UCD AND SAOL PROJECT

From service user to social work examiner
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Celine Larkin
Hilda Loughran
Jean Shortt
SAOL AND SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS AND ME (GARY THE PHOTOGRAPER)
THE 2 SERVICE USERS WITH HILDA AND GARY DURING THE FIRST DISCUSSION SESSION IN UCD (DON’T MENTION THE HAIR)
WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

- SAOL and UCD and Addiction Studies for Social Workers Module
- Debate on level of Service Users’ Input and that it would be meaningful, respectful and beneficial to both parties
  - Power inequality - building a partnership/bridge
  - Choice
  - Duty of Care
- Research and a curriculum project (beginning 2013)
A CURRICULUM PROJECT

- Discussion with Service Users
- Relationship building between UCD and SAOL
- Design curriculum assessment
- Service Users provide written formative feedback on students’ work
- Service Users meet students to provide verbal feedback and discussion
HILDA CHARMS THE SAOL PARTICIPANTS BEFORE ONE OF THE DISCUSSION SESSIONS
AND 2 BECOME 12
2015 DISCUSSION GROUP
A RESEARCH PROJECT

- Tracked the process
- Focus group with Service Users
  - Reviewing the experience of writing the case study letter
  - Listening to the discussion as the letters were being read and ‘marked’
  - Reviewing the experience of ‘marking’ the letters
- Students submitted reflections
  - Yr 1: 21
  - Yr 2: 41
  - (Mirrored the involvement of the service users)
HOW DID WE DEAL WITH ‘PERCEPTIONS’

- Key to this working was having a mutual respectful relationship between service users and SAOL/UCD
PATHWAYS OF CARE TO RECOVERY

- What’s a service user?
- How can service users educate professionals?
- How is our perspective on service users hindering their recovery path?
- What do service users want to teach professionals?
- Do professionals want to learn from service users?
Opportunity to make things better for others
They do it kindly and non-resentfully
Some of this seems to have emerged from the ‘objectivity’ that arises from reading so many letters
Representative voice for other women is very important
Meeting in the capacity of someone who is giving feedback to ‘help you in your work’.
Listening to the service user in a broader sense:

- Service users perceptions of social work services
- Social workers perspectives on service users
- How do these perceptions interact and impact on the quality of care that a service user gets and a social worker gives?

Perceptions of other professionals: our experiences of publishers
PATHWAYS OF CARE TO RECOVERY

- Broad view of recovery
- Recovery needs to be inclusive; service users, even from an early stage have something to contribute to the education and training of the people who work with them - and are we open to this
- Recovery: giving back and its value is important. It is beneficial to the service users themselves - they felt respected and listened to and were giving something back
JEAN AND CELINE
Benefits to Service Users
- Self esteem
- Respect and recognition
- Role in the community/peers
- Contribution
- Relationship with Social Workers

Benefits to Students/Social Workers
- Addressed confidence issues
- Addressed competence issues
- Values
- Relationship with Service Users
SAOL SPREADS ITS WINGS

- SAOL now engaged with other 3rd level institutes helping with training:
  - DCU
  - TCD
  - NUIM
  - Liberties college
  - University of Warsaw
Service users should be involved in service delivery and in decision-making structures. UISCE are the named service for promoting/representing the service user voice.

5.1.46 Support evidence based practice: including develop collaborative relationships with 3rd level institutions.
THOUGHTS FROM JEAN AND CELINE

- It was a deep storyline and very real to life; to our lives. You relate to the Martha’s case because you have lived through some of it.
- Reading the social work students’ letters brought back memories of actually receiving letters like them.
- Hilda made the whole process understandable; she explained it well and made it manageable/approachable.
- We just wanted to help. There was no pleasure in writing negative comments.
- It made me think about other families and what they are going through right now.
- The experience of interacting with SW students was good; experience of interacting with Social Workers wasn’t always good.
- They came across as nice. That was a little surprising.
- You were representing other women who wouldn’t get a chance to put their opinions across and that was an honour.