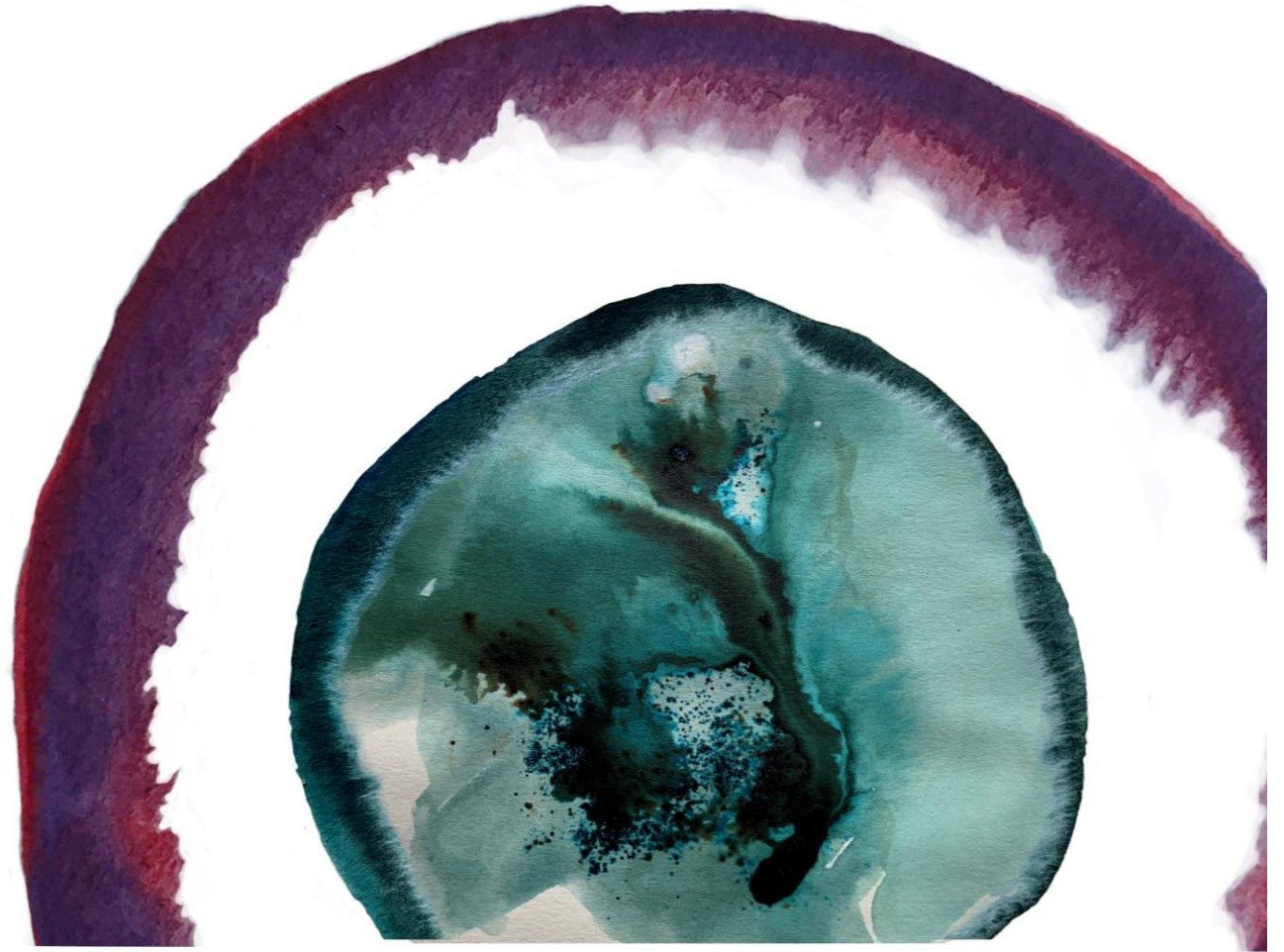
