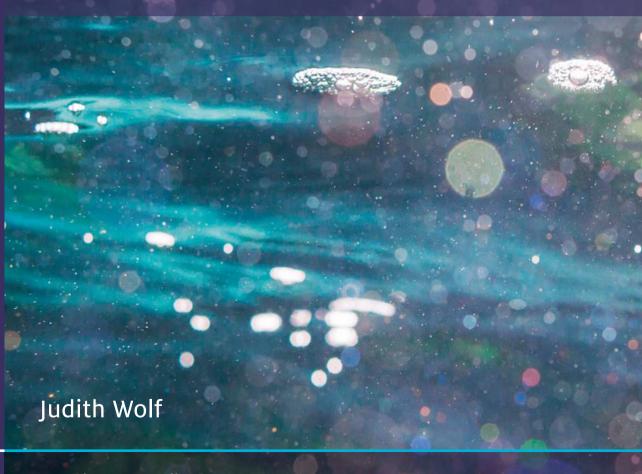
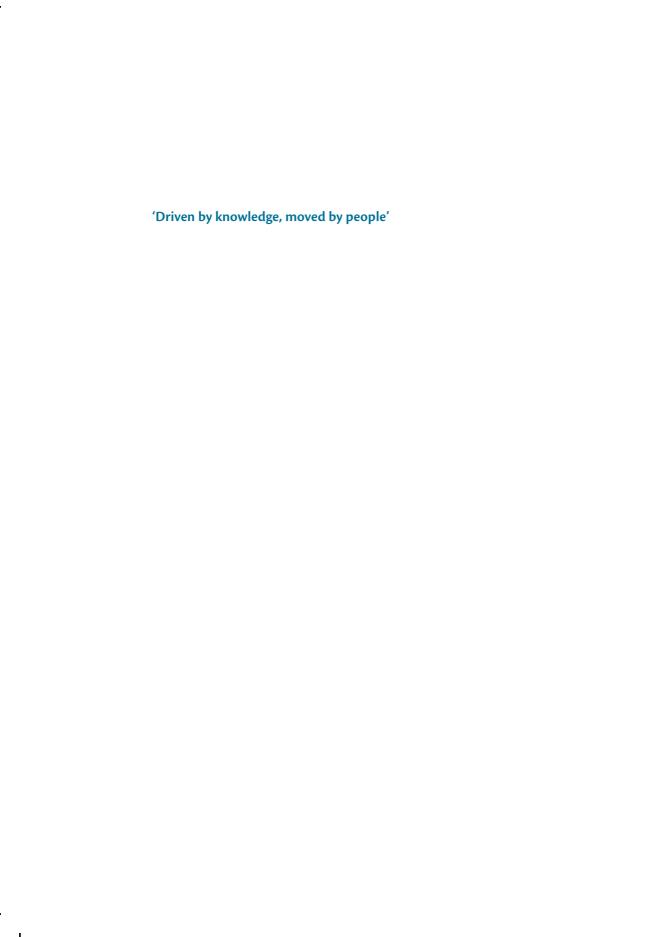
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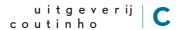




Methodically working on participation and self-direction

Judith Wolf

Translation of the Dutch revised second edition



bussum 2021

www.coutinho.nl/pathways

You can start working with the online study materials accompanying this book. These materials consist of links, worksheets and an example of a safety plan.



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Preface

Pathways to Empowerment is a strength-based methodology for providing social support to people in situations of disadvantage. The reason for developing this methodology was the desire of social support institutions to give new impetus to the method-based action of counsellors, with the aim of improving the quality of counselling given to people facing disadvantage. The initiative came from the institutions of the Academische werkplaats Opvang & Herstel (Academic Collaborative Center for Shelter and Recovery) and Impuls, the Netherlands Center for Social Care Research of the Radboud University Medical Center (Radboudumc Nijmegen) (www.impuls-onderzoekscentrum.nl). Pathways to Empowerment takes the individual strengths and potential for growth of its clients as the starting point and focus of its work. During the development of the strengthbased approach by Impuls, in the period 2008-2011, there was intensive cooperation with clients, counsellors, policy officers, and managers of social support institutions. This cooperation resulted in a number of books and materials for the benefit of vulnerable people, such as homeless adults and young people (Wolf, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c), and women who have experienced violence (Wolf & Jansen, 2011; Bos, Reijmers, Scherpenisse, Jonker & Wolf, 2012). A process evaluation carried out in 2014 provides more information on the background and development of the strength-based methodology and the decision to give it the name Pathways to Empowerment (Krachtwerk®) (Wolf, Jonker & Jansen, 2015).

