



Canada

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The « BY AND FOR » approach

the good practice guide and its application at





Table des matières

Preface.....	7
Projet L.U.N.E.....	11
2.1 History	13
2.2 The mission of Projet L.U.N.E.	15
2.3 The main lines of work of Projet L.U.N.E.	15
2.4 Committees and bodies.	18
2.5 The place of the allies	23
Methodology.....	25
3.1 Good practices	27
3.2 Information collection	28
A look at the good practices of Projet L.U.N.E.....	31
4.1 BY AND FOR approach	33
4.2 Welcoming peer-helpers	43
4.3 Fostering involvement and (..)	49
Overcoming real-life challenges	59
5.1 Individual challenges	61
The final word	69
Glossary of terms	75
Appendix	81
8.1 Code of Ethics	83
Bibliography	87
Drafting and Revision Committee	93



1

PREFACE





Preface

When the opportunity came up to talk about the *by and for* approach and the place of peer-helpers in Projet L.U.N.E., the whole team was thrilled. After all, the organization was born from participatory action research, and the desire to share knowledge is growing as Projet L.U.N.E. grows. The *by and for* is at the heart of everything that Projet L.U.N.E. is, and above all, of all its successes!

Projet L.U.N.E is proud of all that it has accomplished, whether it is the distribution of hundreds of hygiene kits, the opening of an emergency shelter with a high acceptance threshold, or the recognition from its many partners who welcome peer-helpers with open arms. Through all these great successes, Projet L.U.N.E has faced significant challenges, and it is to share these experiences and to allow for reflection on the *by and for* approach that the guide was created. In this sense, this good practice guide presents an example of what *by and for* can be within an organization that, since its creation, has involved experience experts and peer-helpers. It is notably through the history and the different axes of work of the organization that the good deeds and challenges will be presented, to highlight the concrete experience lived by Projet L.U.N.E. over the years.





2

PROJET
L.U.N.E.





Projet L.U.N.E.

2.1 History

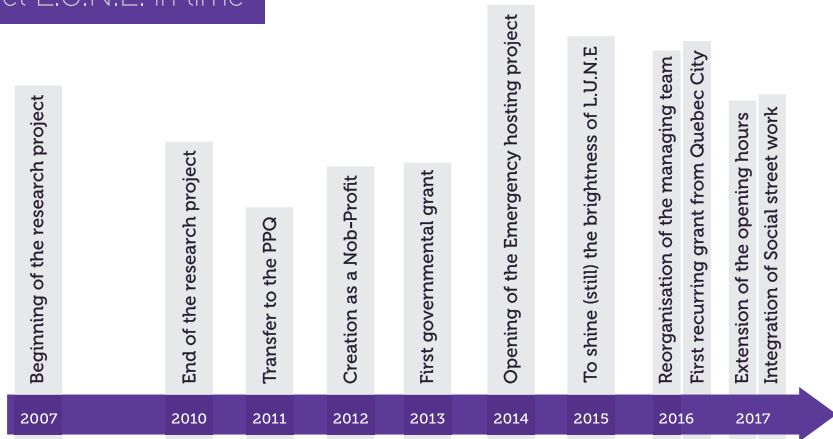
Projet L.U.N.E.¹ was born in Quebec City in 2007, from an alliance between the community sector (Point de Repères, Projet Intervention Prostitution Québec), a team of researchers (Laval University, Université du Québec à Montréal, Université du Québec à Rimouski, Université de Montréal) and women street sex workers (SSW) and injection drug users (IDU).

At the time, many female street-based sex workers and injection drug users were not reached by community and institutional settings. The need to adapt services and the welcoming of these women became essential. The participatory research project aimed to address a set of needs identified by women, while strengthening their roles as peer-helpers in their communities. To do this, a merging of knowledge model was used (Labbé et al., 2013: 98). This partnership has enabled all those involved in the research to develop a new knowledge, a collective knowledge, shared by the whole group.

« Women's involvement in the project has led to several activities, including writing a study on the needs of SSW-IDU² women in the Quebec City region, developing and updating a list of descriptions of dangerous clients, publishing a newspaper with, by and for SSW-IDU women, organizing co-training and creating information leaflets and condom kits. » (Labbé et al., 2013: 98)

Thanks to the great mobilization and perseverance of peer-helpers, not to mention the support of several organizations and community partners, Projet L.U.N.E. was recognized as an autonomous community organization in 2011. The emergency shelter, for its part, opened its doors in 2014.

Projet L.U.N.E. in time



2.2 The mission of Projet L.U.N.E.

Projet L.U.N.E. is a group for the belonging, recognition and defence of social rights *by and for* sex workers (SWs³), active or not, who act as peer support workers. Their know-how and expertise are shared in many ways: speaking out in the public arena, awareness-raising activities, advocacy and mobilization. Anyone who identifies themselves as a woman, trans* woman or queer is welcome, regardless of their history, background or experiences. The mission of Projet L.U.N.E. is at the heart of all its actions:

Intervene, support and welcome women/trans*/queer⁴, through community action in a peer intervention approach, in accordance with an empowerment philosophy, to improve their quality of life..

2.3 The main lines of work of. Projet L.U.N.E.

The approach advocated by Projet L.U.N.E. is said to be *by and for* and focuses on the restoration of the power to act individually and collectively. To better understand how its mission is respected and to ensure that it works effectively and consistently with the needs of the community, seven areas of work have been defined by Projet L.U.N.E.

Shelter

Drop-in⁵ type, the shelter offers a reception space with a high acceptance rate. To access it, the criteria are reduced to a minimum, namely: identify yourself as a woman and be 18 years of age or older. On site, five emergency beds and three reclining chairs are available between 6 pm and noon every day. Women can drop in, with or without pets, have coffee, eat, and socialize. The women who are housed are welcomed by a team composed of a dyad of social worker and peer-helper.

Les voix de la ruELLES

This street newspaper is intended to be a tool for expression, awareness and prevention. There is, for example, a list of bad customers. Peer-helpers choose the themes, design, write, edit and distribute this journal three times a year. More than 500 copies of the newspaper are available in nearly 30 locations in downtown Quebec City and are also available online at www.projet-lune.org

Hygiene kits

These kits include hygiene equipment for women/trans*/queer engaged in sex work and/or who are homeless. Nearly 80 kits are distributed by peer-helpers and allies. The products in the kit allow those who receive



them to take care of themselves, while reducing the risk of transmission and acquisition of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV).

The training

All the people involved in Projet L.U.N.E. have access to numerous training courses to perfect their knowledge and skills. The topics covered during the training sessions are chosen in collaboration with the peer-helpers and the work team, according to the needs of each.

Socio-professional inclusion

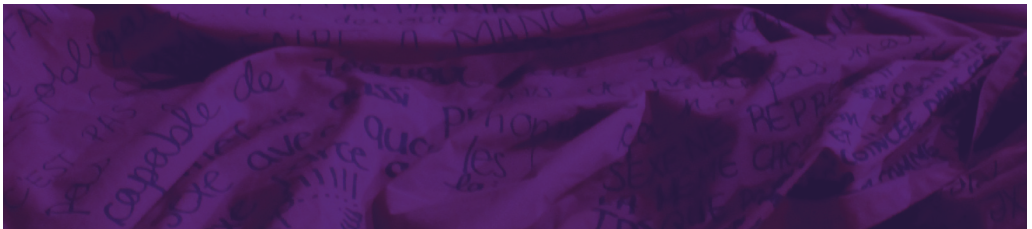
This work stream is present at all levels of the organization. The peer-helpers involved in Projet L.U.N.E. have the opportunity to experience different roles and responsibilities, depending on their interests and the organization's needs. It is also possible to talk about socio-professional inclusion with regard to the composition of the work team, since 23 peer-helpers had access to a job where, for example, their experiences in sex work were recognized as work experience.

Presentations and representations

Projet L.U.N.E.'s working committee travels regularly to discuss sex work, its decriminalization and *by and for* in a variety of settings: CEGEPs, universities, community organizations, media, etc. Many actions are also carried out by the working committee, for example during the organisation of activities carried out as part of the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers.

Outreach⁶ work

A team of two street workers and two peer-helpers offers support to people reached by Projet L.U.N.E. According to empowerment and harm reduction approaches, they support women/trans*/queer in their efforts to improve their quality of life (access to health care, legal services, Director of Youth Protection, relocation and housing maintenance, etc.). As street workers, they are present in various formal and informal places frequented by disaffiliated women (parks, streets/runs, soup kitchens, community organizations, etc.). They also do community work by creating partnerships with community and institutional organizations.



2.4 Committees and bodies

2.4.1 The composition of the work team

The responsibility for developing the many areas of work is shared between different committees and through the work team. In order to better understand how all these axes are realized, it is important to understand the structure of Projet L.U.N.E.

Working committee

Composed of 8 sex workers and/or former sex workers, the working committee is the core of the organization. The peer-helpers group is mobilizing to take action to defend rights, raise awareness, prevent and represent sex work and its decriminalization. It is also these peer-helpers who produce and distribute the newspaper *Les voix de la ruELLES*, in addition to distributing hygiene kits. To do this, they meet once a week, co-facilitate these meetings and are accompanied by a facilitator.

The work team

Projet L.U.N.E. has more or less 28 employees, peer-social workers and allies. A large majority of them work in the shelter, where a pair is formed on each shift between a social worker and a peer-social-worker to better welcome women and provide shelter. Two other pairs are composed of a street worker and a peer-street-worker. In addition, allies join the team to provide support and follow-up at the administrative level, including a coordinator, a facilitator and a person performing tasks related to the administration and financial management of Projet L.U.N.E.

The administration committee

The administration committee is composed of four administrator positions reserved for sex workers or former sex workers and three administrator positions from the community. They are all elected by the members of Projet L.U.N.E. at an annual general meeting for two-year terms. The administration committee has the legal responsibility of the organization and is the guardian of its mission.

The members

The organization has three categories of members: active members, user members and associate members.

- **The active members** of the organization are the signatories to the request for its incorporation, as well as any adult interested in the purposes and activities of the corporation who requests it and who is accepted by the administration committee.
- **User members** are all persons who benefit from the services or programs set up by the organization at their request and who are accepted by the administration committee.
- **Associate members** of the organization are any association or legal person interested in the purposes and activities of the corporation that so requests and is accepted by the administration committee.

2.4.2 The peer-helpers at Projet L.U.N.E.

«Peer-helpers are people who work with others who have experienced similar difficulties. [...] The value of this support lies in the recognition of the experience that is transmitted from one person to another and the equity that exists in this relationship.» (Komaroff, 2013: 43)

« Giving these actors a voice means reaching out to the most marginalized populations and supporting the recognition of their point of view, which is often ignored when it comes to thinking about intervention and prevention. » (Greissler, 2013:89)

Three characteristics stand out among the peer-helpers reached by Projet L.U.N.E. : having experience with sex work, «having communication and relational skills» and having already participated in collective actions (Labbé et al., 2013: 102). Several factors can lead women SW or ex-SWs to want to get involved: whether it is to «improve their own living conditions» and those of other women with SW, to participate in an activity that values them, to make the SW community more supportive or to fight against prejudices towards them (Labbé et al. 2013: 102)

Michou's testimony, peer-helping in the hosting committee

«My role as a host is to understand these women and to listen to them because almost everything they are living was a part of my life. Therefore, my empathy towards these women is stronger. I convey confidence, I feel because I show that I'm also (partly) marginal, and that inspire women to talk to me and to believe that one day this chapter of their lives will end. They tell themselves that If me, their peer-helper, has been able to get out, they can.

I help the women's in their path and, has a peer-helper, I hope I am a good inspiration for these women who lost faith. I kind of see myself as a mentor, I listen to them and take care of them and give them the attention we all need.»

Different roles at Projet L.U.N.E.

The people that work at LUNE are or were sex workers, drug users or not



2.4.3 Roles and responsibilities of peer-helpers

The involvement of peer-helpers in Projet L.U.N.E. can take many forms, depending on the time they wish to invest, the interests of each and the needs of the organization. The roles can be divided into four categories: natural-helper, peer-helper, peer-social-worker and administrator on the administration committee. Projet L.U.N.E., through its decision-making and management methods, is a self-help organization⁷. Understanding the roles and responsibilities of each person involved helps to understand how Projet L.U.N.E. works to empower and involve peer-helpers.

