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Opportunities for reintegration of addicts into the labour market (with methodological guidance exercises)

Extract

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1. CONTEXT

In our society, work is identified with employment, with work, with the activity that provides an income. Work is an activity that produces value for others and for ourselves. In economic terms, it is an activity for which workers are paid in order to buy goods and services. From a psychological perspective, it is an instrumental activity of man that is central to his economic behaviour. We can say that it is one of the most decisive activities of life, an integral part of our daily life. At the moment, there are people who are looking for work, people who have already found work, people who no longer work, people who are happy to carry out their daily tasks at work and, of course, people who are not happy to carry out their tasks at work. Work becomes dominant mainly in adulthood, but we also carry out similar activities at different ages and stages of development, thus ensuring work socialisation (e.g. day care at nursery school, children's train activities, etc.).

Work is not just a way of earning money, it has a wider meaning in our lives. First and foremost, it develops our self-awareness and self-esteem. It varies in different ages, societies and cultures, but generally speaking, we spend a lot of time at work and/or at work, so it is not surprising that we often develop friendships from our work. The amount of time spent at work has changed somewhat with the COVID-19 pandemic (home office), but is still significant.

The right job for us can be a challenge that motivates us, pushes us forward and helps our physical and social development. Often, the much-needed flow experience is also provided by work. Work also provides the basic status and financial resources we need to earn a living.

In summary, work is important for all people because:

- lack of work can make you ill (no meaningful time structure, feeling of "uselessness" can arise in the unemployed individual);
- income from work provides material goods;
- provides one's social connections (human relationships);
- is a possible way of self-realisation;
- stimulates a person's development (motivates him/her to continuous achievement in physical, intellectual and social terms);
- an occupational role is an essential part of an individual's self-definition, identity, which significantly influences his/her social and economic position in society.

There is no question, therefore, that employment, work and jobs are important for all individuals. However, there are some groups in society who face barriers and/or difficulties and who need help to a) be able to work, b) dare to work, c) stay in work, c) find the most appropriate time-structuring and livelihood activities.

To help and support this requires planning and deepening of self-awareness on the part of the client. Job coaching can help this process.

2. APPROACH AND METHOD: JOB COACHING

2.1 What is job coaching?

A helping relationship means that the helper seeks to bring about a change in the emotions and thinking, actions and behaviour, and often even in the moral values of the person being helped, through a human relationship with the other person. The aim of the helping relationship is to help the person being helped to adapt better to his or her environment. Its main characteristic is that it seeks to promote mental health and personal development. Ultimately, the aim of the helping relationship is to help the individual to help himself. The helping relationship involves regular meetings, an emotional relationship between the two parties and a specific series of shared experiences. Helping is in fact nothing more than persuading a person to take certain actions and make certain changes through the relationship.

One of the basic conditions for helping is the creation of a positive atmosphere between the two people. It is not only the helper who must accept the person who needs help, but it is also essential that the client accepts the helper.

One of the most popular and "trendy" methods/approaches in helping relationships today is coaching.

Coaching was born in the 1980s in Milwaukee (USA), where Insoo Kim Berg and Steve de Shazer's research team tried to find out what is most useful in the client-counsellor relationship, when and why the client starts to act effectively towards the goal he has set for himself. The most effective and popular solution-focused (brief) coaching is all about seeking and finding solutions, thereby dramatically reducing consultation time (by about 70%) compared to traditional therapy. Researchers began to consciously seek and describe issues and methods that led to useful outcomes in the client's life.

Coaching has then developed several trends and tools over time. Its definition is also very broad, ranging from "picture framer" to "taxi driver"(Source: Szabó,Peter-Meier,Daniel-Hankovszky Katalin, 2010, 11Szabó,Peter-Meier, Daniel-Hankovszky Katalin, 2010, *Rövid és tartós coaching. Megoldásközpontú beszélgetések*, Budapest, SolutionSurfers Magyarország. 11. 1Kelló Éva, 2014, *Coaching alapok és irányzatok*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó. 32.), metaphorically helping us to understand.

In our understanding, coaching brings about development and change by altering or eliminating habits of thoughts and actions. Coaching focuses on the future and is not, or only to a necessary extent is interested in the past. **It deals with solutions rather than problems.** We believe that every human being has inner resources, and that the goal is to find and harness them. In other words, coaching: "Teaches the client to learn, empowers the client to look at the world through different eyes, to consciously observe and analyse their own actions, thinking and feelings, and to take responsibility for them. /.../ Coaching is a journey of self-discovery, based on the principle that our development or well-being depends on our ability to function as part of the system."

Some basic principles of coaching:

- Communicating/talking about solutions brings solutions.
- Always seeking, searching, discovering, showing resources.
- Exploring, "thinking" around possible, targeted futures.
- What is already working.
- The client/customer is the expert in their own life.
- What works well, do NOT fix!
- If something works well, do it more often!
- If something is NOT working, do it differently
- Change is continuous and inevitable.
- Look for positive changes
- We have an impact on the future.
- Small steps can lead to big changes.
- The solution doesn't care where the problem comes from.
- There are always exceptions to problems, it is not just problems that happen.

