



The EduCoRe Training Curriculum

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Introduction

After analysing the results of the interviews performed during the project's needs analysis phase, it was possible to create some guidelines for a training course; the content of which would correspond to the results and conclusions of the needs analysis phase.

The initial target group of the EduCoRe project consist of trainers and counsellors from European medical rehabilitation centres who face extremely diverse patient groups i.e. large variation regarding socio demographic characteristics and types of disabilities. It is obvious that in most cases the type of traumas and disabilities of the patients remarkably affect the social and working life of the staff and can cause worry or anxiety regarding the future. This is why it is necessary that the counsellors and trainers provide the patients with a tailor-made counselling and training program i.e. that the professional trainers and counsellors working with rehabilitation patients should be able to use the counselling and training material in a flexible way regarding its application to the patients needs.

A patient who has a disability after an accident or illness often finds himself or herself in a situation of uncertainty during the medical rehabilitation period: uncertainty regarding the duration of the illness, the full re-acquisition of the patient's physical functionalities and consequently the patient's career and educational future.

Generally, after a severe accident or illness, patients cannot continue on with their job or continue their education for the foreseeable future. Under these circumstances it is useful from a counsellor's or trainer's point of view to collect data on the patient and to reconstruct personal life stories by means of self-evaluation by the patient.

Planning the next steps can include providing social and/or professional aims. It is beneficial for the patient to not only possess knowledge regarding motivation and self-management style, but also of management strategies for one's disabilities and restrictions.

The trainers and counselling conducting the training and counselling sessions in the medical rehabilitation centre have to be aware that in some cases, the development of specific (inter-) personal skills, e.g. in the areas of communication, teamwork or conflict management is necessary before the patient can apply for a new job; as these skills create the basis for any cooperative situation, such as work or any other social event.

Information regarding application documents, knowledge of labour market dynamics, and legislation of labour market for people with disabilities will also be delivered by the counsellor and trainer working with patients of rehabilitation centres. A special focus is set on the job interview as the overall aim of the application process.

Along with the counselling and training, an evaluation takes place starting at the beginning of the counselling and concluding at the end of the training. It aims at evaluating the development of the patient.

EduCoRe pursues a blended learning strategy. Therefore it is crucial that both trainer and counsellor (if two different persons fulfil these roles) encourage the patients to use the online platform and to communicate with other patients and the counsellor via the existing online forum. Especially during the beginning of the counselling and training, patients need more support regarding use of the online platform.

To ensure consistency between face to face learning and e-Learning, all counsellors and trainers should be trained in providing e-Learning. The national pilots conducted in Austria, Italy, Slovenia and Germany pointed out two crucial facts: the trainer should be an e-Learning trainer or at least familiar with **blended learning** and the use of the **Moodle platform**. Experiences tended to be most positive when the counsellor and trainer was the same person. If two different individuals counsel and train patients, then they have to ensure that a frequent exchange of information between them and the medical and psychological staff of the rehabilitation centre takes place.

A practical example of how to interlink face to face and e-Learning is described in the EduCoRe Approach in chapter 2.1.1.

The next five chapters of the training curriculum describe the five modules of the EduCoRe Kit:

1. Self-evaluation of the patient

Patients that have had an accident or illness often find themselves in a situation of uncertainty during their medical rehabilitation. This does not only concern their further physical well-being or their private life, but also their further employability. The latter includes more than financial security, it also contributes a lot to a feeling of personal well-being.

After leaving the rehabilitation centre people often cannot simply return to their former jobs, or continue with their education. At this stage it is most helpful to get an idea of the individual's private and working life, which can be evaluated with the help of self-evaluation instruments. Together with the counsellor and the trainer, the patient reflects his/her past, current and future (private and professional) situation.

1.1 Educational and professional background of the patient

Before planning new vocational steps it is useful for both patients and employers to get an overview of their educational and professional background. Emphasis should also be placed on periods without employment, or other problematic situation in the past. Such circumstances require a detailed explanation. The evaluation of one's working situation allows a useful reality-check of the situation that the individual is currently living in.

1.2 The disability of the patient

Some patients are no longer able to fulfil their job in the way they did before their stay in the rehabilitation centre. An individual learning how to explain their disabilities and its practical effects can help create a realistic picture of the individual's professional possibilities. Therefore it is indispensable to be able to talk about one's disabilities.