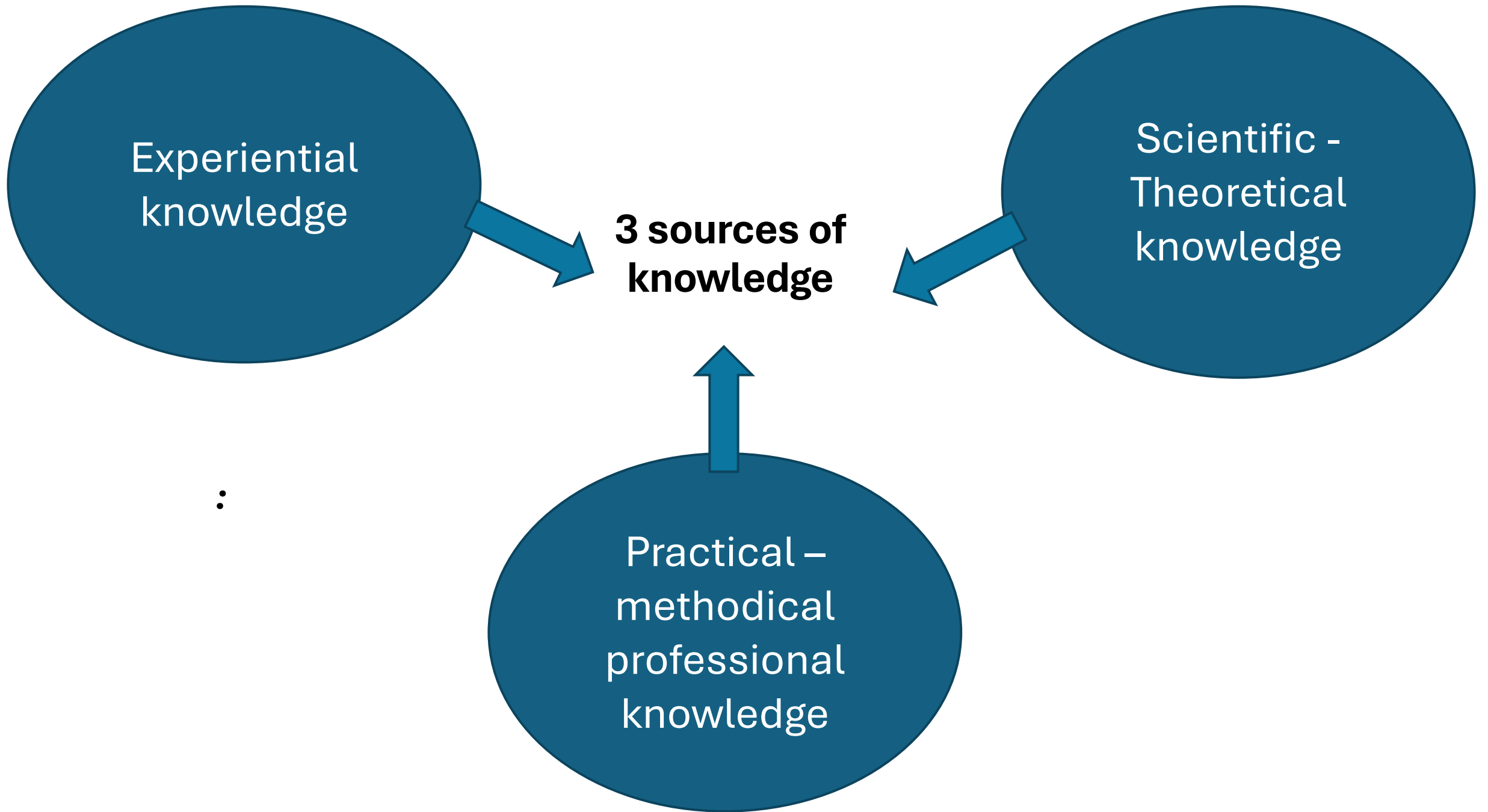


