enskilda tillfällena och helhetsprocessen. Jag tog då tillfället i akt och kombinerade detta planerande med skrivandet av mitt slutarbete vid Diaconia University of Applied Sciences.

Detta material kan användas som inspiration när ni planerar, det finns självklart utrymme att utveckla detta material mer, och utbildningarna behöver även formas efter de gruppmedlemmar och ledare man har just det året. Jag nämner även flera teorier och metoder här utan att utveckla dem närmre, tanken är att utbildaren på egen hand bekantar sig med de koncept och metoderna när den planerar utbildningen.

Det jag har upplevt som viktigt är att som utbildare ha en tydlig plan att presentera för deltagarna men sedan hålla dig öppen och flexibel för att göra förbättringar och förändringar på basen av deltagarnas feedback. Samla feedback. Var inte rädd för att göra fel. Och framför allt, njut av detta tillfälle för ömsesidigt utbyte av kunskaper och erfarenheter.

My 2018

2 BAKGRUND

På basen av feedback från tidigare deltagare i erfarenhetsexpertutbildningar har det framkommit ett behov att få mer stöd och struktur i bearbetandet av livshistorien. Erfarenhetsexperterna förväntas vara just det, experter på deras egen erfarenhet och historia, detta kräver noggrann analys både av det personliga narrativet, samt den egna personen. Att kunna använda sina personliga erfarenheter i offentliga och professionella sammanhang kräver förberedelse, dels för att vara klar och tydlig med sitt budskap, dels för att skydda den egna integriteten.

Detta dokument innehåller ett kursupplägg som följer parallellt erfarenhetsexpertutbildningen.

3 STRUKTUR

Kursen är uppdelad i fyra olika delar med olika delmål. Det slutgiltiga målet är att deltagarna efter avslutad kurs ska ha en klar bild över sitt eget narrativ i relation till deras erfarenheter. De ska ha delat sin historia med gruppen samt ha definierat mål för framtiden.

1. IN – Den första delen riktar sig inåt mot den egna personen, vem är jag? Här ingår även byggandet av en trygg grupp.

2. UT – Här undersöker deltagarna sig själva i relation till samhället och utforskar sina egna styrkor och resurser

3. HANDLING - Målsättning och projektplanering.

4. FÖRÄNDRING – Projektutförande. Definiera en personlig plan för ytterligare åtgärder och förändringar.

I slutet av processen kommer deltagarna att ha:

- Erfarenhet av gruppbyggande och delning av känslor och processer.
- Skrivit och delat sin livshistoria ur lämpligt perspektiv och vara medveten om dess tema och budskap.
- Definierat sina personliga värderingar, formulerat sina egna styrkor samt utforskat sin plats i samhället.
- Definierat vissa mål i sina liv och som experter med erfarenhet samt ha utfört ett gemensamt projekt.

4 TIDSRAM

KRAN rf:s erfarenhetsexpertutbildningar tar i allmänhet ca 6 månader i anspråk och består av ungefär 24 närstudiedagar. Dessa är utspridda på 12 veckoslutsträffar. Erfarenhetsexpertutbildningen följer rekommendationer av Mielen Avain och är indelad i fyra delar: "Vad är erfarenhetsexpertis", "kunskap vid sidan av erfarenhet", "jag som erfarenhetsexpert" och "erfarenhetsexpertis i praktiken". Detta materialet du håller i kan alltså användas som ett komplement till denna struktur. När jag genomförde detta använde jag förmiddagarna åt det självbiografiska arbetet och eftermiddagen var planerade enligt Mielen Avain-riktlinjerna och där hade vi för det mesta gästföreläsare.

Närstudiedagarna är uppdelade jämnt mellan dessa ämnen, dvs två till tre veckoslut per del. Den processen som det här dokumentet beskriver, det självbiografiska arbetet följer inte parallellt med dessa andra delar.

Del 1 rekommenderar jag fem veckoslut, alltså 10 halvdagar.