1.3 Self identification

Self-definition and self-knowledge might be one of the biggest challenges, but in the real-life situations that people have to face after medical rehabilitation, it might be even more difficult. Thus it makes sense not only to deal with one's personality but also with one's motivation and coping strategies:

1.3.1 Types of personalities

This chapter aims at identifying and reflecting changes in one's personality; comparing personal behaviour before and after an illness respectively accident. To be conscious of differences in behaviour is crucial for patients before applying for a new job, as the effect of the disability can be bigger than one can

imagine. To be able to evaluate and understand oneself is the basis for reintegrating into the world of work.

1.3.2 Motivation

Each person has his/her own method for self motivation but a person might not always be aware of the motivating factors (as for example courage). In the course of the counselling and training, patients at rehabilitation centres get the opportunity to become acquainted with their own personal motivation style. As expectations from outside are often mistakenly interpreted as one's own motivation, the trainer and counsellor who is training the patient should be able to distinguish between personal motivation and the expectations of other people.

1.3.3 Coping strategies for fears

Returning back into professional life can often create anxiety for the patient. Facing and expressing these fears is important for the participants for two reasons:

- (i) To make patients aware that all people are confronted with different fears at some stage of their lives.
- (ii) To remember that participants have different methods for dealing with them, if they are not pushed into the back of the individual's mind.

1.4 The learning style of the patient

Due to socialisation, education, personality amongst other reasons, people are used to work in their own style which often is different to that of other persons. An accident or illness may influence or change one's way of behaving. Especially in a situation which demands the obtainment of new skills and knowledge, it is important to be familiar with one's actual learning habits.

2. Personal planning

During the rehabilitation period, physical and mental inactivity is inadvisable for patients. By transforming it into a period of learning and personal growth, patients can plan their career and social life. The essential condition for this is the ability to plan how and when to develop specific skills and competences. Personal planning does not only depend on individual life and health circumstances, but also on the transparency and definiteness of the intended aims – whether they have a social or professional character.

The evaluation of necessary changes and development steps after a permanent disability can be delicate. The decision to change jobs is an important step for each individual that will often change part of one's life.

Specifically for this reason, most patients have the aim of keeping the same job they had before the accident. Almost all patients mean to continue - if their physical conditions will allow it - the job carried out before the accident or illness. However, in the case of severe loss of mobility, some patients, conscious that they can no longer carry out certain tasks, mean to reintegrate in the working world through new activities. In this case it is necessary to help the trainer and the counsellor to build up a new professional identity, which allows a stable and sustainable reintegration into the new working reality. In this case, one goes through a transition phase, where changes occur both in the professional environment (in the relationship with the colleagues, superiors) and in the personal (progressive reorganisation of one's life).

2.1 Individual aims

To enhance the ability to achieve these aims, it is crucial to plan every single step until the result is reached. This means not only keeping an eye on the time schedule, but also on relative factors that may influence the process. Defining realistic individual aims can include the identification of possible obscurities or difficulties.

The educational or vocational background of a person can also determine the possibility of achieving professional goals. This can be facilitated in a first step by designing one's educational development. According to the defined objectives, the acquirement of new and relevant competences and skills can be planned.

In difficult situations, patients often do not see any alternatives to their former job. This is why the patient will - together with the help of the trainer and counsellor - develop job alternatives depending on his/her personal aims.

2.1.1 Planning one's educational development

During the first step patients rethink their educational and professional life. On the basis of this, new possibilities can be created. Questions that may help identify new educational and professional paths can be:

- "What do I want to do after my medical rehabilitation?"
- "Where do I see my profession in the future?"
- "What kind of skills do I need to achieve my professional aim?"

- "If I need any further educational training, where do I find information about it?"
- "Where can I find resources for further education?"
- etc.

Spending enough time and energy on answering these questions at the very beginning of the counselling and training process can save a lot of time and frustration throughout the entire process.