Pathways to Empowerment has really taken off in recent years. Since 2010, more than 50 institutions throughout the Netherlands have chosen to implement this methodology in their organisations. Nearly 4000 counsellors have successfully completed basic Pathways to Empowerment training at the Impuls academy. In addition, policy officers and managers of the institutions took part in training days in order to have the tools needed for embedding and safeguarding the methodology in their organisations. Requests to use Pathways to Empowerment now also come from local authorities, for example, which are keen to apply the methodology in district social teams, addiction care, juvenile care and refugee shelters. There is also interest in Pathways to Empowerment from abroad.

An important step in the development of Pathways to Empowerment was its formal recognition as being 'well-founded'. On the basis of this recognition, Pathways to Empowerment has been included in the Effective Social Interventions Database of Dutch knowledge institute Movisie (www.movisie.nl/esi/krachtwerk). But possibly more important is the appreciation of clients for the counselling they receive with Pathways to Empowerment to support their recovery. Clients recount feeling renewed courage, cherishing hopes for the future, experiencing their own strength and being

able to get to work on their personal goals. These responses strengthen our wish to use Pathways to Empowerment to give more clients prospects for a meaningful life.

The immediate motive for this edition (i.e. the translation of the revised second edition in Dutch) of the book about the basic strength-based methodology (Wolf, 2012a) was the desire of the social domain and sectors other than that of social support institutions to deploy Pathways to Empowerment, and the requests from universities to make it available for training students.

Many individuals and institutions have made valuable contributions to the development of Pathways to Empowerment and this methodology book. The methodology would not be what it is today without the inspiration and support of the social support institutions in the Academic workplace and the involvement of Federatie Opvang, the sector organisation for social care, sheltered housing and women's refuges. Also worthy of a special mention is the space that Charles Rapp and Rick Goscha gave us to apply and elaborate their strengths model (see Rapp & Goscha, 2012) in the Netherlands into a methodology for people in disadvantaged situations. Thanks are also due to Geert van der Laan, Sjef de Vries and Roel Bouwkamp: their valuable contributions to the professionalisation of methodbased action in social work in the Netherlands have been integrated into the methodology in as recognisable a way as possible. In developing the methodology, we also drew on the accumulated body of knowledge of the recovery movement and approaches to recovery for people with severe mental health conditions and addiction problems, with specific thanks to Dirk den Hollander, Jean Pierre Wilken, Wilma Boevink, Gert de Haan and Jaap van der Stel. The input from our Pathways to Empowerment trainers has also been of great value, especially that of Eric Albers.

Important input for this edition (i.e. the revised second edition in Dutch) was provided by Carinda Jansen and members of a focus group: Yvonne Boersma and Rionne van de Laar (Higher Professional Education students, Social Work and Service Delivery (SW&SD)), Marjo Boer, Anja Gouwerok, Corinne Lenting-Eijkman and Inke Schaap (lecturers in social service professional education), Hans Aalders and Janne Baudoin (Pathways to Empowerment trainers), and Wytze Groen (manager of social support institution). Their feedback on the first edition of the book on this methodology (Wolf, 2012a), together with their suggestions for case studies and assignments, prompted a thorough revision. From the Impuls academy, Irene Jonker, Nicoline Jansen and Milou Christians were always on hand with solicited and unsolicited advice, and they tested the correct use and the quality assessment of Pathways to Empowerment's instruments. In addition, together with Manja van Wezep, they provided in-depth information on the central topics of Pathways to Empowerment. Many thanks are due to Ragna van Kesteren and Nicoline Jansen for putting the final touches to the book.

Judith Wolf Nijmegen, June 2016

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Introduction

For people in disadvantaged situations who have lost control of their lives, Pathways to Empowerment offers an inviting prospect. This strength-based methodology supports such people in their recovery towards a quality of life that they wish to have, in which they, just as every other citizen, are allowed to participate in society, belong, have significance, and be who they are. Clients' own strengths and potential for growth, and what they believe is most important for their future, form the starting point and the focus. Together with others around them, people actively set to work with the help of goals and action plans that they have chosen.

