



Feantsa conference 2020

Women's Homelessness

TRAINING AND IMPLEMENTATION ON PIE APPROACH IN SERVICES

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Introduction

- ▶ The contribution wants to share the experience that many organization in Italy, thanks to the Fio.PSD (Italian Federation of Organizations working with Homeless People), had taking part to the Pie4Shelters project
- ▶ In particular, we want to share the results of training sessions for the staff and social workers which work with homeless women in shelters and small group houses, on the topics proposed in the project and how the training improve our awareness and affect our practice in services, and the capacity of our services to support women with the experience of homelessness and gender-based violence.



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PIE4shelters

MAKING SHELTERS PSYCHOLOGICALLY AND TRAUMA INFORMED



Budapesti Módszertani
Szociális Központ
és Intézményei



PIE4shelters- Making Shelters Psychologically and Trauma Informed

- ▶ The PIE4shelters project aims at **improving the capacity of homeless services to support women with the experience of homelessness and gender-based violence.**
- ▶ The project will develop a training guideline for homeless services, based on the PIE approach. PIE stands for *Psychologically Informed Environments*. Psychologically-informed services take into account the psychological makeup – the thinking, emotions, personalities and past experience - of service users in the way a service operates. The PIE4shelters project will also promote a trauma-informed and gender-sensitive way of working.
- ▶ The main activities and outputs of the project:
 - ▶ Develop a PIE training framework, target group are homeless services.
 - ▶ Train frontline and management staff working with homeless services in the partner countries HU, BE, IE, IT, UK
 - ▶ Organize national awareness raising events on PIE in partner countries, target group are homeless services

Women, homelessness and gender based violence

- ▶ Violence can be prevalent prior to and during homelessness.
- ▶ Commonly experienced violence first in childhood.
- ▶ 40 per cent of girls run away from home due to sexual abuse.
- ▶ 1 in 3 women in homelessness services are escaping domestic violence.

WOMEN AND HOMELESSNESS



1 IN 3

WOMEN CITE DOMESTIC
ABUSE AS THE **MAIN CAUSE**
OF THEIR HOMELESSNESS



60%

OF WOMEN CITE DOMESTIC
ABUSE AS **ONE OF THE**
CAUSES OF THEIR
HOMELESSNESS





- the awareness that **some behaviours are adaptations to adverse situations**
- the need to screen for **trauma**,
- sensitivity to the **impacts of stigma and blame on survivors** of violence and abuse
- the crucial importance of **high-quality supportive relationships**
- focus on **physical and psychological safety needs**
- focus on **empowerment** and **self-management of service users**
- the need for professional **supervision** for staff and **practices of self-care**
- the need to **involve management** and the whole organization
- awareness of operations of **power** and the **social and cultural aspects** of individual problems.

The Key Elements of PIE

- **Key element 1:** A Psychological Framework.
- **Key element 2:** The physical environment and social spaces.
- **Key element 3:** Staff training and support.
- **Key element 4:** Client involvement / Managing relationships.
- **Key element 5:** Evaluation of outcomes.
- **Key element 6:** Reflective practice.

• **Key element 1: A Psychological Framework.**

- ▶ Shared understanding of the origins of behaviour, human development and change.
- ▶ A guiding framework to enable a consistent approach within teams.
- ▶ Recognising and responding to psychological needs.
- ▶ Psychological approach that is client centred.
- ▶ Positive outcomes for clients.
- ▶ Use an evidence based approach to client wellbeing.
- ▶ Work effectively with clients with complex trauma.
- ▶ Positive effect on staff morale and learning which protects from vicarious trauma.
- ▶ Manage risk more effectively.

Key element 2: The physical environment & social spaces

- Services should feel **non-institutional**, **safe** and **welcoming** and **facilitate interaction** between staff and clients.
- Clients have choice and control over how and when they engage.
- There is a sense of physical and emotional safety for both clients and staff.
- There is a culture of health and wellbeing.

