
Impuls - Netherlands Research Center for Social Care



Strengths work

Recovery and inclusion of disadvantaged citizens

Judith Wolf | 9 June 2016

Driven by knowledge, moved by people

Radboudumc

‘Yes, you come to a point where you don’t belong to anything. You don’t belong to the group anymore, but you don’t belong to the normal people either.’

Housing First: principles (Sam Tsemberis, 2010)

Housing

1. Housing as a basic human right
2. No assessment of housing readiness
3. Scattered-site housing: independent apartments
4. Separation of housing and services

Floating support

1. Respect, warmth & compassion for all clients
2. Consumer choice and self-determination
3. Recovery orientation; support clients in their process of recovery
4. A Commitment of working with clients for as long as they need
5. Harm reduction

Recovery orientation Housing First in the Netherlands (N=13) (Wewerinke et al., 2014)

- All Housing First programmes support clients in their process of recovery
- Wide array of definitions of recovery with different focus

Improvement of someone's personal feeling of being there

Being as active a part of society as the client chooses

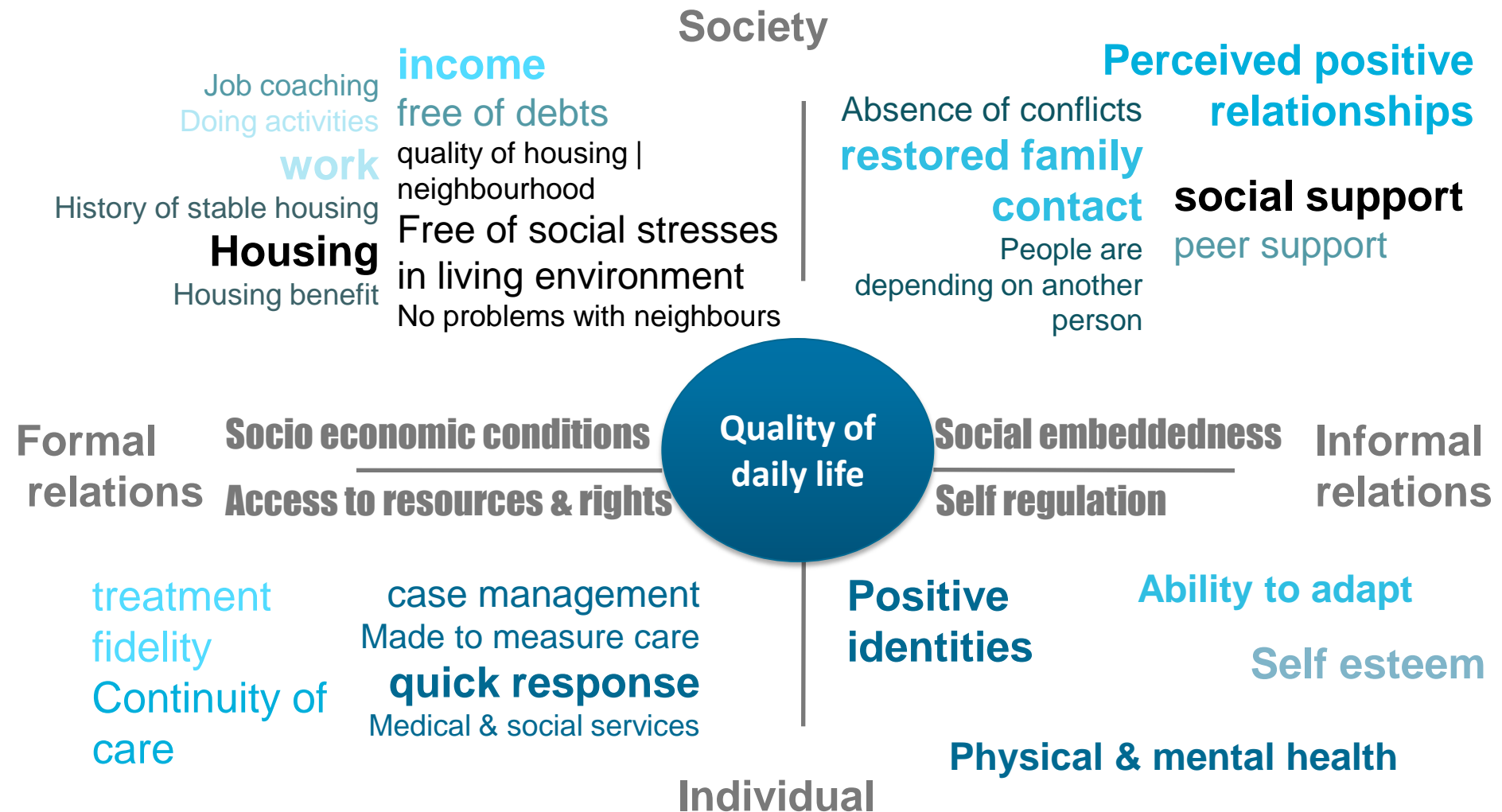
Being able to accept limitations

Being stable in at least four life domains; a certain extent of control with regard to finances, housing, daily activities and care.