Natural-helper: The natural-helper role includes volunteers, SW or ex-SW, who gravitate more punctually around Projet L.U.N.E. It is also the role of the people who join the working committee, during their trial period. Whether by offering a hand with the distribution of newspapers, supplying the organization with safe-use materials or helping to organize a special activity, to give just a few examples, the involvement of natural-helpers is interesting because it can allow a person to be integrated into the organization at their own pace, as well as maintain a link with former peer-helpers. Natural-helpers have roles adapted to their rhythm, to meet needs that could not otherwise be met: two positions have been created for natural-helpers who are involved, for example, in the maintenance of the premises and the sorting of donations received.



Peer-helper: The involvement of peer-helpers is supervised and requires participation in an intake interview. After a period of one month, the peer-helpers sign a participation contract and the organization's code of ethics. These documents include the number of hours of involvement expected and confirm the commitment of the peer-helpers to the values promoted by Projet L.U.N.E. In addition to participating in weekly meetings, the peer-helpers have access to training and define their own tasks during the working committee meetings and during their self-evaluations. Their participation is highlighted by a financial allocation that aims to cover expenses related to their presence at Projet L.U.N.E. (travel expenses, etc.) and at social events that take place four times a year.

Peer-social-worker: This role is held by employees of Projet L.U.N.E. The peer-social-workers sign an employment contract and the organization's code of ethics. Like all other employees, they are accountable to coordination and the administration committee and carry out the functions assigned to them in their job descriptions. In addition to receiving a salary, peer-social-workers have access to training. They work in pairs with professionals from different backgrounds: social work, special education, criminology, delinquency intervention, etc.

SW or ex-SW administrator: On Projet L.U.N.E. administration committee, a majority of seats is reserved (four out of seven) for people with experience related to sex work. Like the other administrators, they are responsible for the management of the organization and are the guardians of the mission.

In light of these different roles, it is clear that women/trans*/queer SW or ex-SW are involved at all levels in Projet L.U.N.E.

2.5 The place of the allies

The place of the allies in Projet L.U.N.E. is consistent with its management mode. While the administration committee is composed mainly of peer-helpers (four out of seven positions), the position of allies on the administration committee, as well as on the work team, is relevant to support the management of the organization. They are used to fill positions for which peer-helpers are less interested in or for which no one has the necessary training. The presence of allies on the work team also allows for exchanges with people from a variety of backgrounds and who have acquired diverse experience in intervention. The interest shown by the allies in Projet L.U.N.E. is also an important motivating factor for peer-helpers, who like to share their successes, while making the allies aware of their realities.

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Le dernier refuge des prostituées



La coordonnatrice du centre d'hébergement, Maude Santerre, et la travailleuse sociale Amélie Bédard se réjouissent de la concrétisation du projet, même si les dollars octroyés par la Conférence régionale des élus et la députée Agnès Maltais ne lui permettront de survivre que cinq mois.
Le Soleil, Pascal Rathé



Baptiste Ricard-Châtelain

Le Soleil (Québec) Sept ans d'efforts seront finalement récompensés le 10 novembre. Les prostituées de Québec sans logis pourront trouver refuge dans un sanctuaire secret où elles seront accueillies peu importe qu'elles soient païf, déboussolées ou perdues dans un paradis artificiel.

Vous ne savez pas où se trouve ce dernier refuge. Les travailleurs de rue, les femmes concernées, même les policiers sont dans le coup. Question de sécurité pour les pensionnaires, on nous a toutefois demandé de ne pas vous donner trop de détails; un client malcommode pourrait y descendre. Peut-être qu'un souteneur éconduit pourrait aussi s'y présenter.

Donc, le 10 novembre, le projet LUNE mettra au monde son bébé. LUNE pour Libres Unies Nuancées Ensemble. Un acronyme conçu par des femmes du milieu. En fait, tout le projet a été enfanté «par et pour» des adeptes de drogues et des travailleuses du sexe actives ou non.

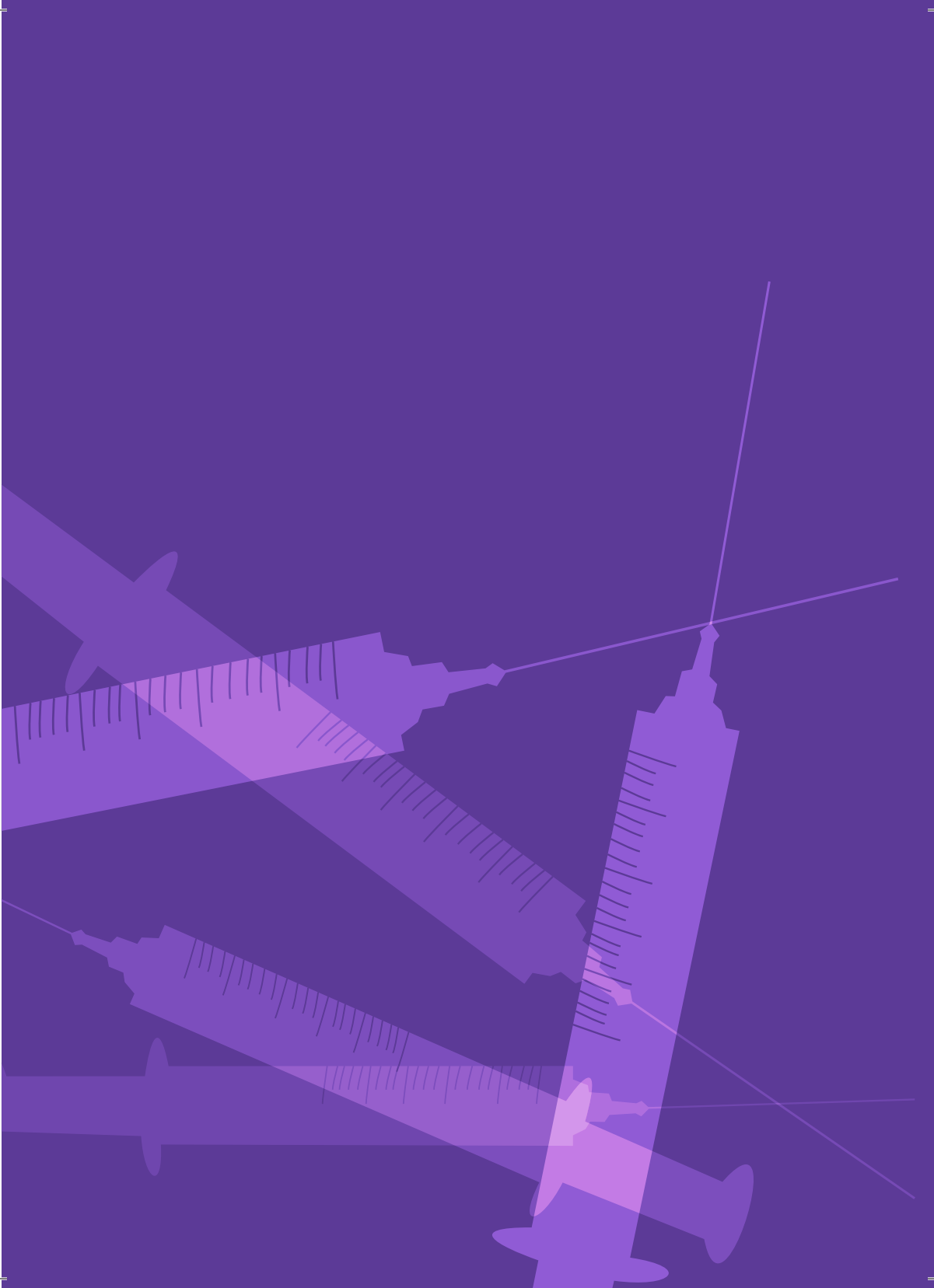
Dans l'aventure depuis le début en 2007 pour aiguiller les femmes, la travailleuse sociale Amélie Bédard se réjouit même si le financement recueilli ne permettra d'ouvrir que durant les cinq mois de congélateur à venir. Après? Le



3

METHODO- LOGY





Methodology

3.1 Good practices

The idea of creating a guide to good practice in a *by and for* is intended as an element to enrich the discussions that take place in the intervention community. Far from thinking that Projet L.U.N.E. has found the ideal way to apply this approach, it is rather a question of demonstrating a *by and for* in a very specific context, to meet the needs of women, trans* and queer sex workers in the Quebec City area. «Thus, «good practice» seems to be a way of doing things that would produce convincing results and that in its implementation can reveal an innovation compared to what has been done so far.» (Abdoulaye, 2003: 2).

It is therefore through the history of Projet L.U.N.E., its mission and services that the application of its approach will be demonstrated.

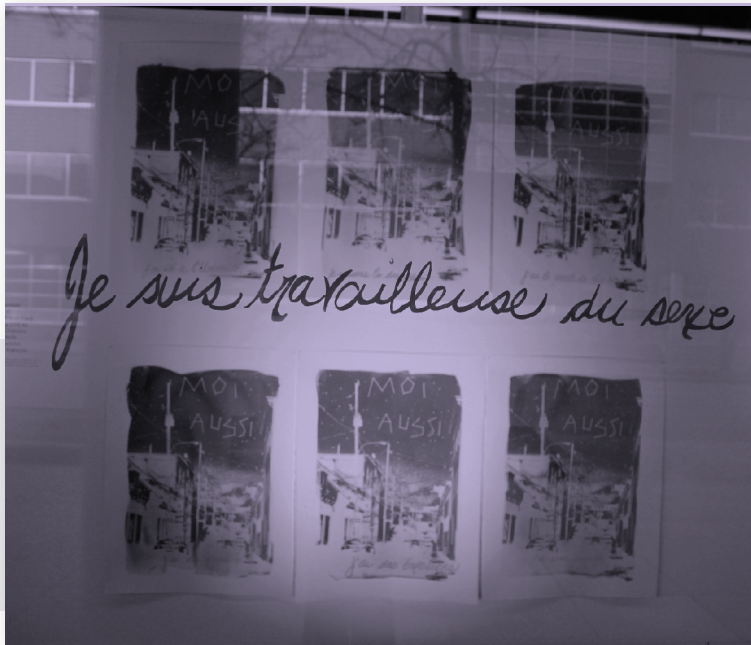
«Self-help as a strategy to help people cope with various health and social conditions has been widely documented in research, demonstrating its usefulness in symptom alleviation and the use of formal health care, and in strengthening feelings of personal effectiveness, social support, stress management and quality of life.» (Cyr et al., 2016: 28)

The implementation of Projet L.U.N.E. was evaluated as part of a participatory action research project (Labbée et al., 2014) and the culture of evaluation remains at the heart of Projet L.U.N.E.'s practices. It is partly due to these moments of reflection and evaluation that the successes of Projet L.U.N.E. were achieved. Whether in the ability to reach people who were not reached by other organizations or through the creation of new partnerships, Projet L.U.N.E. has increased the desire to share knowledge. Projet L.U.N.E.'s team believes that other groups with similar intervention objectives and values can be inspired by the *by and for* model developed by the organization.

3.2 Information collection

The development of the good practice guide was structured mainly in two stages, over a period of 15 months. First, a project manager was hired to conduct a literature review and meet with the work team. Subsequently, a committee was set up to draft and revise the document. During the implementation of the draft guide, a project manager facilitated meetings with the coordinator, the administration committee, the working committee and the work team. During these meetings, several themes were discussed, including: the successes and challenges of a *by and for*, the structure of the organization, empowerment, etc. They then worked on the development of a preliminary work plan.

However, to ensure that The *by and for* approach: good practices and its application to Projet L.U.N.E. provides a complete and realistic picture of the situation, a drafting and review committee has been created. It consisted of the coordinator, two members of the administration committee, two peer-helpers, two social workers and an ally who had worked on the team for several years. The committee met several times to develop the work plan and to validate and review the work of the drafters. Peer-helpers were also involved to be able to include testimonies.

