
POSTER ABSTRACT

Open house for people facing a chronic disease

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“De Kolibrie” (from Dutch to English translated as “the hummingbird”) is literally an open house where people who are facing a chronic disease – as a patient or in their immediate environment – can walk into to find someone to listen to their (life) story.

In addition, they are offered the possibility to take part in a range of activities, all which are organised in function

to increase empowerment,

improve their quality of life,

optimize knowledge about their specific condition,

support them through the process of accepting their new found limitations and

dealing with the loss of possibilities (= their personal mourning process).

Because we think it is important that this offer is accessible to everyone - regardless of his financial capabilities - are almost all these activities free of charge.

These activities (ranging from educational workshops, workshops on healthy nutrition, psychological support, peer support, over -lectures and group sessions to creative workshops) are very approachable, need-driven and person-centred. We operate in the core of society and are meeting all the challenges facing a chronic illness and his/her context. We are also raising awareness towards schools, associations, children ...

Dealing with a chronic illness implicates learning how to accept that condition and fitting it into everyday life. Not only is this important at the moment of diagnoses, is a recurring process. We are trying to increase our visitors self-reliance and self-management through good education and customized support. One is not able to influence the fact that a person is ill, therefore many people think that they also can do little to its effects. Patients themselves however, can often achieve more than they think when it comes down to disease or health.

The objective also is, to organise twice a year a specific “theme in the spotlight”. This in order to obtain knowledge, understanding and empathy for people who are suffering from a specific condition. One of the subgoals of this approach is the improvement of health literacy.

Starting September until December 2016 we covered the dementia theme. This way we were able to reach 93 persons suffering from dementia and/or their family context. We also reached a lot of people who do not live with dementia, but out of interest participate in activities.

Spring 2017 is dedicated to the theme of cancer and fall 2017 will be programmed to cover – at the request of the general practitioners - the condition of obesity. In 2018 the attention will go to mental health and non-congenital brain injuries.

“ De Kolibrie” opened its doors on February 1st 2016, and has welcomed 2712 visits (counted until December 30th, where many of the guests were referred by doctors and other health care professionals). Since then, 38 volunteers have offered their kindness and knowledge. A total of more than 350 activities took place. Feedback from our guests shows us that we meet our objectives. We are currently performing a measurement to obtain objective data on our social influence.

Keywords: empowerment; selfmanagement; health literacy