'I've had all kinds of methodologys, but now for the first time it isn't therapeutic. This is simple, effective and good; it has become more human. This isn't forced on you because it comes from you.' (Client)

Addressing issues in the social domain

Pathways to Empowerment provides tools for the challenges that social work is facing in today's radically changing field of influence, in view of the policy focus on an individual's own strength and self-reliance, and on support from society in the neighbourhood. There is a greater emphasis on the ability of people and their social networks to organise themselves, and only if these fall short is professional help brought in. Due to cutbacks, more help has to be provided with less money. The trend towards more extramural care (e.g. in care of the elderly and the disabled, and mental healthcare) and changes in the funding of long-term care also mean that vulnerable people continue to live independently for longer and that we can expect to see an increase in the number of people in the community who find it hard to cope in society. Pathways to Empowerment provides principles and method-based tools to equip professionals from various occupations better in order to meet the new requirements of working with diverse groups of vulnerable people. Pathways to Empowerment is deployed to deal with major social issues, such as homelessness, domestic violence, addiction, release from prison, and refugee problems.

Pathways to Empowerment:

- lays a well-founded base under the professional method-based actions of counsellors and can ensure greater clarity within and between teams – including district teams – and organisations in method-based work and the development of a common language;
- offers cornerstones and principles on the basis of which counsellors, volunteers, experts by experience, and employees of support services (receptionists, night staff, etc.) approach clients and support them, regardless of the setting and the nature and duration of the services provided;

- provides insights and tools for creating an optimal working relationship with clients, increasing the chance of successful counselling;
- offers instruments to assist clients in making an inventory of their strengths and resources, such as the inventory of strengths (IS);
- provides insights and tools to assist clients in evaluating their self-regulation, specifically their way of dealing with setbacks;
- provides an instrument to assist clients in setting their long-term goals and setting down actions in the form of personal action plans;
- gives counsellors instructions for tapping into resources together with clients;
- provides an instrument (a step-by-step plan for team strength meetings) for learning together in multidisciplinary teams from 'what works' with clients and for strengthening and safeguarding the strength-based, recovery-supporting work of counsellors.

Origins and further development

As a methodology, Pathways to Empowerment is based on theoretical concepts and models (theoretically founded), scientific knowledge of what works (evidence-based), and relevant expertise from the field (practice-based). It is based on the strengths model developed by Charles Rapp and Rick Goscha at the University of Kansas in the United States at the end of the 1990s for people with severe mental health conditions, and adapted for use in social work by Dennis Saleebey (2006). The adaptation made use of work principles that had long been known in social work (Jagt, 2008; Richmond, 1917; Saleebey, 2006; De Vries, 2008). These principles, such as the importance of 'being there' and 'starting where the client is' have actually existed for as long as people have been caring for one another (Van der Stel, 2013; Wolf, 2013). They have been elaborated in a multitude of methods, including the presence approach (Baart, 2001), the approaches focusing on empowerment and rehabilitation (Van Regenmortel, 2002; Korevaar & Dröes, 2016; Wilken & Den Hollander, 2012), and outreach (Van Doorn, 2004), active intervention (Lohuis & Schout, 2000), and Flexible Assertive Community Treatment (FACT; Mulder & Kroon, 2005).

The new edition of this methodology book has been seized upon as an opportunity to broaden and deepen Pathways to Empowerment. The methodology is now more explicitly grafted onto the concepts of self-regulation and self-determination. Information from scientific research has been integrated into the methodology – research on self-regulation and self-determination, on contexts in which people experience happiness and manage to flourish, and on personal qualities and skills that contribute towards this blossoming (positive psychology; Bohlmeijer, Trompetter, Schotanus-Dijkstra & Drossaert, 2015). This connects with a broad concept of health – positive health – and with what is known about what works in health promotion and self-management.