Key element 3: Staff training and support

Fundamental part of part of workplace wellbeing, it should enhance professional competencies and the confidence in working with people with complex trauma.

Training and support should enable staff to understand the recognise the impact of trauma as the baseline expectancy for working with this client group, and also protects against professional burnout.

Key element 4: Client involvement / Managing Relationships

- **Empowerment:** Recognise strengths and build skills to enable Recovery.
- **Safety:** Ensuring physical & emotional safety.
- **Trustworthiness:** Maximise trustworthiness, model openness, respect boundaries and clarify tasks.
- **Choice:** Emphasise individual choice and control for client preferences in routine practices and crisis situations.
- **Collaborate:** Provide equality in participation to share power and create a sense of belonging.

Key element 5: Evaluation

Enable to understand what works, put in evidence progress to clients, staff and commissioners, support continuous learning and development or people and the organisation.

Contribute to a wider cultural understanding of complex needs and homelessness.

Key element 6: Reflective practice

Reflective practice is the process of reflecting on actions and interactions, either during or after they have occurred. Allows you reflect on your ways of working, supporting learning, build on successes and improve practices.

An essential component of effective, safe work with people who live with complex trauma.

Fio.PSD commitment

Fio.PSD took part to the train for trainers in London and carried out five training (internal training, frontline staff training, management training, train for trainers...), with more than 70 participants in total.

It also carried out some events of awareness raising events dedicated to members of the Federation and public services (more than 100 people reached).

Valorization

3 focus group, 15 interview (28 people in total)

Increased awareness and understanding...

- ▶ Of the topic in general, of PIE approach and trauma in particular (clear framework on trauma, traumatized persons and women victims of gender violence – GBV), of **the signs of trauma** and **how this affects and impacts on working with women** and on social workers as well. The possibility to reflect on trauma during the training has allowed to better understand **the stories of the women and the reasons behind their life choices and paths**.
- ▶ Of the importance to **take care about the social workers well-being**, the care of the **"living spaces" of the women** and the team, and the daily attention that workers should pay to women.
- ▶ Of the importance to **co-build with homeless women a personalized path**: women as an **active actor in the creation of their present and future paths**, greater **self-determination** and **involvement** of women, **empowerment** and personalization of the service response.

Valorization

3 focus group, 15 interview (28 people in total)

About staff...

- ▶ Now the importance of **working with a competent staff, attentive to the needs** of the workers, in pleasant and suitable places is even more evident. Some workers now feel more motivated to maintain, preserve and cultivate this way of working. The team is the place where, especially in case of difficulties, many interviewees share their efforts and find solutions. **Cohesion, listening, dialogue, exchange of ideas, sharing** with the team are fundamental to face and manage complex situations and to identify trauma.
- ▶ All the interviewees gave a very big importance to **supervision** (monthly supervision, specific supervision, support from specialist), continuous **training** and **team support**.

After one year..

- ▶ We improve some activities, with women and in the staff:
 - ▶ A three-weekly group with women focused on personal narratives and emotional experiences;
 - ▶ Pay more attention to our attitudes and daily behaviours, in particular searching of co-building together with women their paths, empowerment and self determination, starting from every day and little things;
 - ▶ Dedicated moments to reflective practice in staff, pay in particular attention to what happens with the women and our reactions, most of all in difficulties but even for good moments we share;
 - ▶ Improve attention to the history of the women and the traumatic events in their lives, trying to understand the connection between them and their actual behavior;
 - ▶ Improved attention to the living space;
 - ▶ Maintain and improve good practice as continuous training, supervision and evaluation;
 - ▶ Search more collaboration with public services and psychoterapist to facilitate access to the psychotherapy for women who want to.

In particular during the lockdown, women in our small group houses demonstrate a great capacity to sustain each other, collaborate with the staff in maintaining a good quality of life inside the houses. Group meeting was the moment in which fears, angers, but also joy, wishes, projects were shared.

Creativity, strength, sweetness, comprehension arise from every woman and from the group. Staff and women who live in the houses shared a common problem and found solution together.

