

VET<sub>MH</sub>

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TUT+3

*Peer Support*

**PAT - PEER AND TEAM SUPPORT**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

## — Intro

# The TuTo3 project - PAT: PEER and TEAM SUPPORT in Mental Health

Peer support in mental health is not an innovative practice. It is developing worldwide.

Peer-support is a mutual support between people who have had similar experiences, particularly in matters of mental health or addictions. It is on



sharing experiences and knowledge gained through experience to support recovery and empowerment.

The WHO recognizes peer-support as a complementary approach to traditional health care, which can improve quality of life and recovery.

The ERASMUS Tuto3 project, focusing on PAT (Peer and Team support) in mental health, represents a pioneering approach to enhancing mental health support systems. This initiative stands out as a beacon of hope and innovation in the realm of mental wellness, aiming to leverage the power of community, empathy, and shared experiences to foster a more supportive environment for individuals facing mental health challenges. By placing emphasis on peer and team support, the Tuto3 project acknowledges the profound impact that connection and understanding can have on an individual's mental health journey.



# The TUTO3 PROJECT

The TUTO3 PROJECT comprehensive support system that addresses both the emotional and clinical aspects of mental health. The innovative nature of the Tuto3 project lies in its understanding that mental health recovery and support are multidimensional and deeply personal. The project aims to create mental health care that is more inclusive and effective by building environments where individuals feel seen, heard, and supported by both peers and professionals. As the Tuto3 project continues to evolve, its focus on PAT (peer and team support) promises to reshape how society approaches mental health, making it more accessible, compassionate, and tailored to the needs of those it seeks to serve.

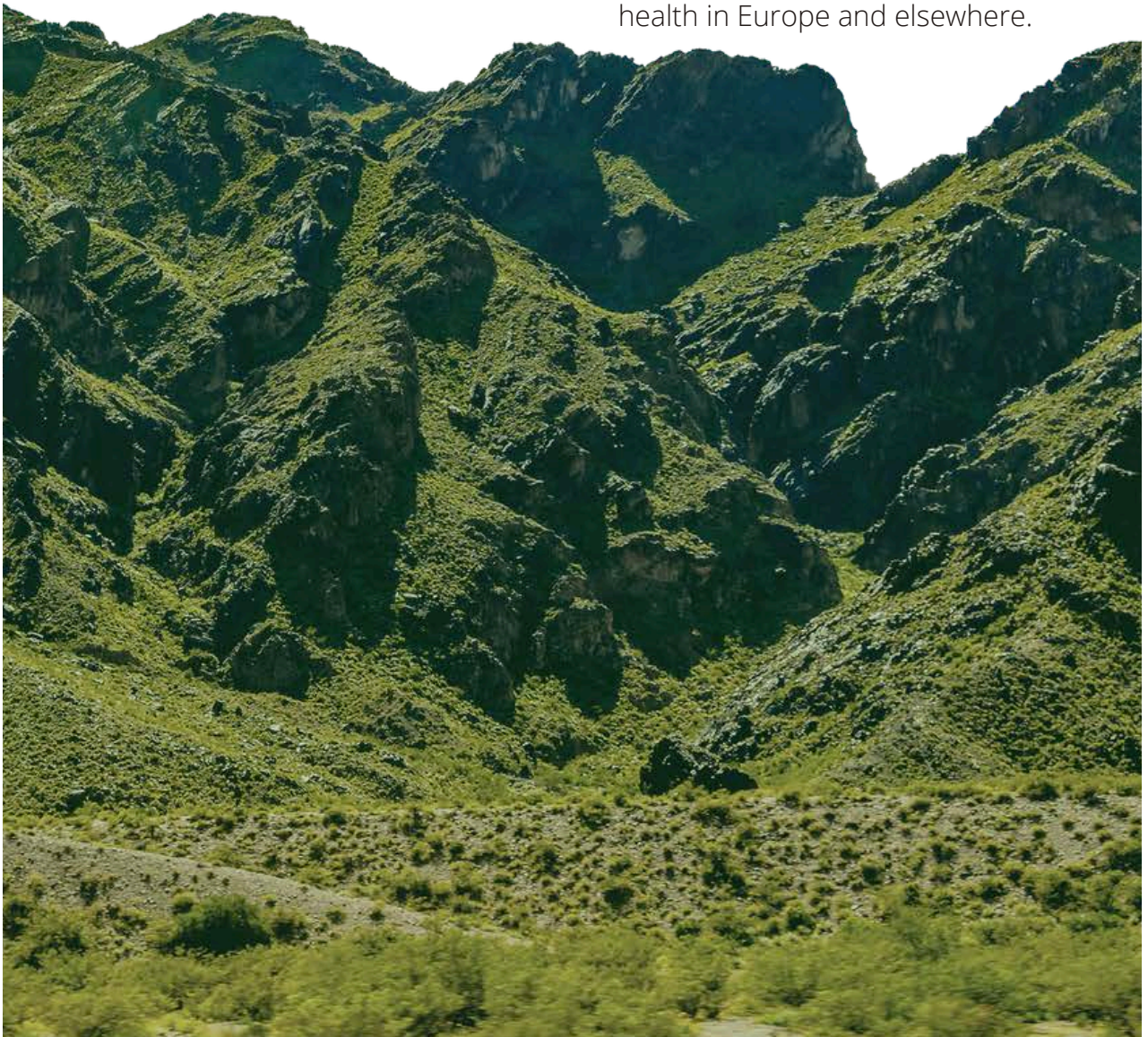
Peer support, a cornerstone of the Tuto3 project, operates on the principle that individuals who have navigated their own mental health challenges can offer unique insights, empathy, and practical advice to others facing similar struggles. This approach not only helps in destigmatizing mental health issues but also empowers individuals by validating their experiences and promoting a sense of belonging. Similarly, team support within the Tuto3 framework amplifies this effect by creating structured support networks, combining professional guidance with the relatability and immediacy of peer support. This dual approach ensures a comprehensive support system that addresses both the emotional and clinical aspects of mental health.