2.1.2 Planning of competences and skills development

After defining one's professional aims and knowing what kind of further educational trainings are necessary to achieve this goal, the development of competences and skills can take place. The patient carries out a comparison of his/her knowledge and skills with those that are connected with the job description (or other personal aims). At this stage of the counselling and training, the focus is set on those skills that the person has to learn. Then the patient, with the help of the trainer and counsellor, can plan the structure of his/her learning process.

2.2 Self management

The way of motivating oneself to pursue a goal depends on (i) the goal itself and (ii) on the personality and self-management of the acting person. To boost one's self management strategies - the training of time management, working and learning structure, defining of milestones etc. - can be very helpful for the participants. A special focus during the training will be set on one's confidence, and techniques on how to improve it.

3. Development of (inter) personal skills and competencies

Additional to the development of (further) educational and vocational skills, the acquisition of (inter)personal skills and competencies support the reintegration of the individual into social and/or working life. The main features of this are communication, team work and conflict management.

It is not only important to manage a conversation and a relationship between colleagues, but also to be able to present one's own skills to others and to create a favourable working environment.

3.1 Communication skills

Obtaining specific communication skills for private and/or business issues always includes the understanding of one's position within the communication process, knowing how to talk about one's own ideas and justify the choices.

One of the competences necessary to face and manage relationships within the working environment is the competency to see and understand one's potentialities and limits. This also influences one's team work. It can also contribute to achieving the aims of the enterprise, as well as personal needs. All these tasks refer to communication skills with the aim of fulfilling responsibility, cooperation or collaboration.

Communication can be divided in verbal and nonverbal communication:

3.1.1 Verbal and non-verbal communication

Communication refers to everything that happens when we try to communicate our feelings to one another. There are a number of issues that are crucial for understanding verbal and non-verbal communication.

It is therefore important to be aware of the culture/the context/ the situation in which the communication takes place, as is the relationship between the individuals communicating and also the individual's verbal and nonverbal language.

For patients of rehabilitation centres, verbal communication is essential as they have to use the job interview for presenting themselves, but also (if necessary) for describing their physical and mental restrictions.

Of course, verbal communication doesn't end with the job interview but continuously is part of daily life, as communication with one's colleagues, friends, family members etc.

Additionally, non-verbal aspects of communication are essential for a smooth conversation. Each person, unconsciously, through gesture, movements, posture, eye contact etc. sends signals to the interlocutor. Sometimes messages are misunderstood by one's communication partner. Because of this, it is important that each individual is also aware of nonverbal communication, as these factors can also influence the process of a conversation drastically.

Communication skills can be trained and optimised during the course of the individual counselling and training.

3.2 Teamwork

Almost every employee has to cooperate with colleagues in a team in which common goals are shared. Team work is positive when aims and work methods are clear and when the group is able to manage time, define and respect roles, procedures and rules.

Today there is also a strong development of team work based on the use of new technologies (for example internet) to reduce time and space and to support knowledge sharing (for example in the Web 2.0).

In the course of the training, participants relearn with the help of the trainer and counsellor to integrate in a team and cooperate with others once within it.

3.3 Conflict behaviour and conflict management

Depending on one's personality, difficult and new (life) situations can be seen as challenges. Having to deal with new circumstances increases the possibility of personal conflict with others. As new situations demand the (re-)definition of oneself in a new environment, conflicts with other persons may emerge. Conflict behaviour may change within a life time – especially after a drastic experience, such as an accident or illness. Patients get the opportunity to deal with their personal conflict management strategies and learn new ones if necessary.

4. Application strategies

The main aim of the EduCoRe project is to offer patients of rehabilitation centres in Europe a tailor-made educational and vocational counselling and training service conducted by professional counsellors and trainers. These activities aim to reintegrate this specific target group into the labour market, and at the same time into society. Beside the recognition of (personal and interpersonal) skills, these individuals learn different kinds of application strategies which they can use for their independent application process.

4.1 Labour market dynamics

In order to have realistic and practical aims, it is necessary that people highlight their own competences and skills related to labour market dynamics.

A correct and conscious choice depends on the combination of various factors: personal desires of the person, skills and competences, work experiences and the opportunities offered by the labour market. Due to permanent changes in the labour market and the variety of educative and training options available it is advisable that the planning of a professional project is the result of a meditated process. This process takes all factors into account that can help the individual make the best decision.