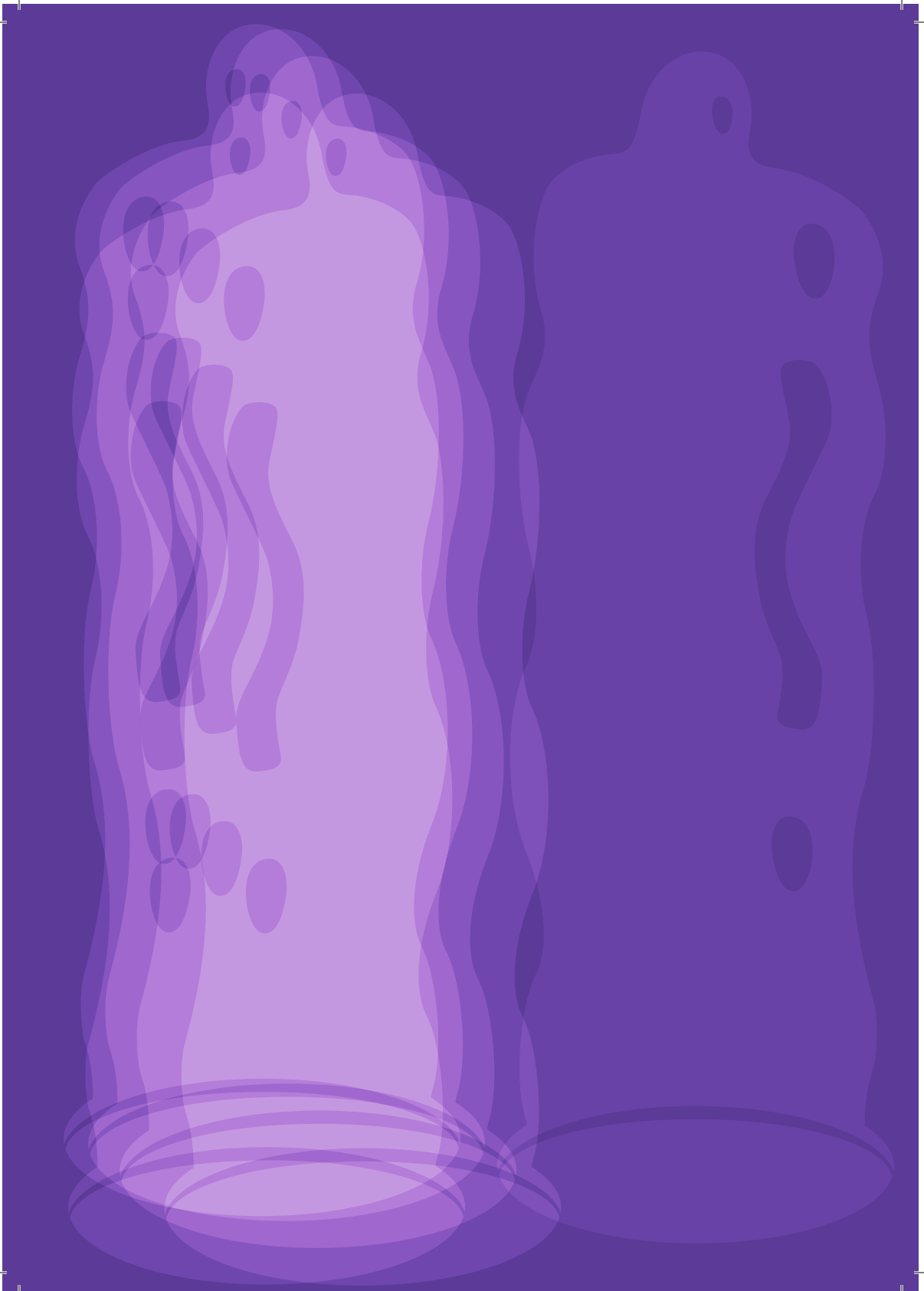




4

A LOOK
AT THE
GOOD
PRACTICES
OF PROJET
L.U.N.E.





A look at the good practices of Projet L.U.N.E.

As explained in sections two and three, Projet L.U.N.E. is still working to refine its approach by offering services that meet the changing needs of the people it reaches. Through its different axes of work and years of experience, Projet L.U.N.E. has developed different strategies to innovate in the field of *by and for* intervention, to maintain its achievements and to enhance the place of peer-helpers in intervention environments. Section four presents various important principles for the *by and for* approach and their application to Projet L.U.N.E. Good practices are divided into four parts: the *by and for* approach, the welcoming of peer-helpers and the implementation of projects, factors to facilitate and support their involvement and possible solutions to overcome the challenges encountered.

If you or your organization are looking for more information on starting a group *by and for*, Projet L.U.N.E. invites you to consult the following article: *Aider, s'aider, s'entraider : expériences de femmes travailleuses du sexe de rue et utilisatrices de drogues par injection dans une recherche-action participative visant la prévention du VIH* (« Helping others, helping ourselves, helping each other: experiences of women street sex workers and injection drug users in participatory action research for HIV prevention »), published in 2014 in the journal *Drugs, Health and Society*. Full references can be found in the bibliography.

4.1 BY AND FOR approach

The by and for approach is an intervention approach that aims to develop services around the needs of a targeted community. To this end, the mobilization of « The peer intervention approach has many advantages... which develops from the needs and interests of the people concerned and involves them at every stage of the process, ensuring that useful and socially relevant interventions are put in place. A peer involvement approach also allows for the development of interventions that would otherwise be difficult, if not impossible, to implement by people without privileged access to the environment... ». (Labbé et al., 2013: 112)

4.1.1 The unconditional welcome

One of the important values governing good practices in a *by and for* is unconditional reception. Although all the peer-helpers in Projet L.U.N.E. have experiences related to sex work, they all have different backgrounds and need to be integrated at their own pace and in a personalized way. Each one wants to bring her own colour to Projet L.U.N.E. and for this to be possible, the peer-helpers need support from each other and from the allies. The involvement of some people can even lead to important adaptations, even to a change in the mission.

This is indeed what happened in 2016 when two people, a trans* woman and a queer person, wanted to join the working committee. Faced with this new reality, the working committee, the administration committee and the intervention team met to reflect on the importance of non-mixing in Projet L.U.N.E. Following these reflections and thanks to the marked interest of the two new peer-helpers, Projet L.U.N.E. decided to make this change part of its core mission by adding the terms «women/trans*/queer» to define the people reached by the organization. Although all those involved in these reflections wanted to integrate trans* people into the working committee and emergency accommodation, some felt the need to participate in various training sessions to familiarize themselves with the different realities related to transidentities and to ensure that they were giving a respectful and personalized welcome.

4.1.2 Equal relations

There are many reasons why peer-helpers and allies want to get involved and work at Projet L.U.N.E. Whether it is to have the chance to work in a community organization that offers flexibility in scheduling and hours of involvement, to experience working with women in emergency sheltering or street work, or to develop new professional skills, Projet L.U.N.E.'s team is a diverse one! It is this diversity that makes it so strong, since it allows us to reach a large number of people and to set up actions that promote Projet L.U.N.E.

The creation of an egalitarian relationship between social workers, peer-social-workers and peer-helpers is at the heart of the success of a project *by and for*. So how do we value their strengths and unders-

tand how they can update them? First, we must have the opportunity to develop a common language and have spaces to share this different knowledge. One of the strategies used within Projet L.U.N.E. is to explain in depth the roles of each one, so that they are complementary. Whether it is hiring, team meetings, group clinical supervision, or social and informal activities, there are many pretexts to allow everyone involved to be recognized and heard.



Many examples of this synergy of knowledge are present within the emergency shelter response team. Although peer-social-workers and peer-helpers have the same job description, the way they interact with women at the shelter varies widely. A peer-social-worker with experience related to injection drug use, for example, may be able to talk to another woman who is a drug user to help her adapt her drug use ritual to ensure that the risk of transmission and acquisition of blood-borne infections is reduced. This kind of exchange requires a lot of knowledge about drug use patterns, different drugs and rhythm. The fear of judgment and the lack of specialized knowledge of the professional are two factors that could limit a more traditional intervention context. However, for some women who are used to meeting with professionals and/

or who prefer a more formal contact, it may be easier to request help or referrals directly to the professional.

The experiences of each are important and the team appreciates this synergy. The dyads in the emergency shelter vary according to each person's schedule and availability, which does not seem to be a limit to the creation of close ties between colleagues.

Nikita's testimony, peer-helper in the hosting committee

«At my job, I do not have to avoid certain conversations with my boss, nor afraid of not being accepted. On the contrary, she's sees me in a great way. I learned to grow with the women that use the resource.»

4.1.3 Harm reduction

The values of Projet L.U.N.E are also largely inspired by the harm reduction approach, an approach that allows for intervention according to the needs targeted by peer-helpers. There is no unanimous definition of what harm reduction involves, as it encompasses a wide range of practices; however, groups working with drug users often use it. In this context, harm reduction could be defined as a humanistic approach that can be found in the form of social policies, interventions or programs that aim to respect the pace and choices of those reached and that aims to «reduce or minimize the harmful effects of drug use on health and society», without requiring a cessation of drug use (Beirness, 2008: 2). Two factors can therefore be identified as central to this approach: the choice of individuals and intervention based on their personal motives (Brunelle, 2010: 217).

At Projet L.U.N.E., whether it is homelessness, drug use, sex work or mental health, the choices of the women reached by the organization are at the heart of its interventions and improving their quality of life is an explicit part of its mission. The emergency shelter is a good example of how harm reduction works, consistent with a *by and for* approach. It is important to remember the process that led to its opening: the needs for such sheltering were identified by SSW-IDU women (Labbé et al., 2013: 97). By having access to high threshold emergency shelter, women SSW-IDU can protect themselves from many factors that can have

a negative impact on their health, including access to sterile injection equipment and food, to name a few. The women in the shelter do not have to commit to an intervention plan and identify their own needs. In addition, the flexibility of access criteria and tolerance towards certain behaviours considered disturbing by other sheltering organizations, such as arriving in a state of drug use, makes it possible to reach women who would not otherwise have had access to a safe place to sleep.

In 2018, Projet L.U.N.E. was designated as an official distributor of naloxone kits, a basic necessity drug that can stop or reverse the effects of opioid overdose. All peer-helpers are trained to administer the product when there are signs of overdose. In addition, street workers and peer-helpers on the work team can distribute the kits to people potentially at risk of overdose or in contact with people at risk in their environment.

4.1.4 A strength-based approach

The strength-based approach is traditionally used for mental health follow-up and aims to regain the power to act of individuals who volunteer in a recovery process. However, the use of this approach in resources to address homelessness is increasingly present, for example, within groups such as the *Mouvement pour mettre fin à l'itinérance à Montréal* (Movement to End Homelessness in Montreal) (Latimer, 2018).

Although Projet L.U.N.E. does not formally apply this intervention approach, five of its six basic principles are at the heart of the relationship between peer-helpers and Projet L.U.N.E. as illustrated in the following table.

«On déborde tout le temps!»

Avec le froid extrême, le seul refuge dédié aux prostituées à Québec est contraint de refuser des femmes



Elles sont épuisées, congelées

ACTUALITÉS 3

leSoleil VENDREDI 18 JANVIER 2019



Le refuge Projet L.U.N.E est contraint de refuser l'accès à des prostituées qui cherchent à se loger la nuit par temps glacial. — PHOTO LE SOLEIL, YANVOURLET

Au départ, le projet avait d'ailleurs émané du besoin exprimé par ces femmes de disposer d'un lieu où, peu importe leur état, elles seraient accueillies.

EXPOSITION AU FROID

L'hiver, les femmes refusées doivent marcher longtemps, parfois dans des températures glaciales, avant de trouver un toit avec du chauffage. Autre temps, elles s'exposent aux morsures du froid. Elles

Les prostituées peuvent aussi être tentées de dormir chez des clients agressifs et deviennent plus à risque de subir de la violence. Sinon, elles doivent se rabattre sur les entrées de guichets automatiques ou les stationnements chaudés.

