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## WORKSHOP ABSTRACT

# Bringing companions together: how we support, develop and spread Open Dialogue practice in Flanders, Belgium

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The main goal of this workshop is to exchange together on the values of the Open Dialogue approach, from the different perspectives and experiences of professionals, people with lived experience and people with family experience.

Structure of the session:

**15 min. introduction:** The Open Dialogue approach was first established in Western Lapland (Finland) and is gaining wider development in international practice. This approach has been remarkably helpful in different situations and contexts, always possible starting from within a personal mental health crisis - without hesitation or delay - and with further flexible, sustainable support for everyone who is involved in this together. In the Open Dialogue approach professionals seek connection and dialogue with and between everyone involved. Without delay, to listen openly to the different voices, experiences and perspectives. In searching for a new understanding to carry on together, there's time and a future to be won. Following seven core principles, Open Dialogue translates "being with" and "doing with" concepts to a dialogical practice.

**15 min. Presentation of different case studies or contexts:** Involving many teams in different regions, Open Dialogue practice is also developing in Flanders, Belgium. In cooperation with mental health organisations, people with lived experience, people with family experience, social welfare partners and training of health professionals/peer workers, teams are also actively connecting Open Dialogue practice to strengthening and spreading other community-based, right-based and recovery-based practices.

**25 min. Interaction:** Exchanging reflections with the audience

**5 min. Interactive closing together:** Gathering take home messages and looking forward to further steps in Open Dialogue development