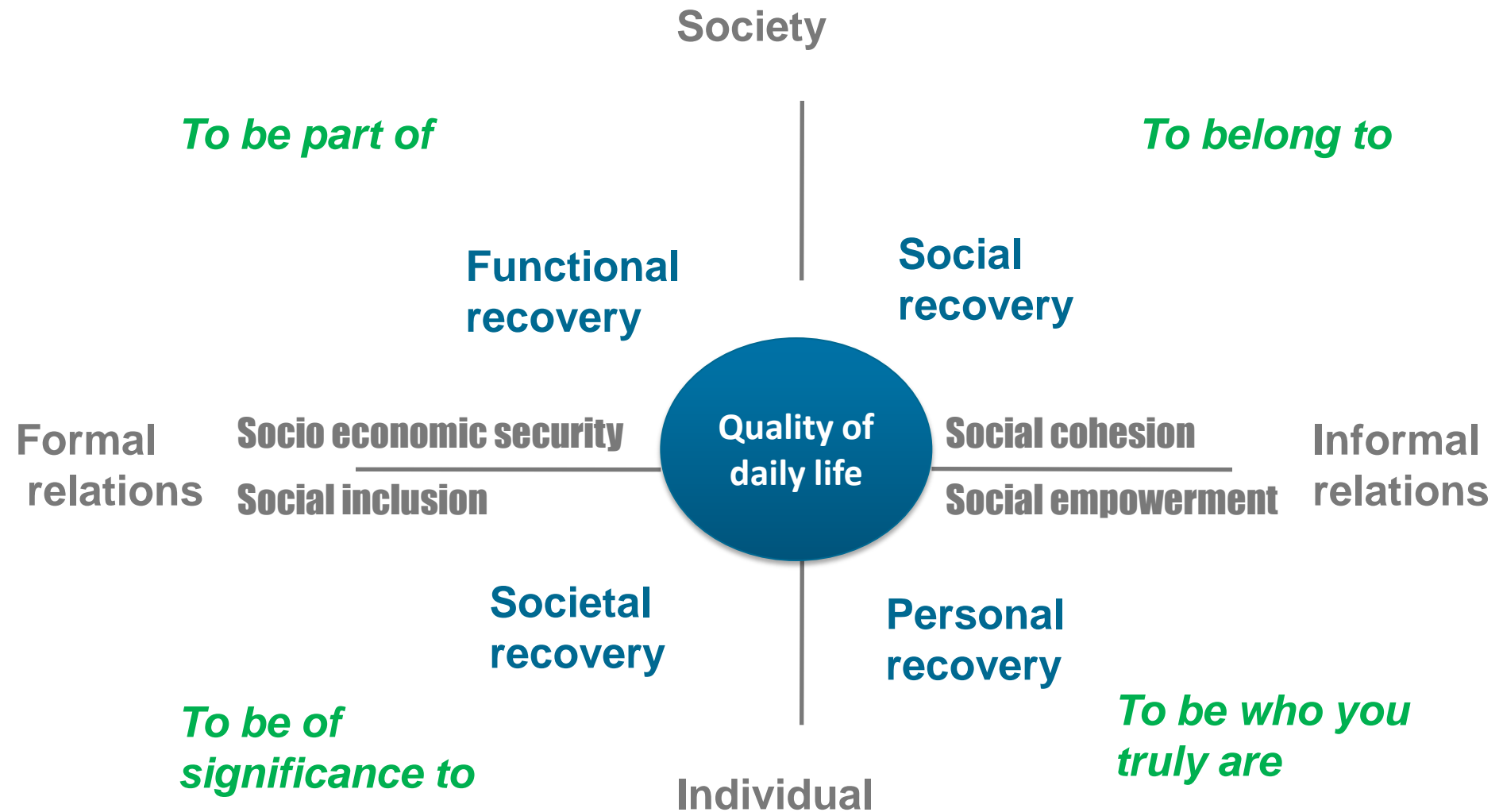
Recovery

The ability to self-regulate and self-manage in the light of emotional, physical, social and material challenges in life

Reinforcers of participation and self-direction



Supporting different types of recovery (Wolf, 2016)



Functional recovery

- Strengthening of competencies and the fulfillment of societal roles so that the person is able to independently secure the basic necessities of his existence
- Re-appraisal of personal efficacy by self-assessment of behavior & daily routines
- Change the way people interpret situations & how the explanation affects their emotions (locus of control)



Social recovery

- Change of relationships within system and wider community
- Restoration of the damage done in relationships
- Explore, use and support resources in environment
- Different frames of reference: explore, discuss and align various ways to explain the situation and to achieve goals



Societal recovery

- To become a valued member of society
- Access to social rights and resources & access to enabling environments
- Recognition and fighting exclusion mechanisms in societal institutions, like labor market, social housing
- Cut back unnecessary rules & regulations, increase responsiveness