How to use experiential knowledge in mental health care

Dr. Rosalie Metze

Windesheim University of Applied
Sciences





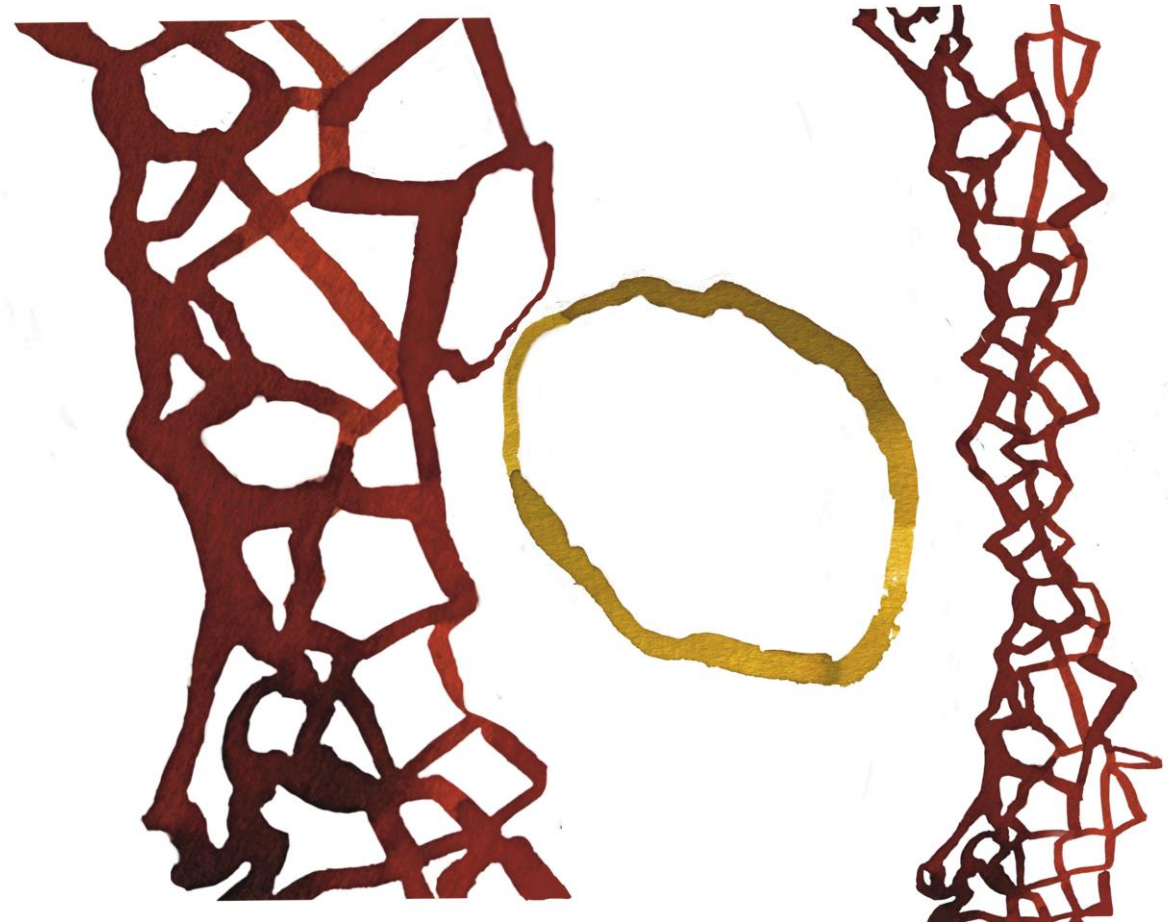
The professionalization of using lived experiences (competence profile, 2022)





Turning shit into manure

“All experiences matter, but you can't just use someone with experience as an expert by experience. To do that, you have to be able to be sufficiently open to experiences of others. An expert by experience first and foremost gives space to others' experiences and is able to put their own experiences in the background, if necessary.”



The Netherlands, 2022: National Quality System Experiential Knowledge

To strengthen the professionalization of peer support workers in 2019 the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport commissioned the development of a quality system for experts by experience.

In 2022 about 900 professional peer support workers/ experiential experts were working in mental health care and adjacent fields. They want this system. 15% of these experts are healthcare professionals with experiential expertise (ZME). This ZME is a relatively new position in The Netherlands (*Van Slooten, Sprinkhuizen en Weerman, 2022*).

