

Dialogical Practices in Child Protective Services: Azienda “Comuni Insieme” experience

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The Dialogical Practice Coaching & Mindfulness approach has been tested in the Garbagnate Milanese territorial scope, in the province of Milan, Lombardia region, in the north of Italy; this territory is composed by 7 municipalities, 191.663 total inhabitants, 32.622 children.

2 entities manage situations involving children who are subjected to Juvenile Court measures and in social malaise conditions: “Azienda Comuni Insieme” and Paderno Dugnano and Novate Milanese Associated Management.

Workshop will be focused on the children situations managed by Comuni Insieme: in 2016 Comuni Insieme took in charge 839 children and their families.

The mentioned experience has been lead having as a reference the Finnish integrated model of the “Dialogical Practice Coaching & Mindfulness” (DCPM) approach – the research team coordinator is prof. Marco Braghero, supported by a staff composed by: Nicoletta Foresti, Giorgia Franceschini and Annarita Galanto; supervision, instead, is granted by prof. Jakko Seikkula and Tom Arnkil, from the University of Jyväskylä. This trial to apply the referred approach (DCPM) is born from the willingness to pursue a double longtime aim: improving the integration modalities of working among the different services involved, which manage children and their families; building a participated way of collaborating between families and social agents.

To achieve these goals, Welfare Services Directors, acting in the mentioned district area, have joined the programmed research titled in 2013/2014 year: “The DCPM supporting local networks governance”, financed by the University of Jyväskylä. The realised experience provided a review and a new reading back of the built in Protocol operating among the different departments. It points out everyone's different skills and areas of intervention, and provides effective guidelines supporting the Protocol itself. These guidelines resume the DCPM fundamental principles and methodologies. The Territorial Scope Planning 2015/2017 includes these documents.

The DCPM leading principles are: all the significant members of families and services involved need to participate; équipe is responsible for what happens; taking charge of the psycho-social malaise situations must be continuous; uncertainty tolerance; dialogical approach; social network involvement and activation; timing; early open cooperation (EOC).

“S.Lancia Eu.Coop La Società” training staff proposed and started a professional training directed to the territorial scope operators we focused on: evaluating the consistency and accuracy of the taking in charge processes along with the DCPM methodological principles was the goal. Social operators chosen among the staff of the various territorial Services were trained: Neuropsychiatry, Psychiatry, Drug Addiction Services, Counselling Centre for Families, Child Protective Services. Among the staff of these services were picked up some operators whose task was being the Case Manager.

Case manager is a neutral figure, not involved in managing the situation, whose task is to organize dialogical meetings, guaranteeing dialogues among participants, compliance with time limits, implementation of the commitments undertaken during the meetings.

After a short presentation of the experience and context it was realised in, workshop will tell through an open dialogue how the take in charge of the situation took place, what changed and which manner it happened in.

DCPM approach allowed to implement more effective interventions, because they were shared and decided with the families; produced quicker processes; allowed changes in operators perspective referring to their relationship with families and children, improving quality in these relations; implemented integration among welfare and health services.