

CELEBRATING THE RESULTS OF THE PIA PROJECT TO MAKE THE PEER SUPPORT WORKER A REALITY

The PIA project, funded by the Erasmus+ programme, has come to an end and during its 2 years of existence saw 5 organisations from 4 countries collaborate to promote the figure of the Peer Support Worker (PSW) with the role of advocacy for family members and caregivers of people with dementia in Norway, Greece, Italy and Romania.

In the context of dementia care, a PSW is a current or former caregiver of a person with dementia who draws strength from personal experience and is able to provide advice and observations from a different perspective to a person who has had or is having similar experiences. Through the project, the partnership involved more than 20 caregivers to valorise their spontaneously developed experience in caring for people with dementia. The various activities implemented in these 2 years focused on accompanying caregivers in a path to upgrade as PSW by discussing and sharing experiences among peers and testing how personal interaction, empathy, communication and listening are relevant in peer support. In parallel, focus groups were organised for the development of strategies for involving family members in the care of dementia patients. The expected impact is to strengthen services in dementia care and will enable greater innovation in services through the involvement of PSWs in care planning and support.

Three main project results were developed and validated for this purpose:

- Competence and capacity building training package in education for Peer Support Workers in dementia
- A digital platform that facilitates networking and improving peer support in dementia care.
- A set of recommendations to address dementia challenges and policy gap implications

All outputs are available in English, Norwegian, Greek, Italian and Romanian language and the report about training pilot is available in English on the project website.



FINAL NATIONAL CONFERENCES

In the last months, national dissemination events were held in the different partner countries, aimed at sharing and disseminating PIA project and its results. These events saw the involvement of current or former caregivers of people with dementia, experts in peer support, healthcare professionals, educators and mentors, policy makers, other categories of professionals interested, but also representatives of public and private health authorities and organizations.



National multiplier events have been an opportunity for the different partner countries to present the project as well as to raise awareness and launch significant conversations on dementia care challenges, on relevance of PSW in this field and on strategies to involve these figures in health and social care sectors.

INPUTS FOR THE FUTURE

Improving the lives of people with dementia is an area of increasing policy attention, given the magnitude of the phenomenon now and projected for the future, and enhancing a resource such as the PSW would overcome so many critical issues present today. Just as dementia is a worldwide problem, so sharing experiences on how to deal with the impact of care it is appropriate to cross physical boundaries. The PSW is a key figure in improving dementia care, precisely because can help family caregivers and health and social practitioners in understanding the dynamics of the care relationship and the impact it can have. Therefore, although the PIA project has ended, the partnership is keen to further exploit and build on what has been learnt from this project and on the priority of improving the condition of people with dementia and their caregivers, both formal and informal.

TIME TO SAY GOODBYE

Our project has come to its end and we want to thank you all for this amazing experience! To read more about us, visit the project website www.piaproject.eu or follow us on the most popular social networks with #pia_project.

Hope to see you soon!