Del 2 rekommenderar jag två veckoslut, 4 halvdagar

Del 3 rekommenderar jag två veckoslut, 4 halvdagar

Del 4 rekommenderar jag två veckoslut, 4 halvdagar

Det är dock inte så att de olika delarna är helt fristående från varandra, och de flyter in över varandra, det biografiska arbetet fortsätter hela tiden, lika så att utforska styrkor. Det viktiga är att tillräckligt med tid läggs på det självbiografiska och att sedan projektplaneringen sätter i gång i tid och att det avslutas med genomförande av projektet.

Varje dag rekommenderas att börja med en "morgonreflektion" vilket betyder att deltagarna svarar på ett antal frågor, som kan variera något, men de reflekterar över förra gången, det egna måendet och förväntningar på dagen. Varje

deltagare får tala ostört och resten av gruppen lyssnar utan att ge kommentarer eller frågor. Det är att rekommendera att samla in en enkel skriftlig feedback efter varje veckoslut, så att deltagarnas åsikter verkligen tas i beaktande i planeringen. Det är även värdefullt för organisationen att ha skriftlig utvärdering.

5 DEL 1 IN

Första veckoslutet GRUPPEN:

Den första och andra träffen bör ägnas åt att bygga gruppen och odla förtroende, eftersom deltagarna kommer att dela personliga känslor och fakta om sig själva, de behöver känna sig trygga och fria att göra det. Dessa två första dagar rekommenderas övningar i att lära känna varandra och samarbeta. Här följer några exempel på övningar som kan användas men det behövs fler och det är fritt fram att variera dem.

Använd även detta första veckoslut till att tillsammans sätta upp regler för gruppen, tex angående tystnadsplikt, hålla tider och regler för mobiltelefoner. Diskutera även vilka gemensamma värderingar ni har och hur de tar sig uttryck i gruppen.

EXEMPELÖVNING 1 Bokstavspresentation

Material: Papper och penna

Deltagarna skriver alla sitt namn på ett papper, för varje bokstav skriver de en egenskap de tycker stämmer in på dem. De får ca 5 min på sig att göra detta. Sedan går ordet runt i gruppen och var och en presenterar vad de skrivit. Det är bra att ha en lista på olika egenskaper att lägga på bordet för inspiration.

EXEMPELÖVNING 2 Kasta boll

Material: Bollar

Deltagarna ställer sig i ring och kastar bollar till varandra. Öka och minska antalet bollar för att öka eller minska svårighetsgraden. Uppmuntra deltagarna att hålla fokus i mitten av ringen för att hålla sig öppen för kommande bollar. Denna övning

ökar koncentration och samarbete. Den funkar även som en "isbrytare" då folk ofta tycker att den är rolig.

ÖVNING 3 Brev till dig själv

Be deltagarna skriva ett brev till sig själva som sedan ges tillbaka på sista dagen.

HEMUPPGIFTER

- Gör en tidslinje över ditt liv.

Spendera ca 15 – 30 min för att skriva en lista med händelser i livet som varit betydelsefulla. Både positiva, stabila och negativa saker. En bra historia är flerdimensionell, konflikter och motgångar är det som gör en berättelse intressant. Försök att sätta in något ungefär vartannat till var femte år.

Sätt sedan händelserna i kronologisk ordning och skriv ungefär hur gammal du var. Post it lappar kan vara till hjälp här för att få saker i rätt ordning.

Ta ett papper och lägg det horisontellt, rita en linje tvärs över pappret med födelseåret till vänster och nuvarande år till höger. Dela den sedan på mitten, och skriv där vilket år som är helt i mitten på ditt liv. Jag är född 1987, så mitt "mitten-år" är 2002 (mitt födelseår (1987) plus min ålder (30) delat på två (15) = 2002)

Placera sedan in händelserna på linjen, om du vill kan du placera upplevelser du tolkar som negativa under linjen och händelser du tolkar som positiva över linjen.

