The International Program for Participatory Action Research - IPPAR

• The International Program for Participatory Action Research (IPPAR) is a five year research program funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research
  – knowledge translation priority announcement
• IPPAR is also a private non-profit community organization whose members are people with the lived experience of mental illness (consumers and carers).
• The aim of the IPPAR is twofold:
  – to translate the experiential knowledge of consumers and carers into scientific evidence and
  – to transform the research and scientific milieu as an inclusive workplace for them.
Community-based Participatory Research

- Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) is an approach to research that involves persons of primary interest in all aspects of the process, from conceptualization to data collection, through interpretation and dissemination of findings.

- Involving people about whom the research is conducted as full research partners is a fundamental tenet of CBPR, and speaks to CBPR’s roots in social justice and social change movements.

- Co-learning, a strengths-based approach, and acknowledgement of privilege and power are hallmarks of CBPR.

- To explore issues pertaining to the expression of citizenship of people with the lived experience of mental illness, the IPPAR applies a CBPR approach to embody the principles of civic and social inclusion in research as community.
  
  - We are family...
The IPPAR as Social Support Program

• The IPPAR proposed a new Social Support Program (SSP) to the Quebec Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity (MESS), namely the Projet citoyen
  — a transposition in Montreal of the Yale-New Haven Citizens Project.
• In the province of Quebec, SSPs are designed for people who face various forms of disabilities that had major impacts on their life trajectories, particularly in terms of their much lower socio-economic status.
• Participants in SSPs receive a monthly supplement to their government social welfare allocation – SSI-like.
• There are SSPs in different economic sectors, offering mostly basic manual or clerical work experiences.
• The IPPAR SSP offers a scientific environment for persons who need special employment support and who have an interest in academia and research.
The Consumers’ checklist for Participatory Action Research

• To better understand the hopes and expectations of consumers who might be invited to get involved as partners in a CBPR project that would aim at addressing inclusion, study participants were asked:

  – What would do you think you would gain in being engaged as full research partners in a participatory research project aiming to address social inclusion and citizenship?

Discussion

• **Breaking free from poverty**
  – Breaking free from poverty is the ultimate goal for many persons in recovery.
  – If people are economically better off, their mental and global health will improve.
  – Paying consumers to get involved as full CBPR partners is a way to help them financially.

• **Recognition of competencies**
  – Recruiting and training consumers to conduct interviews or focus groups with peers is an excellent way to recognize their specific competencies and contributions.
  – Being recognized as important contributors within a research team demonstrates that they have specific and useful skills.
  – This confers social legitimacy to the process, as well as scientific credibility.

• **Improving access to information**
  – Being actively involved in research is a good way to have access to first-hand information and new technologies, even more so with newly discovered findings.

• **Taking responsibilities**
  – Playing an active role in CBPR is an opportunity to get trained and supported in assuming some responsibilities and to be accepted and recognized as a teammate within an inclusive scientific workplace.
Merci!

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