Idealement, le Projet L.U.N.E aurait besoin d'appartements additionnels dans Saint-Roch, Côté encore dans ce quartier, sur les trottoirs des rues de la Reine, de la Salle et du Roi, notamment, que

«Mettons qu'il y en a juste trois qui dorment. Il y en a d'autres qui veulent manger, il y en a en psychose [...]. À plus que douze, oublie ça...»

— La directrice du Projet L.U.N.E, Chantale Simoneau

En péril

La directrice du Projet L.U.N.E., Chantale Simoneau, craint pour la survie de l'organisme.

Un financement fédéral de 447 000 \$ pour quinze mois arrive à échéance le mois prochain. Sans cette somme, Mme Simoneau se demande comment le Projet L.U.N.E, qui emploie une vingtaine de salariés — travailleurs de rue, intervenants psychosociaux, pairs aidants — fera pour assurer son existence.

La directrice espère seulement que les demandes financières du Projet L.U.N.E ne sont perdront pas dans les soubresauts de la bureaucratie gouvernementale. Elle demande un financement récurrent à la hauteur des besoins de l'organisme, qui a accueilli

124 femmes en six mois. «À l'heure actuelle, c'est sûr qu'à l'été on ne pourra pas être ouvert. On va être obligé d'attendre que ça se règle, se désale Chantale Simoneau. Et on ne sait pas non plus combien de temps on va pouvoir ouvrir durant la période hivernale.»

— MARC ALLARD



La directrice du Projet L.U.N.E, Chantale Simoneau — PHOTO LE SOLEIL, YANVOURLET

Principles of intervention

(Latimer, 2018)

Examples of application to Projet L.U.N.E.

1 The focus is on the client's strengths rather than weaknesses

By allowing peer-helpers to be curious and experience different roles and responsibilities, they have the opportunity to experience both personal and professional successes. An example of this valuation is the involvement of a peer-helper as an accounting clerk. While she had worked earlier in her life in accounting, a series of events kept her away from this practice for several years. Having responsibilities, access to training to update her knowledge, and an active role in Projet L.U.N.E. have allowed her to regain her self-confidence and experience success. In addition, she has become an important ally in popularizing certain complex concepts related to the management of a community organization to other peer-helpers..

2 The natural environment is considered an oasis of resources

The creation of a team of street workers has made it possible to highlight the links that already exist between some partners and the peer-helpers hired. They were familiar with downtown Quebec City, the organizations and also the more informal places where women who may need sheltering services tend to visit. In addition to reaching a wide range of women, peer-street-workers proved to be excellent guides for their fellow street workers, who were less familiar with the region, which helped to create an egalitarian relationship within the work team.

3 The client is responsible for their own support process

As in this more formal approach, the responsibility for the involvement of peer-helpers rests with them. Although allies often have the role of motivators, the great solidarity between peer-helpers encourages them to maintain their deadlines and complete their projects. They themselves identify their areas of interest and the actions they want to implement. The resulting feelings of responsibility and pride are stimulating factors in achieving their objectives. .

4 The relationship between the client and the social worker is crucial and essential

The importance of the relationship of trust between the members of the work team, the administration committee and the peer-helpers is central to the realization of the mission of Projet L.U.N.E. Although these exchanges are often informal, these relationships are crucial and essential. The support and personalization of the follow-ups can be illustrated by this example: following conflicts with the law, a peer-helper involved in the working committee had to spend a year in prison. The fact that she was no longer able to attend the working committee meetings was an important loss for her. The peer-helper asked the social worker facilitator to accompany her when she appeared at the courthouse. During her absence, they had correspondence to ensure that she was aware of the working committee's plans. She also took advantage of this turbulent period in her life to write about her reality, texts that were published in Projet L.U.N.E. newspaper and inspired an entire issue on prison. It is through this special relationship between a social worker and a peer-helper that the latter was able to continue to get involved in Projet L.U.N.E. in a different way. Not only did this peer-helper benefit from maintaining this relationship, and all the peer-helpers on the working committee were also affected by it, not to mention the hundreds of people who consulted the issue of the newspaper *Les voix de la ruELLES* and who read her texts.

5 Intervention is mainly in the living environment

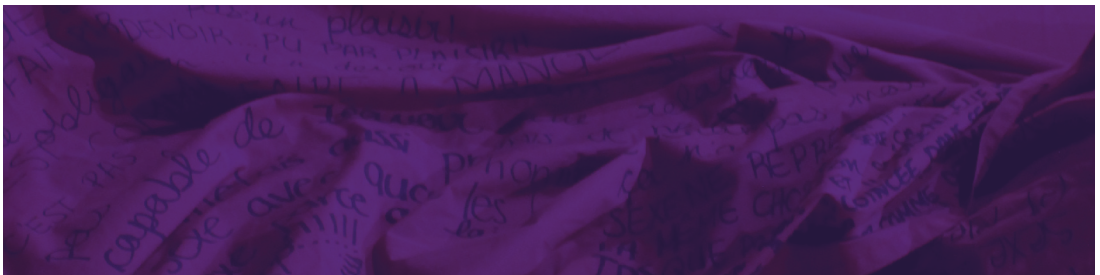
The integration of a team of street workers makes it possible to reach people where they are, in their environments, so that they can make changes in their lives that will be sustainable and coherent in the long term. The mobile team in the downtown area reaches a large number of women and promotes the services of Projet L.U.N.E. Thus, by visiting more formal partners such as the soup kitchen, or informal partners such as local convenience stores, Projet L.U.N.E. reaches a wide variety of people who do not attend other community groups and who are sometimes resistant to more traditional services. Being able to join them in their living environments allows them to develop a relationship of trust with the street work team, a trust that can be transmitted to the accommodation team during support. This happened after a meeting between a street worker and a SSW-IDU woman, who was unaware of the resources and had a weak support network. The relationship she created with the street worker led her to agree to be accompanied by her for a first visit to the shelter. She now sleeps there every day and has found support. She is now a peer-helper on the working committee and has the desire to take control of her life in order to work as a peer-social-worker and to help other women.

4.1.5 The development of the power to act

Through all these reflections on the *by and for* approach, one aspect comes up systematically: the development of the empowerment of the people involved. Since this component is analysed throughout the guide, the following paragraph deals more specifically with the development of the power to act in management, mainly at the decision-making and participatory management level. The various decision-making processes and the participation of peer-helpers in the reflections on the management of Projet L.U.N.E. are at the heart of the success of a real *by and for*. Although, for the time being, few peer-helpers have participated in the writing of funding applications, it is important to create spaces for reflection to feed the allies in their tasks and to ensure consistency in the development and maintenance of services.

Part of this collaboration is the establishment of workshops for reflection and, above all, evaluations during the implementation of projects. Understanding how a community organization operates can seem like a puzzle to many. However, it is very important to encourage the involvement of peer-helpers. To do this, it is important to explain and re-explain often the functioning of the structure and the role of each one: beyond a simple representation, the presence of an employee on the administration committee, for example, allows her to understand in depth the steps taken by the committee, while creating an additional communication corridor between the employees and the administrators. This employee then becomes an important extension worker for her team and can share her perceptions and trust with her colleagues.

An example of the decision-making processes at Projet L.U.N.E. is the drafting of a three-year strategic plan and annual action plans. Although it requires a great investment from all those involved in Projet L.U.N.E., the work of collective reflection is much appreciated. The peer-



helpers of the working committee, the employees of Projet L.U.N.E. and the administration committee meet separately to work on the areas of work that usually fall to them, then, during a reflection day where all the people concerned are invited, a co-animation makes it possible to popularize and share the results of the work of each party in the process. A lively and dynamic animation, inspired by the world-café⁸ type, then takes place to share the different ideas and to prioritize the fields of action for the coming years.

The use of a variety of facilitation techniques aimed at the participation of all is essential to allow each person to be heard, in the first place, and to be able to put into practice the many ideas proposed by the peer-helpers. This tool is then used to write funding applications and helps to keep in mind the short, medium and long-term objectives that the organization can achieve.

I love L.U.N.E. ...
*for the moments of happiness
 that we create every day*

This example also illustrates some of the steps taken to ensure a participatory management approach within the work team. The organization of regular meetings between the work team and the administration

committee and the systematic addition of information points on this subject to the agendas have improved communication and fostered a climate of trust conducive to discussions. In addition, it is important to remember that a majority of seats on the administration committee is reserved for people with experience related to sex work and that a non-decision-making seat is provided for a Projet L.U.N.E. employee. The presence of these administrators is consistent in a group *by and for*, not to mention the importance of these administrators in creating trust between the employees and the administration committee.

4.1.6 Flexibility

One of the basic principles of the *by and for* approach is flexibility in terms of management, intervention objectives and services offered. Since the *by and for* is based on the people involved in Projet L.U.N.E., the organization must be able to adapt to the different realities experienced by the peer-helpers and by the people reached by the organization. Thus, Projet L.U.N.E. team must adapt to the changes proposed by its members and benefits from regularly reviewing itself to ensure that it adequately meets these needs.

For example, in the participatory research project that led to the creation of the organization, one of the needs identified by the co-researchers was the opening of an emergency shelter for SSW-IDU women (Labbé et al., 2013). However, the complex realities experienced by disaffiliated women and the great need for confidentiality of SWs in relation to their work, not to mention the limitations associated with SWs's self-identification with their practice (e.g., a woman offering sex to a landlord in exchange for rent may not identify herself as a SW), led Projet L.U.N.E. to open a shelter that welcomes all people who identify themselves as women, without further specificity. This change in the vision and interpretation of the mission has made it possible to reach a greater number of disaffiliated women from a wide variety of backgrounds.

4.1.7 Partnerships

There are many partners to help women, as well as many needs. Whether it is in terms of rights, mental and physical health, sheltering, food, material and financial security or social inclusion, Projet L.U.N.E. works in partnership with several local organizations. Projet L.U.N.E. is part of a continuum of services and its credibility contributes to promoting the experiential knowledge of peer-helpers in intervention with women. They are given space and voice on several committees, issue tables and awareness activities.

4.2 Welcoming peer-helpers

In January 2015, Projet L.U.N.E. released a Socioprofessional Profile and Portrait of the Employability Needs of Sex Workers in Quebec City. Accompanied by peer-helpers to complete a questionnaire to identify their interests and experiences related to employment, 76 women sex workers or those at risk of being so in Quebec City were interviewed:

«Despite the urgency of surviving, the vast majority of respondents still have hope, dreams and aspirations for a new life. Nearly 2/3 of the women interviewed would like to work in a new occupation or return to training, hence the importance for institutional and community resources to offer appropriate programs and follow-up. It should be noted that many respondents would like to put their life experiences to good use by working in a line of work related to the helping relationship. This avenue is clearly to be explored, particularly through peer support training projects.» (Projet L.U.N.E., 2015: 15).

It is precisely with this in mind that peer-helpers were involved in the discussions preceding the opening of emergency accommodation and in the creation of many jobs for peer-helpers. The following section is therefore a summary of the steps taken by the organization to welcome peer-helpers to its team, while remaining consistent with the needs of women/trans*/queer in their employability efforts.

Michou's testimony, peer-helper in the hosting committee

«Since the age of 20 I wanted to be a drug addiction counsellor and now I consider that I am a counsellor of many more things. Because when we lived through something, its easier to place ourselves in someone's shoes and explain better some of the things we lived.»

4.2.2 Adjust hiring and welcoming methods

In order to offer more job opportunities to as many women, trans* and queer people as possible, Projet L.U.N.E. is adapting its job posting to reach these people. The preferred means of dissemination are word of mouth and distribution of posters in partner organizations that reach people with a wide variety of backgrounds, including people diagnosed

with HIV/HCV, homeless, with mental health issues and addictions. The offers are also published on social networks. By reaching women/trans*/queer SW or ex-SW in a variety of settings, the accumulation of the different life experiences of peer-helpers is enhanced.

The process of applying as a peer-helper is also simplified: for example, some women who only have sex work as work experience sometimes prefer to apply through a cover letter rather than curriculum vitae. More formal dissemination is also available on job search websites, since it is important not to overlook the wide range of people who have experiences related to sex work and who may want to make use of them.

