

Abstract No. 6.5

Thursday 7th September 2017 at 14:15-15:00

Title: Come to shared knowledge in 1 day!

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Main focus: Mainly practice/Congenital deafblindness

Abstract: CRESAM, national resource centre of deafblindness in France, provides advice, support and training to individuals and their families and friends, and to professionals, on all issues regarding deafblindness.

With this workshop we would like to explain our observation programme. The main aim of this programme is to find (new) skills and abilities of the individual with a multi-sensory impairment.

Each individual, each situation has his/its own specific needs and in some very complex cases we advise to do an observation at CRESAM. A specialist staff, consisting of different disciplines (orthoptist, eye-specialist, psychologist, practitioner of Feldenkrais, other specialists) will be put together.

We offer an observation programme in a neutral setting, a normal house in a normal residential neighborhood. This area has nothing to do with institutions or hospitals and therefore visitors feel comfortable pretty fast and so we create different conditions:

1. A new environment can already evoke different emotions and actions of the individual. The individual will have to adapt to a different situation, and (new) skills can be observed.
2. The family has already a great knowledge and experience with the individual. They have developed a routine together and because of that sometimes the potentials of the individual are not recognized. By inviting the family to a neutral setting they lose the routine and so they are obliged to invest in the relationship.
3. By inviting professionals to a neutral setting we experience that they are more engaged. They don't get distracted by other work-related issues, and so there is a greater focus on the individual.

We experience that a neutral setting creates a dialogical platform in which all partners are equal. They are all challenged to adapt to a new situation, the routine is broken. They are all willing to learn to see the potentials of the individual. Parents share their knowledge with the professionals, and vice versa. From here on we co-construct knowledge and we will come to shared knowledge.

In general, the programme lasts 1 day, it is adapted to each individual and his partners. There will be several tests during the day with the individual. Family and professionals are present also and can witness and participate the different activities of the specialist staff. At the end of the day there will be a moment where all participants exchange their experiences of the day, connections will be made with the past and new skills are discovered, new skills that were maybe already there but never seen or shared before. We experience that in general the results of an observation programme offer shared meaning between the families and professionals which contributes to the wellbeing of the individual!