Strengths model proven to be effective

International studies carried out with various target groups point to positive effects obtained through the application of the strengths model and similar interventions focused on empowerment (see Wolf et al., 2015). Most studies focus on vulnerable people with chronic mental health conditions who experience problems in various life areas, such as obtaining and retaining housing, work and social relationships. These studies booked positive results in health (including mental health) and hospitalisation (Björkman, Hansson & Sandlund, 2002; Macias, Kinney, Farley, Jackson & Vos, 1994; Macias, Farley, Jackson & Kinney, 1997; Modrcin, Rapp & Poertner, 1988), skills for independent living and daily activities (Macias et al., 1994; Modrcin et al., 1988), job training and income (Macias et al., 1997; Modrcin et al., 1988; Stanard, 1999), social support and behaviour (Macias et al., 1997; Modrcin et al., 1988), leisure activities (Modrcin et al., 1988), quality of life (Stanard, 1999), and satisfaction with the help given (Björkman et al., 2002). However, other target groups – people with addiction problems, women who have experienced violence, and young homeless people - also appear to benefit from a strength-based intervention (Rapp et al., 2008; Saewyc & Edinburgh, 2010; Song & Shih, 2010).

This edition

The desire of the social domain and sectors other than emergency and sheltered accommodation to deploy Pathways to Empowerment and the requests from universities to make Pathways to Empowerment available for training students were the incentive for a thorough revision of the methodology book on the basic strength-based methodology for vulnerable people (Wolf, 2012a). In fact, each chapter has been rewritten and new information and insights have been incorporated. The most important innovations, in addition to the consistent incorporation of the concepts of self-regulation and self-determination, are:

- the three cornerstones of Pathways to Empowerment: hope, self-regulation and citizenship;
- a deepening of the concept of recovery, in particular personal recovery, and the importance of resilience and self-compassion;
- the forms of recovery personal, social, functional and societal that are also
 the starting point for supporting clients in their own individual recovery
 process;
- strengthening the systemic approach of Pathways to Empowerment through the integration of the contextual approach;
- practical tips for counsellors in carrying out the basic tasks of a strength-based counselling programme;
- the conditions for participation and personal control in society: social empowerment, social cohesion, socio-economic security and social inclusion;
- the description of the indicators and quality requirements of the model compliance of Pathways to Empowerment.

Transfer: attitude, knowledge and insights

This methodology book has been written for teaching, training and further professional training. It helps students and counsellors to master an attitude and acquire the competences needed to do strength-based work with clients and provides them with specific tools to do method-based work on client participation and personal control. You can increase your proficiency through practical exercises (at work or during an internship) and by linking the fundamental aspects of Pathways to Empowerment to the daily reality of counselling. The chapters provide practical insights (quotes from clients and counsellors, cases, references to film clips) and each chapter concludes with some assignments in order for the reader to process the knowledge and insights provided. Pathways to Empowerment sees counsellors as practitioners and it is only through practice and working with clients that they can really master the strength-based working methodology. By reading, actively internalising and applying the knowledge in this methodology book, you will:

- become familiar with the cornerstones and principles of Pathways to Empowerment;
- know which factors are connected with the quality of life of clients;
- understand the meaning of recovery and know the forms and phases of recovery;
- know why a good, respectful working relationship is necessary and how you can create it;
- be able to help people recognise their strengths and opportunities;
- be able to give people insight into the way they deal with challenges in life and with their own regulatory process;
- have drawn up an inventory of strengths and an action plan, and you will know how to use it in practice with clients in achieving the goals they have chosen;
- know how you can use your position to support the recovery processes of clients;
- know the conditions necessary to implement Pathways to Empowerment successfully and safeguard it.

Hopefully Pathways to Empowerment will give an impetus to enhancing the quality of counsellors' professional work and that it will support and strengthen disadvantaged people in their quest for a meaningful existence.

Structure of this book

This book about Pathways to Empowerment consists of 11 chapters divided into three parts, covering the foundations of Pathways to Empowerment, a strength-based counselling programme, and the conditions for implementing and safeguarding the methodology. At the end of the book there is a list of references and an index, as well as four appendices. Appendix 1 gives an explanation of the 10 life areas that are central to Pathways to Empowerment, with a number of sample questions for each area. Appendix 2 gives an overview of the strength-based

competences of counsellors. Appendix 3 gives an overview of the indicators and quality requirements of Pathways to Empowerment's model compliance, and Appendix 4 lists all the participants of the Academic Collaborative Center for Shelter and Recovery. This book is accompanied by a website – www.coutinho.nl/pathways – where you can find additional information.