Nikita's testimony, peer-helper in the hosting committee

«I was able to identify my fears and quickly, I felt accepted, even with my past. I was somewhere where I was able to be myself. I wrote them a motivation letter and got an interview. When I knew I had the job, I stopped injecting morphine. I was 24 years old.»

4.2.2 Welcoming interview / job interview

It is not only the job posting process that is adapted to the realities of peer-helpers; the intake/employment interview is also adapted. It is agreed upon that all people who send a cover letter are called back for an interview. During this interview, it is an opportunity to explain the different possibilities of involvement in Projet L.U.N.E., to ensure that each person has access to a form of involvement that suits them and meets the organization's needs. These interviews are co-facilitated by a peer-helper, a person already employed in a similar role and the coordinator, if necessary. The interview is an opportunity for the future peer-helper to share her life experience, motivations, challenges and interests. There is no right or wrong answer, the idea is to offer a space for reflection. The questions addressed are related to the values, the approach of Projet L.U.N.E. and the needs of women SWs. Scenarios are used to highlight this information. The welcome/hiring committee and the future peer-helper then discuss and define the contribution they could make to the team.

Nikita's testimony, peer-helper in the hosting committee

«After many failures in my jobs, a lack of motivation and multiple injection marks on my hands, I was paralyzed when faced with the perspective with a new job. I was asking myself: Where could I work and feel like I belong?»

4.2.3 Favouring gradual integration

The participation and ability of peer-helpers to act «is recognised on the basis of their experiential knowledge. [...] Overall, this dynamic reinforces everyone's sense of empowerment, even though newcomers to the group may be less well prepared to take on the role of caregiver. After a period of learning that may vary from person to person, however, participants will reach the same abilities as more experienced caregivers.» (Kumaroff, 2013 : 51). The experience of Projet L.U.N.E. also shows that when they have time to take ownership of the approach, to better understand their roles, the functioning of the organization and the different realities experienced there, peer-helpers gain more confidence in their abilities as peer-helpers and change agents.

Michou's testimony, peer-helper in the hosting committee

«The goal is to adopt a better quality of life. I project hope because these women believe in me and in what I tell them. They know that life has up's and down because I also share to them those moments of pains and sadness. That feeling of hope day after day evolves into positive growth in these women.»

Women who participated in the Socioprofessional Profile and Portrait of the Employability Needs of Sex Workers in Quebec City also expressed the need for flexibility and innovation in the kinds of changes they would like to make to their reorientation approaches: «It is interesting to note that many respondents are considering, in order to reintegrate, volunteering, participating in a project *by and for* or acting as a peer support worker. This confirms women's strong interest in helping each other and the helping relationship.» (Projet L.U.N.E., 2015 : 17). This is in part why peer-helpers may experience different roles and responsibilities, depending on their interests, strengths, challenges, availability and desired

level of involvement. A woman who wants to work as a peer-social-worker in the near future, but feels that she does not have the necessary perspective at the moment, will have the opportunity to get involved as a natural-helper in the team or as a peer-helper on the working committee, while stabilizing her situation. In addition, before officially starting as a peer-social-worker, she will be able to spend a few nights there as an observer. This observation period allows them to become part of the work team, to create an initial contact with the women who frequent the shelter, to exchange with other peer-helpers and allies about their experiences at Projet L.U.N.E. When they arrive at Projet L.U.N.E., each new person is welcomed, regardless of their past, beliefs, work and life experiences; they will have the necessary space to find their place in the respect of their uniqueness. No conditions are set in advance to get involved, other than believing in the mission of Projet L.U.N.E. and committing to respect the code of ethics.

4.2.4 Creating and maintaining a favourable climate

The importance of hiring employees, peer-helpers and allies who believe in the approach and mission of Projet L.U.N.E. is fundamental. Indeed, the organization's achievements and success with women and partners are closely linked to the quality of the employees within the team, who must uphold the Project's values. Each believes in the importance of the experiential knowledge of peer-helpers and the clinical knowledge of allies, which promotes an open attitude towards each other. « In this space free from the contempt, stigmatization and discrimination to which they are often subjected, [peer-helpers feel] accepted, treated equally and considered. » (Labbé et al., 2013 : 106).

Once the basic values have been established, it is essential to work towards maintaining a climate conducive to involvement and exchanges. It is important to remain available and to create regular and informal moments to name the questions and dissatisfactions that some people may experience, so that they can be answered quickly. Since the people involved come from different backgrounds and live very diverse realities, it is necessary to work to develop empathy and great solidarity within the team. Social activities and moments of celebration are therefore very important to build this solidarity. To do this, a «how are you doing?» tour de table, a feminist intervention tool used since the awareness

groups of the 1970s, is done at the beginning of each team meeting. This helps to depersonalize conflicts, even prevent them, and creates a concise space for expression (Dubois, 2018: 27). Once the «how are you doing?» is over, we don't go back during the meeting on what was said, but all those present were made aware of the state of others and will be able to adapt their way of interacting with each other. Tools, such as the clarification of discomforts, are also used more informally to ensure that potential conflicts can be quickly defused.

4.2.5 A tailor-made involvement

The progressive welcoming and the favourable climate are two elements that facilitate the gradual integration of peer-helper and they must be arranged with appropriate involvement and working methods so that they remain involved in the long term. The socio-professional profile underlines the importance of having a job that can adapt to the specific needs of the people involved, as the following testimony underlines:



«Not too many hours a day and not every day. I'm exhausted and I need to rest.» (Projet L.U.N.E., 2015 : 18).

To be consistent with the needs expressed by the peer-helpers, Projet L.U.N.E. has adapted its working conditions. Peer-social-workers and peer-street-workers have access to a reduced work schedule, between 25 and 30 hours per week. At the working committee, peer-helpers must work a minimum of 10 hours per month. This reduced schedule allows peer-helpers to invest time in their personal lives, for example, for those with needs related to their family situation, legal situation, physical or mental health, or for those who have a follow-up with one or more professionals. Several possibilities are available to them. In this sense, they can work during the day, evening, weekday or weekend, depending on their availability and the number of hours they are willing to work.

In addition, all employees have access to paid sick leave and resourcing leave as soon as they join Projet L.U.N.E., which means 75 hours per year that they can use according to their needs. They may take time off work or reduce their hours if they need to take care of themselves, for example, to seek help in outpatient therapy, or to overcome a personal or organizational challenge such as an upcoming move. To keep Projet L.U.N.E.'s emergency shelter open, while providing good working conditions for its employees, a list of replacements has been created and they are very often asked to work. Given the atypical schedules of the shelter, finding competent and available people is sometimes a major challenge.

4.3 Fostering involvement and supporting peer-helpers

Nikita's testimony, peer-helper in the hosting committee

«I am proof that everything can happen and that you only need to take the hand that is given to you to get up in life. I feel useful when I work and also feel appreciated by my colleges. I think that the key in this work. Its not because I don't have a diploma in this field. I have now been working as a peer helper for 1 year and 3 months and this program gave my life a new meaning, for which I am grateful.»

4.3.1 Participatory management and shared decision-making

«Beyond the support provided to the people with whom they work, it is important to highlight the significant contribution that peer-helpers can make to the development of the organizations where they work.» (Komaroff, 2013 : 51)

Helene's testimony, peer-helper in the working committee

Id like to share my experience and why Project L.U.N.E gave me everything I though id never have. I showed up at the P.I.P.Q in around April 2017 because I really didn't feel good. I felt alone and abandoned.

I had nobody with who I could be myself and I wanted my paper (medical document) for the Social Security to get my check. There was a worker (Laurianne) there who talked to me about Project L.U.N.E. I will never forget this girl who knew how to find the right words to get me to go there.

The first time I was able to tell the whole truth and talk about me (was at L.U.N.E). My life experience became relevant, I was home and the girls from L.U.N.E made me feel normal. Nobody asked me to change. I changed myself, while being in great company.

I had no trouble getting involved in the Project and to become a helping peer. Today, I have less problems with society and I have much more confidence in me. I told them I didn't know how to write and Johanne, a girl at Project L.U.N.E, told me that it was the same for her in the beginning and now, I can write.

I did 5 therapy's and that didn't work too well for me and I'm now 49. I have started a process with the CAVAC for the rape I suffered when I was 15. I think about it every day, but I also have a social worker (Sarah) that is essential now in my life because she believe inn me and helps me in this very hard process.

At Project L.U.N.E, I'm getting out of my solitude.

Coaching and individual support for peer-helpers

It should be remembered that peer-helpers, in addition to being involved in improving the quality of life of their peers, are also involved in improving their own lives. « The way peer-helpers intervene has an impact on the outcomes of actions for themselves and the people they want to help » (Komaroff, 2013 : 43). It is also for personal reasons and benefits that peers are involved (Labbé et al., 2013 : 110-111). Peer-helpers often put themselves in a position of great vulnerability during their interventions, since they work with women whose experiences sometimes resonate with their own. It is important to have people available to express their feelings and exchange during all working hours covered by the peer-helpers. It must be understood that this is not about monitoring, but rather support and follow-up, most of which takes place informally over coffee or a spontaneous visit to the office. These meetings are also excellent opportunities to reflect on their interventions, but even more so on the impact they can have on the lives of peer-helpers. The allies then have a role as a safety net for peer-helpers. Making allies available for clinical support, as well as personal approaches, is a practice that really improves their participation and helps peer-helpers to have confidence in the work team and its ability to intervene. These informal meetings are also excellent opportunities to reflect and learn to respect your limits in intervention.

Another way to support peer-helpers in their involvement in Projet L.U.N.E. is to provide income or financial compensation to help cover the expenses associated with their participation (Labbé et al. 2013 : 106). Much more than a way to improve one's economic status, access to income is a great source of pride for peer-helpers, since for some of them it is their first legally recognized job, sometimes after years of stigmatization and rejection related to sex work. Having a peer-helper title, being recognized in their community and in society in general is an important element that encourages peer-helper involvement.

Michou's testimony, peer-helper in the hosting committee

« My goal as a helping peer is mainly my recovery. By helping others, it helps myself to abstain from everything. I do not hang out with the same people or at the same places. I now have a family. My life is fulfilled by the love of my kids, my coworkers, the director, the women who hang at the Project and my dog Garda. I am surrounded by love, there isn't place for anything else anymore. My life is truly filled with love. »

Promote teamwork and value different types of knowledge

As can be seen from the reading of the document, teamwork is at the heart of good practices in a *by and for*, whether through the dyads of intervention in the shelter, or through the culture of consultation with members and peer-helpers in decision-making, each person is important and necessary for the proper functioning of Projet L.U.N.E. It is through the many team meetings, communication tools such as the logbook and weekly meetings of the working committee that this sense of solidarity is created. The experience of Projet L.U.N.E. confirms that it should never be taken for granted: for the experiential knowledge of peer-helpers and the intervention experience of allies to be recognized, there must be room for frequent discussion, for everyone to be heard and for maintaining an equal relationship within the team. Through their work experiences in the sex industry, an environment where solidarity and trust between women and their employers are not always valued, it is important to take the time to develop a sense of belonging to the organization and to the entire team. In addition, as peer-helpers regularly reveal themselves, allies have privileged access to the lives of their colleagues, which is not the case in all workplaces; listening, respect and confidentiality must always be at the centre of allies' practice. In the emergency shelter, one way to value and highlight each other's experiences is to think carefully about the twinning between social workers and peer-social-workers. For example, by matching a newly arrived employee with an experienced employee, or by matching people according to the complementarity of their strengths.

Fostering involvement in a creative way

The integration of peer-helpers into an organization requires that the organization demonstrates constant creativity to develop appropriate ways to encourage and grow their desire for involvement. Projet L.U.N.E. is concerned that each person, natural-helper, peer-helper and peer-social-worker, can express themselves in different ways and find the place that suits them. It is through multiple actions and projects where space and speech are given to them that the organization enhances the strengths, interests and experiential knowledge of each. The use of artistic media, for example, responds to the need of women in L.U.N.E. to find new ways to express their experiences and beliefs.

