

**PEER TO PEER: A ROUTE TO RECOVERY OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS  
THROUGH PEER SUPPORT TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT**

Project N° 2013-1-ES1-LEO05-66277-AN

EVALUATION OF THE METHODOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION

## INTRODUCTION

The PEER2PEER, funded as part of the Lifelong Learning Program of the European Commission, seeks to provide people suffering from mental health disorders with the necessary training, tools, skills and confidence to become peer support workers. It also encourages people with mental illness to support one another and view their experiences as a resource for recovery. Peer2Peer itself was a vocational training course which was tested and fine tuning to become a manual of reference for those who are interesting in becoming peer support workers and for the support workers who would like to continue learning and improving. Peer support working involves developing mutually beneficial relationships between individuals who can share their lived experiences in a manner that inspires hope for and belief in, the recovery process. This vocational training, with specific focus on experiential education, provides a practical learning environment as the trainee's progress towards working as a professional support worker.

Peer2Peer training course was fully tested in 3 countries: Spain, Austria and Romania, through the collaboration of four organizations:

Fundación Intras (Spain),  
Escuela Andaluza de Salud Pública (Spain),  
Promente Upper Austria (Austria) and  
Liga Romana Sanatate Mintala (Romania).

All the training courses organized were delivered followed the same structure. In total 13 session covering knowledge, practice and values in recovery and peer support. Two of them were focused on reviewing and assess learning outcomes (session 7 and session 13). These two review and evaluation sessions provided an opportunity for students to reflect on their learning and also to receive advice and guidance on any written assessment required.

From session 1 to session 6 the main focus was on knowledge and understanding of recovery, besides, the second section focused on knowledge and skills required in the peer support role.

This was the common schedule of the pilot course:

Session 1: Introduction exercises: icebreaker, learning environment and feedback  
Session 2: Development of recovery approach and key concepts in recovery  
Session 3: Societal influences and effect of force and trauma and Trauma-informed practice  
Session 4: Understanding peer support  
Session 5: Key concepts of peer support and peer relationship  
Session 6: Working with the effects of labeling  
Session 7: Review and evaluation  
Session 8: Strengths-based approaches, resilience, role modeling and hope  
Session 9: Formalized peer support, considering boundaries, supervision and goal setting  
Session 10: Effective communication and working with risk  
Session 11: Self-care, safe practice and self-management in peer support  
Session 12: Reflecting on personal experience: Understanding the process of change  
Session 13: Remediation, review and evaluation

More than 130 individuals with personal experience of mental health problems were trained throughout peer2peer piloting courses. All of them, after each session, assessed their experience and provided feedback using the Evaluation Instrument (see annex 1: Evaluation instrument for students). This questionnaire provided a thorough revision of the session implemented in terms of usefulness, quality and coherence. Trainees were asked to be precise, thorough, comprehensive and honest in their responses, since the results of their evaluation informed this report and influenced the final version of the methodology developed.

Furthermore, feedback from the facilitators was also an important source of knowledge and inputs to improve the methodology and teaching materials. Facilitators were also asked to fill the Evaluation Instrument for facilitators (see annex 2: Evaluation instrument for facilitators). 104 questionnaires were filled out throughout the training course.

This report provides a throughout revision of all answers from trainers and students, session by session highlighting their impressions about the teaching materials and how them could be improved.

## SESSION 1 – INTRODUCTION creating a learning environment

### AIM OF THE SESSION

This session introduces students to the course and through the use of exercises promotes general discussion encouraging the students to begin to get to know each other and establishes a group working agreement. This session establishes a sense of working together.

This session is probably the best time to remind students of the appropriateness of sharing personal information and disclosure. Another goal of the session is to provide students with a clear picture of what is expected of them in terms of participation, timekeeping, commitment, homework, aspects of confidentiality and assessment.

This session was designed to make students:

1. Understand the course
2. Establish a positive learning environment
3. Developed a group agreement

### CONTENT OF THE SESSION

This first session is dedicated to learn about how the course will be conducted and its philosophy, to discuss what is expected from students and to create a positive learning environment. It starts with a short introduction by the facilitator, and continues with the exercises to start knowing each other's, what are the personal tastes and preferences of the students; what they like and what they dislike in their private life. These activities were meant to serve as ice-breakers, but also to provide each participant with a more profound understanding of who their peers are as human beings. Knowing other peers is also crucial for forming connections and opening up potential horizons of mutuality between oneself and others.

During the second part of the session, participants discuss about the rules of the whole training course and create a learning agreement. The topics for discussion were around: breaks, sharing personal information, confidentiality and given feedback. Besides the discussion more ice breakers were organized to fully understand these topics.

### INTRAS: SESSION 1

### STUDENT FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 1

When asked what they have learned in the session, the target group responded that they came to feel themselves more as part of the group. When they spoke about personal

issues, they came to realize that they're not alone in their own problems, since others may experience them as well in one form or another. The group noticed that its members may have more things in common as they might have realized before. To talk about some of the issues addressed, made them feel more connected with each other and it is highly positive to see the group acknowledge that fact.

At the same time the group admits that it was hard to talk about things related to them in the beginning, but later on they report having understood that nobody will judge them for the way they feel, which made them feel comfortable and free to express their opinions openly.

Students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to the general presentation, organization and exercises. All participants rated the session with 3 or more than 3 points out of 5. It means that all of them considered the session well organized, clear and useful.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 1

The trainers from the Spanish group reported that all of the participants enjoyed the ice-breaking games of getting to know other peers on a more personal level. The participants seemed shy and embarrassed in the beginning, but near the end they participated with energy. Apparently all of the students involved were keen to enter fully in the interaction and adopted a positive attitude towards the exercises.

Trainers report that this initial activity of warming up the group by allowing the participants to come closer to one another instigated the possibility of attentive talking and listening and prepared the individuals for authentic and earnest expression of themselves in mutual exchange through the recognition of their individual differences. Most of the participants had no problem talking about delicate and personal issues and in general the group worked well together. There were some problems, however, with the time managing, as more time on group dynamics would have been useful to understand the role of facilitators in the development process which is the course.

#### EASP: SESSION 1

#### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – EASP – SESSION 1

The students report that they learned a lot about the group and its members, being able to understand much better now what they have in common and in what they differ. They also came to learn something about the appropriateness of sharing personal information and disclosure with others. Some students also say that time was simply flying away during the session, showing appreciation for the possibility of sharing their respective opinions without being interrupted. In general, the group reports having felt safe in the room during the implementation of the session.

Students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to the general presentation, organization and exercises. As their colleagues from Intras, all participants from

EASP rated the session with 3 or more than 3 points out of 5. All the opinions were placed on the extreme positive pole with almost all participants giving the workshop the highest possible grade.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – EASP – SESSION 1

The trainers report that the students were very motivated to carry out each of the exercises, receptive and enthusiastic. Apparently they had a lot of fun and were looking forward to the next exercises. The workshop has made the target group more receptive to each other according to the trainers and clarified the course and its aims. In addition, this session gave enough information to students to create realistic expectations about the course, and what may happen after it.

#### PRO MENTE: SESSION 1, 2

#### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – PRO MENTE – SESSION 1, 2

The evaluation forms were submitted by this partner for 2 workshops together. The reason for that is that all participants live in rural areas and have to take public transportation to attend the course, sometimes for more than 2 hours. To facilitate the accessibility of the course, two sessions were organized together. In this case, session 1: Introduction and session 2: Recovery Approach.

Students commented that the training session was very well done, although they have some problems to finish the exercises, because of the lack of time. From their answers, it may have caused some tensions between participants who did not respect the time for sharing and comment.

However, when students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the sessions in relation to the general presentation, organization and exercises, their scores were placed on the positive pole, 4 or higher, meaning that besides the time limitation, the session was well organized, useful and clear. It is impossible to tell if their comments refer to session 1 or 2.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – PRO MENTE – SESSION 1, 2

The trainers in this partner institution held together 2 workshops, and then evaluated them in one form. The reason was explained above.

The general feeling expressed in the reports of the two workshops is particularly positive. The main goal of these first sessions were reached, all participants got to know each other, understand the philosophy of the course, the methodology and they started to discuss about recovery. Trainers however, state that no matter the activity, students wanted to continue sharing expectations, thoughts, questions, commented on the stories and videos about recovery, etc. and there were not enough time for all the warming up exercises. Trainers commented that ice breakers exercises not just allowed students to know each other and start working together, they also were significant for the trainers, since they allowed them to get some insights about students, the knowledge they already have in the

related field.

Trainers commented that students discussed the theme of recovery in a very open-minded manner. Hints were provided by the trainers, to foster the identification of big topics for recovery such as “social support” or “empowerment” to then introduce the theoretical part. Trainers commented that more practical exercises could have been useful for the second session; it could be useful to identify someone to tell their own recovery story.

## LRSPM: SESSION 1

### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – LRSPM – SESSION 1

The students were pleased to have been able to learn about their mates during the activities of the session and they realized that they have a lot in common with each other. The general attitude of the group towards the activities proposed was positive, saying they liked the activities and that they made them feel accepted, which created a good atmosphere.

Students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session, the answers show a highly positive response of the students about the organization, clearness and usefulness of the session.

### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – LRSPM – SESSION 1

The trainers report that the students were interested in the session and had a positive attitude towards it “The students welcomed the proposed activities very well; they were motivated from the beginning”. One rather interesting remark was that the trainers should have a clear role division, to explain that they are facilitators, they are not therapist and the training course is not about therapy. Unfortunately this statement is not explained further, but it should be considered in the final teaching materials.

Trainers also commented that since the course include some controversial topics, to have some time at the end to share feelings and relax after the session will be useful and will help to review interested discussions, summarize the session and leave with a good feeling. In general facilitators commented that more time is needed, more practical exercises and more time for breaks.

## SESSION 2 – DEVELOPMENT OF RECOVERY APPROACH AND KEY CONCEPTS IN RECOVERY

### AIM OF THE SESSION

The aim of this session is to explore the development of the recovery approach in mental health and to examine key concepts in recovery — a range of factors that support recovery and explain how hope and belief underpin recovery.

This session is the first containing input material. It is hoped that the work done in the first session will have laid the groundwork for the creation of a positive learning environment.

### CONTENT OF THE SESSION

During this session, students are asked to reflect on and discuss a fairly substantial research paper. Candidates should read this paper in preparation for the class, and then individually reflect upon it.

The session starts with the theoretical background to understand the unique role that peer support can play in promoting mental health recovery. The approach is to learn directly from people who are in recovery, or who have recovered from mental health problems, and then applying that learning to the way we support people.

To understand recovery in mental health, students will hear about long-term studies, and discuss early influences on the recovery approach. Recovery involves empowerment and the promotion of citizenship and inclusion of people with experience of mental health problems, so this session go through the rights-based approach and service user activism, before identify key concepts in relation to recovery. Students were invited to reflect upon key factors which promote recovery and to link them with peer support.

### INTRAS: SESSION 2

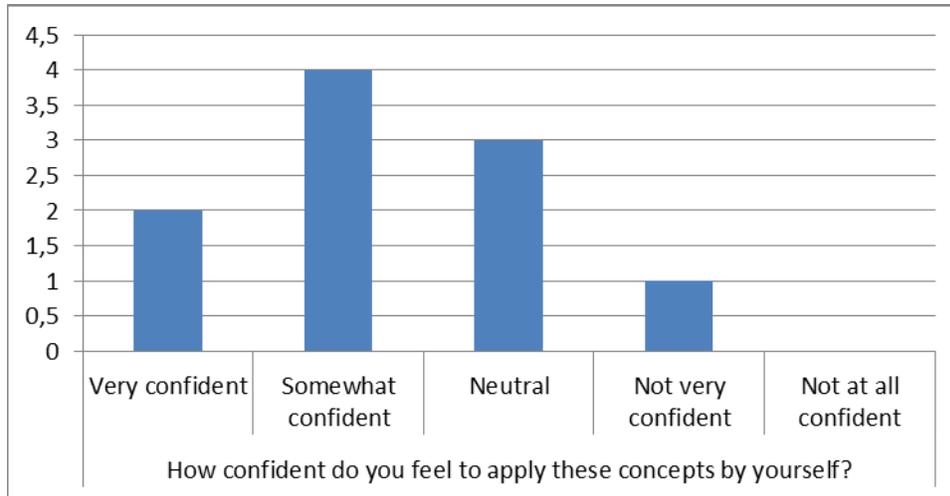
#### TRAINEES FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 2

Almost all students reflected upon their own recovery approach and realized the implications of hope and belief in it. Apparently, two participants did not share their thoughts about their own recovery, though they explained it in written. Students are aware of their rights to share only the information they would like to share, and they feel comfortable sharing; it may be useful to include some more exercises to reinforce confidence or trust and continue working to create a safe learning environment.