# — HOW

Peer support workers provide support and accompaniment to their peers, people who are going through similar situations. They are found in many areas where the elements of life have left traces, sometimes indelible, from which it is difficult to recover. They share the knowledge, strategies, and tools they have learned from their recovery journey.

They embody the hope that it is possible to get better and to take control of your life. To recover is to reclaim what is already ours: life.

The project aims to facilitate the deployment of peer support workers by strengthening the professionalization of the various stakeholders: peer support workers, trainers, institutions, care teams and associations of peer support workers in the field of mental health in Europe and elsewhere.





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## Support and duration of the project

The PAT project is an Erasmus+ ka220 project co-funded by the EU. It will last 36 months until January 2025

# Partnership



The project is supported by organisations of 7 countries, associations of peer support workers and universities, coordinated by the Hospital Centre Neuro-Psychiatrique Saint-Martin.

The NGO's contribute to producing knowledge and innovative tools and validate them based on the experience of peer support workers.

Centre Neuro Psychiatrique St-Martin, Namur



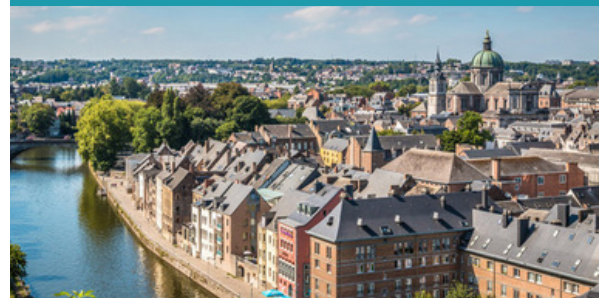
Établissement Public de Santé Mentale Lille-Métropole



Universitatea Aurel Vlaicu Din Arad



Peer and Team Support, ASBL, Namur



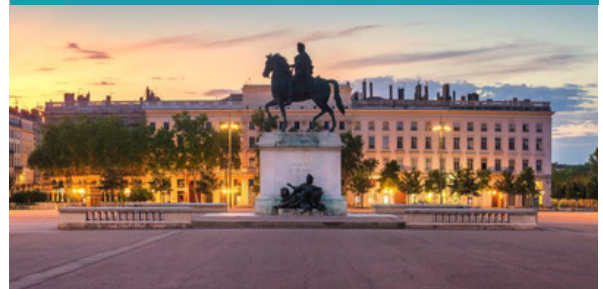
# Partnership



Haute Ecole de la Province de Namur



Espairs Pair Aidance Santé Mentale Rhône ,  
Lyon



Grupo de Investigación en Salud Mental en  
Primera Persona, Barcelona



Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de  
services sociaux de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal



Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences



Universität ULM





Integrating peer support in a more structural way into the care pathway.

Strengthen the employment of peer support workers by reinforcing their professional profile and training adequacy.

Better prepare the professional teams to welcome and integrate peer support workers in their practices: accompanying the team during the whole integrating process.



Encourage the innovation and exchange of practices on these themes.

## — GOALS PROJECT



# PROJECT OUTCOMES

Increase the level of expertise of the different partners, mental health professionals and other stakeholders benefiting from the production about the added value of peer support workers as people that are skilled to support users in recovery.



Increase the level of skills of peer support workers.

Creation of tools that will be available at the European level to any mental health stakeholders.

Support the integration of peer support workers in the world of work by supporting the creation of qualitative jobs.