In 2018, a pilot cultural mediation project aimed at initiating and developing with the peer-helpers of Projet L.U.N.E. a process of creation and personal expression, through various artistic media such as visual arts, dance,

etc., was carried out. This artistic mediation project gave peer-helpers the opportunity to reclaim their bodies and express themselves beyond words. In collaboration with a social artist, the NUIITS project allowed everyone to explore different ways to express their background in relation to their personal experiences as sex workers. The approach, which was intended to be individual and collective, was developed over several weeks through individual and group meetings. At the end of the project, the peer-helpers exhibited their work through a collective exhibition, which represented a nod to Amsterdam's Red Light theme, unveiled at a public opening. <https://www.lafabriqueculturelle.tv/capsules/10994/nuits-ou-l-art-qui-repare-projet-l-u-n-e>

Include peer-helpers throughout the organization's structure

As discussed in section 4.1.2, which deals with egalitarian relationships, the more central peer-helpers are to the reflections and decision-making of Projet L.U.N.E., the more confident they are in the organization and the more willing they are to get involved. For example, knowing that the majority of members on the administration committee are peer-helpers and that an employee is invited to attend meetings, it is easier to accept certain decisions related to the management of the organization. They know that their peers have thought, in collaboration with the allies, and that their voices have been heard at all stages of these decision-making processes. It is also this transversal inclusion that demonstrates, once again, how Projet L.U.N.E. is a self-help organization, where the roles of helper and supported person sometimes overlap.

I love L.U.N.E. ...

I like teamwork

There is often talk of evaluation

From reading the guide, it is clear that Projet L.U.N.E. has, since its very beginning, had a culture of evaluation. Critical scrutiny of these practices allows Projet L.U.N.E. to renew them regularly, to be creative and innovative and to adapt to changes in the sex worker population (Greissler, 2013: 82). While the time spent on employee and peer-helper self-assessments can be stressful for some, being part of the evaluators and targeting your own goals not only allows you to recognize your challenges, but also to celebrate successes and see how each one is progressing. In

addition, since all employees and peer-helpers are required to participate in an annual self-assessment, it can be seen as an element that reinforces the equity climate within the team.

The benefits of such an evaluation culture are felt: «Evaluation is integrated into the life of the project and its actors and is based on the principle of practical use of results.» (Greissler, 2013: 82). The writing of an evaluation report: *Experimental High Acceptance Emergency Sheltering Project for Disaffiliated Women* (Bernard, 2015) is an excellent example. Not only was this report used to support funding requests to reopen the emergency shelter for a second winter, it also identified areas for improvement to ensure that the most appropriate response was provided to those reached, for example by increasing opening hours and possibly developing an outreach work team.

4.3.2 By developing a common language to speak about Projet L.U.N.E.

«The organizations best positioned to provide peer support services are small, non-profit, community-based or peer-led, with a horizontal hierarchy and a consensual and inclusive decision-making process. However, these organizations must be structured, have plans and procedures, training and supervision, with clear limits, such as respect for confidentiality.» (Cyr et al., 2016: 76)

Access to regular and varied training

Training has been a focus of Projet L.U.N.E. since its creation. To meet the wide range of needs of the work team and the working committee, diversity in training offers is to be favoured. The topics covered during the training sessions are decided during the team meetings or following the self-assessments. These moments allow the team to take stock of its approach and interventions, to renew its knowledge, to demystify certain realities and to equip itself to better intervene. Projet L.U.N.E. favours short, practice-oriented training courses. To facilitate them, several partners are invited to come and share their knowledge and experiences. Examples of training available to peer-helpers and allies include: OMEGA (crisis intervention), feminist self-defence, prevention

of sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections, interconnections between law and sex work, working with suicidal people, safe drug use practices and harm reduction, naloxone administration, etc.

Reflect on your interventions in a context of clinical supervision

As in any intervention setting, access to individual and group clinical supervision, both for peer-helpers and allies, is a tool that facilitates communication. It is an opportunity to develop a common language, not only by reflecting on your own interventions, but also on the impact they can have outside the workplace. Meetings with a clinical supervisor familiar with the *by and for* approach will have a positive impact on the challenges encountered in practice.

Why not discuss it at a team meeting

At Projet L.U.N.E, team meetings are often a headache in managing each other's schedules... however, it is time to see some unfamiliar faces, to include alternates and interns and, most importantly, to have access to all the information related to the organization, directly from the team and coordination. These are times to clarify certain issues, to reflect and also to hear from others present. Taking notes during these meetings was an important element in keeping track of the various reflections and decisions, as well as allowing for effective information transfer for those who were absent. These meetings are held in a warm atmosphere; there is room to share each other's good deeds and to eat a bite during the many breaks, more informal moments that allow them to continue thinking and breathing.

Through these meetings, intervention capsules were developed. Occasionally, a social worker and/or a peer-helper prepares an activity of approximately 30 minutes, either training or reflection, to initiate discussion and provide an informal learning environment to meet more specific training needs. These intervention capsules can also help to enhance the strengths of certain peer-helpers and allies.

A well-loaded toolbox

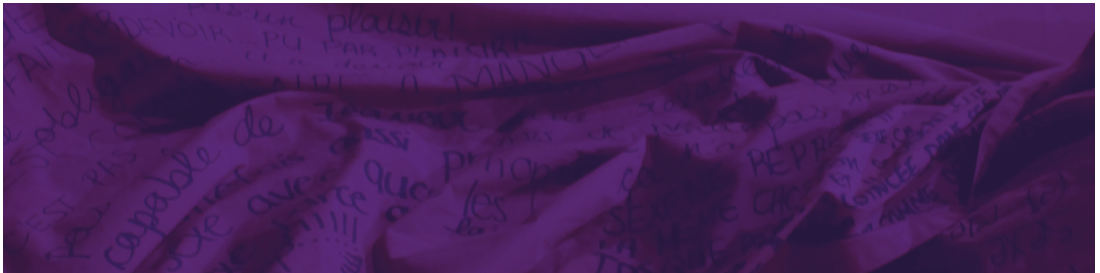
Several documents provide a framework for Projet L.U.N.E's interventions, including the employee manual, the code of ethics and a logbook. Of course, all these tools have been thought out and written by involving peer-helpers at each step. These documents are distributed to the persons concerned and are also made available in a binder in the offices and in the emergency shelter, for frequent and simple reference.

The **employee manual** is a complementary document to the employment contract. It includes the employer's expectations and the working conditions of employees. It also includes the conditions for statutory holidays, the consequences of non-compliance with the employment contract or code of ethics and the values of Projet L.U.N.E. This comprehensive document is a reference tool for employees who want to know about and enforce these agreements. Much more than just giving it to new employees, the document is read collectively and used during team meetings. This document is not rigid and has often been updated according to the situations encountered over the years.

The **Code of Ethics** (Appendix 1) is a tool that aims to ensure that the organization's values are respected and to protect the people reached by Projet L.U.N.E. It provides a framework for the practice of peer-helpers and allies, according to their respective roles and responsibilities. All persons involved in the organization, whether natural-helpers, peer-helpers, the work team, coordination or the administration committee, sign and undertake to demonstrate professionalism, confidentiality and respect through their activities at Projet L.U.N.E. The code of ethics is presented several times a year and is at the heart of several exchanges during team meetings.

Finally, two very common communication tools are used in the emergency shelter to share information between response teams and to keep track of them: the **logbook** and statistical data collection. These documents, which are compiled daily, ensure that the necessary information is shared between the work teams. To ensure that all employees are comfortable with statistical data collection, it is still done in paper format. The data compiled in the statistics allow us to draw an overall picture of the people reached by the shelter and by the street work team, in addition to motivating funders. Projet L.U.N.E. also shares some statistical data (obviously by ensuring the confidentiality of those contacted!) with the Regroupement pour l'aide aux itinérants et itinérantes de Québec (RAIIQ) (Network in Aid of Homeless Persons in Quebec City), which compiles information collected from various emergency shelters in the region. By participating in the creation of statistical portraits of homelessness in the region, Projet L.U.N.E. ensures that the presence and realities of disaffiliated women/trans*/queer are made visible and recognized.

I love L.U.N.E. ...
*for the mission and
the women reached*

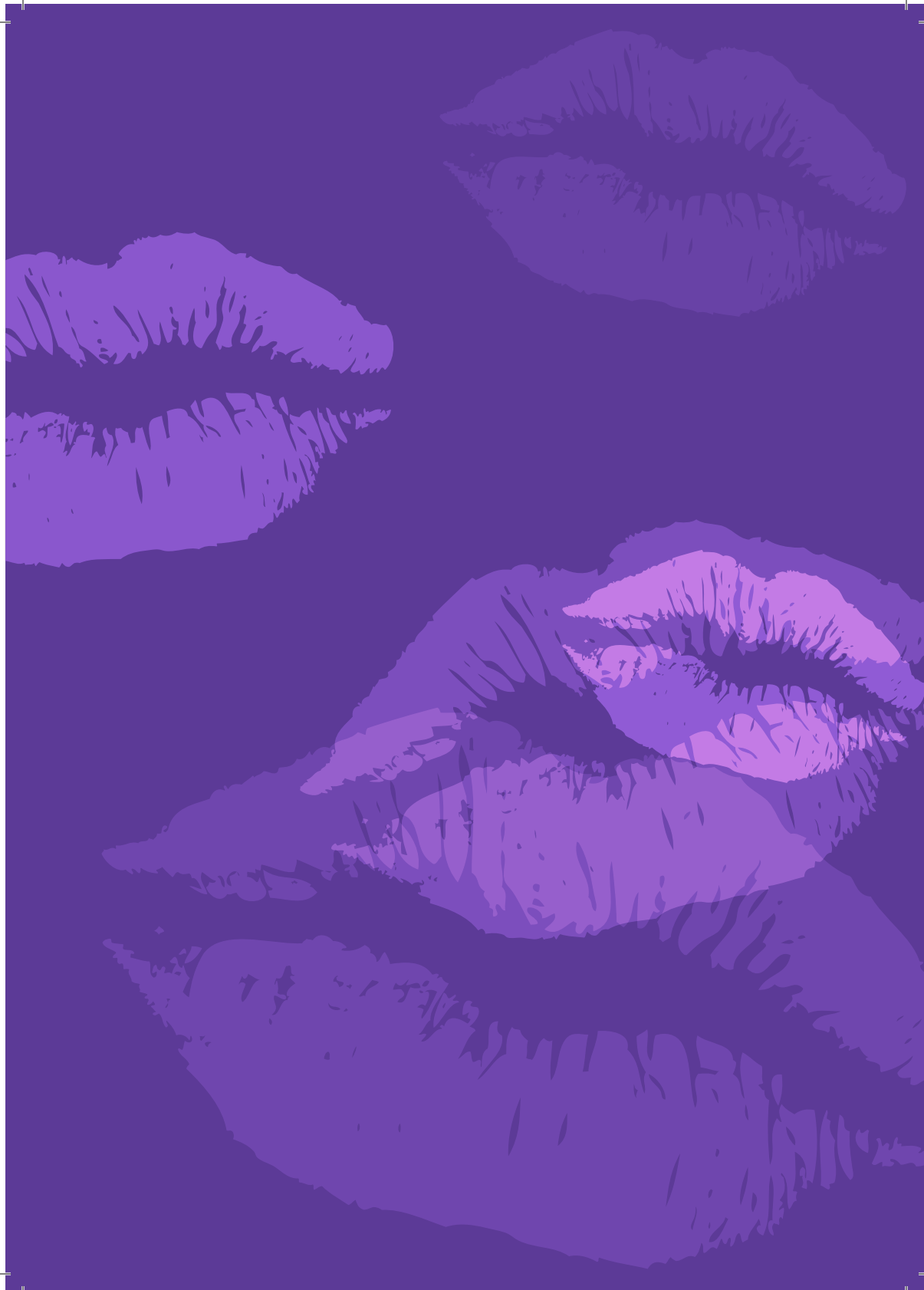




5

OVER-
COMING
REAL-LIFE
CHALLENGES





Overcoming real-life challenges

5.1 Individual challenges

Lifestyle changes

It is not only Projet L.U.N.E. that has an impact on the lives of peer-helpers. It should be remembered that certain events or situations in their private lives may be limiting their involvement and attendance. Several factors were identified as barriers to the participation of peer-helpers, such as: « their drug use, health or legal problems, lack of availability [...] conflicts between women. (Labbé et al., 2013: 104). The response to these kinds of limitations brings back the importance of flexibility (section 4.1.6) and individual support and guidance (section 4.3), for both peer-helpers and allies.