A person with mental health issues was invited to share her experiences, her name was Guadalupe Morales, president of the Mundo Bipolar organization. Her contributions were appreciated by students, who identify hope and belief in their words.

When students were asked to rate the organization of the session, the materials provided, or the usefulness of the theoretical/practical part of the session, all answers were placed on the positive pole, 3 or higher, meaning that they are satisfied with it.

To the question: how confident do you feel to apply these concepts by yourself? These were their answers:



The chart shows that mostly of the students feel somewhat confident to apply the recovery approach by themselves, though there are a mix of answers, 1 student feels not very confident and 3 feel neutral. Some of the reasons given by participants were: *"because I am just starting and I need more theory and overall practice"*, *"theory is not the real life, I still have to gain some confidence"*.

## TRAINERS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 2

The trainers reported that students were actively involved in the dynamics prepared and were interested in the theory.

In general, trainers commented that the fact of inviting Guadalupe Morales to the session and to comment and discuss with her the key factors of recovery was a very powerful idea. The trainers also report that the group paid a lot of attention to Guadalupe's recovery process, and some of the group members even felt free to reveal their fears of becoming peer workers.

Trainers also commented that the activities were fun and fulfilling for students, although they consider it difficult to start sharing personal thoughts about their own recovery as early as the second session, and let the group to comment on them. Through the session, trainers had to organize warming up exercises to stop intensive discussions and start with another topic. Furthermore, time to time, trainers had to remind students, the aims of the session, as it is not about sharing their experiences, it is about sharing it intentionally, and keeping in mind what would be useful for their peers to know.

The general feedback to this session is extremely positive, what seems rather interesting is the fact that the participants start identifying themselves with the recovery approach and with the peer workers role, although they comment that more practical work is needed.

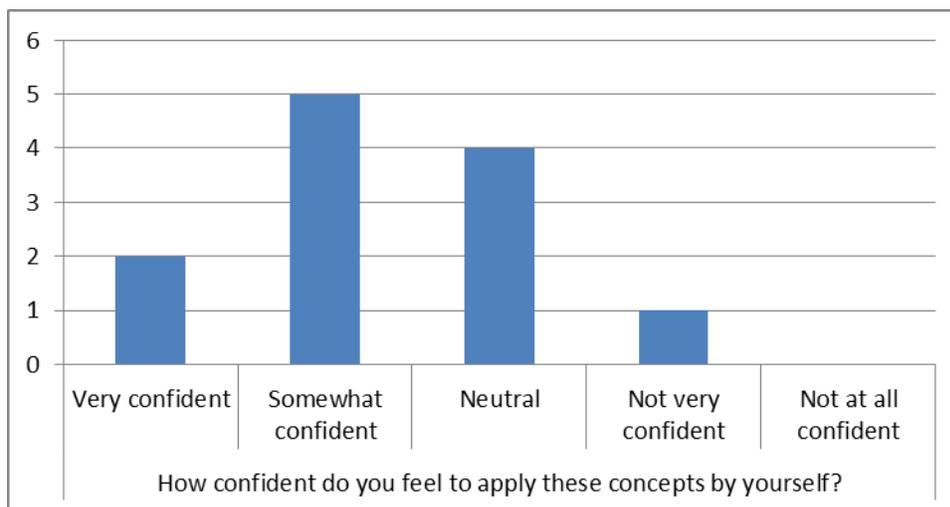
## EASP: SESSION 2

### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – EASP – SESSION 2

Participants from the EASP, rated very well the session, they gave 4 or higher score to the organization, and considered the explanations clear and the exercises useful. Students who attend this session commented that it will be useful to have some printed materials to support the learning, to consolidate concepts and to go back to the theory studied in previous sessions.

During this second session, students continued feeling uncertain about their future role as peer workers, and commented about the need of more practice; besides, they appreciated the opportunity to talk to others who know exactly what mean to have mental health issues, and to discuss different ways to progress along their individual path of recovery. Students commented to feel listed and included in the group.

To the question: how confident do you feel to apply these concepts by yourself? These were their answers:



Students gave mix answers to the question about how confidence they feel to apply concepts in the role of peer workers. Students needed a while to think about their perspective and position themselves according to this statement; students are taking the role of peer worker very seriously and are afraid of not having enough practice, and that is what they comment over and over: *“I understood the concepts and I think that with some experience I will be able to use them”, “more practical exercises and more role playing”; “Since I do not have too much experience supporting other people, I cannot be sure”.*

### FACILITATORS FEEDBACK – EASP – SESSION 2

Again, facilitators commented that students reacted very well to the exercises proposed and were interested in hearing more about the factors which support recovery individually. Facilitators considered the session very effective and useful. During this session, students

were able for the first time, to use the knowledge provided from their peers. A key activity which was very useful for students was about to collect some of the statements shared by participants about their own recovery, and rated them according with the relevance. During this activity, students shared their experiences, and they were able to focus on the relevant ones, they did not share any thought about their process of recovery, and they were able to select what was important for the group.

Trainers considered to place session 12 *reflecting on personal experience* right after this session, as they both are connected; in their opinion, split them and place them one at the beginning and the other at the end of the course does not benefit the learning process, as you need to refer one and another constantly.

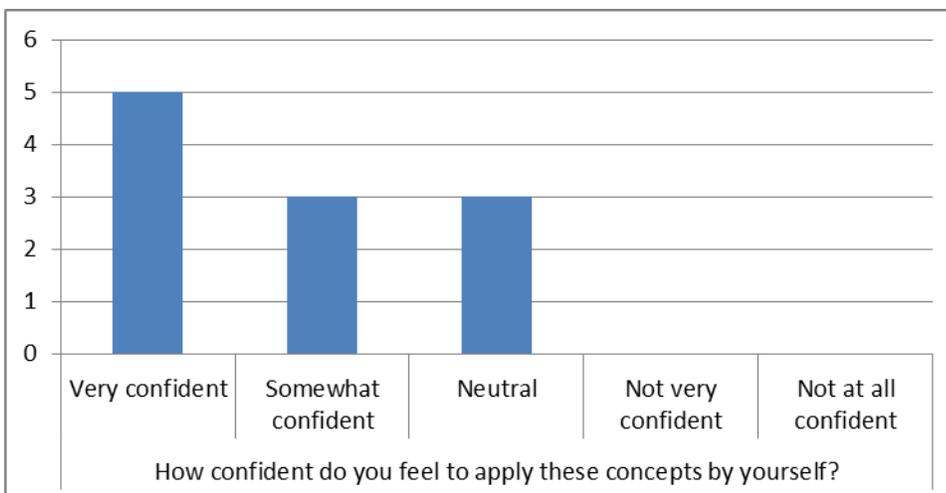
## LRSM: SESSION 2

### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – LRSM – SESSION 2

The students reported that they learned to define their own process of recovery and identify some of the key factors which helped them in their own process. They also enjoyed the role play scenarios and commented that they provided the space needed to apply what they learnt and to reflect upon real situations that they may face after the course.

The feeling from students was that there was not enough time to elaborate further the conclusions from the role play, apparently some of the students did not even have the change to share their thoughts before the session finished. This issue should be explored further, or to make longer sessions or to reduce the learning outputs per session.

Nevertheless students rated the session as very positive, well organized, clear and useful. When they were asked to rate how confident they feel about applying these concepts by themselves:



The group was most affirmative in this statement, “yes, they feel confidence”. Though highly positive attitude is prevalent in the target group’s answers, there is still some variation to be seen amongst their answers. There have been a significant number of answers, which neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. It would have been beneficial for the project to know more about the background for these neutral attitudes.

## TRAINERS FEEDBACK – LRSM – SESSION 2

The trainers identified the activity *key factors to recovery*, and the role play scenarios as the more meaningful tools for students, as they were able firstly to share their own key factors for recovery, and then, after identify them, to practice using real situations. Trainers commented about the lack of time at the end of the session and how some students agreed to share their inputs at the beginning of the following session.

As all partners agreed that more than 4 hours-session is needed to go through the content proposed. More time is needed for discussion after the exercises and also that more time is needed to copy with emotional topics, the issue of timing has to be addressed at the time of designing the last version of the teaching materials.

## SESSION 3 – TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

### AIM OF THE WORKSHOP

The aim of this session is to explore the impact of societal influences on mental health recovery, to examine possible effects of force and trauma on mental health and the implications of this for practice. This is likely to be a challenging topic for some, so it would be beneficial to discuss some ground rules before beginning. We have suggested the following as starting points for discussion: There is no need to share anything personal if you do not want to; It's ok to take a break; Don't share anything you're not comfortable sharing; Be respectful of other people's confidentiality; This is a discussion about trauma and recovery, not group psychotherapy!; The aim is not to 'open people up' to raw experiences as we won't have time or capacity to properly attend to distress during and after the session.

At the end of the session students will be able to:

- 1 Analyze two societal influences that impact mental health recovery.
- 2 Explain two possible effects of force and trauma on mental health.
- 3 Demonstrate an awareness of the effects of trauma

### CONTENT OF THE WORKSHOP

The session starts with an introduction of the topic by the facilitator, followed by group discussions and individual reflection upon thoughts, feelings and behaviors of trauma. To finish the session, role play scenarios were designed to analyze deeper how to create trauma informed relationships and how the autoknowledge can help us to deal with some situations.

After each role play scenario, students seat in a circle and comment about how they felt during the session, and what they have learnt. Witnesses commented how their peers performed and identified comments and behaviors which promoted trauma informed relationships.

### INTRAS: SESSION 3

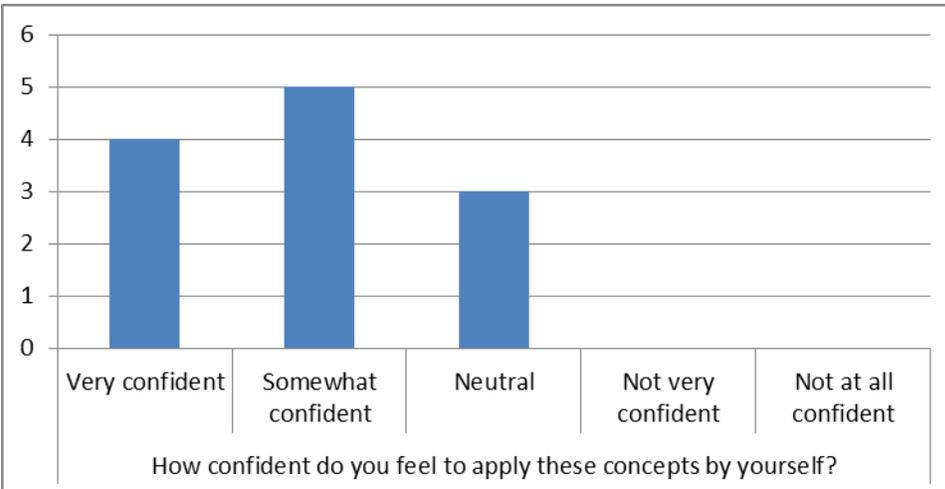
### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 3

Students found the session well organized, clear and comprehensive, since all the answers were on the positive pole (higher than 3). In the same way participants found the role play scenarios very useful, and commented that more role playing scenarios should be included, to fill the need of more practice.

In Spain an activity to recognize the strengths was organized, in the previous session participants wrote a short story about a super hero, where they highlighted their own skills and abilities and how they would like to group to remember them. During this session, students remembered this activity and received a badge with a sentence about their skills and abilities. Students appreciated it in all questionnaires and commented that it is very

powerful to be aware of your own capacities.

When they were asked to rate how confident they feel about creating trauma-informed relationships, these were their answers:



Even though there is a miss of answers, students start to feel more and more confident in their roles of peer support. There are 3 students who still feel neutral, from their answers we can suppose that more practice is needed, or more role play scenarios to apply what they learnt.

### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 3

Trainers considered that this has been a challenging session and some experience is needed to deal with the resistance to talk about mental health issues and traumatic experience. The activity with the badges helped students to focus on strengths, but all the discussions were carefully conducted by the facilitator to avoid too sensitive or intense discussions. For some trainers, it is maybe too early in the course to talk about this topic, and the session remained in the surface of trauma.

