

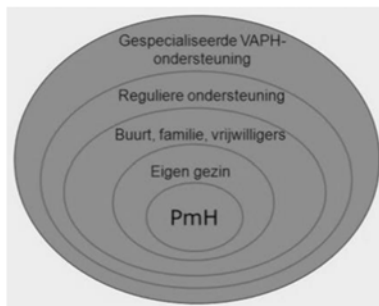
## Towards a new profile of competences of an 'inclusive' coach <sup>i</sup>

This draft document may inspire and give direction to practitioners and organizations in different fields - e.g. services for the disabled, to HR policy makers, to VET organizations and to those involved in curriculum development in their aim to realize 'inclusion'. It may be a starting point for making the competences that promote inclusion and community based support more concrete and observable.

### 1. Introduction

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the policy of the Flemish minister of welfare (Perspectiefnota 2020) focus on inclusion and community based support. Basic principles are:

- Recognition of the power and potential of the person with a disability and his social network
- Each person is the director of one's own live
- (Handicap specific) support is residuary according to the following model of concentric circles of support, referring to the principle that one uses the outer circles of support only in strengthening or restoring the competences of the inner circles.



- handicap specific support
- mainstream services
- informal care (relatives, neighborhood, volunteers,...)
- natural social network (family)
- client, person with disability

One of the main goals of Flemish policy is: *'By 2020, informed consumers exercise their right to person centered support and assistance in an inclusive society'*. How can a coach contribute to this goal?

### 2. Selection of core competences

Depending on their mission statement and the specific support needs of their clients/persons with a disability, each organization determines core competences of the staff. This draft especially focuses on those specific competences of the coaches that are necessary for an inclusive and community based support.

Up to now, from the viewpoint of the coach, a main goal was to establish a 'good' client-coach relationship. The coach invested significantly in his relationship with the client. At the same time as the transition toward inclusive support, this goal - although referring to a critical condition - moves from the primary to the secondary plan. The inclusive approach invites to focus on the relationship between the client and his (social) network/society. The coach supports both the client and his network, and their mutual relationships, in order to promote an active participation into society.

Also up to now, the professional coach did many things *for* the client, or *instead of* the client. Now, he is challenged to invite the client (and his network) to take initiative and do things themselves. While doing this, he expresses his belief in the talents, potential and power of the client and the social network. The coach can do things for/instead of the client or the network on a temporary base, always looking for opportunities, as soon as possible, to give back the initiative and responsibility into the hands of the client or his network.

The central person is the client himself. He plays an active and participative role, while the coach is the one who supports and empowers the client. This is the first core competence of an 'inclusive' coach: supporting, reinforcing, *empowering* the client.

The second core competence is related to the social context: the inclusive coach takes care of the (broad) social network; this is often labeled as *social worker* who supports the social context.

*Building bridges* or *linking* is the 3rd core competence. Bridges are built by supporting and facilitating relationships between the client, the social network partners and the society.

The coach is actively involved and does whatever he can to avoid a situation where the client and/or his network lose their independence. The support needs and personal aspirations of the client are the starting point for the coach to explore, stimulate, reflect and empower. Quality of life is the touchstone. *Relational autonomy* is a concept often heard in this context: the disabled person discovers his needs, his abilities and talents in a mutual relationship with significant others, a.o. the coach. Mutual trust between the client, his network and the coach is a necessary precondition for the realization of this empowering and intermediary role of the coach.

### 3. Core competences for inclusion

#### 3.1. the coach as the one who empowers the client

##### Competences:

- Having a clear understanding of your critical role as a professional in the process of emancipation of the client
- Unconditional belief and insight in the different elements of the concepts of full/active citizenship and Quality of Life
- Insight and belief in the concept of relational autonomy of the client
- Finding a good balance between outcome oriented and relationship oriented efforts
- Defining individual goals in collaboration with the client
- Having a clear understanding of the support needs, preferences, abilities, talents and aspirations,... of the client
- ...

##### Behavioral indicators

- Shows unconditional respect for the client and his social network
- Strengths and personal interests of the client are the starting points
- Detects and understands signs and expectancies from the environment towards the client
- Guarantees the necessary space to the client and his network to take initiative
- Shows an adequate distance/proximity
- Can delegate and 'sit on hands'
- Is willing to take reasonable risks
- Waits until the client asks for help, support, information,...
- Reaches an agreement between various parties involved
- Works in a participative way with the client
- Involves the client and his network when looking for adequate sources of support
- Knows the limitations of the service he works for and looks for external sources of support
- ...

#### 3.2. the coach as the one who supports the network

##### Competences:

- Is able to define the social network of a client
- Can analyze the network (e.g. strengths, weaknesses,...)
- Can support and empower the social network
- Knows and implements the Contextual theory (Nagy)
- Knows how to link the client and his network
- ...

##### Behavioral indicators:

- Implements adequate methods to define and analyze the social network
- Respects and guarantees the responsible role of parents, family and other persons being part of the social network
- Defines and analyzes the network in collaboration with the client
- Defines the support needs of the network.
- Reflects with the client on a regular base on the social network
- Integrates advices and viewpoints of the social network
- Plays an intermediary role and negotiates with the client and the social network
- Supports the client in his dialogue with his network

- Supports the client in maintaining or empowering his network
- Supports the client to detect sources of support within his own environment and supports the client to mobilize them
- Takes into account the strengths and weaknesses of the social network
- Gives the members of the social network an active role
- Monitors, in collaboration with the client, the quality and durability of the social network
- ...

### 3.3. *the coach as the one who builds bridges*

#### Competences:

- Being able to 'connect' people
- Being competent in using methodologies like personal future planning, personal supports planning, network development
- Community oriented
- Orientation toward society
- Unconditional orientation towards society for all persons, independent of their level of functioning
- Special attention for the most challenged disabled people, to facilitate access to society for them
- Being able to detect the needs of disabled persons when promoting their active participation in society
- Being actively involved in society in one's personal life
- Be aware and look for opportunities in one's own social network to participate in support activities.

#### Behavioral indicators

- Stimulates the client from a perspective of solidarity
- Informs and sensitizes society
- Helps the (social) environment see what disabled clients need, and how they can contribute to the necessary support
- Looks actively for 'inclusive' opportunities for the client
- Looks for sources of support within society
- Looks for mainstream services as source of support and empowers these services
- Promotes living together in a heterogeneous environment and facilitates dialogue between (groups of) people
- ...

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#### <sup>i</sup> coach

It is difficult to find the exact word for *the professional who empowers and supports the client towards participation in an inclusive society*. This professional monitors, has handicap specific expertise, supports, cares, is involved, is a companion, is a spokesman, helps, is a proximal and a distal factor, trains, evaluates, assists, reflects, is social, stimulates, is cooperative,...

*Therefore we have chosen for the concept of 'coach' just like a football coach...*