Andra veckoslutet, DRAMATURGI:

Andra träffen föreslår jag att man går genom grunder i dramaturgi, Vad är en historia? Det finns ett innan, en vändpunkt och ett efter. Hur är man annorlunda "efter" jämfört med "innan"?

Deltagarna presenterar sina tidslinjer och man kan ta tillfället i akt att diskutera om de kan se några vändpunkter.

HEMUPPGIFT: Deltagarna uppmanas göra en tidslinje över åldrarna 0-13 år. De väljer sedan ut ett bra barndomsminne och skriver även en fri text om detta minne. Kom ihåg dramaturgin.

Tips för berättande: En sak som är bra när man berättar en berättelse för att göra den intressant är att variera mellan handling, beskrivning, känsla.

Tex: **handling:** Jag gick upp på vinden **Beskrivning:** Det var dammigt och spindelväv överallt **Känsla:** jag kände mig rädd, som jag var en inbrottstjuv i mitt eget hem. **Handling:** jag smög fram till lådan **beskrivning:** den var mindre än jag mindes den. **Känsla:** det kändes som att någon tittade på mig. Jag skakade av mig känslan, tog mod till mig, satte mig ner och öppnade lådan snabbt innan jag hann ångra mig.

Tredje veckoslutet BARNDOMEN:

Detta veckoslut ägnas åt barndomen. Deltagarna delar sina tidslinjer över barndomen och läser upp sina texter om ett barndomsminne.

HEMUPPGIFT:

- Deltagarna gör en tidslinje över tonåren, ca 13-20 år

- Skriv en text från ungdomen med titeln "kära dagbok" en fri text inspirerad av ett minne i formen av ett dagboksinslägg.

Tex: "Kära Dagbok, idag var första dagen efter sommarlovet. Nu är det bara en termin kvar på grundskolan, jag vet inte hur jag känner inför det. Spännande kanske. Men också jobbigt..."

Fjärde veckoslutet UNGDOMEN:

Under detta veckoslut går man genom hemuppgifterna om ungdomen. Varje deltagare får först dela sin tidslinje. Uppmuntra alltid till diskussion och reflektion efter varje övning och genomgång. Sedan delar deltagarna sina "Kära dagboks texter".

HEMUPPGIFT:

- Gör en tidslinje för vuxenlivet, från 20-nutid.
- Börja formulera ett tal på ca 20 minuter som kan fungera som grund för deras kommande föreläsningar. Till detta talet ska de fundera över vilket tema de har, vad för titel de kan ha, samt tre huvudpånger för att stödja sitt tema.

Tips: Vi använde grunderna för hur man gör ett så kallat TED-talk inspirerat av boken "Talk like TED – 9 secrets to public speaking" av Carmine Gallo.

Femte veckoslutet VUXENLIVET:

Här behandlas vuxenlivet, de delar sina hemuppgifter. Tidslinjen över vuxenlivet och grunderna till 20-minuters talet. Deltagarna går genom sina teman och huvudpunkter. Arbetet med detta tal fortsätter fast gruppen officiellt går över till del 2.

Detta tal är grunden experterna gör för deras kommande föreläsningar i arbetslivet. De fortsätter att utvecklas och ge deltagarna utrymme att flera gånger öva och få feedback på dessa tal ända fram till avslutningen. På så vis får de bra material och träning i att tala inför grupp.

6 DEL 2 UT

Den andra delen, fokuserar på styrkor och deltagarna granskar sig själva i förhållande till samhället. En personlig reflektion om värdegrunder ska inkluderas, vad är viktigt för mig? Vilka egenskaper beundrar jag hos andra och mig själv? Arbetet med deltagarnas tal är fortfarande en pågående process och ta upp uppgiften varje veckoslut och be dem redogöra för det material de har så att ledaren och gruppen kan ge hjälp och feedback.