It must also be taken into consideration that this flexibility and access to break times for self-care implies some turnover among employees. While stability in the work team is a very important element, both for peer-helpers and allies, it is sometimes difficult to maintain, as evidenced by the large number of people who have worked at Projet L.U.N.E. in recent years. While for some, their involvement as a peer-helper is a stepping stone to other personal projects, for others, this experience can be a time to become aware of their condition or situation, which requires taking a step back and rest. In addition, the challenge of night work for many shelter workers should not be underestimated. Despite all the support made available for everyone engaged in Projet L.U.N.E., the many changes in the people involved require the team to be ready to constantly welcome new faces, to re-explain the roles and responsibilities of each person, to review the mission, values, code of ethics, etc. and especially to develop a relationship of trust with these new people.

In addition, changes in the personal lives of peer-helpers can have an impact on their role as social workers and the perception of partners. A very clear example of this double hat was mentioned by a peer-street-worker. While, a few months earlier, she was seeking services from a partner organization in Projet L.U.N.E., she had to accompany a woman there during a follow-up as a peer-street-worker. Of course, if she refer-

red to this organization, it was probably because her experience there had been positive and useful. However, it takes a great deal of humility to introduce yourself as a peer-social-worker and to be recognized as a support for the recovery of the person you are accompanying. While Projet L.U.N.E. is increasingly recognized in the various circles of the Quebec City region, it is more about developing your confidence as a peer-helper, adapting your way of being and getting in touch with partners in a collaborative context.

Become aware of your own limits and learn to respect them

Because of the close relationship between the women joined by Projet L.U.N.E. and those who are involved as peer-helpers, several situations can be considered confrontational for them. Whether listening to a life story that is very similar to their own, or facing the inability to motivate people to take action and make changes in their lives, peer-helpers sometimes say they feel like they are facing mirrors as their own backgrounds come to the surface. The complexity of the realities experienced by peer-helpers is one of their strengths, but negotiation between the different roles expected of them and their life paths can shake their confidence and reflections.

How can one remain in their role as peer-social-worker and be recognized as such when they have just shared their lives in an intimate way? How can they protect themselves from certain realities and keep a professional distance when the person in front of them is experiencing realities that peer-helpers face on a daily basis?

The negotiation between the different hats that peer-helpers can wear within Projet L.U.N.E. as well as in their personal lives (assisted person, peer-social-worker, role model, community leader, drug user, sex worker, parent, etc.) is a key element in understanding the role of peer-helper and the success of the involvement. It is not a question of taking a huge distance, let alone pretending that these contradictions and interactions do not exist. Rather, it is about understanding your different roles and responsibilities, being supported by your work team, having space and time to express your feelings and reflect, and working to develop your self-esteem. The line between capacity building and humility can also be a challenge in this kind of thinking and requires well-balanced support between peer-helpers and with allies.

Creativity and innovation in intervention

While the context of intervention in a *by and for* context is extremely stimulating for both peer-helpers and allies, the situations encountered push the entire team to reinvent itself. Some situations, because of their flexibility and audacity, create contexts that bring everyone into solution mode. A good example is the acceptance of dogs from people in emergency shelters. Having the responsibility for a domestic animal can be a real limitation to access to a regular emergency shelter. This is why women and their four-legged companions are admitted to Projet L.U.N.E., whose shelter is intended to be at a high threshold of acceptance. However, the team had to deal with evenings when the accommodation was full of people and dogs.

«What to do when several animals cannot live together, what are the team's expectations of the animal owners, what to do if a social worker or a peer-social-worker is afraid of them?»

Team reflection and work team participation are necessary to meet the ever-changing needs of the people reached by the organization.

I love L.U.N.E. ...
for the team

Labour market integration

Other important challenges identified by Projet L.U.N.E. team are related to labour market integration, whether through an understanding of the code of ethics, access to income or respect for certain mechanisms within the structure.

The code of ethics is a central element of Projet L.U.N.E., as illustrated throughout this document. However, its in-depth understanding and, above all, its application in an intervention context are not easy. While the code of ethics is reviewed by the work team annually, it is also an important tool during team meetings and clinical supervision. For some peer-helpers, the challenge is to distance themselves from their street value code in relation to the code of ethics in the workplace. As some of them are called upon to intervene with their friends and colleagues, or even with members of their family, the negotiation between their roles

as peer-social-worker and resource person in their community is sometimes difficult and requires time to think about it.

Another challenge related to integration into the legal labour market is access to income or a financial contribution. For some of the peer-helpers who are used to have sex work income as their main source of revenue, having to wait to be paid only once a week, or having to suffer a significant drop in their income may limit their involvement. For others, access to a salary, which significantly increases their income, may be an element that leads to an increase in certain behaviours, such as drug use, which may have an impact on their ability to continue working. It is therefore a double-edged sword that needs to be named and discussed with the main parties involved.

Another limitation related to labour market integration is the respect of certain mechanisms set up in a workplace and involvement environment. Arriving on time, calling in case of absence or using your agenda are behaviours that must be learned and that require flexibility and time in a context of *by and for*.

5.2 External challenges

The recognition of the *by and for* outside. Projet L.U.N.E.

While the creation of equal relationships within the team is one of the most important elements in achieving a *by and for*, these relationships can take time to develop between certain groups, for example with partners less familiar with this approach.

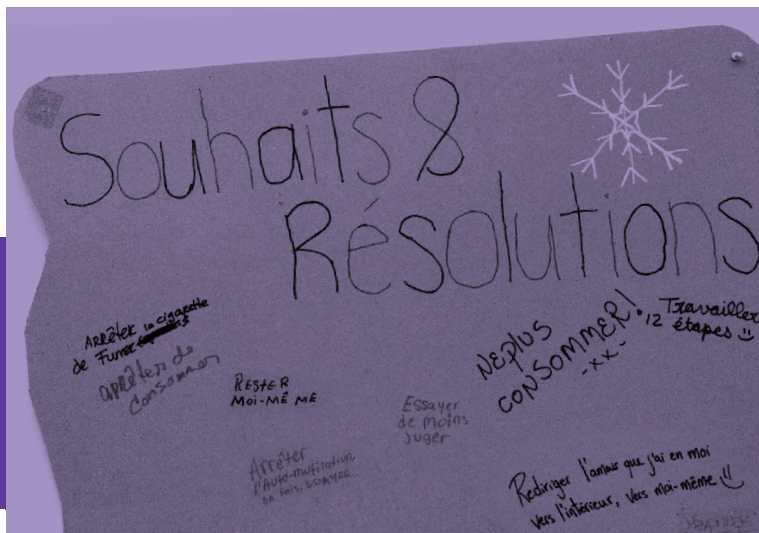
«It should be added, however, that when peer-helpers have to deal with stakeholders from different organizations, they are not necessarily paired with other peers. These conditions can be intimidating for them as they often interact with clinicians who will tend to impose a supervisory relationship on them. [This] highlights the importance of supporting peer-helpers by offering them training, community support or other arrangements that can help them to recharge their batteries.» (Komaroff, 2013 : 51)

Teamwork, peer-to-peer and allied twinning and awareness among partners are all elements that gradually develop a sense of trust and a better understanding of the *by and for* approach within and outside the group. It is also to promote this approach that the peer-helpers of the working committee will present it to future speakers at CEGEP or

university, during conferences or training days. They are very motivated by these presentations, for which, in addition to having a good dose of stress and adrenaline, they stand out proud and recognized.

The creation of links with our immediate environment

The lack of knowledge of Projet L.U.N.E. and the stigma associated with sex work are two obstacles that are also regularly faced. Whether it is to have access to a place for emergency sheltering or to respond to the neighbours' feeling of insecurity in the neighbourhood, Projet L.U.N.E. must make many representations to demystify its approach and to reassure partners of the positive impact of its presence in the neighbourhood. Not only does Projet L.U.N.E. shelter welcome all people who identify themselves as women, whether they are sex workers or not, it also offers a sterile consumer equipment exchange service and makes an intervention team available from 6pm to noon every day. It is then a question of changing some people's perception of attracting marginalized people to the neighbourhood, when it is more a question of offering a service to people who are already there! The presentation of the evaluation projects highlighting the successes of Projet L.U.N.E., as well as the participation in a good neighbourliness committee in the neighbourhood, are two concrete examples of the organization's constant work to promote its approach and demystify the many realities experienced by women.



Underfunding of autonomous community organizations

« There will always be a place for unfunded, volunteer-managed self-help networks. However, most of the networks we consulted were frustrated because of their overloaded workload, lack of recognition and funding for development and provision of support. » (Cyr et al., 2016: 73)

The last external challenge to the realization of Projet L.U.N.E.'s mission is a major one: the financial survival of the organization. The lack of funding in the community sector in Quebec to support autonomous community organizations with so-called mission funding, especially for community groups promoting advocacy, forces many of them to close their doors every year. For Projet L.U.N.E., the challenge is twofold since it also faces the resistance of some financial partners to identify with sex work, an unrecognized and highly stigmatized work environment. As a result, the work team must spend many hours each week seeking funding and providing comprehensive accountability to partners who agree to fund, in addition to having to live with the stress and insecurity of employees and people joined by the organization, which prevents them from maintaining activities in the medium and long term. Once again, Projet L.U.N.E. benefits from being known at all levels of government (municipal, provincial and federal) and from remaining creative in the development of new projects, without compromising its core mission.

Des nouvelles du Projet L.U.N.E.*

Par Maya St-Laurent

Après de durs labeurs, l'hébergement du Projet L.U.N.E. a enfin ouvert ses portes. Ayant activement participé à l'élaboration de ce merveilleux projet innovateur depuis ses tout débuts, il y a 7 ans, je suis particulièrement fière qu'il soit devenu une réalité. De plus, j'ai la chance d'avoir été l'une des paires-aidantes choisies pour travailler à l'hébergement.

C'est un grand privilège pour moi de faire partie de cette équipe et qu'on me donne la chance de faire mes preuves. Ils m'ont acceptée telle que je suis et me font confiance pour accueillir et prendre soin des femmes qui fréquentent notre ressource. C'est pour moi un grand accomplissement, car avant que l'on me recrute pour participer à cette grande aventure, je ne croyais plus tellement en mes chances de faire quelque chose d'autre de ma vie à part me geler. Je tiens d'ailleurs à remercier toutes les personnes qui, de près ou de loin, m'ont aidée dans mon cheminement, ont enduré mon caractère et m'ont accompagnée tout au long de ces belles et fastidieuses années.

Si je vous parle de ceci, c'est entre autres pour montrer à ceux et celles qui sont découragés de leur vie et qui croient qu'ils n'ont aucun avenir devant eux, qu'ils peuvent avoir de l'espoir ! Je vous le jure, si moi, Maya St-Laurent, j'ai pu prendre ma vie en main, alors, vous pouvez tous et toutes le faire. De la mardo, j'en ai mangée et remangée, mais il suffit de vous trouver une chose positive à laquelle vous raccrocher et de vous botter les fesses ! Car pour parvenir à améliorer sa vie, il faut y mettre du sien, persévérer malgré les embûches, se concentrer sur le but à atteindre et visualiser toutes les belles choses que ça peut vous apporter ! Alors, réveillez-vous, entourez-vous de personnes positives et prenez les moyens nécessaires pour que vos rêves se

L'équipe m'a
acceptée
telle que je
suis et me
fait confiance
pour accueillir
et prendre
soin des
femmes qui
fréquentent
notre
ressource.



