

IN THE MIDST OF DAILY LIFE

Germany's Pfalzlinikum explains how its community-based services are becoming more and more decentralised

With the aim of less 'special realm' and more 'citizens among citizens', the integration aid of Pfalzlinikum has strongly shifted over the last 30 years.

Participating actively in community life, maintaining social contacts and carrying responsibility are the central working aspects of Pfalzlinikum's Department of Community-Based Services.

During the 1980s, the integration aid of Pfalzlinikum for people with chronic mental illnesses was limited to the main location in Klingenmünster. It offered around 200 treatment places in a long-term ward, far from the cities and towns of the Rhineland Palatinate. Moving patients from the wards to the former staff apartments at the edge of the clinic's site in the 1990s was the beginning of an important turn: from being patients to becoming home residents.

In the meantime the Department of Community-Based Services has developed services at nine locations in the Palatinate. Pfalzlinikum now embarks on a path away from central, institution-based care to individualised solutions that fit into the daily life of the towns: from being home residents to becoming citizens.

Support and integrate: community mental health in Speyer

An example for this is the community psychiatric centre in the Palatinate city of Speyer. This project was embedded into an ongoing process of district development according to the motto 'social city'. The centre unites a community-integrated residential concept as well as daycare and outpatient support. 12 of the inpatient places are located above a row of shops and a neighbours' meeting point, and eight have been implemented in



decentralised rented apartments in the neighbourhood. The decisive idea of the project was to gain an added value – for the people living in the neighbourhood as well as for the future residents.

Citizen among citizens: participation centre in Bellheim

Another step towards decentralisation describes the project inclusion-orientated dwelling in Bellheim, a small town in the south Palatinate. The project is called 'virtual home', wherein 20 residents moved from the clinic site in Klingenmünster to rented flats in Bellheim after a period of intense preparation. They are looked after by a multiprofessional team based in a supporting point (the participation centre) within walking distance of the apartments. There the patients can participate in their day-structuring measures, in cooking sessions or other leisure activities. A similar, locally adapted offer is planned in Wörth am Rhein, near Karlsruhe.

The basic idea is:

- To acquire as much normality as possible in every sphere of life (i.e. being perceived as a citizen, tenant or neighbour, not as a home resident or patient);
- To participate in the community (i.e. creating new inclusive structures, using chances and risks in a town community: social bonds but also narrow social control);





- To develop more self-empowerment and responsibility for their own matters (i.e. coping with crises, being able to make agreements, accepting established support by other residents); and
- To aim for a win-win situation for all persons involved. Inclusion cannot be established or prescribed by professionals; creating a real home and being part of the community only works with help from citizens, neighbours, associations, etc.

Everybody in the same boat

Inclusion is often accompanied by prejudices, uncertainties and fears within the population. The employees of the participation centre are frequently confronted with the questions: 'Are those people dangerous?' or 'how am I supposed to behave?' Such fears can be reduced by personal contact and encounter in the communities of local associations. Furthermore, it is important to know the local customs – the unwritten laws – of a community, and to respect them. In cases of crises, residents and neighbours should be able to fall back on a reliable intervention by the professional attendants.

People who have lived in an institutional environment for a long time have to be led carefully to the aspects of social participation, which has to be accompanied by professionals or by citizens, at least at the beginning. Many public offers cost money that the residents do not have, for example for public transport. The Department of Community-Based Services is planning an ideas workshop to identify fun, low-budget activities around the towns.

Solid preparation at all levels

In continuing training, about 50 employees were prepared for the new challenges that come with the task of participation support. They developed a new understanding of roles based on issues such as recovery, self-empowerment, orientation to social space and biography work. Reflection on the employees' projects, work shadowing, and taking into account the residents' views were also important aspects.



In order to manage inclusion successfully, the future citizens and their attendants have to reflect on their expectations and fears at an early stage; they have to get to know their new neighbourhood and the processes of a self-determined daily life. Steering groups are crucial for such projects – they comprise experienced people, legal guardians, employees, authorities and municipalities.

Concepts based on daily needs

The development of new forms for care and dwelling must be measured against the benefit for the individual. The first results of a joint survey of Hochschule Aalen and Pfalzlinikum show a greater satisfaction among the clients concerning their new living situation. The subjective sense of security and the degree of freedom and independence are perceived to be on a solid, even high level. Find more information about the quality of life indices: <http://www.paneuropeannetworks.com/special-reports/what-is-the-state-of-the-quality-of-life/>

At the Inklusionstage (inclusion summit) in Berlin in October 2016, initiated by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Pfalzlinikum and the Community-Based Services presented their concepts on an important national platform. The aim is to find creative and flexible solutions for all clients individually and to sustain the role of their attendants as 'intermediates between realms'. Sharing their concepts nationwide is the first step for them to be adapted beyond the Palatinate.



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