

CONCLUSION

Psychosocial competence is a person's ability to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. It is a person's ability to maintain a state of mental well-being and to demonstrate this in adaptive and positive behaviour while interacting with others, his/her culture and environment.

Psychosocial competence has an important role to play in the promotion of health in its broadest sense; in terms of physical, mental and social well-being. In particular, where health problems are related to behaviour, and where the behaviour is related to an inability to deal effectively with stresses and pressures in life, the enhancement of psychosocial competence could make an important contribution. This is especially important for health promotion at a time when behaviour is more and more implicated as the source of health problems.

The most direct interventions for the promotion of psychosocial competence are those which enhance the person's coping resources, and personal and social competencies and this can be done by the teaching of life skills in a supportive learning environment.

Reflections coming from a first analysis of the good practices that were collected are about skills and their learning. Self-esteem, autonomy, strategic planning, reduction of negative symptoms and stereotypes, improvement of social skills, respecting the rules: those are the goals that mental health workers are trying to achieve to improve the empowerment of the users. Too often an awareness of the achievements comes after the need of "doing, performing" and the assessment of the results is not supported by appropriate scientific instruments.

The aim of the seminary which will be held in Oxford from September 30 to October 4 -2019, concerns a comparison and a closer examination about Life Skills. There are at least two important reasons for that:

- 1) In their activities operators carry out with the users with mental disease the most important objectives they try to achieve concern Life Skills (self-awareness, empathy, effective interpersonal relationships, coping with stress, etc.) even if Life Skills are not always documented with scientific tools and also evaluation methodology often is inadequate.
- 2) Life Skills acquisition is not realized theoretically on the contrary they are acquired through an active methodology, the same methodology operators use in their sport, cultural and social activities with the users

Starting from the collected good practices we can identify instruments and methodologies which enable operators to document and evaluate the activities they carry out in scientific terms, by realizing a comparable model which can also be transferred to other contexts .

The WHO (World Health Organization) defines Life Skills as "abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable humans to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of life".

Developing and putting life skills into practice can impact the way we relate to ourselves and the others, and the way others see us. It also helps to better recognize and acknowledge our abilities and boost our confidence and self-esteem. Life skills play a central role in promoting mental health and preventing behavioral and mental diseases, and they can represent the key for the empowerment of persons with disabilities.

The central core of life skills as identified by WHO (World Health Organization) is expressed by 10 competencies:

1. SELF-AWARENESS

Self-awareness is about knowing ourselves. Being aware of our 'self' means being able to identify our strengths and weaknesses, knowing how we react to a situation.

2. COPING WITH EMOTIONS

Being able to cope with our emotions lets us stay in control of ourselves, maintaining our clarity of mind, effectiveness, and ability to ponder our choices and the effects that they could have on ourselves and the others.

3. COPING WITH STRESS

It is the ability of recognizing our stress and its causes in the everyday life. Learning to cope with stress is essential to strengthen our physical, psychic, and social health.

4. EMPATHY

Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person. In other words, being able to understand and share their emotions. Active listening is crucial for good empathy.

5. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Communication is the process of exchanging information. Being effective communicators means that we are able to express ourselves clearly and consistently in every situation and with any individual, both verbally and non-verbally.

6. EFFECTIVE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

This may mean being able to make and keep meaningful relationships, as well as being able to end relationships constructively.

7. PROBLEM SOLVING

Identifying effective solutions to every problem, considering the context and the people involved, including ourselves.

8. DECISION MAKING

When we consider the possibilities we have and their consequences, we are making a decision. No decision is absolutely autonomous; however, it can be, depending on ourselves and on the specific context.

9. CRITICAL THINKING

is the ability to analyze information, situations, and experiences in an objective manner – separating our subjectivity and biases from the reality. Critical thinking makes us choose wisely by recognizing the factors that influence people's thoughts and behaviors.

10. CREATIVITY

Creative thinking helps us develop possible options and original ideas, as well as solutions to get out of difficulties or behavioral patterns that keep us stuck.

These competencies can be put together in 3 areas:

1- EMOTIONAL (self-awareness, coping with emotions, coping with stress)

2- RELATIONAL (empathy, effective communication, interpersonal relationships)

3- COGNITIVE (problem solving, decision making, critical thinking, creative thinking)