Create and consolidate a European network of different and complementary organisations around innovative mental health outcomes and connect with world leaders (Canada) on the recovery and training of peer support workers.

Participate in the destigmatization of the mental health sector in general and users in particular by creating bonds between facilities, the education sector and users associations.



# TUTO3 PAT

# RESULTS

## RESULT NUMBER 1

A competency framework for peer support workers

## RESULT NUMBER 2

A standardized training profile for peer support workers.

## RESULT NUMBER 3

Include peer support worker: training material for mental health professionals

## RESULT NUMBER 4

A methodological framework to support the integration of peer support workers into teams

## RESULT NUMBER 5

Development of a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course)



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# PEER AND TEAM SUPPORT PROJECT RESULTS

The development of a skills framework for peer helpers is a crucial step in recognizing and promoting their essential role within mental health services. This framework must identify the fundamental skills, knowledge and attitudes required to effectively support people seeking mental well-being. This includes the ability to build trust, an empathetic understanding of the experiences of others, and a solid understanding of professional boundaries and role ethics.

At the same time, the creation of a standardized training profile for peer support workers guarantees quality and consistency in their preparation. This profile could detail essential training modules, such as active listening techniques, crisis management, confidentiality, and navigating the mental health care system. Related training materials should be designed to be accessible and engaging, using a variety of formats such as

videos, case studies, and simulations to facilitate learning.

To support the integration of peer support workers into mental health teams, a methodological framework must be put in place. This framework should include guidelines for supervision, ongoing support, and evaluation of the contributions of peer support workers while recognizing the unique value of their lived experience. Finally, the development of a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) specifically dedicated to the training of peer support workers and mental health professionals could greatly contribute to the dissemination of best practices and raising awareness of the importance of peer support workers. This MOOC could serve as a resource accessible to all, thus promoting a better understanding and integration of peer support workers in mental health services globally.





# RESULT NUMBER II



# A standardized training profile for peer helpers.

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Worldwide, including in most European countries, peer support workers receive training to prepare them for their role. The effectiveness of peer support varies because of considerable differences in the way the peer support training is provided. Thus, the aim of this production is to develop a standardized profile of peer support training.

## **Step 1: Overview of peer support training programmes**

For the development of a standardized training profile for peer support workers we have searched for available training programmes. Over 60 different training programmes for peer support workers from around the globe were found.



## **Step 2: Comparing Training Programmes for peer helpers**

Now the training programs were compared regarding several aspects, for example, the content of the training sessions. 15 general training elements were identified which were found in the majority of training programs (Table 1).

## TABLE 1: IDENTIFIED TRAINING ELEMENTS

### ELEMENT

### DESCRIPTION OF ELEMENT

#### Recovery

Trainees are introduced to the concept of personal recovery, focusing on experiences of recovery and recovery-oriented support.

#### Inclusion and Support from Family and Community

Importance of building support systems within families and communities, promoting inclusion through networking, connection, and dialogue.

#### Skills

Trainees learn a variety of skills essential for peer support, including problem-solving, coping strategies, technological skills, letter writing, presentation skills, organizational abilities, and crisis intervention.

#### Peer Support and Use of Experience

Introducing theories and concepts of peer support, exploring peer relationships, and utilizing personal experiences to support others effectively.

#### Communication

Principles such as active and reflective listening, understanding, conflict resolution, feedback, probing, and motivational interviewing.



## TABLE 1: IDENTIFIED TRAINING ELEMENTS

### ELEMENT

### DESCRIPTION OF ELEMENT

Assessment

Recovery-based assessments, needs assessments, personal health evaluations, and conducting interviews for reviews and evaluations.

Relationship and Roles

Role descriptions for peer supporters, the dynamics of interpersonal and therapeutic relationships, and the importance of role modeling.

Group Setting

Designing and implementing groups, understanding group dynamics, and leading effective group discussions.

Stigma

Impact of stigma on mental health, including internalized self-stigma, and the socio-emotional consequences of stigma.

Workplace Training

Prepares participants for working in professional settings, such as mental health wards, including work preparation and role-specific training.



### Step 3: Developing a standardized training profile

In the next step, 73 international experts and stakeholders in the field of mental health peer support (e.g. peer support workers, policy makers) helped us to narrow down which of these elements are essential for basic peer support training, and which are more relevant at an advanced stage or for specialized peer support. Participants were invited to rate the importance of each element in a two-step procedure (so-called Delphi-Survey) and to suggest additional elements not listed yet. We also asked them to help us find out to which extent these training elements correspond to theoretical core principles of peer support that were previously identified in Tuto3-PAT Result 1 ([www.mentalnet.eu](http://www.mentalnet.eu)). The result of this process was a set of consented prioritized basic components of peer support training elements, as well as elements that are more relevant for training peer support workers at an advanced stage, for example in ongoing professional development or for a special group of peer support clients (Table 2).