The quality system regulates and improves the quality of experiential expertise within the mental health sector and adjacent fields. Components of the quality system:

1. A professional code of conduct
2. National curricula (Associate Degree, Bachelor and Master)
3. A professional register
4. A quality standard



Using experiential expertise at different levels

- Interacting with individuals and groups
- Making and influencing policy
- Contributing to a society where people are not excluded



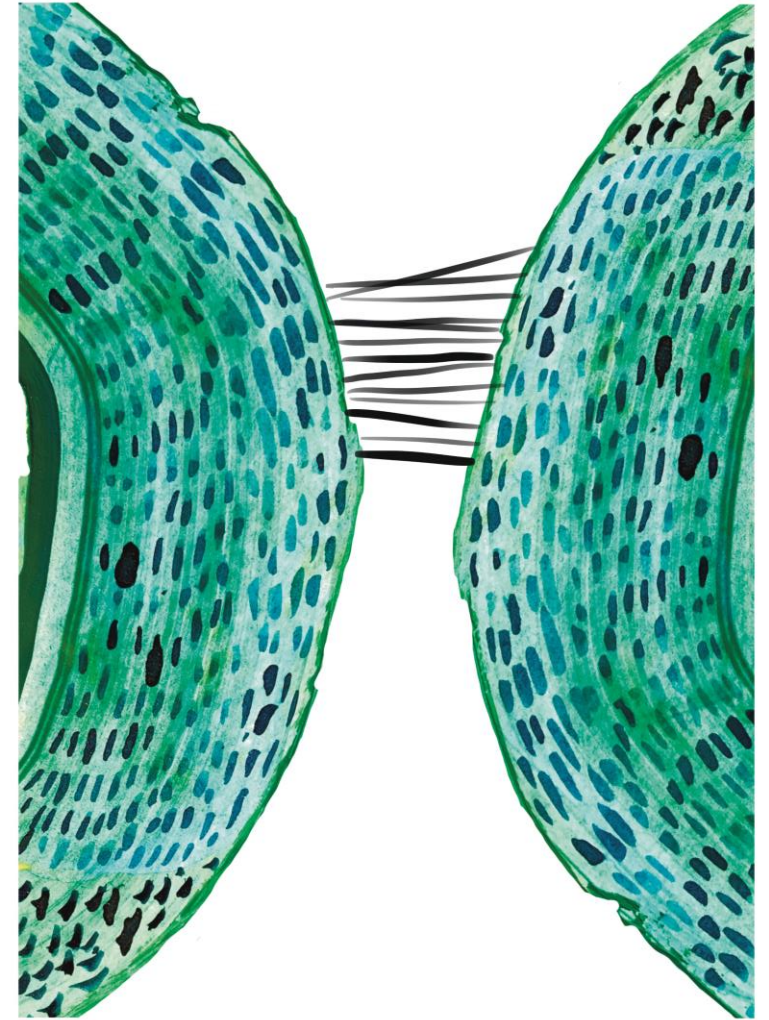
Using experiential knowledge in various roles and functions

- Citizen and client participation
- Clients-in-recovery
- Recovered Storytellers
- Professional experts-by-experience (at three levels: assisting, executive or coordinating)
- Care and service providers with experiential expertise (more than 500 mental health professionals did a training on this).
- Administrators-with-experiential knowledge
- Etc.



Fields of Tension

- Too narrow conception of experiential knowledge;
- Low status of experiential knowledge;
- Implicit assumption of classical and common conceptions of knowledge and professionalism;
- Lack of connection with other disciplines;
- Emphasis on risk aversion and experiencing accountability pressures;



PEPPER

Experiential Knowledge as PEPPER

It is.....



Pepper also is a consortium of mental health and care organisations and a recovery center: Dimence, GGNet, RIBW Overijssel, MEE Samen, Iriszorg, Leger des Heils, Focus and the Association of Experiential Experts and the University of Applied Sciences of Utrecht and Windsheim.

Practical: how to survive and how to recover

Existential: embodied knowledge of *existential boundaries*, resilience and meaningfulness.

Political and critical, aimed at inclusion, and humanizing the mental health system.

