
WORKSHOP ABSTRACT

Engaging youth in research, education, and practice: a workshop on various forms of youth participation

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Laura Nooteboom¹, Carolijn de Beer¹, Eline Heek¹, Robert Vermeiren^{1,2}

1: LUMC Curium – Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Leiden University Medical Center, Oegstgeest, Zuid, Holland, Netherlands

2: Youz: Parnassia Group, Den Haag, Zuid Holland, Netherlands

To improve integrated care for youth with multiple and complex needs, it is crucial to actively collaborate with youth in research, education and practice. Only by combining scientific evidence, clinical expertise, and patient values, we are able to organize care that fit the needs of youth [1].

However, engaging youth can be challenging for both professionals and youth. For example, youth participation often fails due to a lack of knowledge on the various roles they can play, problems in collaboration, or a lack of preconditions such as insufficient rewards and minimal supervision. Questions that often arise are: how do we actively engage youth in research, education and practice? What roles can youth play to improve integrated care programs? And what conditions are needed to optimize youth engagement and collaboration?

This workshop is for all researchers, policy makers and practitioners, working in youth (mental health) care, interested in improving (youth) engagement in their own practice. Also, this workshop is interesting for youth who want to be involved in improving integrated care.

The workshop is based on the results of a systematic review on youth peer support [2] and experiences from multiple projects (i.e., research, education and treatment) in child and youth psychiatry in The Netherlands. Participants will learn about the various roles youth can play and preconditions that should be met to optimize collaboration in practice. The workshop starts with an introduction (15 min.) explaining different forms of experiential knowledge and the added value of including all perspectives in research, education and practice. Then, the various roles youth can play will be presented. Also, opportunities and challenges within these roles will be discussed by a youth representative based on examples from practice.

Following the introduction, the workshop participants will get the opportunity to reflect on youth participation in their own context (30 min. in total). First, participants are asked to answer questions which stimulate individual reflection on the theory presented (10 min.). Then, participants will discuss their successes, opportunities and challenges in groups (20 min.). An experienced participatory researcher and a youth representative will provide real-time feedback on the participants' experiences and support them to formulate points of action to improve their practice.

Nooteboom: Engaging youth in research, education and practice: a workshop on various forms of youth participation.

At the end of the workshop, participants will have insight into various forms of youth engagement, they will be inspired by examples from other participants, and are equipped with specific points of action to improve their own practice (15 min.).