

# Från omsorg till socialt förändringsarbete – en analys av villkor för stödgruppsarbete

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## ABSTRACT

Eriksson, Bodil: "From care to the social work of change – an analysis of the prerequisites for support-group work" (dissertation in social work). Stockholm 1995.

What are the prerequisites for conducting social work in housing areas with residents handicapped by severe social problems? This is the main issue addressed in this dissertation. Is it possible to go beyond the bounds of the work at the individual level? Groups previously considered to be in need of institutional care nowadays live in flats in residential areas. The social services seek to develop work methods which will facilitate their integration with the rest of the population.

The dissertation is a qualitative case-study of a support-group project in a suburban area heavily burdened with social problems. The focusing of the study upon the support-group project, with its orientation towards non-verbal inputs, led to the choice of observation combined with interviews, examination of documents and recording of informal conversations as research methods. The project was followed for more than two years. The data processing leads up to a structured description of the support-group's work and an analysis of the core conditions.

The description shows the support-group project's development process in which the personnel's efforts, aimed at giving the help recipients a chance to achieve more independence, progressed from focusing upon work in the client's home to placing the main emphasis upon work at the project's premises and thereafter reaching out into the local community. This also involved a development from two-person relationships to broader network relationships.

The terms of the work are indicated in the analysis. The essential element of the work is the intervention in the everyday life of the help recipient and the development of an informal social relationship. This reciprocal relationship was fundamental in enabling the help recipient to boost his/her own capacity for action and increase the field of action. The terms under which the work was carried out were dictated by the personnel's qualifications and their capacity for learning from experience and accumulating knowledge in their work. The organisational form provided personnel with the scope in which to act both formally and informally and thereby be able to function as mediators between the help recipients' life-world and the system of organisations. This also gave the scope in which to make connections with various organisations. In order for this to be possible it was necessary for the support-group project to develop both a certain autonomy in relation to the social services organisation and a legitimacy regarding its actions amongst the actors in the world-at-large.