

Poster abstract

## The empowerment and sharing of knowledge among mental health service users: bridging the gap between the users and the mental health institution

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Provide an insight into the on-going work in the Barcelona Demonstration Site of the European 6th framework EMILIA project (Empowerment of mental illness service users: Lifelong learning, integration and empowerment). Determine how this work bridges the gap between mental health users and the mental health institution.

**Aim:** To demonstrate how the methodology of life long learning is used to train a group of mental health service users to become Experts by Experience (EbE). The EbE is a new professionally recognised working profile within the psychiatric hospital which aims to offer a better understanding of the mental health institution to mental health service users; informing them about hospital layout and procedures; strengthening the relationship between service users and professionals; stimulating the relationships between the service user and their social network friends and family. This act of sharing experience and knowledge, and passing it on from one user to another is vital to give continuity to the lifelong learning process.

**Methodology:** The EbE completes a dynamic, interactive training programme where personal strengths, recovery, people skills, learning more about the workings of the mental health institutions and how to encourage others to work towards empowerment. All users complete an average of 36 h of preparative training before embarking on the 20 h EbE training course.

**Conclusion:** The traditional line of sanitary care in mental health institutions has sometimes ignored the importance of recording the knowledge that users can give. By creating the profile of EbE within the mental hospital, this knowledge is guaranteed to transcend from one user to another and hence, not only benefiting the recovery process for the users involved, but also improving the care given by the institutions.

### Keywords

life long learning, mental health service users, empowerment, bridging the gap, Barcelona

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