

Proposal for a presentation or a workshop at the IFSW Conference on *Marginalization and Social Work in Changing Society*, in Reykjavik, Iceland, May 2017

Title:

“Co-production: A key element of ethical and effective approaches to social work with service users, carers, and staff in social work practice and policy- a critically evaluative account of the current discourse, with examples from research, policy, and educational developments”.

This presentation addresses the conference theme of ***Marginalization and Social Work in Changing Society*** by examining a key area of social work values, ethics and practice for reducing marginalization, that of service users and carer involvement in their own services and care plans, and in overall policy development and review in social work and related services.

It does this by addressing the relevant key principles from the IFSW Definition of Social Work, and its Statement of Ethical Principles- such as *‘Respecting the right to self-determination’; ‘...respect(ing) and promot(ing) people’s right to make their own choices and decisions’*, and *‘Promoting the right to participation (for) the full involvement and participation of people using their services in ways that enable them to be empowered in all aspects of decisions and actions affecting their lives.’*

The presentation will identify current strengths and continuing challenges in these areas by focusing on the area of co-production, and then applying these analytically to social work research, practice and education issues, giving examples from the presenters’ own projects and research areas within the mental health field:

- 1) The practice-based Whole Life Project, where the research team of service user researchers, agency staff, and university based staff co-constructed a Whole Life Programme that acted as a therapeutic instrument to be used between a coach (professional), and a participant (service user), which was then evaluated by the research team of service user researchers, agency staff, and university based staff, leading to the co-construction of the findings in the final report and in a journal article.
- 2) The development and outcomes of a part-time innovative online European Union funded online Master in Mental Health Recovery and Social Inclusion, developed by both agency staff and service users, and with staff and service users as students on all its 3 cohorts to date.

- 3) The UK National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NIHCE) 2015 Guideline on the most challenging of areas for such co-production, of working positively and jointly with service users, staff and carers in addressing the causes, consequences and resolution of issues from when there is violence from mental health service users on staff, themselves, and others in their formal and informal networks. The Guideline addresses how best to respond to staff, service users and others after such incidents, and the potential for jointly produced solutions to the issues that arise, as part of the construction of the NIHCE Guideline on 'Violence and Aggression: The short-term management of violent and physically threatening behaviour in mental health, health and community settings' that took place with service users and carers. The presentation will examine in particular one key recommendation, on developing service user led monitoring units in agencies to review and make changes to services after such incidents, a recommendation being piloted in 2016 in a project by the presenter.

The processes, challenges and outcomes of these 3 projects are set out and critically assessed.

In so doing the presentation will look at how we can move towards co-production rather than just taking into account the views of service users about their services, making use of Arnstein's 'ladder of participation' model, which as part of its 8 rungs on the ladder goes from the bottom 2 rungs of the ladder- Manipulation and Therapy- to the 2 topmost rungs, Delegated Power and Citizen Control.

Biography and Contact Details

Professor Brian Littlechild is Research Lead in the Department of Nursing (Children's, Learning Disabilities and Mental Health) and Social Work at the University of Hertfordshire, UK. A qualified and registered social worker, he worked in child care social work, youth justice, and in hospitals and in the community with people with particular mental health needs before working in universities. He still works with young people who have been to court for offences.

He has been a member of BASW for 32 years. He is a member of its England Professional Development Reference Group, been chair of a local branch, of its Criminal Justice Committee, its Ethics Committee and Publications Board, and been a member of its Council for 10 years, as Treasurer for 2 of those years.

He has published 44 books/book chapters/monographs, and 28 refereed journal articles.

He has carried out 21 qualitative and mixed methods research projects, and published widely on, amongst other areas, mental health issues for young and adult offenders, mental health and risk assessment, and on child protection work.