Personal recovery

- To become aware of your self and your existence and the values that matter to you and give direction to your life
- Regulate your emotions, cognitions, behavior and motivation and adapt to challenges in order to be able to reach the goals you consider important
- Self-compassion: non-judgmental recognition, assessment and acceptance of negative emotions
- Support and reinforce positive identities
- Fight self-stigma and stereotyping



Strengths based support trajectory

Strengths based support trajectory

Focus determination

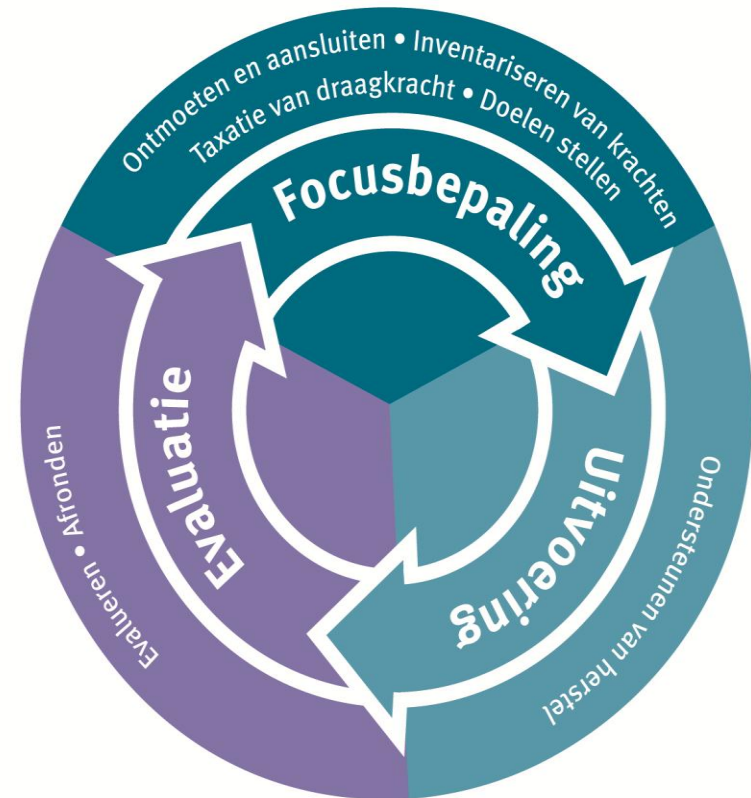
- Building a trusting relationship
- Strengths assessment
- Evaluation of self-regulation
- Setting goals en making action plans

Supporting the recovery process

- Supporting different types of recovery

Evaluation and completion

- Evaluation
- Wrapping up



Strengths assessment | searching for empowerment

Mindset: focus on capacities, talents, skills, resources and aspirations of people (and their environment) today, future and past

- Personal capacities (I am)
- Talents and skills (I can)
- Strengths in environment (I have)
- Interests and aspirations (I want)
- Knowledge (I know)

Result: Document in the clients' own words, signed by the client and provided with priorities.