The International Coach Federation (ICF) defines coaching as a partnership with a client, a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires the client to get the most out of themselves personally and professionally. In other words:

"Talking about solutions brings solutions."

- Find resources.
- Discovering a possible, targeted future.
- What's already working?"
- The client is the expert in their own life.

Today there are almost all types, varieties and possibilities of coaching, including job coaching, which is relevant for us.

Job coaching is a goal-oriented, solution-focused facilitation process, specifically designed to help people find and keep a job, i.e. to help them overcome stuck points in the world of work. It is a personalised service, free of charge to the client, the process, delivery and duration of which are determined by the client's current life situation, blocks, skills, cooperation, etc.

What does a job coach do?

- Encourage, support and stand by the client - in general and in specific job-related issues. He or she does all this in order to help the client's needs and wants, his or her vision of the future, to be realised and achieved in the process of coaching. This is achieved primarily through the development of various competences (life skills, social and transversal competences in particular) and positive changes in interpersonal skills (coach and coachee together). Emphasis is placed on the client's independence and autonomy.

- Often - specifically for the sake of long-term success - various development and training courses are provided for the client.
- Establishing and ensuring professional contacts, regular communication on the subject and in the field.
- Supporting the individual (coachee) to be able to meet his/her own self-assessment and the various and constantly changing environmental expectations and challenges (coping capacity, developing resilience).
- Constant encouragement to realise and solve problems and stagnations that arise.
- To support the development of individuals through a wide repertoire of methodologies, individualised methods and tools and techniques.
- To be able to respond to any relevant problems and challenges that arise and are related to the life of the individual (i.e. stuck situations do not occur in isolation in the life of the individual).
- Using creative tools and questions to help change the perspective, support the client in developing the most appropriate solutions and action plans, self-awareness and professional functioning.

What does a job coach NOT do?

- Does not perform the tasks, work and activities necessary for the development and change of the individual, but provides help, support and cooperation in solving the problem.
- Does not take responsibility for the performance of the individual's life tasks and duties.
- Does not represent the individual to the employee or in any other forum, nor send messages, verbal or written statements on behalf of the individual.
- In the event of a choice of options, he/she does not decide or choose on behalf of the individual, the client.

2.2. Job coaching techniques and tools

The target group (addicts or people affected by addiction) usually come to the service when they are in "big trouble", including when they have lost their job. Job coaching does not make sense at the beginning of the service, but only when the client is in a stable physical, mental and psychological state, so that the question of taking up a job, independent living and social tasks arises. The first step in the process is therefore to look for a job.

The job search requires planning and deepening self-awareness. The job seeker needs to be aware - in general - of what he or she is good at, of the areas in which he or she would like to work. Only apply for jobs for which you have the skills, competence, personality, competences and willingness - otherwise you will be disappointed. It is therefore important for jobseekers to be aware of the realistic job opportunities available to them and to know their own talents, strengths, potential, skills, abilities and limitations.

The essence of the job coaching process (from the client's point of view) is, in a very simplified way, to equip the job seeker with the necessary knowledge and practice to find a job, to reintegrate more successfully into the labour market and to learn the necessary job search techniques.

Therefore, this methodological guide is in fact an aid which tries to describe a complex process in general terms. However, each situation, and therefore each jobseeker's circumstances, are different, each individual has different skills, abilities and strengths, and therefore in practice certain steps may be omitted or, on the contrary, certain elements may need to be reinforced.

The following themes emerge in the process:

- Self-awareness. Developing a realistic self-image. Achieving a positive outlook and striving for change
- Articulating the need and want of a job search. Formulating realistic employment goals
- Exploring opportunities (employee and employer). Exploring ways of entering the labour market
- Choosing a job
- Applying for the selected job. Preparing and updating a professional CV. Preparing job application (e.g. cover letter, certificates and other documents as required)
- Preparing for the interview (appearance, communication, typical questions)
- Knowledge of basic labour law issues (employment contract, job description, etc.)

3. TOPICS TO BE COVERED IN THE JOB COACHING PROCESS

The following material contains exercises, tasks, tests, handouts and guides to help you work through the topics described in 2.2. In the Annex you will find CV and motivation letter samples, samples of other documents required for employment (employment contract, job description, etc.).

4. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

Our professional material provides methods, tools and approaches for the (re)integration into the labour market of a target group in difficult situations and facing obstacles, in this case addiction and addiction-related problems. The material does not characterise the target group, assuming that it will be used by professionals who are generally familiar with the specificities and characteristics of the target group.

The guide outlines the job coaching approach, and in the second part it covers the basic steps of the employment process, with supporting techniques and tools.

The guide is based on the current situation of employment in Hungary, which it fully reflects. Based on previous project knowledge, it is also compatible with Serbian employment and contains additional useful information for Serbia and Vojvodina. For Romanian employment, information is collected and presented in an appendix.

We hope that the guide will contain practical information that can be used in everyday client work.