About the time, it was enough time to understand trauma, but there were not enough time to perform and discuss about the two role play scenarios, and just one scenario was fully reviewed and commented. They felt that more time is needed to clarify trauma informed practice in peer support relationships.

Trainers commented that the session was very participative, students shared interesting thoughts and comments about traumatic experiences and how they lead with them or could have lead. Furthermore, trainers considered this session as very effective and useful.

According to their answers, the session was a success, even though the final version of the teaching materials should consider allocating more time for this session and maybe to place it later on the course.

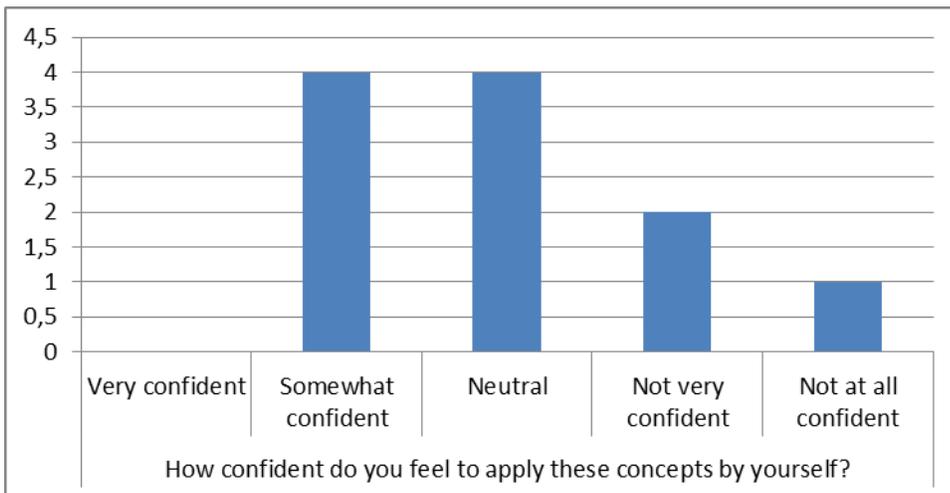
## EASP: SESSION 3

### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – EASP– SESSION 3

The students stated that this session made it clear to them how to establish a trauma informed practice, at least in theory. The group did enjoy the session and considered useful and clear the theory and the exercises proposed.

For students this session included so many abstract concepts and once again, they required a manual for students to follow the session and to read it over if they may have any questions. Here, in Granada, students also considered the session too short to discuss about trauma, understand these concepts, analyze them and then know how to create a trauma informed relationship. They considered it enough material for two sessions.

The students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to how confident they feel to apply these concepts in a peer support relationship:



In spite of the fact that this session was difficult and challenging, the scores were mostly positive, the majority of students felt somehow confident to apply concepts, though there are a number of mix answers which claimed for more practice and more role playing exercises.

### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – EASP– SESSION 3

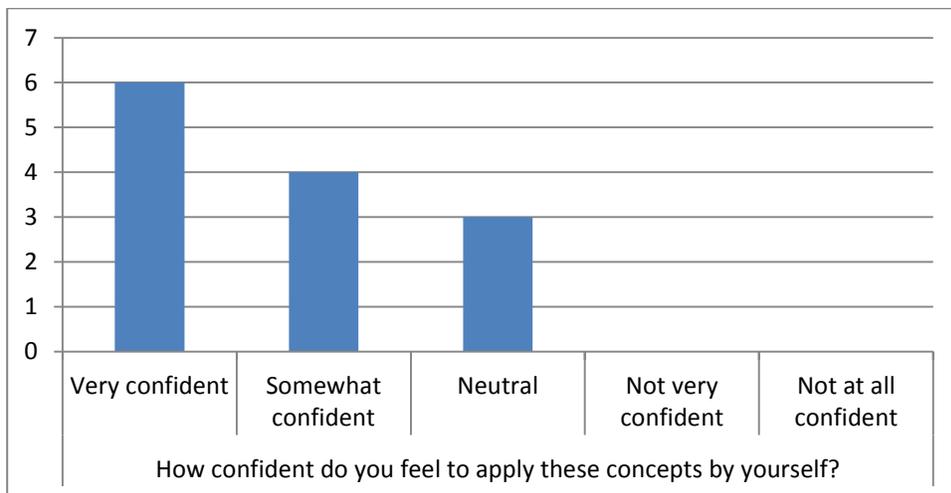
The trainers from EASP decided to delay this session and placed it after the session on strengths based approach. In spite of this, one student got too affected for the topic and the session needed to be redirect to a safer topic about stigma. The student finally took a break, and was encouraged to continue working and progressing on his recovery. It is important for student to have the right tools to work individually on their own traumatic experiences, to then be able to support others.

As trainers from Intras, the trainers from EASP, reported after the session that more time is needed and the contents should be split in two sessions.  
 In regards of trauma and societal influences of stigma, trainers suggest to consider the topic from a more positive point of view: what type of world do I want to live in? This approach apparently worked well in the group.

**PROMENTE: SESSION 3, 4**

**STUDENTS FEEDBACK – PROMENTE – SESSION 3, 4**

For the reasons explained above, the session 3. *Trauma informed practice* and session 4 *Understanding peer support* were delivered together in the same day.  
 After these two sessions, students commented that they have learnt about the effects of trauma on mental health and how the societal influence impact on mental health recovery. For them the session was clear, well organized and useful. All feedback received was extremely positive.  
 In spite of this, as in Spain, in Austria students considered the session too short, but it is difficult to know if they refer to session 3 or 4 or both.  
 Some of the students appreciated the role playing scenario and the discussion afterwards, but as usual they claimed for more practice.  
 The students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to how confident they feel to apply these concepts by themselves in a peer support relationship:



This session also reveals a highly positive attitude of the students towards the activities and the learning outcomes.

**TRAINERS FEEDBACK – PROMENTE – SESSION 3, 4**

The trainers in Austria commented that there is too much content or theory, and more exercises are needed. They commented that the group is very curious about peer support and enjoyed group discussions, reflections, lectures and dynamics. Besides, for the trainers in Austria, the role playing scenarios worked very well and consider that more scenarios should be

included, to discuss about the theory as practicing it.

One of the trainers commented that *"The knowledge is only one important thing, but it should be also important the communication skills"* in their opinion, the training about communication skills should be placed in the beginning of the course, as the communication skills are required all along the sessions.

## SESSION 4 – UNDERSTANDING PEER SUPPORT

### AIM OF THE SESSION

This session was aimed at securing the internal mental space of the participants by asserting their own boundaries and to make them understand how they can control this space, i.e. to what extent and whom they want to share it with.

### CONTENT OF THE WORKSHOP

The session starts with an introduction of the topic by the facilitator, followed by group discussions and individual reflection upon different types of peer support in mental health and about the relationship between peer support and the recovery concepts. Empathy and empowerment had an important role in this session and a lot of exercises were organized around these topics. In some countries, students worked in pairs, to discuss then the topics in groups. To finish the session, a role playing was organized to analyze empowerment in the framework of a peer support relationship.

After each role play scenario, students seat in a circle and comment about how they felt during it, and what they have learnt. Witnesses commented how their peers performed and identified comments and behaviors which promoted empowerment.

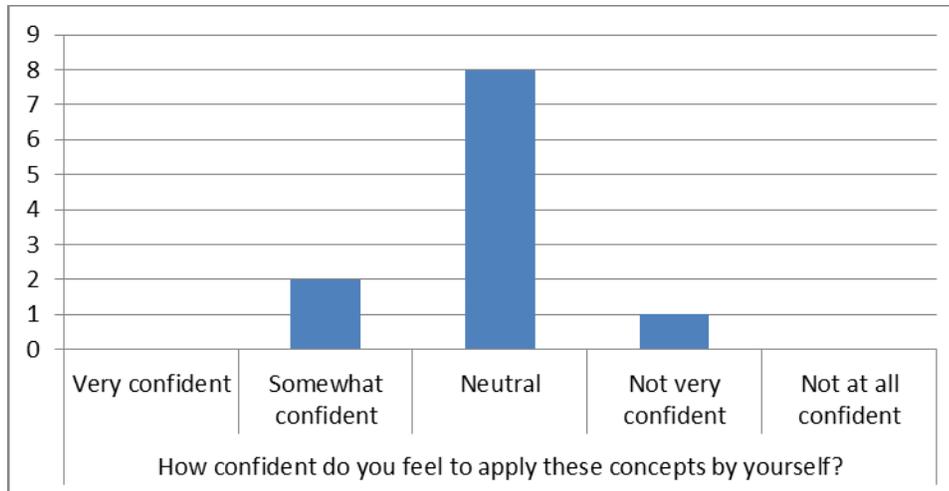
### INTRAS: SESSION 4

### TARGET GROUP FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 4

The students assessed well this session, in their opinion; it was well organized, clear and useful. Participants appreciate to talk about peer support itself, since the course is about peer support, and they haven't heard about these concepts until this session. Maybe for the final version of the teaching materials, this session could be placed earlier, to fully understand the concept of the course from the beginning.

Students continue asking for more supporting materials or hand-outs at the end of the session, since they have to fill in the portfolio mostly at home without the help from other students or trainers.

The students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to how confident they feel to apply these concepts by themselves in a peer support relationship:



In spite of the fact that the session was assessed positively and interesting by students, when they were asked about their confidence to apply concepts, which in this case could have meant, act as peer support workers, students showed a mix of answers from somewhat confident (2) to not very confidence (1). Anyway the majority of answers were placed on Neutral (8) meaning that more practice and knowledge could be needed, to make participants to feel more confidence.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 4

The group participated well in the activities; their interaction is described by the trainers as *“a group”*. Trainers commented that some of the students stay longer after the class to work together in the portfolio. Apparently, throughout the session, students started to feel more like peer workers and start practicing with their colleagues.

The trainers commented that this is a very important session, but in their opinion, the content is too long, there are so many points of view, details and hints, which may be simplified to focus on what is peer support and its relationship to recovery.

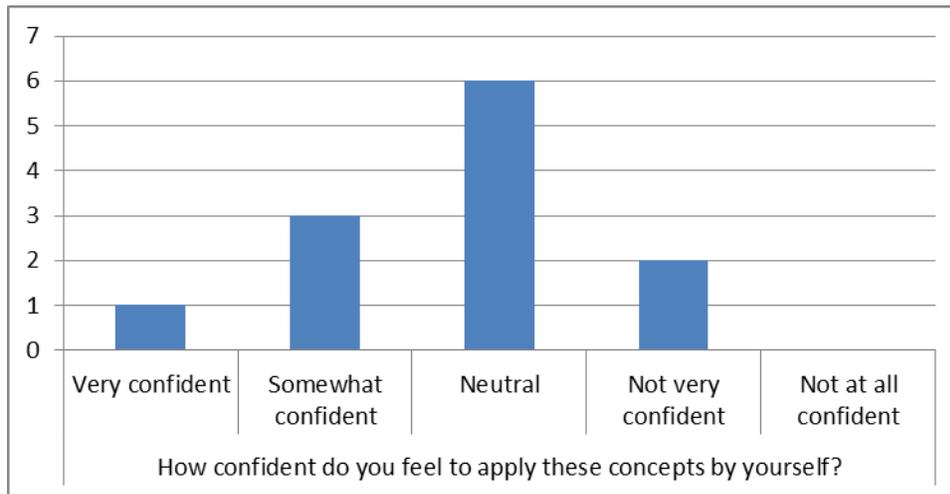
#### EASP: SESSION 4

#### TARGET GROUP FEEDBACK – EASP – SESSION 4

At EASP, this session was split in two different sessions, to better understand peer support. This session was particularly positive rated by students, when we asked them about the organization, materials, clearness and usefulness of it.

Now that the students start to understand the concept of peer support, they asked for more information after the class. During this session, they did not just ask for the material of the session, they would like to have references, bibliography and websites about peer support in their language. Students start to see the benefits of this approach and commented that it will be very useful to disseminate the approach among people with mental health issues who have improved and feel able to become peer support workers. Apparently, they would like to start building a network of peer workers.