Part I begins with a characterisation of Pathways to Empowerment and the methodology's target group: people in disadvantaged situations (Chapter 1). Chapter 2 gives an overview of the cornerstones of Pathways to Empowerment; addresses the concept of recovery and the relationship with the self and one's own identity; describes the four forms of recovery and the recovery process; and deals with recovery in relation to others, together with the conditions for recovery in society. This first part concludes with Chapter 3, which centres on the working relationship as the foundation of work with clients.

Part II gives an extensive description of the strength-based counselling programme. The successive chapters cover the seven basic tasks of this programme: meeting and connecting (Chapter 4), making an inventory of strengths (Chapter 5), evaluating self-regulation (Chapter 6), setting goals and drawing up an action plan (Chapter 7), supporting recovery (Chapter 8), and concluding (Chapter 9). Each of these chapters covers the importance of the basic task; goes into more detail about the subjects that are key to the basic task; and describes method-based tools and aids. Finally, tips and sample questions are given for counsellors to help in carrying out the basic task.

Part III covers the conditions for successfully implementing and sustainably safeguarding Pathways to Empowerment. Chapter 10 explains the importance and the steps of the team strength meeting (a form of peer-to-peer reflection for the counsellors). Chapter 11 addresses the importance of implementing and safeguarding, and describes the characteristics of a comprehensive change process that is needed to embed Pathways to Empowerment in a team or organisation. There is also a discussion of what is important for a good connection between Pathways to Empowerment and four levels of care (professionalism of counsellors, connections with the environment for the operational work with clients, work processes in a team or organisation, and management and policy). Finally, there is an outline of a learning organisation, because such an organisation offers favourable conditions for embedding Pathways to Empowerment.

Online study material

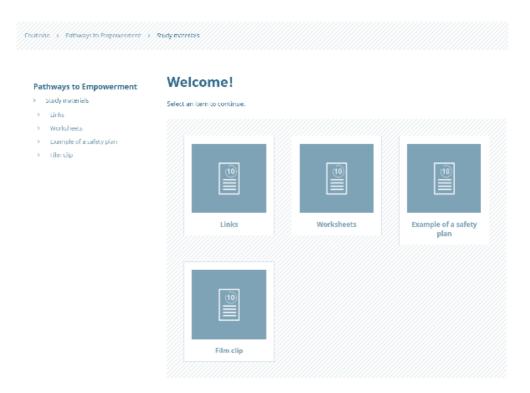
On www.coutinho.nl/pathways you will find the online study material that goes with this book. This material consists of:

- worksheets, for example of an inventory of strengths and of an action plan
- example of a safety plan

In this book, references are made to the website using this icon: //

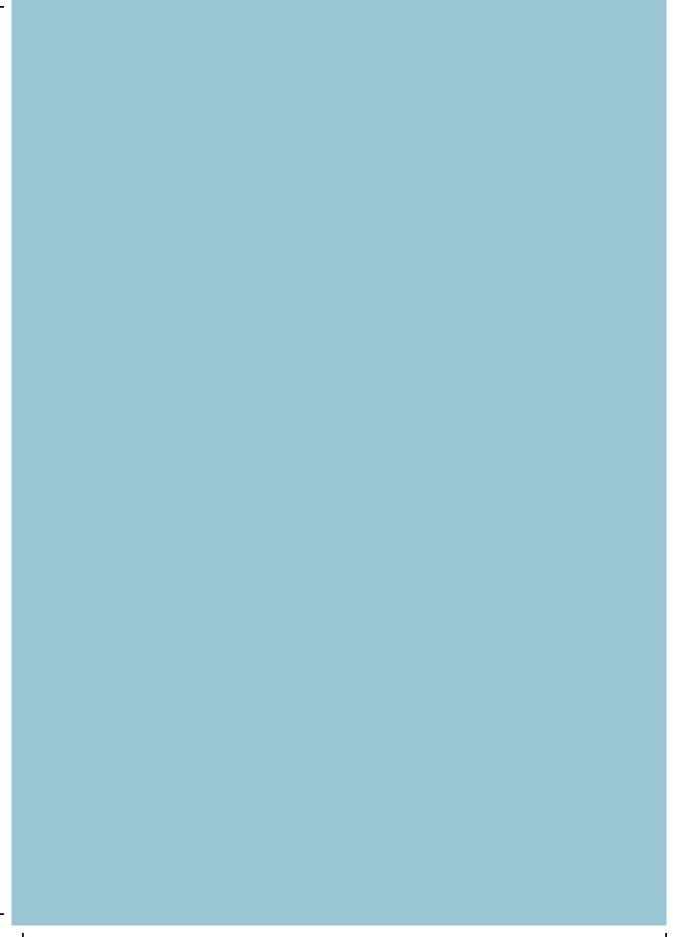


See www.impuls-onderzoekscentrum.nl for more background information and in depth knowledge (in Dutch).



