



Häuser
zum
Leben
StoDt Wien

Structural Integration of Conflict Counseling and Mediation in the „Häusern zum Leben“ (Homes for retired citizens) (Kuratorium Wiener Pensionisten-Wohnhäuser/KWP)

- **Institutional framework ...**
- **Service for clients ...**
- **My background ...**
- **Conflict areas and interventions ...**
- **Elder Mediation in the KWP ...**
- **Fundamentals to conclude ...**

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Norbert Koblinger/Vienna



Institutional Framework ...

- Board of Residences for Retirees (Pensionisten-Wohnhäuser) with **31 residences** - biggest provider in Austria – since **1960**
- *Assisted living* in one- or double-room apartments or in nursing care (including departments for dementia patients and rehabilitation)
- Ca. **3'400** full-time staff (about **40** nationalities) und more than **500** volunteers
- Clients: approx. **9'300** residents with their relatives and **17'000** members of **172** retirees-clubs in Vienna
- Average age: **85** years
- Ca. **90** residents are **100** years or older
- **82%** of the residents are **female** (most frequent first name: Maria) and **18%** are **male** (most frequent first name: Franz)



Services for Residents ...

- Since **1997 staff office for management as internal ombudsperson's office**: Director and 3 staff (assistant social worker, psychotherapist)
- **Strategic management of praise, prevention and complaints**
- **Second Level Support when clients give feedback** (praise/appreciation – wishes/requests – criticism/complaints)
- (Continuous) development of measures to promote **client satisfaction** in the sense of mistake and prevention management
- **(Conflict) Counseling** for professional staff and teams in the residences
- **Cooperation** with other supervisory organizations



My background ...

- 1956 born in Salzburg – since 1976 in Vienna
- Banker > Community organizer > licensed Social worker
- Since 1985 cooperated to develop mediation in criminal law („ATA“= Victim Offender Mediation): From pilot project to legally accepted measure and institutionalization within the association NEUSTART (New Beginning); participant in pilot project: Family and Divorce Mediation 1993 (Vienna/Salzburg)
- Since 1990 Trainer und Supervisor for Mediation training (Focus: Highly escalated conflicts, mediation and social work, support during course work)
- Since 2004 listed mediator (ZivMediatG) – Focus: Family and divorce mediation, mediation in organizations
- 2004: Director of a residence for retirees; since 2007 director of staff office “Services for Residents”



Conflict Areas and Interventions ...

- Structural Conflicts > **Administrative/organizational counseling/support** when services, menus or fees are not clear ...
- Intrapersonal conflicts > **Psycho-social counseling and longer-lasting care** in change and crisis situations because of bereavement, loss, illness...
- Interpersonal conflicts > **Conflict facilitation, -coaching and -mediation** regarding problems with neighborhood (noise, smell, jealousy...), with staff (suspicion, unfair treatment, bad or non-rendered service...), with relatives (incapacitation, neglect, embezzlement...) and other causes, such as with near-by service-providers, neighborhood politics (bad treatment, wrong or non-fulfilled expectations...)



Elder Mediation in the KWP (Homes for Retirees)

- The word „mediation“ is generally not mentioned, but acted upon; however it can, paradoxically, also be used as a door-opener
- **Pre-mediation:** Separate preparatory conversations (empowerment) or assessment of the mental and physical capacities (possibly together with psychologist and nursing staff...)
- This determines the **number of participants** (confidante, trustee...), the **setting** (“residence advantage”, “slowing down” ...) and the **method/technique** (one-sided conflict counseling, shuttle-mediation, such as *role-playing regarding negotiation*, co-mediation/“interpretation“, visualization, i.e. conflict mapping, or of the agreement, supportive measures, results...)
- **Follow-through and control** in the sense of a generally reduced perception and cognition (follow-ups, trusted staff/relatives instructed to be one’s “memory”, symbolic reminders...)



Fundamentals as Conclusion ...

- **Elder Mediation as a measure is coordinated** with the care network in each residence
- **Deficiencies of parties are balanced out**, but not by compromising the mediation principals > subsidiary conflict management
- **Adjusting conversational volume and speed and accord plenty of time**
- **Amplify communication techniques**, i.e. validation
- The **mediation agreement is not the only goal**, but mediation promotes and empowers **the self-determination the self-reliance and being taken seriously** in a caring environment
- **Documentation and reflection of the experiences and results** are not only important for each specific case but also for a continuous professional development of Elder Mediation in the *Häusern zum Leben (Homes for retirees/Homes for Life)*