The students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to how confident they feel to apply these concepts by themselves in a peer support relationship:



Students from the EASP, continue asking for more practice, one of the student commented *"Until I do not have the chance to put them into practice, I cannot know", "I will know it when I practice it"*.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – EASP – SESSION 4

The trainers have had the impression that the students start to understand the power of the peer support and their motivation increases from the first sessions. One trainer commented: *"At this time of the course, it is clear that students are asking for more opportunities to become peer workers, and start asking questions about the peer support in public mental health in other countries, for instance"*. In their opinion the group has been very participative and has reacted well to the exercises. One of the trainer commented that *"one of the strengths of this session was how it connects concepts, which facilitates the learning process"* in spite of this, another trainers missed more visual materials to introduce the concept of peer support. Maybe a video or an interview in Spanish will provide a basis for discussion about recovery and concepts of peer support.

The trainers think that this sessions allowed students to learn about peer support as a tool for recovery and introduced for them the concepts of empathy and mutuality.

## SESSION 5 – KEY CONCEPTS OF PEER SUPPORT AND PEER RELATIONSHIP

### AIM OF THE WORKSHOP

The aim of this session is to encourage candidates to examine the process and practices of establishing peer relationships and the importance of connection. Candidates will examine the concept of worldview and will have the opportunity to build on the initial establishment of the peer relationship through the use of mutuality and empathy and to consider power dynamics in peer relationships. Candidates will also consider issues in relation to power, choice and control in the peer relationship and examine the concept of the individual as expert in their own experience.

At the end of this session, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate through practice the promotion of power, choice and control in the peer support relationship.
2. Define the concept of the individual as expert and provide an example of how this might inform practice.
3. Demonstrate the ability to establish peer relationships based on mutuality and empathy.

### CONTENT OF THE WORKSHOP

The session starts with an introduction of the topic by the facilitator, followed by group discussions and individual reflection upon different types of peer support in mental health and about how individual stories influence our interpretations, and about the different roles that people assume in their relationships. Two role play scenarios were designed to put the theory into practice, and to fully understand mutuality or empathy in peer support.

After each role play scenario, students sat in a circle and commented about how they felt during the role play scenario, and what they have learnt. Witnesses commented how their peers performed and identified comments and behaviors which promoted mutuality or empathy.

### INTRAS: SESSION 5

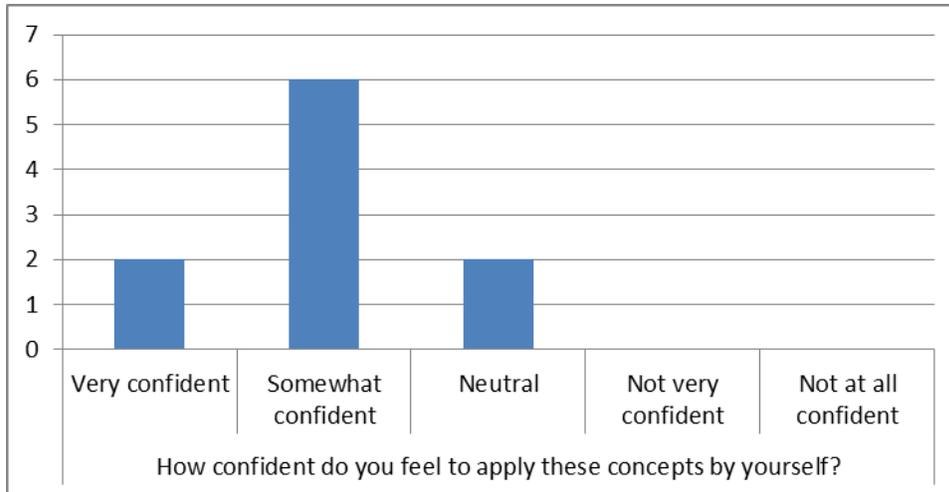
### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 5

The students have reported that the session has taught them to have more confidence in what they knew about mental health recovery, and to consider mutuality one of the most important factors to progress further along recovery.

As usual, after the session, students were satisfied with the organization of the session, with the exercises and role play scenarios. Apparently, participants came to realize during the session that they can face fears much better with the help of others, and that they both are stronger when doing so. Participants also reported an increased ability of the group for feeling empathy towards each other, trying to make others feel well

The students also considered the time limitations, one participant commented *“I would have*

liked that Teresa has went deeper on this session, it was very interesting” and also “we did not have time to finish the session, there was another role play scenario which we did not have time to do”. The students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to how confident they feel to apply these concepts by themselves in a peer support relationship:



The chart shows an extremely positive response of the students to the session, the vast majority rating their confidence in the positive pole of the scale. There were only two students who answered slightly less positive; maybe because the inner fears of the students about their responsibility in the recovery process of other person. Maybe this topic needs to be explained further, together with the concept of empowerment.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 5

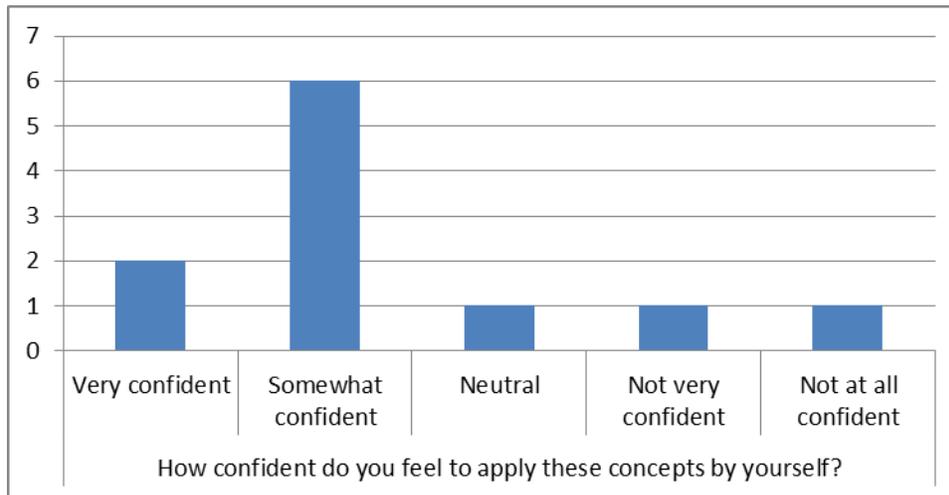
The trainers report the session as a success, since the group showed a great motivation and interest. Nevertheless, trainers considered that more time is needed, since participants are becoming more and more participative and the discussions longer and meaningful. Also, trainers commented that more time is needed to explain Karpman’s drama triangle. They reported the role play scenarios as very useful, and commented that the group reacted a lot better than they expected to the scenarios. Apparently, they are a powerful tool to understand the theory.

#### EASP: SESSION 5

#### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – EASP – SESSION 5

The students said that this session has taught them how to build peer to peer relationships based on mutuality and empowerment and how to take the drive seat of your life. Apparently, students from EASP were more familiarized with the concepts of empowerment and responsibility, as their answers do not reflect fear to fail in supporting others. All answers rated the session as very organized, (apart from the time management) and clear.

The students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to how confident they feel to apply these concepts by themselves in a peer support relationship:



The results of the students' feedback suggest that this session was mainly a success, almost all students felt confident to apply the concepts of empowerment, mutuality, etc. to build peer relationships. In spite of this, there are 3 students who did not feel confident, and even though they do not include any explanation of the reasons, it would have been interesting to know why, unlike their colleagues, they do not feel confidence.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – EASP – SESSION 5

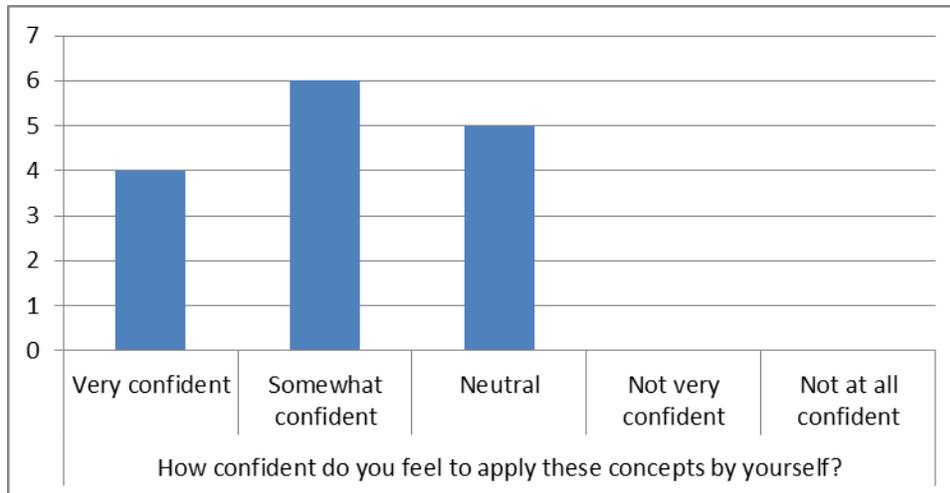
The trainers reported that this session marked the transition to some students from feeling insecure to feeling comfortable and confident in role play scenarios and group exercises. The trainers also referring in particular to the role plays scenarios as a powerful tool to be aware of how important is honestly, to avoid power positions in peer relationship. Apparently, the discussion about expert by experience was especially interesting. Trainers also commented about the drama triangle, as for some students it was not automatically transfer into practice, it was difficult to link power dynamics with peer to peer concepts, such as mutuality. As a solution, they propose to include another role play scenario with specific instructions about this topic.

#### PROMENTE: SESSION 5-6

#### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – PROMENTE – SESSION 5, 6

The students rated this session extremely positive, all the scores are on the positive pole of the scales, from how was the session organized, to the clearness of the concepts and exercises. Some of the comments were: *"It was a perfect day, thank you!"* *"Training was very active, fun and interesting"*; *"I support the implementation and the expansion of the training and the approach"*.

When we look at the answers given by students towards the question of being confident to apply the concepts learnt, students' answers were:



It is clear from the chat that the group had a mixed response to the workshop; whereas it is also clear that the workshop was a success due to the vast majority of students who feel very confident or somewhat confident towards the concepts of the session.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – PROMENTE – SESSION 5, 6

The trainers in Austria commented that there is too much content or theory, and more exercises are needed. They commented that the group is very curious about peer support and enjoyed group discussions, reflections, lectures and dynamics. Besides, for the trainers in Austria, the role playing scenarios worked very well, and it will be useful to include more scenarios, to discuss about the theory as practicing it.

One of the trainers commented that *“The knowledge is only one important thing, but it should be also important the communication skills”* in their opinion, the training about communication should be placed in the beginning of the course.

## SESSION 6 – WORKING WITH THE EFFECTS OF LABELING

### AIM OF THE WORKSHOP

The aim of this session is to introduce candidates to the concept of labelling of individuals and groups. It will go on to consider practices and values that challenge inequality on an individual and organizational level. The session will also introduce practices for working with diversity and different worldviews in peer relationships by using role plays and examples.

At the end of the session, students will be able to:

1. Reflect on the effects of labelling on identity and self-esteem and identify strategies to challenge these.
2. Demonstrate the application of values which challenge inequality.

### CONTENTS

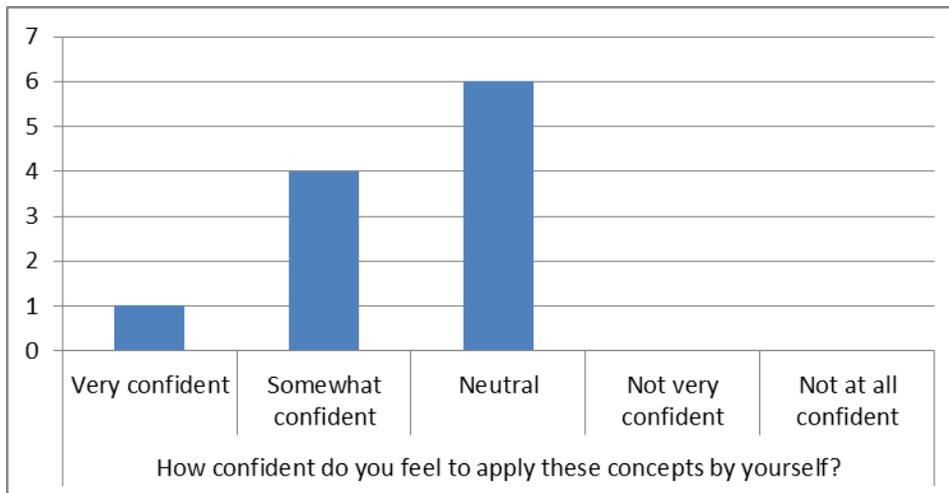
The session started with a group discussion about labelling to identify previous knowledge and aptitudes towards labelling and social stigma. In small groups students then discuss about the power of language, and how it impacts on hope, mutuality and empowerment. All the conclusions and hints were discussed in group. To finish the session a role playing scenario was designed and dramatized in pairs. In some countries a movie film was used to illustrate the topic of stigma, in other countries pictures or cards.

