



Supported Education

Foreword

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. But for people with a psychiatric disability, 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 (see Broenink & Gorter, 2001). 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. 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—also because student services staff have limited knowledge in this area.

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 study successfully. Supported Education is a means to reach these goals. Supported Education is defined as the provision of individualized, practical support and instruction to assist people with psychiatric disabilities to achieve their educational goals (Anthony, Cohen, Farkas, & Gagne, 2002; Sullivan, Nicolellis, Danley, & MacDonald-Wilson, 1993; Unger, Anthony, Sciarappa, & Rogers, 1991). The main aim of the ImpulSE project was the development of a toolkit for Supported Education services for students with psychiatric disabilities. The toolkit is based upon needs and resources assessments from the four participating countries, as well as good practices from these. Secondly, a European network of Supported Education (ENSEd) is initiated, starting with a first International Conference on Supported Education. The aim of ENSEd is to raise awareness in the EU about the educational needs of young adults/students with psychiatric disabilities and for services that are in place to help to remove the barriers for this target group.

The toolkit is aimed at students' counsellors, trainers, teachers and tutors, mental health managers and workers, and local authority officials involved in policymaking concerning people with psychiatric disabilities. It enables field workers to improve guidance and counseling to students/young adults with psychiatric disabilities, supporting them in their educational careers.

The ultimate beneficiaries of the project are the young adults/students with psychiatric disabilities themselves. In the Netherlands alone, it is estimated that five per cent of the total student population suffers from a psychiatric disability—that is, a total of 30,000 students. On a European scale, the number of students with a psychiatric disability is therefore considerably high. We hope that through the project these young adults/students will be better empowered to be successful in their educational careers (improving access and/or preventing drop out), and that their chances in the labor market and their participation in society at large will be improved.

Lies Korevaar, PhD, project leader

Jacomijn Hofstra, PhD, project coordinator

Participating Organizations

Czech Republic	Ledovec (www.ledovec.cz)
The Netherlands	Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen (www.hanze.nl)
Norway	Studentsamskipnaden I Bergen (SIB) (www.sib.no)
Portugal	Associação Para o Estudo e Integração Psicossocial (AEIPS) (http://www.aeips.pt)

Partnership Participants

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Committee and Meetings

Project leader	Lies Korevaar, Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen
Project coordinator	Jacomijn Hofstra, Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen

Meeting Venues

October 2013	Groningen, The Netherlands
May, 2014	Plzen, Czech Republic
November, 2014	Lisbon, Portugal
May, 2015	Bergen, Norway
November, 2015	Groningen, The Netherlands

Advisory Board Members

Bénard da Costa, Ana Maria	Educational specialist and policy maker (retired), Portugal
Bogarve, Camilla	Rehabilitation specialist, Sweden
Podlipny, Jiří	Psychiatrist, Czech Republic
Zijlstra, Annemarie	Director of the Rehabilitation '92 Foundation, The Netherlands

European Network on Supported Education (ENSEd)

Members of ENSEd are from:

- Czech Republic
- Finland
- Germany
- The Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Singapore
- Sweden
- United States of America