

Dialogical and Enabling Approach: Reflections on Implementation

This bite is the fourth of a series of seven documents that offer a first introduction to the approaches that will be adapted to the homelessness field along with the HOOD's project life: the Dialogical Approach and the Enabling Coplanning. They discuss topics ranging from epistemology at the basis of the approaches, the core principles of the two methodologies mentioned, and the key elements that characterized them. Overall, they facilitate the progressive comprehension of the two approaches considered, also providing tips for further readings.



Tolerating uncertainty is a particularly tricky point for professionals that decide to implement the methodology proposed. Indeed, tolerating uncertainty is a key ability for Dialogic Practices and enabling coplanning. It represents a core base for the project's construction because it removes the obligation to complete the description before starting with the action. This duty is coherent with the traditional model of intervention (assessment, intervention, compliance, outcome), but it is not suited to the goal of going along with existential pathways. Enabling coplanning integrates into daily life the dimensions of knowledge, planning, and action and maintains them reciprocally intertwined, in order to get closer to the existential dimension. The uncertainty, the possibility of trying without conditions, of changing your mind, of modifying your one's life path several times along the life, of choosing to follow a direction and then deciding to change it are basic rights for the process of access to full citizenship and recognized adult life. Traditional professional culture tends to constrain these possibilities because it considers that professionals should control that the process develops exactly as planned. In this professional culture, contingencies, changes, uncertainties are disturbing factors. Instead, according to the enabling coplanning, the opening of spaces without predefined answers, the happening of things that were not planned, the rethinking and changing of his/her path by the person are welcomed elements. They are all part of the process of meaning remaking that the professional have to promote, not to hinder.

“Tolerating uncertainty can be enhanced by the creation of honest and significant relationships that provide a perception of confidence and trust among all the participants in the meetings”.



Along with enabling coplanning processes, these things happen in several ways: thus, the professional has to adopt several measures to implement this kind of process. Among them, for instance, there is the legitimization of the language and the way people talk about themselves, their lives, and about other significant ones. In the enabling coplanning, as much as in the Dialogic Practices, then, the professional does not translate, neither explain what people tell, but instead sustains them in progressively shaping their *own way to tell the life*. Establishing tools and objectives, it is necessary to remember that enabling coplanning is an integrated and holistic process, in which single actions' goals and wider empowerment aims (aimed to obtain some power on one own's life) always coexist. From the operative point of view, is it possible to monitor the empowerment efficacy by asking the question "who has the final word?". An "enabled" person, indeed, does not necessarily have more abilities than when we met him/her, but he/she necessarily has more power over his/her life.

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