### INTRAS: SESSION 5

### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 6

The students have learned during the session about how diagnostic labelling affects identity, confidence and recovery and how service providers can create a situation where people can start to describe themselves in relation to diagnosis and illness. Students also had some time to consider other reasons of oppression and inequalities. Apparently, the group has the concepts clear since all the answers reflects a deep understanding of the effects of labelling and how it can become a barrier for them.

The session was extremely well received with not a single negative feedback to the entire segment of statement. The group is satisfied with the session, they commented that it was very well organized, very clear and very useful, almost all students rated the session with the higher scores that reflects the motivation and interest of students. One of them commented *"It was an interesting session, and I need to continue learning about it"*; it shows how the sessions make students more and more interested in learning more about the topic. The target groups were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to how confidence they feel to apply these concepts by themselves in a peer relationship:



From their answers, students have some reservations to apply the concepts from themselves after the session. They considered the session interesting and useful but they seem to need more practice and more supporting documents, bibliography, websites, etc. to feel confidence in a peer relationship.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 6

The group enjoys the movie and they all participated in a positive way. Their reaction to the role playing exercises was very positive, and the topic aroused their interest. Apparently they became aware of the power of language and used it more carefully. In spite of the success of the session, the trainers commented that some of the exercises need to be revised and focus them more on labelling and language.

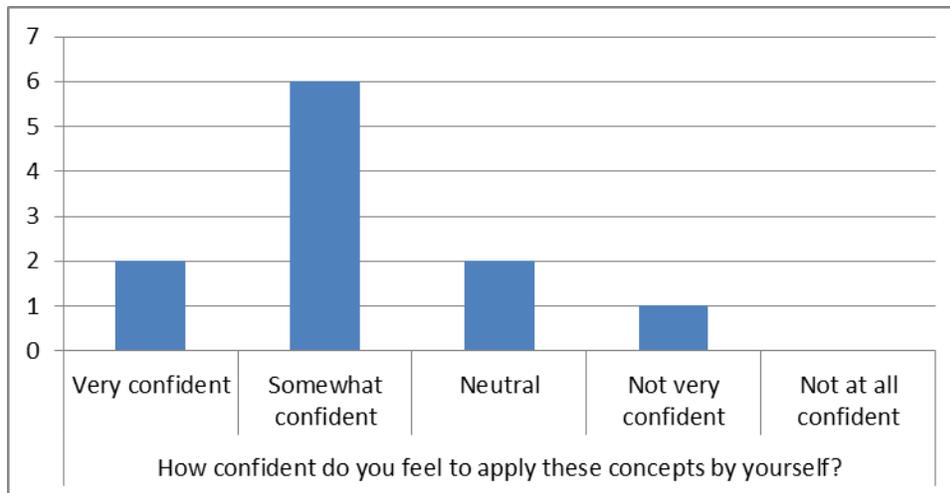
#### EASP: SESSION 6

#### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – EASP – SESSION 6

The students reported that the session made them realize what the language actually means and how labelling can affect us to work as team players. They even started to put it into practice. One of the students commented: *“even though it sounds like an easy thing to do, when one tries to put it into practice it’s easy to say but difficult to do”*. However, the participants thought it was amazing what they all can achieve just to changing a little bit how they communicate it.

All students, without exception, considered the session extremely positive, some of them regretted not having more time.

The target groups were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to their confidence to apply the concepts by themselves.



Apparently, students after this session feeling especially confident to apply what they learnt in a peer relationship. Just 3 people felt “neutral” or “not very confident” the others gave a unanimous positive response.

## LRSM: SESSION 6

### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – LRSM – SESSION 6

The trainers commented that at this stage of the course, students start to understand better the concept of peer support, and the power of being experts. The use of the language was an important topic for them, and how labelling can affect their lives and hopes.

To deliver these sessions, trainers use presentations, discussions and role playing. In their opinion, students were very motivated and interested in the session, and reflected critically how people should be informed about the illness and medication carefully, as sometimes people live with a diagnosis forever, without realizing that there are more things to be aware of.

For trainers, the methodology was very effective, but it would be more powerful if there is a follow up after the sessions, to foster personal development and to underpin peer support.

## SESSION 7 – REVIEW AND EVALUATION

### AIM OF THE SESSION

The aim of this session is to give candidates the opportunity to have individual support for the assessment task, feedback on the assessment (including guidance on remediation if required) and a review and evaluation of the content to date.

The most valid form of evaluation is to ask candidates to submit a short written response giving feedback on what they felt they learned, how this might help their practice, how it has changed their thinking and what suggestions they would make to improve content and delivery. This invariably provides more detailed information than a tick box approach. Also participants will have the opportunity to present evidence collected at the individual portfolio in sessions 1-6.

### REVIEW

This session worked well and gave students the opportunity for one-to-one meeting with tutors to discuss their learning and experience so far.

Some students used the time at the end of each session for their portfolio better than others. It may be worthwhile having something on reflective practice in the first or second session to help them with their portfolio.

## SESSION 8 – STRENGTHS BASED APPROACHES, RESILIENCE, ROLE MODELING AND HOPE

### AIM OF THE SESSION

The aim of this session is to examine ways in which a strengths-based approach might validate and reframe experience and to demonstrate to candidates how a strengths-based approach uses role modeling and hope to help individuals build resilience. This will be achieved through a variety of activities.

At the end of this session, students will be able to:

1. Describe how a strengths-based approach can validate and reframe experience.
2. Demonstrate through practice the application of role modelling and hope in the peer support relationship, including the use of self and constructive sharing of experience.
3. Explain methods of promoting resilience.

### CONTENT OF THE SESSION

During this session, students were introduced to the strengths based approaches and to the concept of resilience. They reflected upon who they are using a creative exercise. Students learnt the concept of resilience as the ability to overcome difficult experiences and find meaning and direction in difficult circumstances. The discussion was about three different people who had to deal with difficult situations in a wide range of contexts. After reflecting on other people's resilience, students considered their own resilience and how to have mental health issues made them stronger.

To finish the session, participants thought about how peer support workers could be considered by their peers as role models. The discussion started looking for someone who could be considered as a model for the group. During this session some countries used documentary films, interviews and YouTube videos.

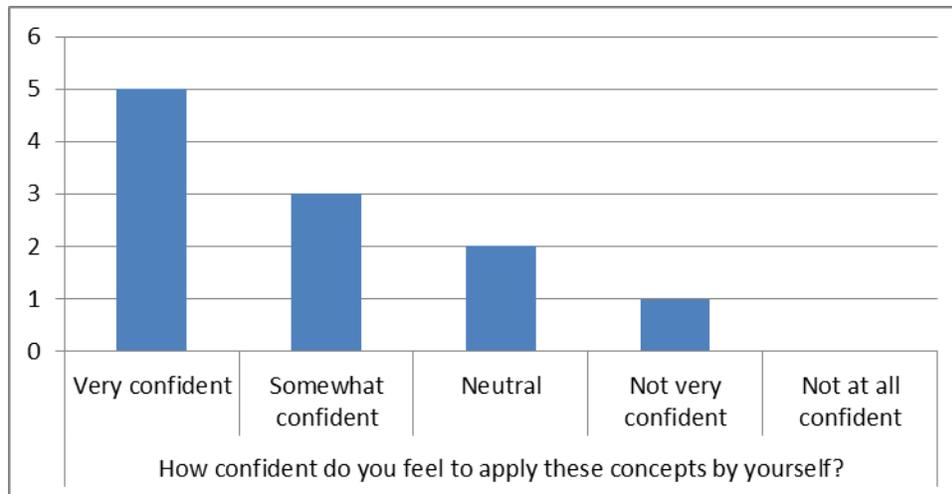
### INTRAS: SESSION 8

#### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 8

The students came to a conclusion that they've left the classroom with a clear picture of the topic and with a positive attitude towards it. They unanimously were satisfied with the session, with both the organization and the usefulness of it. In spite of this, students considered that there was not enough time to reflect and fully understand all the topics introduced.

Apparently, some of the discussions and conclusions were shorter to accommodate them to the time available. Some of the comments were: *"In my opinion, too much content for the time available", "I would like to have more information"*.

When students were asked to rate how confident do they feel to apply these concepts in a peer relationship, their answers were:



An awesome number of students felt very confident or somewhat confident to become role models of other people with mental illness. There was a person who didn't feel very confident to apply these concepts. The reason given was: *"I am still in a recovery process, and I understood that it will last forever, but I could become a role model for some people, but I will need some people to guide me as well"*. This comment shows the understanding of the group about the recovery approach and how students are looking forward to continue progressing further along their own recovery.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 8

The trainers report that the session was too long, and there was not time to use all the materials provided in the manual. For trainers it would have been useful to use some life stories or testimonies about resilience in a visual format. The exercise 2 about resilient people is less powerful than a life example. Trainers also missed a role play scenario about this topic to provide students with an opportunity to go in depth into the role of resilience and strengths based approaches.

The trainers commented that the exercise *"Who I am"* allowed students to know deeper each other and to trainers to get a general impression of where exactly students are in their recovery path.

Because of time limitation, it may be considered to shorten the session or to split it in two sub sessions: *strengths based approaches* and *role modeling and hope*.

#### EASP: SESSION 8

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – EASP – SESSION 8

Again, facilitators commented that students reacted very well to the exercises proposed and were interested in hearing more about resilience, hope and role modeling.

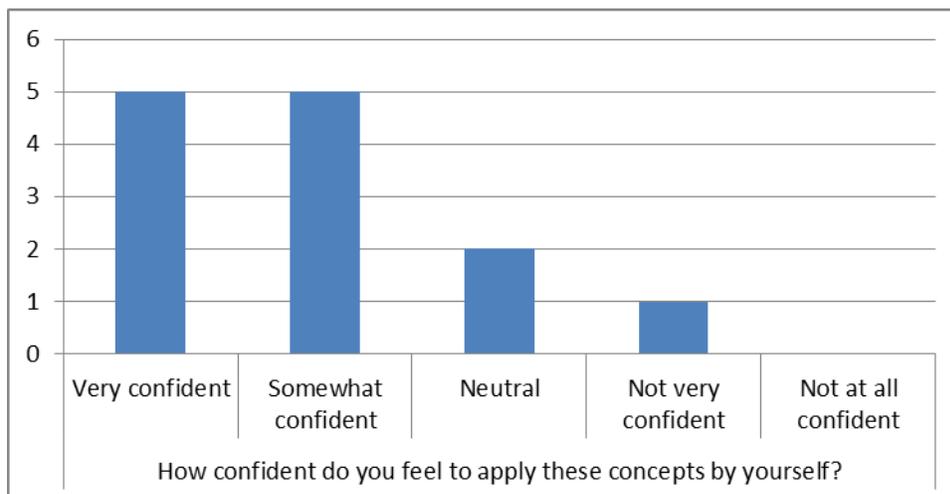
Facilitators considered that students were able to understand and give examples of the strengths-based approach. In EASP, trainers included a role play scenario about being a role model in peer support and how to help others to discover their strengths.

As their colleagues in Intras, at EASP exercises 1 and 2 worked very well, as it did the role play scenarios. Trainers considered the session as very useful (the highest rate was given). In the opinion of the trainers, this session allowed students to develop a more positive view of each individual against the stigma of the diseases. In spite of this, trainers also considered that more work is needed, as sometimes students feel not too positive and could be difficult for them to help the whole group.

## PROMENTE: SESSION 8, 9

### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – PROMENTE – SESSION 8, 9

This session was extremely positive rated by students. 11 students out of 13 gave the highest score in regards to organization, clearness and usefulness of the session. Students are apparently satisfied with the course and also feel confident to apply the concepts by themselves. When they were asked, their answers were:



Only one of the students did not feel very confident about applying these concepts as peer support worker, but not more information was given. In any case, the results are very positive, maybe one explanation could be that in Austria, peer support is more extended than in other countries as Spain or Romania, and the students already had some previous knowledge which makes them to progress faster.

### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – PROMENTE – SESSION 8, 9

The trainers in Austria commented that there is too much content or theory, and more exercises are needed. They commented that the group is very curious about peer support and enjoyed group discussions, reflections, lectures and dynamics. Besides, the trainers in Austria considered that the role play scenarios worked very well, to discuss about the theory as practicing it.

One of the trainers commented that *“The knowledge is only one important thing, but it should be also important the communication skills”* in their opinion, the training about

communication should be placed in the beginning of the course.

## **LRSM: SESSION 8**

### **TRAINERS FEEDBACK – LRSM – SESSION 8**

Trainers found this session useful for students to understand what strengths based approaches are, resilience and role modeling. In their opinion, students liked the exercises and the practical and participative character of the course. Trainers commented that role playing and practical exercises are useful for students as they do not try to memorize the theory; otherwise they tried to first understand and then apply what they have learnt. Lots of questions were formulated in order to be sure that students got a clear picture of the session and understand peer support.

Besides, trainers commented that the session, as presented in the manual, is too long, and there were not enough time to deliver all exercises and theory concepts.

Apparently, the context in Romania influences the development of P2P training course, the innovative character and the fact that in Romania, peer support approach is inexistent now a days, made the progress of students a little bit slower.

## SESSION 9 – FORMALISED PEER SUPPORT, CONSIDERING BOUNDARIES, SUPERVISION AND GOAL SETTING

### AIM OF THE SESSION

The aim of this session is to help candidates to examine the implications of formalized peer support, encouraging candidates to examine the related concepts of boundaries, role tension and confidentiality in peer support working. This session will also focus on the role of supervision within the workplace and how goal setting can be achieved and how setbacks can be managed.

At the end of the session students will be able to:

1. Analyze the implications of formalizing peer support.
2. Identify and explain two aspects of role tension and boundaries.
3. identifies the principles of confidentiality and information sharing.
4. Explain the role of supervision.
5. Explain how goal setting would be achieved and how setbacks could be managed.

### CONTENT OF THE WORKSHOP

The session starts with an introduction of the topic by the facilitator, followed by a group discussion and individual reflection upon boundaries in personal relationships. This is the most important part, which also includes 4 role play scenarios to go in depth into boundaries. To finish the session, the group of students reflect upon role tension, confidentiality and supervision.

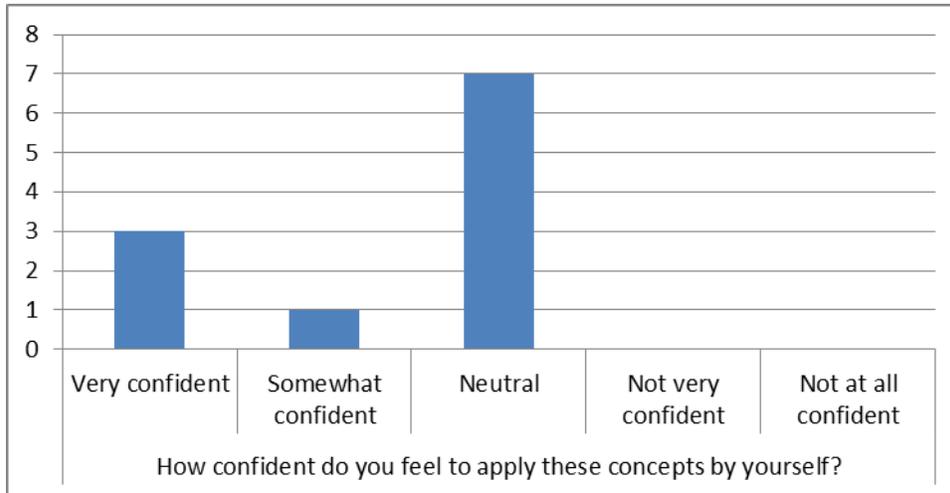
The discussions are led by the facilitator who must prepare some questions (samples provided). At the end of the session, participants seat in a circle and comment about how they felt during the session, and if they feel comfortable talking about boundaries.

### INTRAS: SESSION 9

#### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 9

The students found the session well organized, clear and comprehensive, since all the answers were on the positive pole (higher than 4). Some of the comments were *"It has been very interesting"*, *"this session has been very well led by the facilitator"*.

When they were asked to rate how confident they feel about discuss and negotiate boundaries by themselves in a peer relationship, these were their answers:



There is a mix of answers, some students started to feel more and more confident in their roles as peer support, while others felt “neutral”. It may have been interesting to have learnt more about the reasons, but students just provided a few comments like: *“it is a controversial topic”, “maybe I will need a little bit more of training to put everything into practice”, “I need to study”, “I need to practice”*.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 9

Trainers considered that this has been a challenging session; one of the reasons given is the need to adapt the content provided in the manual to the needs of the group. Apparently, the group reacts better to practical exercises, discussions and role plays, and this session, as it is presented in the manual, has a lot of theory, which has to be reviewed and re-elaborated into practical discussions and exercises.

The trainers considered the content and exercise on supervision not very useful for people not in work as peer workers. So this section was adapted and just a short review was provided. The same was commented for the role play scenarios: an extra scenario was designed on boundaries.

Trainers commented that the session was very participative, students shared interesting thoughts and comments about the topics, and they showed their knowledge on peer working, which has nothing to do with the knowledge they had at the beginning of the course. In the words of trainers: *“students showed a remarkable knowledge about concepts as resilience and empowerment which did not have at the beginning of the course”*.

According to their answers, the session was a success, even though the final version of the teaching materials should include a shorter review of the content and more focused exercises.

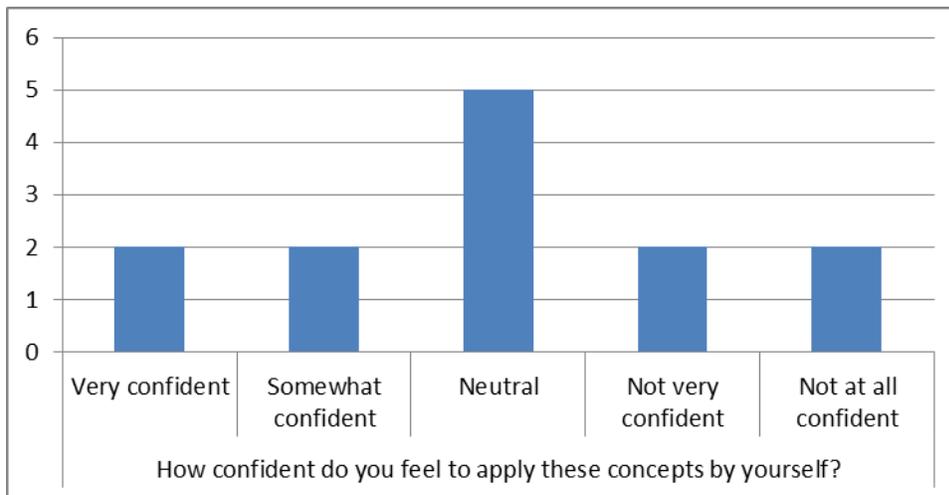
#### EASP: SESSION 9

#### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – EASP – SESSION 9

The students rated this session as positive as the previous ones, in terms of organization, materials provided, usefulness and clearness, all the answers without exception, were placed on the positive pole: very well organized, very clear and very useful.

In regards to the materials, students continue asking for a printed manual or hand-outs for students to follow the sessions, and to review concepts at home, at the time to fill in the portfolio of evidence.

The students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to how confident they feel to establish a formalized peer support:



In spite of the fact that this session was very well rated towards usefulness or organization, student displayed a wide range of answers from the very positive ones to the “No confidence at all”. Students asked to apply the concepts and techniques in a safe environment, as it could be as volunteers tutored by a more experienced peer support worker. Other comments were in regards of the course length, claiming for a longer one.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – EASP– SESSION 9

Trainers from EASP commented that the theoretical part of this session is extremely long, and it is proposed to divide this session into two parts, and offer a course of 15 sessions instead of just 13 of 4 hours each, answering in this way to the students’ suggestion of have a longer course. In EASP exercises 9.1 *Boundaries in personal relationships* and 9.2 *Clarity in boundaries* were combined.

The trainers from EASP rated this session as very effective and useful for students, as they reflected upon the existence of boundaries and identify the consequences of not having clarifying them in formal relationships; nevertheless, trainers also considered that the time limitation could lead to a misunderstanding of the *limits* with the *constraints* of the formalized peer support.

Another suggestion gave by trainers was to include in this session the exercises about ethical code, which was previously included in session 11.

## SESSION 10 – EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND WORKING WITH RISK

### AIM OF THE SESSION

The aim of this session is to introduce students to elements of effective communication, including verbal and non-verbal communication, active listening and the use of recovery language, and to enable them to use these to foster an effective peer support relationship. This session will also introduce the concept of working with risk and the approaches that can be used to help in this process. Candidates will examine the balance between risk and responsibility within the peer relationship. As part of this, candidates will deal with the topics of trauma, suicidality and risk. Suicide is a very difficult and personal topic. It's important to acknowledge this at the beginning of the session and check in with candidates at the end, just to debrief if necessary.

At the end of this session, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate use of effective communication including active listening, recording and recovery language.
2. Reflect on approaches to working with risk.

### CONTENT OF THE WORKSHOP

The session starts with an introduction of the topic by the facilitator, followed by group discussions and individual reflection. Two role play scenarios were organized and to finish the session, it is proposed to discuss about the risks and ethics of a peer relationship.

The first discussion was aimed to reflect upon the impact of communication and validation.

The first role play scenarios was also designed to practice these skills and abilities. The second role play scenario is designed to support others in a tolerant, compassionate, honest and patient way.

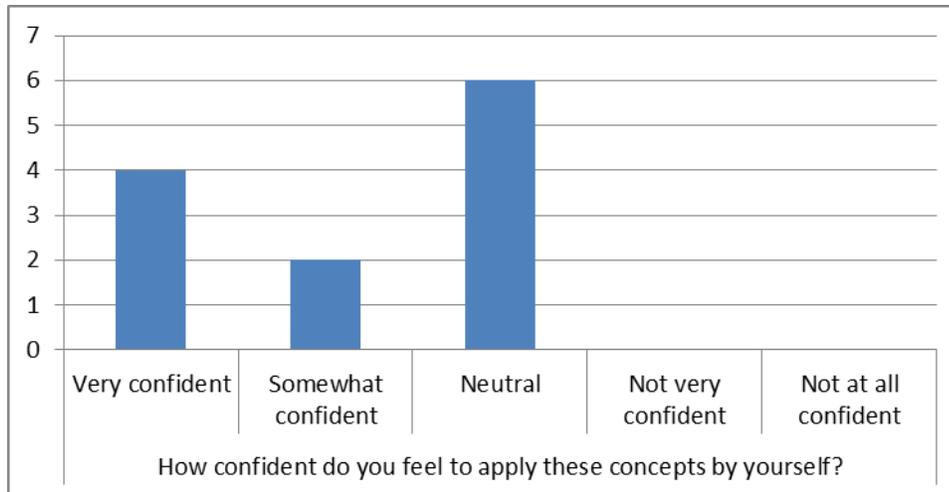
After each role play scenario, students seat in a circle and commented about the complexity of ethical issues in peer support, focusing on confidentiality and power.

### INTRAS: SESSION 10

### TARGET GROUP FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 4

The students assessed well this session, in their opinion, it was well organized, clear and useful, aspects which were always rated as positive or very positive. For some students, this session was *“very well conducted and very well focused”*. Besides, students commented that this session clarifies a lot of concepts and situations, and gave them tools to deal with different challenges, because as they commented *“the real life situations are not easy to face”*. Nevertheless there was a single student who commented that *“This session wasn't easy, it was difficult and at the end I am not clear of the topics”*. This comment may reflect how challenged was this session, as it was not focused on theoretical content, it was more connected with the ethical code in peer relationships.

The students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to how confident they feel to apply these concepts by themselves in a peer support relationship:



In spite of some of the fears expressed towards this session, all answers were placed on the positive pole, though most of the students felt neutral. More practice is needed especially in this session, as it is more connected with ethical performance and ethical dilemmas.

### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 10

The trainers commented that the group was very participative and motivated during the session. Apparently the first section about communication was very well welcome by students, who tried to put into practice some of the communication skills commented before. The role playing organized was a little bit adapted and re-designed to adapt it to the group. Second part of the session about working with risk was more complex and raised a lot of questions. Trainers commented that more time is needed to practice and put into practice concepts to fully understand them.