Personal: it is rooted in personal lived experiences with disruption and recovery. It is knowledge 'from within', from one's lifeworld

Ethical: We all are humans; an attitude of equality and reciprocity

Relational: it develops in sharing experiences

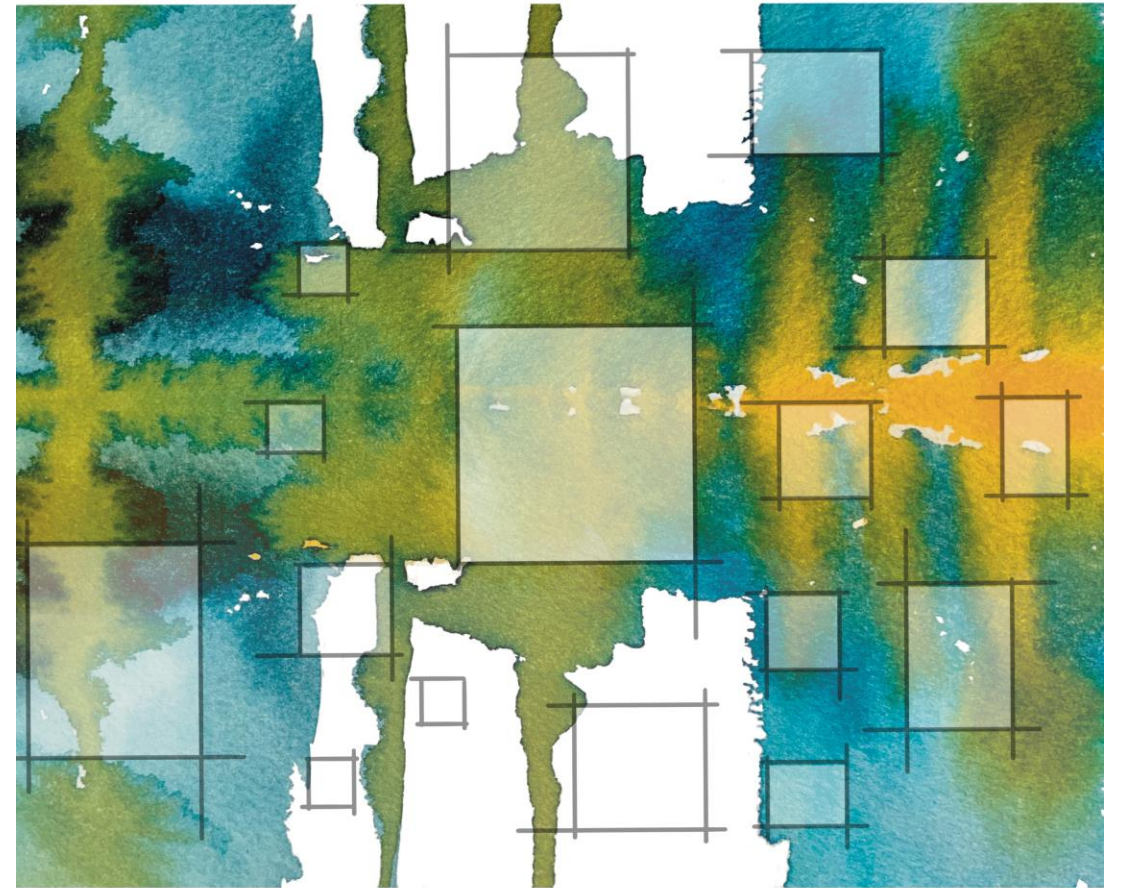


Experiential knowledge as an equal source of knowledge

It is not so much about the experiential experts per se, but about the source of knowledge they bring.

Accepting this source of knowledge means an organization undergoes a transformation; it means adopting a different way of working as an organization: more personal, more equal and with recognition of experiential knowledge. It means bringing this source of knowledge into everything you do in the organization.

We are at a point where this originally bottom-up movement also needs top-down support.



Points of attention by becoming a 'peppered' institution



Political	Recognise experiential knowledge; start with a statement and a supported vision and carry it out at all levels and to all persons in the organisation.
Existential	Give space to questions of meaning and meaninglessness throughout the organization. Be hopeful and practical.
Practical	Give experiential knowledge a place in policy and human resource management; put in job advertisements that this knowledge is an advantage. Organize training sessions.
Personal	Facilitate personal-professional development and commitment; all experiences are valuable, not only those of experiential experts.
Ethical	Work from values of reciprocity, trust and equality and reflect on this regularly both individually as in groups.
Relational	Work in a participative relational way; don't let people pioneer this alone.