6

THE
FINAL
WORD





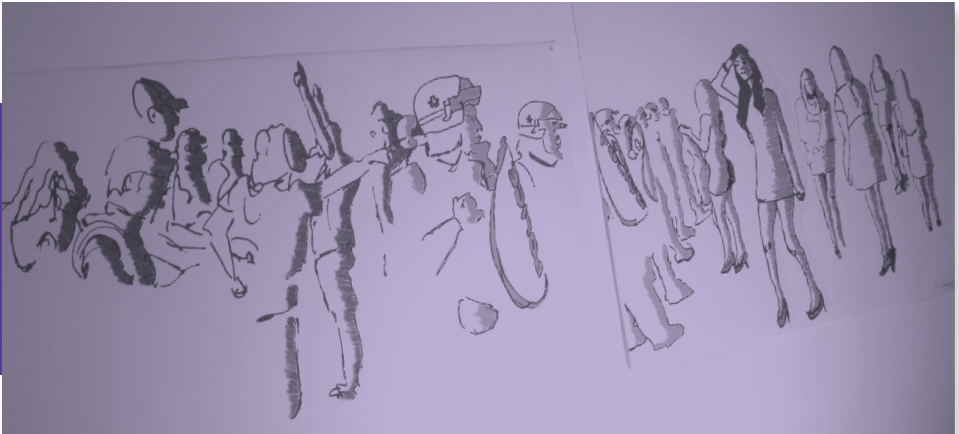
The final word

We wish that this guide will inspire your reflexions and that we succeeded to pass on to you some of our passion for the *by and for* approach as well as our certiture of the importance of the peer-helpers integration in the empowerment of the service users.

This guide presents an exemple of what good practices could look like. However, we do not have the pretention to think that we have all the answers or that things could not be done in a better way. Please do put your own colors to our guide, this will be the key to your project success.

Our environments and workplaces are in constant evolution. We strongly believe that the abilities to listen, be humble and stay open are of the outmost importance to be able to challenge ourselves.

We want to thank everyone that directly or indirectly participated to the redaction of the guide; the shelter and outreach work teams, our precious partner organisations, our allies and the women who poured their hearts on paper and gave us beautiful moving testimonies.



Testimony of a woman joined by the shelter and the street work team

«Projet L.U.N.E. saved my life by giving me a bed, safety, listening and solutions, when I believed there were none left. They gave me the courage to continue to believe in myself, even if no one in my entourage believed in me anymore.

I was shocked to see so many women in poverty. Projet L.U.N.E. helps them, regardless of their age, condition, with or without their dogs. I noticed that there are many young women in poverty and that there are fewer solutions than in my time. There are many more than what we can see, which leads me to believe that women's homelessness is taboo.

We don't see them, but they exist. That is why Projet L.U.N.E. must exist. Many causes can lead us to the street. For me, it was the disease and the wrong choices. Projet L.U.N.E. gives us the opportunity to take charge of our lives, to feel supported in our actions, because we have a right to do so. Projet L.U.N.E. is an essential organization in our society and we must do everything we can to ensure that it does not die out.»



7

GLOS- SARY OF TERMS





Glossary of terms

- ¹ L.U.N.E.: Libres, Unies, Nuancées, Ensemble: Free, United, Finely-shaded, Together
- ² SSW-IDU: Street sex workers, injection drug users
- ³ SW: Sex work / sex workers
- ⁴ **Woman/trans*/queer**: In order to be inclusive of the realities experienced by the people reached by Projet L.U.N.E., the target population includes people who identify themselves as women, i.e. people whose gender identity is female, and also people who are non-binary/queer, i.e. who refuse gender binary. These people identify themselves as neither male nor female, and sometimes their identity is fluid and can vary depending on the situation. Others simply refuse to identify with these categories. Unlike the acronym LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, Queer, and more), it is only about sexual identity, rather than sexual orientation (lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, etc.), although all this diversity of orientations is found in Projet L.U.N.E.
- ⁵ **Drop-in**: The term drop-in, which means «arriving unexpectedly», is used by some emergency shelter settings to refer to a place where people can be sheltered without needing to be referred and where they can arrive and leave at any time. Reception and admission are on a daily basis without maximum sheltering time limit and without the possibility of booking a place in advance. The preferred formula is first come, first served.
- ⁶ **Outreach work**: The term outreach work is a term that encompasses three sub-categories of intervention, namely street, community and outreach work.

Street work: «Infiltration- informal and continuous presence in marginal spaces (landmarks of young people, apartments, arcades, breweries, streets, drug houses, etc.) according to their movement; creation and development of personalized relations, global support for people who have broken their trajectory, multi-purpose intervention according to requests. This practice is called propensity practice, i.e. it is rooted in the demand and choices of the people reached, which we aim to support according to the evolution of the situations and according to their needs and aspirations.» (Fontaine, 2004: 17)

Work in the community: «Presence in the spaces occupied by a target population (school, municipal park, neighbourhood recreation centre, youth centre, neighbourhood plot, etc.); socialization, animation and informal education in

the living environment, collective project promoting social participation, improvement of living conditions and mediation in the community. This practice is also called propensity.» (Fontaine, 2004: 17)

Outreach: «Observation, identification of the places frequented by the targeted people (marginal spaces); making contact, offering and distributing specific services, prevention, lobbying, recruitment and referrals to specific resources, follow-up in the living environment of the people reached by a resource. This practice is called instrumental, that is, it results from an institutional control aimed at reducing the incidence of a problematic symptom by normalizing the behaviours and lifestyles of a targeted population.» (Fontaine, 2004: 17)

⁷ **Self-help organization:** «Self-help organizations are based on a community development model. In these structures, peer-helpers support the recovery of people who are experiencing difficulties similar to those they face. Family members can also get involved, both to provide help and to receive it. [A self-help group] offers the possibility of integrating actors who are not peers.» (Komaroff, 2013: 46)

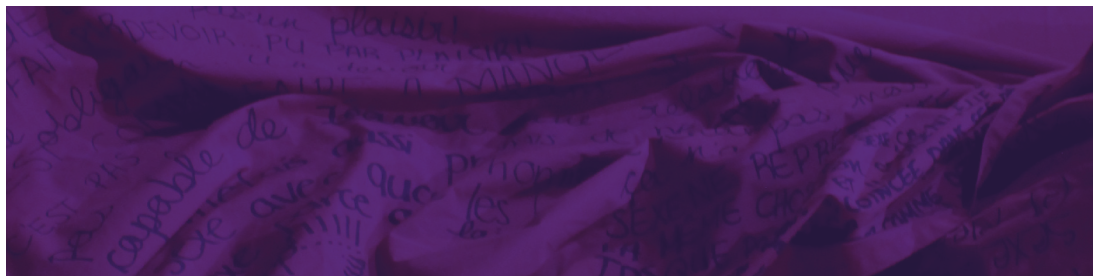
⁸ **World-café:** «The world-café is a creative process that aims to facilitate constructive dialogue and the sharing of knowledge and ideas, with a view to creating a network of exchanges and actions. This process reproduces the atmosphere of a café where participants discuss an issue or topic in small groups around tables. At regular intervals, participants change tables. A host stays at the table and summarizes the previous conversation to the newcomers. The ongoing conversations are then «fertilized» with ideas from previous conversations with other participants.» (Slocum, 2006, 173)

I love L.U.N.E. ...

*I like working with women whose
life experience is very important*

I love L.U.N.E. ...

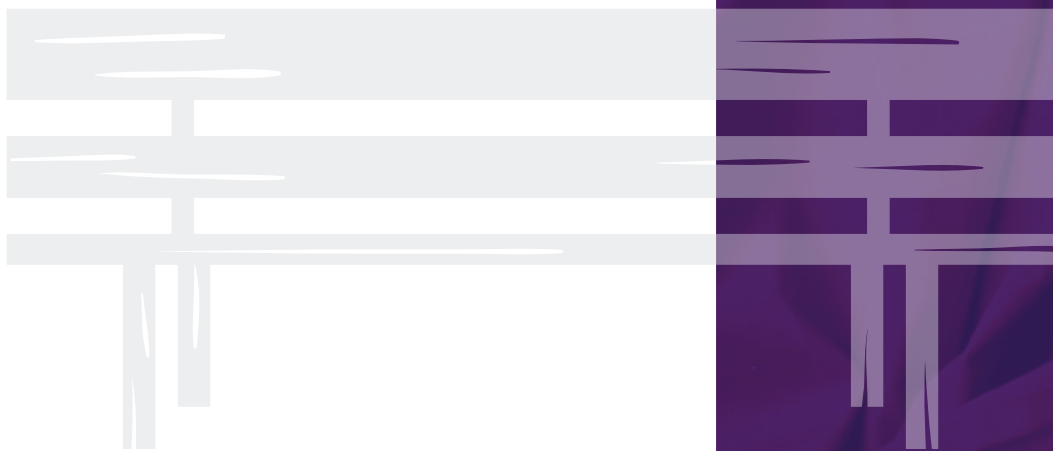
for open-mindedness





8

APPENDIX





Appendix

8.1 Code of Ethics

Adopted by the work committee
19 September 2012
Updated in October 2014

Mission

Projet L.U.N.E. is a group for the belonging, recognition, and defence of social rights *by and for* sex workers (SWs3), active or not, who act as peer support workers. Their know-how and expertise are shared in many ways: speaking out in the public arena, awareness-raising activities, advocacy, and mobilization. Anyone who identifies themselves as a woman, trans* woman or queer is welcome, regardless of their history, background or experiences. The mission of Projet L.U.N.E. is at the heart of all its actions: **Intervene, support and welcome women/trans*/queer, through community action in a peer intervention approach, in accordance with an empowerment philosophy, to improve their quality of life.**

Respect

1. Everyone is deserving of dignity, respect, and equality.
2. In all situations, I respect the women who come to the shelter, the other employees, our partners and every person that I interact with for the purpose of my work. I express myself in a polite manner with my body language, my words, and my attitude.
3. I accept differences (beliefs, values, cultures, sexual orientation, etc) I don't judge other people and their reality.
4. I make sure to prevent and eliminate all forms of discrimination.
5. I respect my limitations and I am mindful of my physical and mental.

health. I chose to not get involved if my condition is susceptible to compromise the quality of my work.

6. I do not seek nor sell drugs (including prescription drugs) through my job.

Equality

1. I am objective et act equitably with everybody, no matter their: gender, age, religion, ethnicity, skin color or sexual orientation.
2. No matter their degree of involvement, each member are on equal footing.
3. There will be no seduction or sexual intimacy with the people I met through my job, their partners or family members.
4. I can't accept a gift, a donation or a service for myself or on behalf of a friend/family member from a person I met through my job at the shelter.

Autonomy

1. I understand the limits of my experiences and of my professional formation and I don't offer services for which I am not qualified and competent. I ask for help or validation if necessary.
2. I exercise judgment in the choice of my actions and their possible consequences. I am responsible for the quality of the services that I offer.
3. I understand and accept the functioning of the shelter project.

Teamwork

1. I contribute to the teamwork according to my own abilities.
 - 1.1. I share my opinion ;
 - 1.2. I support the work of my team ;
 - 1.3. I get involved in the teamwork.
2. I accept the differences of the people I work with, their opinions and working methods.

3. I make the commitment to redirect any conflict or complaint to the appropriate instances.

Confidentiality

As a member of the work committee of Projet L.U.N.E :

1. I demonstrate prudence and restraint in regard to sharing the confidential pieces of information that could harm the interests of the shelter project or invade the privacy of its users.
2. I remain vigilant when I am in possession of confidential documents outside of Projet L.U.N.E office or shelter.
3. I avoid disclosing any nominal information outside the scope of my employment.
4. While outside of my work functions, I am aware that I have a responsibility in Projet L.U.N.E's image in society and act accordingly. I need to obtain the coordination or management committee's approval before using any material that might concern the users of our services, even if it is covered by confidentiality.
5. I respect the confidentiality of the pieces of information I obtained in the scope of my employment even after the end of my work contract.

I understand that the failure to comply with such rules and procedures will lead to a meeting with the coordination and management committee and could lead to consequences such as a warning, a suspension or discharge from my functions.

I hereby agree to comply with the ethics code of the shelter project.



9

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