

PROSCA



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Prostate cancer Peer support groups : the Geneva experience

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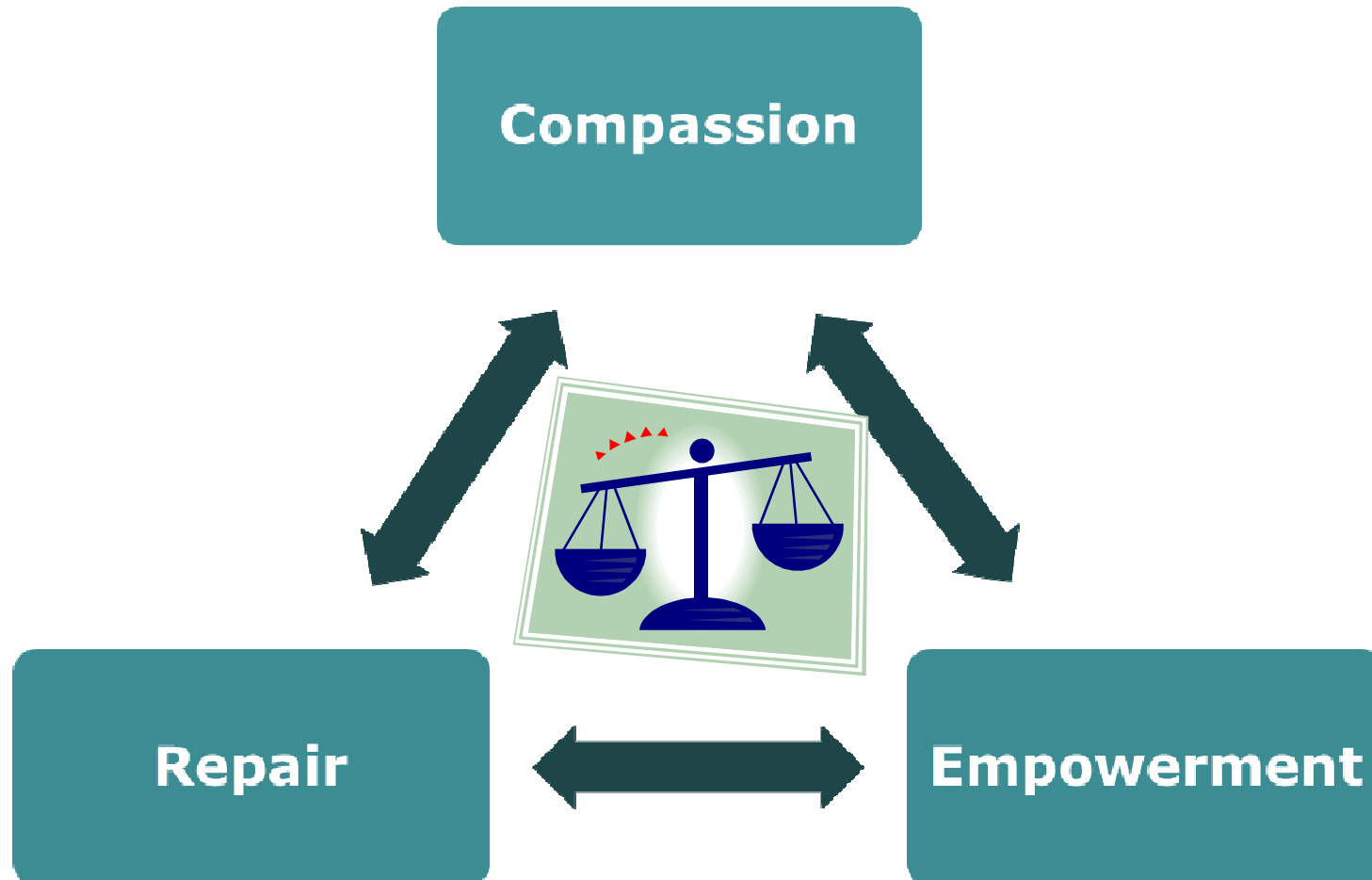
Plan

- 1. Reasons for implementing peer support**
- 2. Why training is important ?**
- 3. Training for peer support**
- 4. Take-home messages**

Reasons for implementing peer support

- **Survivors' initiative**
- **To help other patients :**
 - to prevent them to face the same difficulties within health system (e.g. lack of good quality information)
 - to share useful experience (e.g. management of incontinence)
 - merely to support other patients

Balancing underlying forces



Why training for peer support is needed (1) ?

- Spontaneity, generosity, willing to do are prerequisite but are not sufficient to provide quality support
- Supporting others requests specific skills :
 - Listening
 - Understanding others' problems
 - Communication
 - Management of his/her own emotions
 - Empathy

Why training for peer support is needed (2) ?

...Furthermore

- Basic knowledge about prostate cancer disease and treatment are mandatory

«volunteers provide good quality information»

- Sharing basic values such as

- Respect of the other person

- Respect of the difference *«what I think is not what he thinks»*

- Consciousness of projection mechanism *«his story is not my story»*

- Respect of privacy and confidentiality

Confidentiality



Peer support training program

- A **training course** was given to men with prostate cancer who wanted to become volunteers for peer support (8 sessions of 2.5 hours)
- The main goals of this course were :
 - to **improve communication skills** (to listen, to reformulate)
 - to **prevent individual projection**
 - to **manage their own emotions**
- Monthly group for **intervision (supervision)** and acquisition of **basic knowledge** in prostate cancer

Organization of peer support

- **Helpline support** by telephone and e-mail was set up to men with prostate cancer, wives, partners and people who **are concerned**, and those who **want to know more**
- **Peer support** is given by **volunteers** who have themselves been affected by prostate cancer and who have personal experience of the main treatments and stages of prostate cancer
- A **HOTLINE** was set up in collaboration with the **Geneva Cancer league**

Take-home messages

- Peer support cannot be improvised
- Volunteers need to develop basic skills in
 - Communication
 - Emotion management
 - Knowledge about the disease
- Volunteers have to respect some basic values
 - Respect of the other person
 - Respect of privacy and confidentiality