

Service User Involvement in Social Work Education and Research

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Some introductory Notes

In the UK and now also in ROI, service user involvement is a mandatory part of the social work curriculum



Social work education is the most appropriate place for students to most effectively understand the meaning of partnership work with service users. (Gutman et al 2012)

Opportunities and Challenges

Positive impact on social work students of exposure to service users' lived experiences in social work education, including through research.

Resistance - involving "outsiders" (Banks, 2006) in social work - what kind of knowledge is needed in SW education?

How are service users involved?

Concerns re. tokenism. What does real involvement look like?

Young People as Educators Project

Rationale - include the voice of marginalised young people in social work education and research

Aim – to capture young people's experiences of social work involvement in their lives.

Process - 3 months; one day a week at the prison; activities; building rapport; planning together – key learning

Outcomes - DVD co-produced as educational tool; positive feedback from all participants

MSc in Research Methods – social workers and service users

Qualified social workers and service users study and research together

Building a culture of evidence and knowledge to inform at policy, management, and practice levels

User involvement in research priority setting and commissioning structures, research committees, grant-awarding panels and the dissemination and implementation of research findings.

Developments in Social Work at Maynooth

CORU approval of course - mandatory requirement to demonstrate service user involvement

Service Users as speakers on 1. own experience 2. presenting research findings 3. participating in focus groups with students to co-produce research

Collaboration with Travellers organisations with a view to planning a research project

Long term plans to expand post-qualifying course options for social work and (my plan!) is to include service user pathway

Thank you for listening!



Any questions?