Sjätte veckoslutet STYRKOR OCH VÄRDERINGAR:

Vid de här tillfällena görs olika övningar i att hitta sina styrkor, exempelvis en personlig SWOT analys (se bilaga 1). Förslag på värderingsövning är "heta stolen" där ledaren läser ett påstående och deltagarna byter plats om de håller med och sitter kvar om de inte håller med. Efter varje fråga uppmanar ledaren deltagarna att förklara varför de valde att sitta kvar eller flytta sig.

Hemuppgift: Inför kommande veckoslut får Exposure-uppgift. (se bilaga 2).

Sjunde veckoslutet: JAG OCH OMVÄRLDEN

Under det sjunde veckoslutet ligger fokus på personen i relation till omvärlden. Deltagarna presenterar sina exposure-uppgifter. Sedan kan man förslagsvis mycket kortfattat presentera Bronfenbrenners ekologiska systemteori och ge dem i uppgift att själv fylla i de olika systemen. Ge deltagarna minst en halvtimme för denna uppgiften och be dem sedan att presentera sina system för gruppen.

Hemuppgift: Personliga mål. Deltagarna får i uppgift att formulera personliga mål. Här ingår även deras plan och mål som kommande erfarenhetsexperter. Designa gärna uppgiften efter SMART-modellen, alltså specifika, mätbara, accepterade, realistiska och med en bestämd tidsram.

7 DEL 3 HANDLING

Nu har ni kommit till det skede i utbildningen då det är dags att ta konkreta steg mot positiv förändring. Deltagarna har nu grundligt gått genom sina livshistorier, talat om sina värderingar och styrkor. Nu är det dags att gå framåt.

Åttonde veckoslutet MÅL

Gruppen går genom hemuppgiften om uppsatta mål. Ha sedan en session där ni använder samma metod som hemuppgiften fast gruppen sätter upp ett gemensamt mål för resten av utbildningen, vid avslutad utbildning, vad ska vi ha uppnått? Detta ligger till grund för kommande projektplanering.

Nionde veckoslutet PROJEKTPLANERING

Detta veckoslut arbetar gruppen med projektplanering. Det gemensamma projektet är gruppens avslutningstillfälle. Gruppen tillsammans med ledaren funderar och bestämmer tillsammans vad de skulle vilja göra, de kan till exempel läsa upp några av de texter de producerat under utbildningens gång, ha en workshop, en paneldebatt, levande bibliotek osv. Det viktiga är att de får använda sig av det de lärt sig under utbildningen.

Svara tillsammans med gruppen på följande frågor i relation till projektet: Vad? Var? Hur? När? Varför?

Hemuppgift: Ni bestämmer tillsammans i gruppen vad som behöver göras till nästa tillfälle så att projektplaneringen går framåt.

8 DEL 4 FÖRÄNDRING

Denna sista del är praktisk och innefattar arbete och slutförande av projektet, avslutningen. Arbetet med projektet tjänar även som en förberedelse på att processen faktiskt tar slut vilket kan vara känslösamt. Detta kapitel är kort eftersom det är beroende av projektet i fråga vad som behöver göras.

Tionde veckoslutet ARBETE MED PROJEKT

Under detta veckoslut arbetar ni med ert projekt, kom ihåg inbjudningar och marknadsföring. Bjud gärna in anställda i socialtjänsten och hälsovården samt journalister.

Elfte veckoslutet SLUTFÖRANDE AV PROJEKT/AVSLUTNING

Under detta sista veckoslut slutförs projektet och avslutningen. Se till att deltagarna har tillräckligt tid för att säga adjö till varandra, första dagen kan ägnas mer åt personliga avslut. Ge tillbaka deltagarna de brev de skrev till sig själva i början. Gör gärna någon avslutningsövning eller ritual som gör avslutet positivt och förbereder deltagarna på att gå vidare.

Sista dagen är själva avslutningsdagen och projektet som planerats genomförs.

