

Equal Opportunities in Empowerment

Lic.Health Sciences, PHN, RN, Principal Lecturer *Pirjo Vaittinen*,

pirjo.vaittinen@saimia.fi

L.Soc.Sc., Supervisor, Principal Lecturer *Tuija Nummela*,

tuija.nummela@saimia.fi

Lic. Ed.Sc., M.Sc in Health Care, PT, Principal Lecturer *Eeva Harjulehto*,

eeva.harjulehto@saimia.fi

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences /
Faculty of Health Care and Social Services

Relevance: There is a continuing need for increased Finnish-Russian cooperation between neighbouring areas to enable sustainable development. The cooperative process supports the implementation of social and health care programs in the St. Petersburg and Primorsk districts and in Vyborg.

Purpose: To develop outpatient care by using family-centred and multiprofessional approaches, and developing those methods for caregivers through education and workplace guidance.

Participants: Social and health care students and teachers from the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences, the employees of health care and social work departments and rehabilitation centres from the Primorsk District, teachers and students from the Midwifery College of St. Petersburg, and the City of Vyborg's staff from social care and education.

Results: Exchanges of the social and health care experts on both sides of the border, continuing education for teachers and employees in Russia and Finland, common projects, student and teacher exchanges.

Conclusions: By training both teachers and working employees, the final benefits are felt by the clients, patients and their families. Knowledge of other cultures helps us to understand and respond to the actions of others.

Keywords: family-centred approach, multiprofessional approach, neighbouring area cooperation

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences

The Saimaa University of Applied Sciences (Saimaa U.A.S.) is located in Finland and has campuses in the cities of Lappeenranta and Imatra. The university is comprised of 5 faculties, and the faculty of health care and social services is the largest of these with the highest number of graduates. There are 6 programmes in the school of health care and social services: paramedic nursing, physiotherapy, nursing, social services, and occupational therapy, as well as the master's degree programme in health promotion. There are approximately 700 students and a teaching staff about 40. In accordance with the action plan of the Saimaa U.A.S., the purpose of this institution is to provide education and competent employees, above all, to meet the needs of this region. Additionally, an increase in cooperation between the institutes of higher learning in this region and the Northwest region of Russia is emphasized in the strategy for Saimaa U.A.S., 2011- 2015 .

In this presentation, we will tell you about our faculty's cooperation with St. Petersburg and Vyborg. Our experiences have shown us, and we hope to show you, how from the smallest stream, a great river may grow. This kind of development requires from all participants, active, committed, and motivated work in order to successfully cooperate across borders.

The final product of this cooperation is seen in the client families, who benefit from empowerment and increased possibilities for equality in care. The story began in 1997, with our cooperative work with the St. Petersburg Midwifery College.

The Cooperation with St. Petersburg's Midwifery College

The Midwifery College is one of the oldest nursing schools in Russia, and celebrated its 210 year anniversary in 2007. It has very good reputation in Russia and abroad. It coordinates the activities of all other nursing colleges and schools engaged in training midwives or nurses. It accomplishes the post-graduate training of hospital nurses and midwives, teachers from similar medical schools,

coming from various regions of Russia. The college is staffed with highly-qualified teacher-doctors, teacher-nurses having a large experience of practical work in clinics and hospitals. There are about 400 students in the college who receive the specialty either of a nurse or a midwife.

Our cooperation started in 1997. The form of our cooperation has become stable. In a thirteen-year time period we have had twelve seminars: Ten of them in St. Petersburg and two in Lappeenranta. The subjects of the seminars have been decided cooperatively. The template has been the need to develop teaching; its content, methods, and evaluation. We have had such subjects as Ergonomics in Nursing, Foot Care, Nurse Education in Finland, Nursing Care Plans, the Nursing Process and Nursing Care Documentation, Elderly Care and Geriatric Nursing, the Situation of Venereal Diseases in St. Petersburg, and the Care and Rehabilitation of Postoperative Hip Replacement (prosthesis) Patients. The lecturers in these seminars have been experts in their own professions from the Saimaa U.A.S and from the Midwifery College. They have planned the seminars so that the viewpoint of the themes is multiprofessional (e.g. nursing and physiotherapy teachers working together).

In this case presentation, the main subject is Ergonomics in Nursing. The seminars for this subject (6 days altogether) included teaching and mentoring on the part of the Finnish teachers for their Russian colleagues from both the College and the hospitals regarding ergonomic patient transfer techniques, assisting with transfers, and positioning skills.

As the seminars were open to working life partners (e.g. the personnel from training hospitals, clinics and units), the information was common and they were able to share and adapt it to their own practice. Two teachers from the Midwifery College came to Lappeenranta to observe teaching practices in action, and began teaching these skills to their students. In 2001, one of these teachers transferred from the College to become the Director of the Primorsk Rehabilitation Centre. As director, she has been able to maintain the contacts between the College and the Centre, and has continued to participate in the joint seminars.

