

PEER COUNSELING

EFFECTIVE WAY TO IMPROVE ADAPTION TO THE LIFE WITH SCI

Aim: Aksons main goal is to make sure that all newly injured people get the best possible start with their new life with SCI.

Methods: The Finnish Association of Spinal Cord Injured Akson maintains, develops and improves the benefits and rights of people with SCI and their families in Finland. Peer support is the best way to increase the understanding of SCI and the life with it. Experiencing the same situation and sharing mutual feelings with another SCI person, gives us courage and strength to manage in everyday living. Akson is the main provider for SCI peer support and also service provider of peer counseling for SCI-centrals (public healthcare units).

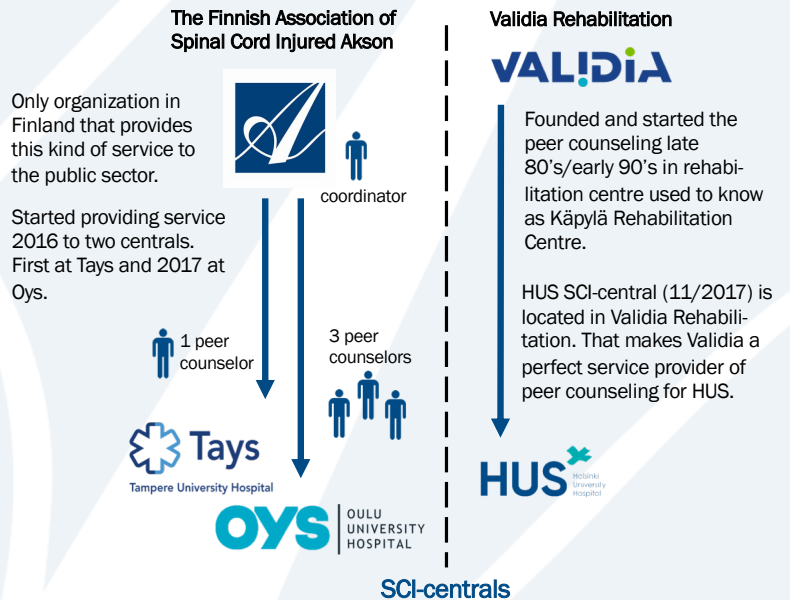
Results: Regulation of spinal cord injury treatment centralization came into force on 1.5.2011 in Finland. Akson was the main party for making this regulation to happen. These SCI-centrals are located in University Hospitals in Oulu, Tampere and Helsinki. They cover acute phase of hospitalization, the immediate rehabilitation and life-long monitoring of all the people with SCI. Akson does close work with all SCI-centrals. By this collaboration Akson can influence and improve the SCI rehabilitation and monitor the implementation of the regulation. Akson started to develop peer support 2014 and peer counseling 2016 in Finland. Organization started to provide these services to SCI-centrals. All the changes of SCI person's life starts at these centrals.

Conclusions: Akson has noticed that the knowledge, understanding and support provided by professional peer counselor at acute phase is the key for better life after injury.



The Finnish Association of Spinal Cord Injured Akson is a Finnish national patient organization founded on 13.6.2009. Organization represent almost 900 person with SCI. Akson maintains, develops and improves the benefits and rights of SCI people and their families.

Service providers of peer counseling in Finland



Benefits of peer counseling collaboration with national organization

- SCI-centrals get competent peer support to newly injured persons
- SCI-professionals get more knowledge about everyday living with SCI
- Understanding importance of peer counseling to be a part of the rehabilitation multiprofessional cooperation
- Peer counseling centralization to Akson guarantee customer oriented approach to the service without profit (non-profit organization)
- Organization can easily customize peer counseling for personal needs
- Akson is responsible training and education of the peer counselors (4) and peer supporters (54) of SCI
- Akson gets valid information how SCI-centrals are working. That creates possibility to monitor and influence development of SCI-centrals. (promotion of the interests)

