

Introducing EUFAMI's Prospect Training Programmes

The European Federation of Families of People with Mental Illness (**EUFAMI**) is an international non-profit organisation which represents all family members of persons affected by severe mental ill health at European level so that their rights and interests are recognised and protected. EUFAMI represents circa 25 million families in Europe.

EUFAMI is a very unique organisation as it is the only European concern which works as a united voice for Families of persons affected by mental illness and which understands the very unique issues of the family members, both those who provide consistent care and importantly other members of the family who must live with the various challenges and questions presented to them.

In 2001 EUFAMI member associations recognised the need for empowerment of family carers through a new approach to training.

Existing courses were reviewed in Europe and the USA, and it was decided to develop a (EUFAMI) tailored approach because nothing based on empowerment existed at this time.

The project Prospect was developed, and it focused on:

- peer to peer facilitators
- equals in experience and not experts to learners
- participation and not information dispensing and receiving
- not providing answers or solutions but opening up to new ways of thinking and perspectives

EUFAMI managed and coordinated the Prospect project with 14 member organisations and by 2004 developed a rich and comprehensive tool that included 4 programmes:

- Prospect Family and Friends Training Programme
- Prospect Training Program for People with Self-Experience (PSE),
- Prospect training for Health and Social Care Professional (HSCP)
- and the Common Ground Module

The global philosophy of the Prospect Training Programmes is to break the cycle of social isolation, limitation and discrimination and enable participants to embark upon their own path towards "recovery". By way of a structured group process, the participants are presented with ideas based on models of best practice and interactive exercises aiming to:

- gain confidence
- develop coping skills
- regain control of their lives
- Improve the quality of life

Prospect is a tool – it is simple and very valuable

Since the programmes were developed and finalised in 2004, Prospect has been implemented in many EUFAMI member association countries.

Feedback from participants has mostly focused on the positive and valuable experience.

" It was a very empowering experience for me and I am much stronger today than I was before. I am able to analyse the current situation and orient myself towards the future when I don't panic every time I hear bad news. I can support my son better and help him believe in a better tomorrow when things are rough."
- Participant in Prospect training programme for family members