BILAGA 1 SWOT

En SWOT-analys används ofta i projektplanering som ett redskap för att definiera styrkor, möjligheter, svagheter och risker. Men man kan även använda den för att definiera sina personliga styrkor och möjligheter samt bli medveten om vilka svagheter och risker som finns så att man kan förbereda sig på bästa sätt.

STYRKOR	SVAGHETER
MÖJLIGHETER	RISKER

UPPGIFT:

Fyll i de olika fälten

Styrkor – Vad är du bra på? Vad gör du bättre än andra? Vad har du för unika förmågor och talanger? Vad ser andra som dina styrkor? Vad är du stolt över hos dig själv? Vad tycker du om hos dig själv? Vad tycker du om att göra?

Svagheter – Vad kan du förbättra? Vad undviker du? På vilka områden har du mindre förmågor och talanger? Vad tror du andra skulle säga är dina svagheter? Vad behöver jag erkänna/ändra på/acceptera om mig själv?

Möjligheter – Vilka möjligheter finns det för dig? Tex i samhället och arbetslivet. Vilka förändringar/trender kan du dra nytta av? Tex ny teknologi, förändringar i samhället, ny policy eller förändringar i miljön/staden. Vilka av dina styrkor kan du göra till möjligheter? Vad händer i din närhet du kan dra nytta av (t ex stad, arbetsplats, familj osv)

Risker – Vad finns det för trender och förändringar som kan vara hot för dig? Vilka är dina konkurrenter och vad gör de? Vilka risker utgör dina svagheter för dig? Vilka hinder och utmaningar ser du i din närmsta framtid?

BILAGA 2 EXPOSURE-UPPGIFT

EXPOSURE BETYDER ATT UTSÄTTA ELLER BLOTTA SIG, MEN HÄR ÄR TANKEN MER ATT MAN UPPTÄCKER (ELLER UTSÄTTER SIG FÖR) EN SPECIFIK PLATS ELLER ORGANISATION.

ATT NI VÄLJER EN PLATS I ER OMGIVNING DÄR NI KOMMER ATT VERKA SOM EXPERTER SOM T EX SJUKVÅRDSBYGGNAD/ORGANISATION, SKOLA ELLER ANNAN SOCIAL INSTITUTION. OM DETTA INTE ÄR MÖJLIGT VÄLJ EN PLATS I ER OMGIVNING DÄR NI LEVER OCH VERKAR I ALLMÄNHET, TEX ETT TORG, APOTEK, TÅGSTATION OSV.

VALET AV PLATS FÖR ERT EXPOSURE HÖR IHOP MED MÅLET FÖR ERFARENHETSEXPERTUTBILDNINGEN; ATT NI EFTER AVSLUTAD UTBILDNING SKA KUNNA GÖRA POSITIV SKILLNAD DÄR NI ÄR, DETTA ÄR ETT STEG I ATT UPPTÄCKA VAR NI FAKTISKT ÄR OCH VAD SOM FINNS DÄR.

DE FRÅGOR NI SKA STÄLLA ER SJÄLVA ÄR: VAD SER JAG, VAD HÖR JAG, VAD KAN JAG LUKTA, SMAKA, KÄNNA? VILKA TANKAR FÅR JAG? TANKEN ÄR ATT FÖRSÖKA NÄRMA SIG STÄLLET SOM EN OPARTISK OBSERVATÖR. UTAN ATT GÖRA ANTAGANDEN, ELLER APPLICERA TEORIER.

TRE SÄTT ATT OBSERVERA:

ATT FRÅGA: ATT FRÅGA VÄNNER, SLÄKT OCH BEKANTA. DE KAN GE INFORMATION OM HUR PLATSEN/ORGANISATIONEN SOM OBSERVERAS UPPEVS (UTRYMMEN, VERKSAMHET OSV)

ATT FOTOGRAFERA: TA FOTO PÅ RUM, SKYLTA OSV. TA INTE BILDER PÅ FOLK UTAN TILLSTÅND, BEROENDE PÅ VAR NI ÄR KAN NI BEHÖVA BE OM TILLSTÅND FÖR ATT FOTA ALLS.