### EASP: SESSION 10

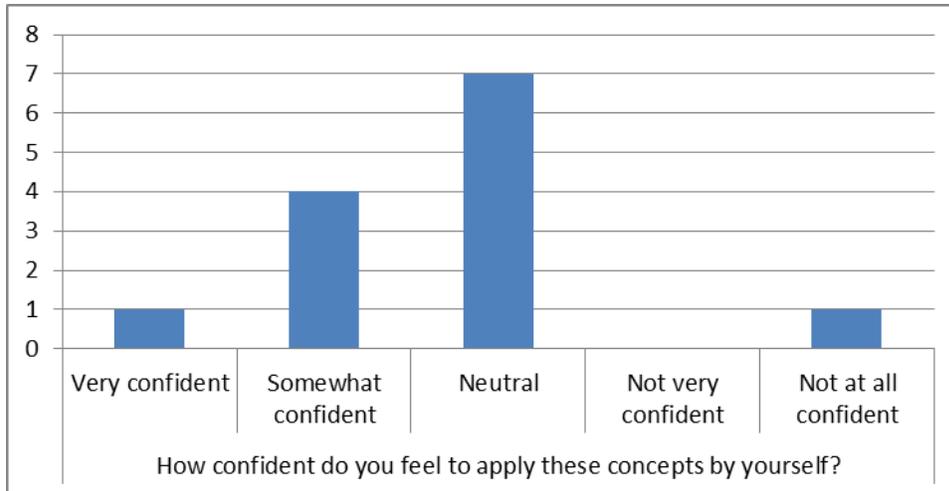
#### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – EASP – SESSION 10

This session was particularly positive rated by students, when we asked them about the organization, materials, clearness and usefulness of it, apart from 2 neutral answers, all of them rated the session with the highest score.

In regards to the materials, students continue asking for a printed material to follow the sessions, to the question, do you miss any material which could have helped you to apply the theory? Some of the comments were: *“A manual with the material well organized”*, *“to have didactic materials”*, *“To have a printed version of the theory”*, *“to have printed materials, though the trainer made a good job, we may need to study it at home”*, etc. Maybe it could have been convenient to provide printed materials and hand-outs for students, as it was done in Intras.

There was one student who commented that he/she missed *“an individualized treatment, as in public it is more difficult for him to express himself”*.

The students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to how confident they feel to establish a formalized peer support:



As in the previous session, student displayed a wide range of answers from the very positive ones to the “No confidence at all”. In this case, the majority of students rated their attitudes as neutral and one person as not confidence at all. Students asked for more practice to fully understand concepts. Nevertheless, some students considered the role play scenario as very useful to put into practice contents, for instance the 10 key communication skills. In the other hand, there was one student who said *“I am confidence; I have assumed it in a natural way”*.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – EASP – SESSION 10

The trainers at EASP, commented that this session worked well, but it could have been better if it was placed before, after session 2 or 3 as communication is a transversal topic and students could have had more chances to apply these concepts along the course.

At EASP a new exercise was included to work on non-verbal communication which worked very well with group, and they propose to include it in the final version of the teaching materials. Also, at EASP some of the exercises planned in this session were already conducted in the previous session.

The trainers considered this session as very powerful and affective, and they considered students ready to apply these concepts by themselves. For them this session is easy to put into practice, and for that more role play scenarios should be included to provide students with the space needed to acquire these communication skills.

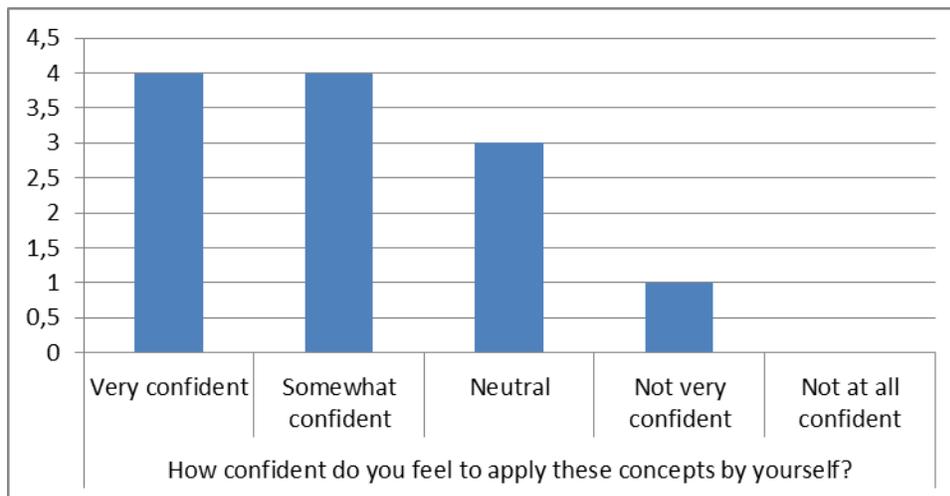
#### PROMENTE: SESSION 10-11

#### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – PROMENTE – SESSION 10-11

This session was extremely positive rated by students. Almost all of them considered it well organized and useful. Students are apparently satisfied with the course, although there was

one student who commented that *"it would have been more useful to have an easier explanation of the theory, to understand it better"* and other commented that the time was so limited and they *"would have liked to learn more to talk better to other people"*. Another student commented that to use films or short movies always help to understand better the theme and to remember the important topics.

When students were asked whether they feel confident to apply the concepts by themselves, their answers were:



Only one of the students did not feel very confident about applying these concepts as peer support worker, but not more information was given. In any case, the results are very positive.

### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – PROMENTE – SESSION 10, 11

The trainers in Austria commented that there is too much content or theory, and more exercises are needed. They commented that the group is very curious about peer support and enjoyed group discussions, reflections, lectures and dynamics. Besides, the trainers in Austria considered that the role play scenarios worked very well, to discuss about the theory as practicing it.

One of the trainers commented that *"The knowledge is only one important thing, but it should be also important the communication skills"* in their opinion, the training about communication should be placed in the beginning of the course.

## SESSION 11 – SELF CARE, SAFE PRACTICE AND SELF MANAGEMENT IN PEER SUPPORT

### AIM OF THE WORKSHOP

The aim of this session is to examine the use of a range of self-help and self-management tools, to consider the role of wellness in recovery and to consider aspects of safe practice and self-care for peer support workers. It will go on to consider peer working within organizations and services and the factors that make environments more, or less, appropriate for peer support working. It will close by considering ethical codes in peer working, including the role of confidentiality in peer relationships.

At the end of the session, students will be able to:

1. Describe the use of self-help and self-management tools.
2. Identify what makes an environment appropriate for peer support.
3. Identify and describe two aspects of safe practice, self-care and self-management.

### CONTENT OF THE WORKSHOP

The session starts with an introduction of the topic by the facilitator, followed by group discussions and individual reflection upon empowerment and self-management. This session also introduce in detail the ethical code of a peer worker. To finish the session a role play scenarios were organized to put into practice the concept of empowerment and strong decision making.

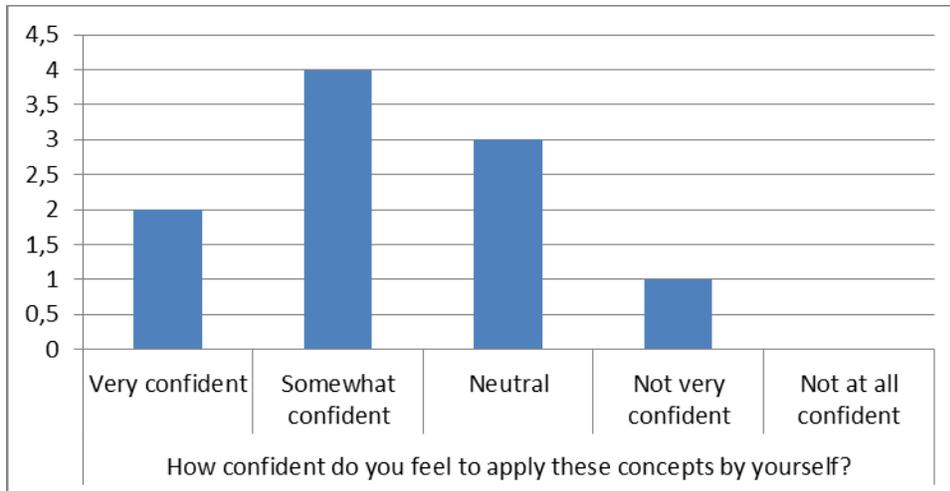
After each role playing, students seat in a circle and comment about how they felt during the role playing, and what they have learnt. Witnesses commented how their peers performed and identified comments and behaviors which promoted empowerment.

### INTRAS: SESSION 11

### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 11

The students have reported that the session has gave them confidence and provided them with a very positive point of view about recovery. Students commented about how useful were the tools used during the session and in general they were satisfied with it in terms of organization and materials.

The students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to how confident they feel to apply these concepts by themselves in a peer support relationship:



The chart shows a positive response of the students to the session, the majority rated their confidence in the positive pole of the scale. There were only one student who answered slightly less positive; This time, even though some of the students commented about the need of more practice, there are two answers about the lack of self-confidence and self-esteem as barriers to become peer workers and to empower others to take the drive seat of their lives. As it happens before, the inner fears of students are seen as barriers, these needs to be addressed in the following courses.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 11

The trainers reported the session as a success, since the group showed a great motivation and interest, nevertheless, teachers considered that there is a lot of theoretical content, and it would be recommended to be more specific and brief.

The trainers at Intras chose to introduce the theory at the same time that the exercises, and make the session more practical. Two extra role play scenarios were organized to illustrate self-help and self-management tools. And an extra one around working with other professionals to understand peer roles in a way that promotes self-care.

During this session, students had the chance to learn from colleagues, the strategies they use to feel better and also they understand better what make them to feel better.

#### EASP: SESSION 11

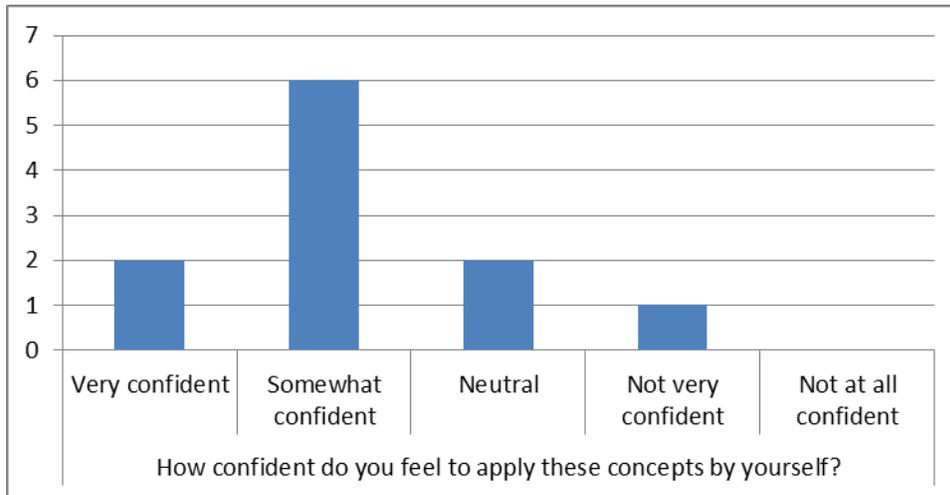
#### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – EASP – SESSION 11

The students were satisfied with the session; they found it very organized, useful and clear. Students also found useful the exercises and role play scenarios.

Apparently, students start to feel that the course is coming to the end and they start to recognize what they have learnt and feel reluctant to finish the course. Some students comment that they *"would like to have a longer course"* or *"another course more specific"*. Other students, claim for more practice and propose a follow up of the course with workshops to support each other.

Anyway, their feedback showed their satisfaction, motivation and interest in the topic. The students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to how confident they feel to apply these concepts by themselves in a peer support

relationship:



The chart shows the feedback given by students, this data suggests that the session was a success; students at EASP start feeling more and more confident to perform the role of peer worker, in this case to apply self-help and self-management in peer support.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – EASP – SESSION 11

The trainers reported that this session provided students with the chance to examine ways to apply the strengths-based approach which has already been studied. Trainers from EASP designed an extra exercise about the WRAP approach, which in their opinion worked very well. The exercises about ethics were already conducted in previous sessions, so more time was allocated to explore self-care and self-management. They commented that more role play scenarios should be designed to practice skills in different situations, as they are useful to fully understand concepts and help students to generalize what they learn from one situation to a wide range of them.