The identification of areas that should be improved in order to reach the targeted professional goals should be carried out while taking into account the opportunities and threats of the labour market. Therefore it is important to have an overview of labour market dynamics, with specific knowledge of the sectors which the person is interested in. With a lack of knowledge about the (national) labour market there is a risk of wasting time and resources and not reaching the fulfilling one's aim.

4.2 Legislation of labour market for people with disabilities

An important element of the protection of the rights of people in medical rehabilitation is information on legislation of the labour market, with specific references to patients who have had an accident or illness affecting their physical or mental integrity.

This information is fundamental for people who can continue their job after rehabilitation but also for those who will need to change their jobs.

Knowledge regarding existing legislation on the protection of workers is necessary. In case of people who need to assume a new role or job it is particularly important to know about the existing laws and norms that regulate the labour market, with specific reference to people with disabilities. Therefore counselling and training participants will learn (with support of the trainer and counsellor) where to find the (national) legislation of the labour market for people with disabilities.

4.3 Application documents

Application for employment assumes that the applicant has application documents available. The Curriculum Vitae (CV), portfolio and employer's references are the most commonly used application documents. Within the EduCoRe service, patients will either create or update their application documents with the help of the trainer and/or counselling.

4.3.1 Curriculum Vitae

The most important tool for the process of application is the Curriculum Vitae (CV). For almost all employers the Curriculum Vitae is the decisive means for judging an application. Hence it is essential that all people looking for a job have the ability to compile a CV correctly with its three aims: introducing oneself to the future employer, outlining personal, academic and work histories and highlighting the individual's main skills.

4.3.2 Understanding an advertisement

Replying to an advertisement is the most common way to apply for a job. The applicants will be encountering different styles of advertisements and will have to learn to understand what human resource managers really want from an applicant while also "reading between the lines".

4.3.3 Letter of application

The aim of the letter of application (together with the CV) is to grab the attention of the employer and to be invited to an interview. It should include more than a response to the requirements listed on the job advertisement. With its formulation and design it furthermore acts as a personal fingerprint. On this account it makes sense not only to adapt the letter of application to the job advertisement and the company in question, but to also bring in one's personality. For this, several rules have to be taken into consideration.

4.4 Job hunting strategies

There are various different job hunting strategies. Before using such means as the internet or print-media, it is recommended to search for a job in one's social surrounding as most of the jobs are assigned by personal contacts. It is therefore necessary that the trainer and counsellor encourage the patients to create and manage a network of contacts. To know how to use

tools such as newsletters, social networking sites, and online profiles is crucial for individuals in the online job hunting process. Furthermore newspaper, magazines or the internet are still common for searching for a job.

4.5 Job interview

The job interview is the overall aim of the job application process. Therefore it is important to be well prepared for it. Patients participating in the training should learn to define different kinds of job interview questions and also to present themselves in an authentic manner. In this phase of the training, the learners are encouraged to take all things into consideration that they have learned during the whole training and counselling procedure.

5. Process evaluation

It can be very useful and motivating for patients to recognise the process they went through during the counselling and training. Therefore a process evaluation has to take place. It includes a first analysis at the beginning of the counselling and ends with a final evaluation. The results are for the target group to identify their development, but also they are for the counsellor and trainer to obtain feedback from their work.

One evaluation output is the portfolio, which can be understood as a collection of application documents but also as an archive of the crucial learning experiences of the participants.

5.1 Portfolio

Informal competences (as a means to face changes in one's professional life) are skills that are often ignored and not genuinely considered by employers. Yet interest in such competencies is growing.

The complexities of informal competences – which are acquired without explicit intention but are strongly present in the person's life – constitute a strength which all individuals can exploit. The development of these specific skills can be shown throughout the portfolio. It is a tool which allows individuals to state all competences acquired in life, but not necessarily within a formal recognition and allows a reflection on past experiences. Testimonials from former employers are part of the portfolio.

Additional to the traditional portfolio, an e-portfolio exists with which the applicant collects e-documents that demonstrate his or her professional development.

This training curriculum contains five modules which are inter-linked with each other and also with the e-Learning objects on the content related stage. This means that it doesn't make sense to separate them respectively or to choose only one or two of them.

