



Supported Education

1.2 Supported Education

The onset of psychiatric disability generally occurs between the ages of 17 and 25—the years in which young adults follow higher education (including advanced vocational education), which is a major channel in our society to prepare for a career and enhance life goals. Yet for people with psychiatric disabilities, this resource is largely unavailable.

Although people with psychiatric disabilities often attempt higher education, they are frequently unable to complete their studies because of the nature of their illness and its treatment. They often meet with overwhelming obstacles, including stigmatization and discrimination. In an economy that requires (higher) education for upward occupational mobility, people who are unable to succeed in postsecondary/higher education or training may find themselves ultimately underemployed or unemployed (Cook, 2006; De Klerk, 2000; Rudnick & Gover, 2009).

For other disability groups, such as people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities or acquired brain injury, student services are available on most campuses, while people with psychiatric disabilities have not been included in these services; this is also because student services staff have limited knowledge about (students with) psychiatric disabilities.

Therefore, it is of the utmost importance for the social inclusion and future (labor) opportunities of young adults with psychiatric disabilities that they have better access to higher education, and are able to complete such a study successfully. The Impulse project will contribute to empowering these young adults to do so by developing and implementing Supported Education services (toolkit) in European countries. Supported education (SEd) is defined as the provision of individualized, practical support and instruction to assist people with psychiatric disabilities to achieve their educational goals (Anthony et al., 2002).