ATT ANTECKNA: SKRIV NER DET NI SER, KÄNNER, HÖR OSV. KOM IHÅG ATT BARA OBSERVERA UTAN ATT LÄGGA TOLKNINGAR ELLER VÄRDERINGAR.

NÄR NI KOMMER TILLBAKA HEM FRÅN SÅ SAMMANSTÄLLER NI ERA OBSERVATIONER OCH ANTECKNINGAR, HÄR KAN NI FUNDERA ÖVER VAD NI TYCKTE SAKNADES, BORDE ÄNDRAS PÅ VAD SOM VAR BRA OSV. NI KAN ÄVEN FUNDERA VAD DET VAR SOM GJORDE ATT NI FICK VISSA KÄNSLOR OSV PÅ PLATSEN NI VAR PÅ.

APPENDIX 4 STATEMENT FROM WORKLIFE PARTNER



My Ström-Rantamäki "Självbiografiskt berättande – ett tillägg till erfarenhetsexpert-utbildningen hos KRAN rf"

Utlåtande från KRAN rf

My Ström-Rantamäki gjorde sin praktik på KRAN våren 2017 och utförde då ett projekt om självbiografiskt berättande inom ramen för KRAN:s erfarenhetsexpertutbildning. Under projektet framkom att det bland deltagarna fanns behov av att arbeta mer på djupet med sina livshistorier än vad som gjorts under tidigare utbildningar. Idén föddes då att My, som sitt slutarbete för Diakonia University of Applied Sciences, kunde utveckla en produkt som kan användas som komplement till Sinnets nyckel-projektets rekommendationer som KRAN:s erfarenhetsexpertutbildning bygger på. Produkten har sedan utvecklats och testats under erfarenhetsexpertutbildningen där hon har fungerat som utbildare från oktober 2017 till april 2018.

Några viktiga faktorer för en lyckad erfarenhetsexpertutbildning är att deltagarna får kamratstöd av övriga deltagare samt får verktyg och stöd att bearbeta sin livshistoria och får den kunskap som behövs för att kunna jobba som och känna sig säkra i sin roll som erfarenhetsexperter.

För kamratstödet är det viktigt att bygga en god gruppdynamik och förtroende inom gruppen från början, vilket lyfts fram i materialet. Processen som beskrivs i materialet ger en chans för deltagarna att sätta upp mål, bearbeta sina livshistorier och verkligen bli experter på sina egna erfarenheter vilket ger en god grund för dem i deras kommande uppdrag efter utbildningen.

Den färdiga produkten har en genomtänkt struktur som av deltagarnas feedback att döma har fungerat väldigt bra. Gruppstorleken har dock varit liten och det är inte säkert att materialet direkt kan appliceras på en större grupp och få lika goda resultat. Utbildarens bakgrund inom drama och teater har troligen också varit till en fördel, och det är inte självklart att en utbildare som inte har denna bakgrundskunskap skulle lyckas lika bra med att integrera det självbiografiska berättandet i utbildningen. Materialet kan ändå fungera som inspiration vid planering och innehåller exempel på uppgifter och övningar som kan användas även fast man inte följer upplägget till punkt och pricka.

Sammanfattningsvis kan produkten fungera som ett bra komplement till erfarenhetsexpertutbildningen. Om den kommer att kunna användas från pärm till pärm i framtida utbildningar är beroende av bland annat gruppstorlek, deltagarna och utbildarna. Det är viktigt att komma ihåg, vilket även My betonar i introduktionen, att utbildningen bör formas efter deltagarna och att man som utbildare därför måste vara flexibel och lyhörd och kunna ändra programmet vid behov under utbildningens gång. I alla fall kan produkten fungera som inspiration och exempel på hur man kan bygga upp en utbildning.

Mette Strauss

Emma-Lena Lybäck

Verksamhetsledare, KRAN rf

Koordinator, KRAN rf