Cooperation with the Primorsk District

Cooperation with the Primorsk Social and Health Care Department began in the spring of 2003. The Primorsk District of the city of St. Petersburg has approximately 500 thousand residents. The area does not have its own hospital, and for this reason has developed a strong outpatient health care system. The Primorsk District has developed day wards that work in conjunction with the outpatient clinics in medical-surgical care, outpatient surgery services, a geriatric centre, a stroke centre, a dental care centre, and a hospice care home. The Primorsk District is financially independent, and this has enabled purposeful and systematic development of services. This part of the city has stayed ahead of its time when compared to other parts of St. Petersburg, and indeed other parts of Russia. The Primorsk District has developed special programmes, among which the stroke rehabilitation Centres are the first of their kind in all of Russia. The first Centre was established in 2000, and the Primorsk District now has 4 such centres for rehabilitation.

The Primorsk Rehabilitation Centres provide medical-social rehabilitation through multiprofessional cooperation. The rehabilitation team includes the coordinating doctor, a neurology nurse, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, social worker, and psychologist. There are 14 such teams, and they do the initial rehabilitation in the patient's home and continue it in the rehabilitation centre when the patient is able. In the centre, they also arrange courses for patients and their families about preventing or adjusting to stroke. There is also a department for assistive devices in the centre.

The cooperative work with the Primorsk stroke rehabilitation team has occurred through joint seminars, workshops, and exchange of experts in the field. Themes for seminars have included prevention of stroke, client pathways in Finland, where to start with rehabilitation for stroke patients, and multifaceted health promotion. During the workshops, Russian experts have given guidance to patients both in their homes and at the rehabilitation centre as well as discussing cooperatively various methods of helping clients. During exchange vis-

its, experts from Russia have become familiar with Finland's stroke practices and rehabilitative or assistive devices. The Finnish experts have become familiar with the multiprofessional home rehabilitation programme model in St. Petersburg.

During the spring of 2009, together with Primorsk Centres and funded by the European Union (EU), second cycle degree students in the field of health care and social services from Finland became familiar with the multiprofessional teamwork model for home rehabilitation in Primorsk. They visited in the homes of patients along with the experts from the Primorsk Centres, and participated in workshop learning. The students then reflected together all the things they had seen and experienced, and how the home rehabilitation model might be utilised in the Finnish health care system. The students also arranged a seminar in Lappeenranta for experts in the field to discuss the multiprofessional home rehabilitation model. Invitations for the seminar were sent to those working in rehabilitation with settings with the elderly. During the course of the whole project, students produced various types of educational materials for review of the teacher mentors. From this was also developed a model for project guidance and learning which has been helpful in implementing similar projects.

Cooperation with Vyborg

The number of foreigners in South Karelia has increased since the 90's, and is the third largest foreigner group in Finland. Due to the close proximity to the Russian border, the majority of these foreigners are Russian. Officials on both sides of the border working with children, youth and families require common knowledge about prevention of problems, and the goals are mutual even taking into consideration differences in environments and legislation between the countries.

Partners in the current project are experts working with families in the Vyborg area. A project focusing on multi-professional work development has been implemented in South Karelia that combines the concepts of work guidance counseling and education. The goal is to share information between different operat-

ing environments. Since 2006 a project called "Promoting the Wellbeing of Youth in Vyborg" has fostered co-operation with different subgroups in Vyborg.

The goal of the current project is to support the well-being of families on both sides of the National border. For several years, partners have participated regularly in events both in Finland and Russia. There have been visits to different communities including social and family work and student counseling by experts from both sides of the border. The main functions of the project have been to develop work counseling groups, held in Vyborg, which helped us to share information on different cultures and working methods. Working within these groups is based on sharing information and experiences. Groups have produced new work methods, for example, a model for early intervention, a parenting role map, and "Audit" test. Also training on children and family legislation as well as services and working methods in anti-drug operations has been held on the both sides of the border. Consultant support in children protection has also been developed.

It takes time to understand the cultural differences between Russia and Finland. This is why long-term and constant cooperation is needed. This project has developed opportunities for experts to network with colleagues, has increased knowledge about Finnish and Russian culture and ways of supporting families, and increased understanding and developed new concrete tools for working with children, youth and families. Good partnership development as well as learning and working together have also been very significant.

Conclusions

In the social and health care fields, Finland's border areas are striving for sustainable development of cooperative work. Continuous development is attainable through participation, prevention, and action, and the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences bases organization and planning on these goals. According to the Finnish Foreign Ministry (2009), cooperative work with border areas includes networking across borders leading to continuous development on both sides, and must be done in a systematic manner to support this development in health

and social care. Joint work with both the Primorsk District and Vyborg has been built around the developmental plans of these areas.

The cooperative work planned between Russian and Finnish border areas for 2009-2011 emphasizes improving the wellbeing of children and young people. Special emphasis is given to the support of families in danger of alienation as well as to the prevention of substance abuse. Cooperation between the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences and the Vyborg Social, Health, and Educational personnel will centre on the development of different approaches and methods for supporting families in various life situations such as during periods of exhaustion, insecurity, and illness, and relationship difficulties. Family centred solutions using multiprofessional education and guidance will be sought in the rehabilitation centres and family health centres.

Through this joint work with our colleagues in Northwest Russia, the faculty and students of our university's health care and social services have increased their competencies for understanding a different culture and learned about new models for social and health care rehabilitation .

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