PART I

Foundations of Pathways to Empowerment





Pathways to Empowerment provides principles and method-based tools for the social support of people in disadvantaged situations. This chapter begins with a characterisation of Pathways to Empowerment. It then describes how people fall behind and which factors play a role in this process. This provides points of reference for supporting clients in their recovery. We discuss a strength-based counselling programme, with an overview of the strength principles, the actors involved in the programme and the basic tasks and life areas of Pathways to Empowerment. We also describe the conditions for working on supporting recovery and the differences between practices that support recovery and those that do not. The chapter concludes with the importance of implementing Pathways to Empowerment in a way that is model-compliant.

1.1 Hope and prospects in disadvantaged situations

Pathways to Empowerment was developed to give new hope and prospects for a fulfilling life to people who have fallen behind in society. The principal cornerstone of Pathways to Empowerment can be found in the mission statement of this methodology for supporting recovery:

Supporting people in disadvantaged situations in their recovery process to become full members of society and to achieve the quality of life that they wish for.

Pathways to Empowerment takes the individual strengths and potential for growth of its clients as the starting point and focus of counselling. The basic principle is that even in the face of adversity and with limitations in their functioning, clients have the ability to recover, pick up their lives again and change. The ultimate limits of the potential for growth and change are not fixed in advance. The task of every counsellor in social work is to support clients in gaining an understanding of their personal situation and their values, in developing and achieving goals with the aim of living a meaningful existence, and in improving their self-regulation and resilience. Counsellors focus on using and

enhancing the client's competences as much as possible, and on building a social support structure for informal support, using professional help as little as possible (Siegel et al., 1995). You can read more about these and other strength principles in the box in subsection 1.5.5.

'My life hasn't always been easy and I've had to deal with really unpleasant situations. I had a negative self-image. Over time, you start to believe what everyone says about you. Things are different now. I'm approached on the basis of my strengths and opportunities. I've discovered that I can stand up well for myself and that I'm very sociable. I now know that I can make my own choices and achieve things. I ask questions about what I want for my future and how I can make it happen. The intention of strength-based working is for you to use your own strength to pick up your life again.' (Client)

1.1.1 Participation and personal control

The things that give sense to the lives of people in disadvantaged situations and give them strength include secure conditions of existence (housing, income, activities, security, etc.); the opportunity to make their own choices and achieve their own goals; the acceptance of their situation but also the knowledge that they are accepted by others; meaningful and reciprocal relationships; meaningful experiences and activities; and pleasure and relaxation (Plantinga, Oliemeulen, Vleems, Jansen & Wolf, 2011; Al Shamma, Wewerinke, Boersma, Beijersbergen & Wolf, 2012). Pathways to Empowerment responds to these needs and wants to help fulfil them, mainly by strengthening the participation and personal control of clients.

Participation means carrying out activities with others, with a view to achieving goals, and represents taking part in society in all its facets. This is all about being involved, belonging and having significance. It is connected with full citizenship, which is also one of Pathways to Empowerment's major cornerstones. Participation gives structure and meaning to life, provides opportunities to learn or improve competences and obtain resources (income, accommodation, support, etc.), enables meaningful bonds with others, strengthens feelings of self-esteem, and is essential for developing a positive identity. Through participation, people also receive critical feedback from others, which gives them the chance to regulate themselves and their behaviour better (Wolf, 2015). Taking part and belonging both call for reciprocity in relationships, actively fighting stigma or self-stigma, and the courage to let go of the benefits and advantages associated with illness and disability (Wolf, 2015).

Self-determination represents the principal value of respect (Donkers, 2015) and concerns the desire to gain and exercise an influence on the quality of your life and the quality of care, and also the wish to withstand in the best way possible emotional, physical, social and material challenges in life. The aim is for less dependency, more autonomy and greater positive health (Huber, Van Vliet, Giezenberg & Knottnerus,