

Peer coaches – A new service for successful reintegration during a critical period after SCI

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PLEx = Person with lived experience of SCI

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INTRODUCTION

A successful reintegration in community is essential for QoL after SCI. Returning home after rehabilitation is emotionally turbulent, faced with the reality. Persons are often irresolute how to move forward in life. The aim of this pilot-project in the southwest region of Sweden is to develop a peer-coaching service combining coaching-skills with the knowledge of persons with lived experience (PLEx).

METHODS

The project includes four phases:

- A) Development of a peer-coaching education.
- B) Recruitment and education of PLEx.
- C) Development of a support-system.
- D) Development of a further education-system.

RESULTS

- A) An education was developed consisting of coaching skills, multicultural competence, medical knowledge of SCI, and finally a period of practicing peer-coaching.
 - B) Criteria for recruitment and certification was developed, e.g., minimum two years' living with SCI, active lifestyle, listening skills, constructive view of life, empathetic, interested in people, understanding that everyone's experience of SCI is unique, understanding of confidentiality. From twenty-three applicants, thirteen was accepted. Twelve peer-coaches were certified.
 - C) Coaching tools, planned and on-demand individual and group support, administrative-, report- and evaluation systems was developed.
 - D) A system for further education is currently under development.
- The pilot serves as a model for an on-going national project to enable peer-coaches all over Sweden.

CONCLUSION

Combining coaching-skills with PLEx-knowledge is a unique and effective tool to support newly injured persons to set and achieve goals in their effort to be successfully reintegrated in community. There is need for peer-coaches in all parts of Sweden.