As part of the survey, we also asked the experts what kind of admission criteria a prospective peer support worker would need to have to join a training programmes. There was a consensus that peer support workers should have lived experience of mental health crisis and of recovery from a crisis, as well as an empathetic personality. There was no consensus on other admission criteria. Also, further investigation is required to determine the optimal amount of training sessions. A more detailed description of the recommendations will be made available on the PAT website by the end of 2024. A scientific publication is underway, to be published in 2025.



## TABLE 2: CONSENSUS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Basic training element

### Recommendation

Peer Support and Use of Experience

Introduce theories and concepts of peer support, peer relationships and how to use their own experience to support another person with mental ill-health.

Encourage sharing of personal experiences in a safe environment, coupled with theoretical knowledge about peer support principles.

Give advice regarding self-disclosure should be integrated into basic training programmes.

Recovery

Introduce the concept of personal recovery, recovery experiences and recovery focused support should include real-life recovery stories and strategies for fostering a recovery-oriented mindset in participants.

Relationship and Roles

Introduce a role description of peer support workers (e.g. Do's and Don'ts), a specification of the interpersonal and therapeutic relationship, and the role modelling.

Engage training participants in exercises that explore relationship dynamics and the impact of role modeling in peer support.

Teach skills to build boundaries with clients and to separate work and personal life.



## TABLE 2: CONSENSUS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Basic training element

### Recommendation

Communication

Include a basic module on communication covering principles such as active and reflective communication, understanding, conflict resolution, feedback, probing and motivational interviewing.

Incorporate role-playing and interactive exercises to practice effective communication strategies in peer support contexts.

Stigma

Provide training on stigma reduction strategies, encouraging participants to share personal experiences related to stigma and its effects.

Principles and values

Discuss principles and values including mutuality, reciprocity, non-directive, strength-based, progressive, inclusive, diversity, values, validation, acceptance, hope, world view, confidentiality, empathy, empowerment and safety.

Facilitate discussions on ethical dilemmas and encourage participants to develop a shared code of conduct for peer support



A standardized training profile for peer support workers

## TABLE 2: CONSENSUS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Basic training element

### Recommendation

Inclusion and support from family and community

Emphasise the importance of building support systems within the family and community to promote inclusion through e.g. connecting, networking and dialogue.

Facilitate workshops on effective communication with families and community engagement to strengthen support systems.

Provide knowledge about the social determinants of health.

Health and Wellbeing

Provide basic training in stress management, selfcare, prevention of relapses and leading a healthy lifestyle with healthy practices, e.g. eating, physical activity, sleep, relaxation.

Conduct wellness workshops that focus on holistic health practices and encourage peer support in maintaining healthy lifestyles.

Advocacy and Rights

Provide training on advocacy strategies, emphasizing the importance of patient rights and the role of peer supporters in advocating for change.



## TABLE 2: CONSENSUS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Basic training element

### Recommendation

#### Skills

Teach a variety of skills, e.g. problem and coping skills, technology (telephone, computer), letter writing and presentation skills, organizational and leadership skills, crisis intervention skills, cultural competent service delivery skills regarding cultural issues.

Provide hands-on workshops to practice these skills, incorporating real-life scenarios and role-playing exercises.

#### Planning

Cover advanced planning, planning with people in crisis, activity planning, health care visits and planning meaningful activities in everyday life.

Teach planning techniques using tools like WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) and practical exercises for goal setting and crisis management.

#### Group setting

Provide basic training in group design and delivery, group dynamics and facilitating group discussions.

Include practical exercises to enhance participants' skills in managing group interactions.



## TABLE 2: CONSENSUS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Advanced / specialized elements

### Recommendation

Psychoeducation and Knowledge

Develop comprehensive training materials on mental health topics, ensuring sessions are interactive and relevant to the specific populations served.

Assessment

Incorporate practical sessions on assessment techniques and provide templates for needs assessments to enhance participant skills in evaluations.

Workplace Training

Conduct simulations and practical exercises related to workplace scenarios, enhancing participants' readiness for real-world interactions with clients.



## TABLE 2: CONSENSUS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Other training features Training feature

### Recommendation

Duration

One training session should not take more than 4 hours.

Accreditation

Peer support training programmes should be officially accredited and educational institutions are suitable institutions for accrediting peer support training programmes.



A standardized training profile for peer support workers

# SUMMARY

Numerous peer support worker training programmes have been evaluated and compared to develop a standardized training programme. After comparing the different training elements of each programme, essential training elements were identified. Afterwards international stakeholders were asked to rate the core element in a two-step procedure. The result was a set of prioritized core items of central components of peer support training, as well as recommendations and practical strategies for training.

