‘To tell or not to tell’
Disclosing a psychiatric disability in an educational setting
Hanze University Groningen (NL) – Ledovec, Plzen (CZ) – AEIPS Lisbon (PT)
Student Welfare organization of Bergen SiB & NAV (NO)

BACKGROUND

Mark is 22 years old and at a point in his study to start his internship. He has an interview with the director of the company where he would like to do his internship. During the interview the director asks Mark why one year on his curriculum vitae is blank. Mark tells him that for one year he has been treated for a psychosis. The director ends the interview quickly and Mark never heard from him again.

A frequently experienced dilemma for students with psychiatric problems is the decision to tell or not to tell about these problems at school.

Disclosing can have positive effects (access to accommodations; more understanding), but many students fear to be stigmatized or discriminated against when disclosing their psychiatric past or present.

It is important to prepare students for situations in which the ‘disclosure dilemma’ can occur. However, many educational professionals do not know how to support these students.

THE TOOL

• Students are encouraged to carefully think about all 5 aspects of this skill

• Worksheets were made to support this

EXPERIENCES WITH THE TOOL

✓ Students indicate to experience less anxiety about disclosing
✓ “I do not feel stressed out anymore; I know that I will not disclose my psychiatric past to my fellow students”
✓ Short, clear and concrete tool

OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT

To (further) develop a tool for professionals and students that gives support in making a well-informed decision about disclosing or not.