

Hidden Treasures Revealed:

Building a knowledge base for and with adults who are visually impaired and have psychiatric disorders

Background

The Robert Coppes Foundation is a specialised care organisation providing care for adults who are visually impaired and have psychiatric disorders. This is a small not yet well described target group that does not easily find its way in the health and care system.

Clinical experience shows that the impact of the combination of visual impairments and psychiatric disorders is much higher than the sum of its parts. The visual impairment seems to be a hindering factor in the most common psychiatric treatment and support programmes and professionals in the visual impairment sector are not always experienced in working with adults with psychiatric disorders. A first study showed that no aggregated data are available on the numbers of adults who are visually impaired and have psychiatric disorders and only few scientific articles or interventions are described. This may easily lead to suboptimal treatment and support.

Method

To describe and model the current care and support, a Participatory Action Research approach is used. Intensive participation of stakeholders is established by the collaboration of three important groups: an expert group, an online Community of Practice (psyvisnet) involving professionals working with the target group, and a client panel.

By conducting in depth one-to-one interviews with all participants, desk research and field observations, current knowledge about the target group is collected. In several group meetings with the expert group a process model of the current situation is made. The members of psyvisnet and a client panel will be asked to provide feedback. Furthermore, a scoping literature review is conducted to obtain an overview of evidence based methodologies and treatments in other health care sectors suitable for the target group. On the basis of the results of the first parts of the study, specific improvements will be developed. These will be combined into a 'toolkit' depicting the working elements of the approach and listing suitable methodologies and treatments.



Objective

Optimising treatment, care and support for adults who are visually impaired and have psychiatric disorders. The specific needs of these people, the everyday experiences of both clients and professionals and the needs for specific knowledge they face, will be described. On the basis of the results measures for improvement will be defined, developed and evaluated.

Duration

February 2017 – February 2019

Partners

Centre for Assistive Technology and Connected Healthcare (CATCH), University of Sheffield

Centre of Expertise for Innovative Care and Technology (EIZT), Zuyd University of Applied Sciences

Disability Studies and Inclusive Education, Ghent University

Grant

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