Leads to: long-term recovery-goals and short term steps and actions

Action plan

From long-term recovery-goals to feasible short term actions

- Action (What?)
- Responsibility (Who?)
- Target date (When ready?)
- Goal realised (When realised?)

Consensus about work-agenda

“In the past I’ve been supported by various methods, but now for the first time the way I am supported is not therapeutic. Strengths work is simple, effective and ok, it has become more humane. This is not forced upon you, because this is yours.”

Successful ingredients | Basic values in Strengths work

(see Rapp & Goscha, 2012)

- Clients are able to recover and to re-gain control over their lives
- Focus is on sources of strength in clients and their environment
- Community settings are maximised, institutional settings minimised
- The working relationship is essential: Recovery starts with trust
- Clients lead the recovery process. Their ability to recover is already there
- The community is a crucial source of support and resources for clients

Certification of
Strengths work

Supporting Strengths work

- Strengths-work manual (publisher Coutinho)
- Worksheets & tools
- Training for various target groups
- Group supervision
- Coaching on the job
- Model fidelity
- Conditions for successful implementation in teams & organizations

Textbook for
University
for applied
sciences

Krachtwerk

Methodisch werken aan participatie en zelfregie

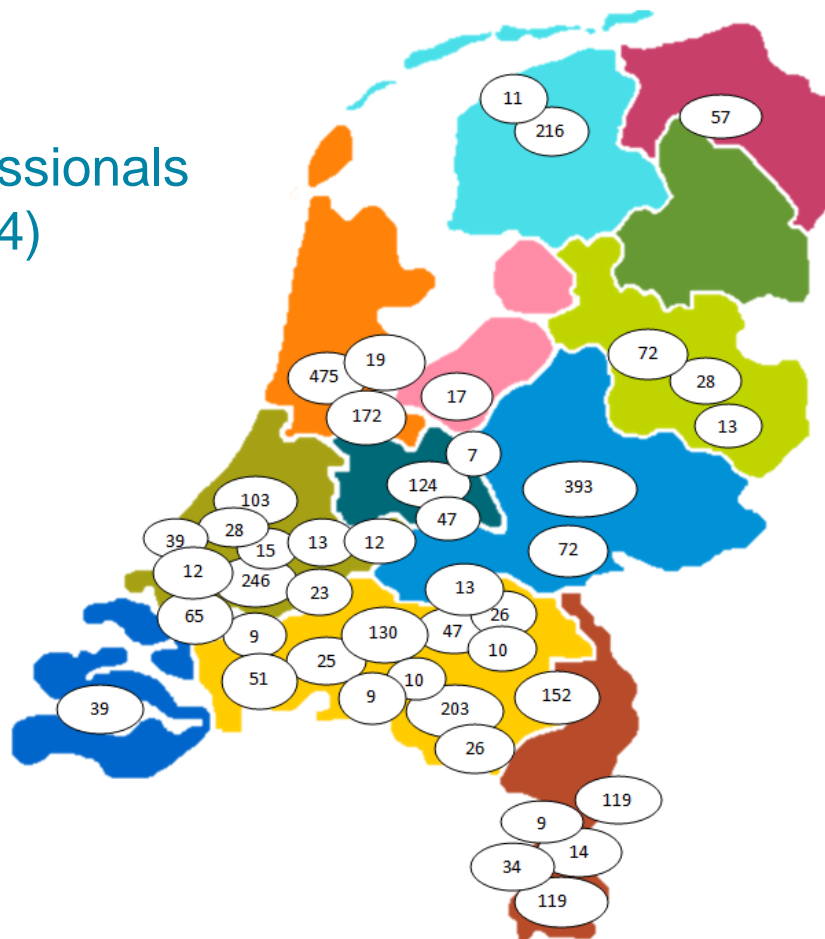
Judith Wolf

uitgeverij
coutinho

Implementation of Strengths work

Certification of professionals
2010-2014 (N = 3374)

Total of certificates
February 2016: N=3913



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