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EDITORIAL

The *Journal of Social Intervention: Theory and Practice* has undergone several transitions since the beginning of 2018. Firstly, we have been delighted to welcome Toby Witte as the new editor-in-chief.

Secondly, we have changed our publication frequency in order to increase our contact with our readers and provide them with relevant information on social interventions more often. As a result, we published an issue containing peer-reviewed articles in February, and two issues dedicated to the Book Review and Innovations in Social Practice and Education articles (in March and May). We are now delighted to publish our second peer-reviewed issue of this year.

We open this issue with a contribution by Eva Marie Castro, Tine Van Regenmortel, Carine Van Wanseele, Walter Sermeus, and Kris Vanhaecht, all of whom work at Leuven University, Belgium. The authors report on a study into existing and potential collaboration between patient organizations and hospitals. Patient participation is an important means of improving the quality of healthcare. Although it is being encouraged by policy institutions, systematic development and implementation is not yet occurring in practice. An exploratory study has been carried out to examine both the current state of affairs and the desired situation regarding collaboration between patient associations and hospitals. A total of 111 patient associations participated in an online cross-sectional survey. The findings demonstrate that the majority of patient associations aspire to “advise” hospitals and collaborate in the development of brochures, while simultaneously

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informing and supporting fellow patients. The main goals of such collaboration with hospitals are: to offer additional services to patients in hospitals, improve patient satisfaction, empower patients and improve the overall quality of healthcare. In conclusion, patient associations are striving for closer collaboration with hospitals in order to become recognized partners within the patient care networks.

The second contribution is from Ed de Jonge, who is a lecturer in Social Work Professionalization at HU University of Applied Sciences, Marijke van Bommel who is Educational Policy Officer at HAN University of Applied Sciences, and Raymond Kloppenburg, who is senior researcher at the expertise centre for Social Innovation, at HU University of Applied Sciences. Their theoretical article sheds light on the various disciplines and perspectives that influence the development of knowledge and the improvement of professional practice in the field of social work. The authors interviewed several academic specialists as part of a national project to explore the common theoretical knowledge base for social-work education. The experts describe a distinctive view that is relevant to social work, but also mention multiple paradigmatic perspectives within such a view. The divergent views and perspectives of the influencing disciplines are important for social work, helping social workers to understand the complexities of social reality while also intervening in that reality. The authors conclude, therefore, that this disciplinary diversity plays an indispensable role in social work practice and education.

The third article in this edition is by Christien Muusse, Caroline Place, and Sonja van Rooijen, all of whom worked at the Trimbos Institute during the project that the article reports on. This practice-based contribution describes the ideals behind an innovative residential facility for people with complex needs. Residents at “De Boerderij”, a care project in the Netherlands, deal with addiction, psychiatric and behavioural issues which mean that they cannot find a (permanent) place to live other than closed mental health wards, prison or on the streets. De Boerderij provides an alternative for these people by offering them a “normal” place to live, with rules kept to a minimum, support on the basis of equality and room for self-management. All of this is done with the aim of breaking the circle of exclusion. The realization of this ideal, however, leads to some significant tensions between “normal living” and diverging notions of autonomy. These fields of tension are the main point of focus within the article.

The final contribution is by Anja Machielse and Pien Bos, both of whom work at the University of Humanistic Studies in Utrecht. The authors report on a study into the opportunities and limitations of a mentor project for lonely older adults. Within the context of Dutch policy, the importance of

informal care in supporting vulnerable fellow citizens is a priority. Working with a vulnerable target group, however, demands a great deal from volunteers. To gain an insight into the limitations of voluntary work with lonely and socially isolated older adults, a study was carried out within a mentor project for this target group. The aim of the project is to help older adults become more self-reliant by stimulating social activities and social contact. The results of the study demonstrate that this goal is unrealistic, however, because the options for change of these older adults are limited, while their vulnerability continues to increase. Above all else, the target group needs personal attention and emotional support. The researchers conclude that successful mentoring can only occur when the expectations of the elderly persons and the volunteers are aligned. This requires, firstly, careful and accurate decision-making regarding both the target group and the volunteers, and, secondly, volunteers who are willing to build up a long-term relationship in which they provide attention, support and companionship. Finally, the volunteers need well-organized professional support.

Our next issue will be published in September and will include Book Reviews and an Innovations in Social Practice and Education article.

Toby Witte, editor-in-chief

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