Some points for discussion:

1. The core value of experiential expertise is **Free Space**. To what extent can this be achieved in a formal (mental health) organization?
2. How to handle the hierarchy of knowledge?
3. Do all experiences still count? Are we constructing a new hierarchy? How can we stay inclusive?
A cliënt doesn't necessarily need an education as an experiential expert, but his experiences should be taken seriously.
4. Experiential knowledge can be at odds with the other types of knowledge (and ZME's sometimes report inner conflicts about this tension in their learning process).
5. Should vulnerability be seen as a strength? Or does this unnecessarily contribute to stigma?

About 23% of the experiential experts still regularly struggle with disruption and vulnerability; Over 64% do so sometimes (Van Slooten, Sprinkhuizen & Weerman, 2023). On the other hand, we know that about 47% of mainstream professionals have (had) to deal with similar forms of vulnerability (Weerman e.a., 2019).

I'm not afraid of presenting myself as vulnerable, but I am afraid of being seen as vulnerable in my job."

"And if they are a bit more expensive because they drop out a bit more often: experiential expertise has a price, just as specialist knowledge of a psychiatrist."



Literature

Beroepscompetentieprofiel Ervaringsdeskundigheid (2022). Utrecht: Movisie.

Boevink, W. (2017). *Over herstel, empowerment en ervaringsdeskundigheid in de psychiatrie*. Utrecht: Trimbosinstituut.

Byrne, L., Happell, B., & Reid-Searl, K. (2017). Risky business: lived experience in mental health practice, nurses as potential allies. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, 26, 3: 285-292,

Generieke Module Ervaringsdeskundigheid (2022). Utrecht: Trimbosinstituut.

Hoorn, E. van en Keuzenkamp, S. (2020). *Ervaringswerk in het Sociaal Domein*. Utrecht: Movisie.

Karbouniaris, S. (2023). *Let's tango! Integrating professionals' lived experience in the transformation of mental health services*. PhD dissertation. Leiden: Leiden University Medical Center.

Karbouniaris, S., Wilken, J. P., Weerman, A., & Abma, T. (2022). Experiential knowledge of mental health professionals. Service users' perceptions. *European Journal of Mental Health*, 17(3), 23–37. <https://doi.org/10.5708/EJMH/17.2022.3.2>

Karbouniaris, S., Weerman, A., Dunnewind, B., Wilken, J.P. & Abma, T.A. (2022), "Professionals harnessing experiential knowledge in Dutch mental health settings", *Mental Health and Social Inclusion* 26(1), 75-88.

Keuzenkamp, S., & van Hoorn, E. (2022). Wat doen ervaringsdeskundigen er eigenlijk toe? Een literatuurreview over de impact van ervaringsdeskundigen in één-op-één contacten. *Journal of Social Intervention*, 31(2), 4-22. <https://doi.org/10.54431/jsi.698>.

Kenniscentrum Phrenos/Trimbosinstituut (2022). *Landelijk leerplan ervaringsdeskundigheid (2022)*.

'S Jongers, T. (2023). Voor een goed beleid zijn persoonlijke ervaringen net zo nuttig als diploma's. *De Correspondent*, 6 juli 2023.

Slooten, M. van, Sprinkhuizen, A. & Weerman, A. (2023). Inzet van ervaringsdeskundigen in de ggz en aanpalende sectoren. Een inventarisatie. *Participatie en Herstel*, 2, 5-17.

Weerman, A. (2016). Ervarin

Weerman, A., & Abma, T. (2018). Social work students learning to use their experiential knowledge of recovery. An existential and emancipatory perspective. *Social Work Education*, 1-17.

Weerman, A., Jong, de K., Karbouniaris, S., Overbeek F., Loon, van E. & Lubbe, van der P (2019). *Professioneel inzetten van ervaringsdeskundigheid*. Amsterdam: Boom