The trainers found the session very useful for students, and believe they will be able to apply the concepts by themselves as peer workers, when it will be required.

## SESSION 12 – REFLECTING ON PERSONAL EXPERIENCE: UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

### AIM OF THE WORKSHOP

The aim of this session is to encourage candidates to reflect on personal experience and the process of change — whether personal or within services and systems. It also examines how learning can be applied in practice and acts as preparation for assessment and will give candidates the opportunity to share some of their own experiences of change.

At the end of the session, students will be able to:

1. Reflect on a personal experience and describe how it relates to the key concepts of peer support, including aspects of positive risk taking.
2. Describe a process of change from personal experience.

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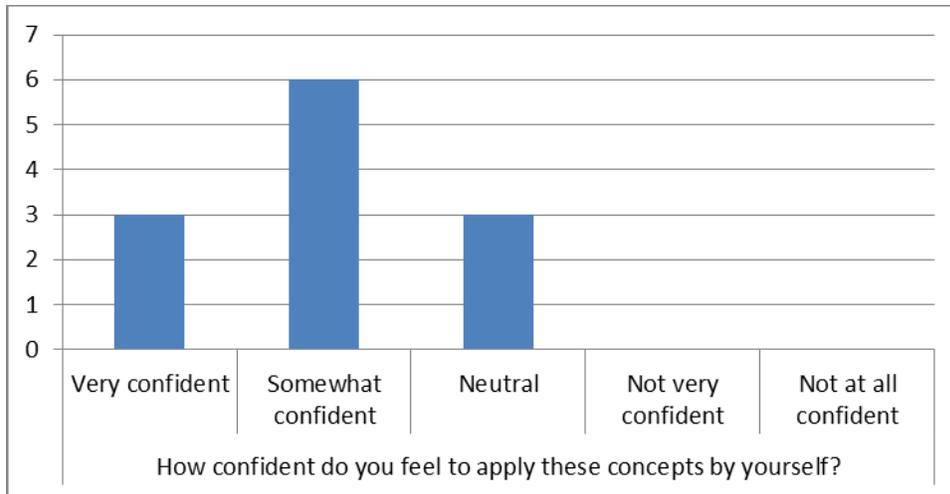
The session started with a group discussion about personal recovery to introduce the five stages model. Students are asked to identify their own story of change, and the key factors of recovery. Students are now ready to share their own story and to use it intentionally to help others. To finish the session three role play scenarios were designed and dramatized in pairs.

### INTRAS: SESSION 12

#### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 12

The students start feeling more and more confidence, some of their comments in regards to this session are: *“I am getting more and more confidence”, “there are a lot of things that I still need to learn but I feel that they will come with the time and practice”*. Students were asked whether they see any barrier to become peer workers and they all answered that no, or with a *“less and less”*. For students, this session was interesting and useful. This session was about sharing and discussing, and they appreciate that all members of the group participated with an open aptitude. The session was extremely well received with not a single negative feedback to the entire segment of statement. The group is satisfied with the session and feels safe and free to express themselves.

The students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to how confidence they feel to apply these concepts by themselves in a peer relationship:



The chart shows that students feel confidence to apply these concepts, just 3 of them felt neutral, nevertheless all the others felt somewhat confident or very confident.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – INTRAS – SESSION 12

The group was very interested in the session and open to the theory and exercises. The session was very effective towards the aims proposed and in the opinion of trainers, *“students are ready to apply the concepts by themselves, even though they felt a little bit insecure to work with people, they will be completely confident with some practice”*. During this session, since the course is coming to its ends, trainers start to see how the living experience of participants is getting stronger and useful for their development, communication skills have increased throughout the course, and the open discussions are meaningful and well balanced. Apparently they became aware of the power of language and used it more carefully.

At the end of the session, it was organized a group dynamic about the benefits of laughing. It was very well welcome by participants.

In spite of the success of the session, the trainers commented that some of the exercises need to be revised and focus them more on labelling and language.

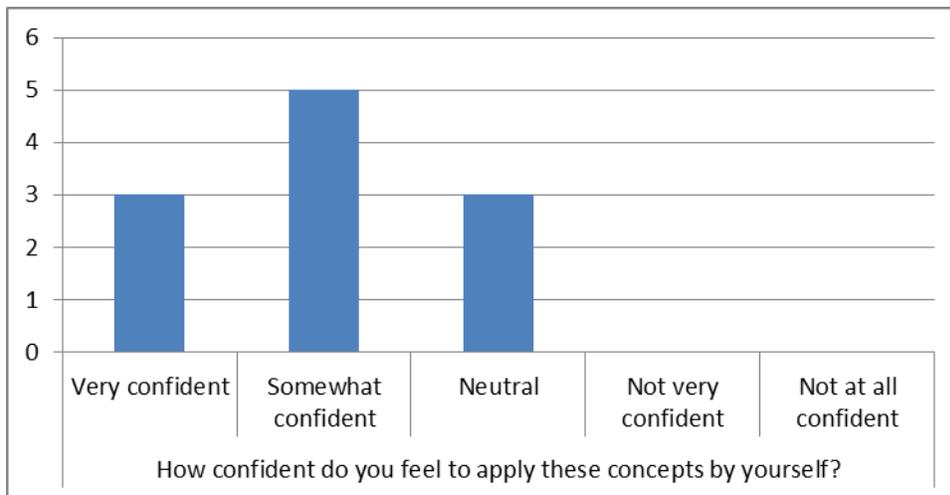
#### EASP: SESSION 12

#### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – EASP – SESSION 12

The students reported that the session made them reflect upon their own experience and they were able to change and progress among their recovery path. The students rated the session as very positive, very organized, useful and clear. They thought it was amazing to realize how they have changed along their life and how they can use these experiences to support others. Students liked the exercises and the enjoyed the focus groups of the session.

The students considered the course very useful and would like to continue learning, to have more sessions or another course as follow up. They also claimed for a practical period, now that they have finished the course.

The students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to their confidence to apply the concepts by themselves.



Apparently, students now at the end of the course, feel especially confident to apply what they learnt in a peer relationship. Just 3 people continue feeling “neutral” the others gave a unanimous positive response.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – EASP– SESSION 12

The trainers from EASP considered not just the session, also the course a very positive experience for all parties. In the opinion of the trainers, students are able to apply what they have learnt and they can now step forward and start practicing in real scenarios. In regards of the session 12, trainers commented that it would be good to have something on personal narrative at the beginning of the course. This would give students an opportunity to author their own narrative and revisit it as the course develops. Also for trainers the role play scenario works to some extent but needs to be revised and clarified a little to fit completely to the topic.

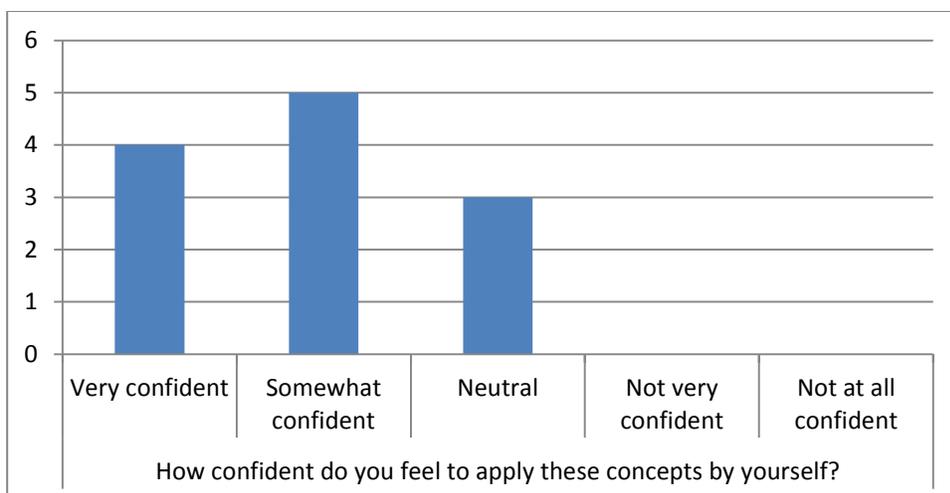
#### PROMENTE: SESSION 12

#### STUDENTS FEEDBACK – PROMENTE – SESSION 12

The students, at this last session, before the final evaluation and assessment, rated it as very positive and very participative. Some students commented that *“there was not enough time to finish the session, and that maybe the course could have been longer”*. They have the feeling that they have learning a lot during the course, nevertheless, a couple of students commented that they *“would appreciate to have had some review-time in every session to progress further instead of completing the portfolio of evidence”*.

Now, at the end of the course, participants asked about the intention of the project and the course after it has finished. One of the students even asked if *“are the users expected to care for themselves? Do they want to save costs?”* It may have been interesting to explain the aims of the course and to be sure that students have realistic expectations.

The students were asked to rate their attitudes towards the session in relation to their confidence to apply these concepts by themselves, these were their answers:



The chart shows an extremely positive response of the students to the session, all of them rated their confidence in the positive pole of the scale. There were only three students who answered neutral; This is a very positive outcome of the project, as students from Austria raised their confidence and feel now more able to support others. There was not a single answer about being not very confidence. It shows the progress of students along the course.

#### TRAINERS FEEDBACK – PROMENTE – SESSION 12

The trainers commented that these session as the whole manual, has a lot of content, it includes vary interesting aspects, but to be more powerful, and promotes a better learning effect, the curriculum should be reduced and focused on the main aims of the sessions and course. In regards to the activities, it was appreciated that the design of the course included so many activities, group discussions, role play scenarios, and the explanations for the trainers helped a lot to lead the discussions. All the exercises proposed were very useful for reflection and throughout the course, students learnt a lot, and that was reflected in their feedback. For trainers from PROMENTE, the proposed timing didn't work in their group and needs to be revised or just leaving it open.

## SESSION 13 – REVIEW AND EVALUATION

### AIM OF THE SESSION

The aim of this session is to give candidates the opportunity to have individual support for the assessment task, feedback on the assessment (including guidance on remediation if required) and a review and evaluation of the content to date.

The most valid form of evaluation is to ask candidates to submit a short written response giving feedback on what they felt they learned, how this might help their practice, how it has changed their thinking and what suggestions they would make to improve content and delivery. This invariably provides more detailed information than a tick box approach. Also participants will have the opportunity to present evidence collected at the individual portfolio in sessions 6-12.

### REVIEW

No comments received.

## CONCLUSIONS

A total number of 135 trainees and 40 facilitators took part in the mutual support learning experience. Three months after the second course was finished, at least 18 of the students trained as peer support workers were working for the organizations involved in the project. The learning results were evaluated after each session through detailed questionnaires. The questionnaires were designed in order to assess:

- The satisfaction of both students and facilitators of the training course
- Learning results according to the objectives of each session
- The students' perception regarding their own skills to apply concepts and tools learned in each session in a peer relationship.

The questionnaires' results proved that the satisfaction with the training course was very high among students. The average score was 4, 07 out of 5. The students assessed as extremely positive the approach and the training course. For students this kind of experiences suppose a change in the way that mental health is commonly understood, an innovative employment opportunity and finally, a positive and realistic point of view of the mental illness. This approach recognizes the benefits of the support given by people with experience in mental health issues, and the knowledge they gained. The students appreciated and highlighted the fact that the peer worker fully understands the situation, the feelings and the symptoms, because he/she has been through them before.

The learning results were assessed through the preparation of a learning portfolio which the students were asked to fill in once the session was completed and/or through the evaluation sessions. All the students were able to produce their own portfolio of evidence. They delivered it at the end of the course and, thereby, demonstrated their knowledge and skills to learn and process the information required.

Regarding the skills to apply the concepts and tools learned through the sessions in a peer relationship, the average score given by students was 3, 47 points out of 5. From the students' answers we can assume the acquisition of theoretical knowledge about how to develop and maintain relationships based on peer support values, but the great majority of the students requested a practical period supervised by a tutor, in order to apply the theoretical knowledge and gain confidence in the role of peer support worker.

Concerning the qualitative results of the questionnaire filled in by the facilitators of the sessions, we can highlight the effect that this experience had in their own understanding and attitude towards recovery, as well as its impact in the cultural change of their organizations. Based on this experience, the organizations that participated in the project, started to question the approach and effective allocation of resources in centers and facilities, in order to include peer support workers in their professional teams.