LSCI-fidelity: how to keep LSCI as a central method in an organization

Gerrit De MOOR[*]

Abstract

The aim of this research is to investigate what kind of actions and initiatives that have been taken in the organization KOC St.-Gregorius in Gentbrugge, Belgium that helped to keep professional adults loyal to the method of LSCI.KOC St.-Gregorius was chosen as a model for good practice because of several reasons:The organization was involved with LSCI from the start of LSCI in Belgium and in Europe, starting with the initiative of OC Nieuwe Vaart in Ghent which is now a National Training Site (D'Oosterlinck, 2005). We speak about 2002.It is a huge organization. Huge organizations frequently struggle with implementation of new methods and with change in general; more than smaller organizations.The organization treats and takes care of children and youth from 3 to 21 years old with a wide range of handicaps or disorders. Regardless the type of disorder, LSCI is the main method for professionals to deal with children and youth in conflict or crisis (Long et al., 2001; Fecser, 2009, Darjan et al., 2014).The research aims to find out which actions towards fidelity have been taken so far; what is important for an action, activity or initiative to lead to LSCI-fidelity and which opportunities still have to be taken in the future. For this purpose, we used a questionnaire with both closed-ended and opened-ended responses. There were investigated the opinions of 59 members of the personnel. The findings and the conclusions of this study offer suggestions on how to stimulate the dedication for change and improvement, and the fidelity for proven efficient method in approaching troubled children and the youth.

Keywords: LSCI,

[*]KOC St.-Gregorius in Gentbrugge, Belgium, gerrit.de.moor@outlook.com

1. Enthusiasm and fidelity versus resistance to change

Schools and educational and re-educational facilities have an important role in socialization of the children and youth. They have to ensure the optimum conditions for effective education and personal growth of the students. For attaining this objective, schools and therapeutic milieus have to systematically improve theirs practices and to adjust the changes to school's culture. Schools and their personnel should be flexible and creative, to continuously learn and evolve (D'Oosterlinck et al., 2008;Soenen et al., 2013). As a living system, schools are put under a lot of stress in the process of transformation, and there are a lot of divergent forces, ones that solicit the changes, and ones that try to preserve the old structures and relations. The desirable outcomes of the transformative process should be a new educational and disciplinary philosophy, improved socio-emotional context and relations, and more efficient educational and therapeutic strategies (Broekaert,, 2009; Darjan, 2017). Along this road, it is important to identify and to address those factors that might sustain the enthusiasm for new and for change, and to overpass the inertia and the resistance to change.

In this paper we present the findings of a research that investigate this forces and motives in the particular case of our institution: KOC St.-Gregorius.

2. Methodology

2.1 Design and instrument of the research

The research design are investigative.As instrument, we developed a questionnaire, with both closed-ended and opened-ended responses.In order to get as much information as possible, the questions were open-ended.But the questionnaire starts with a few closed-ended questions about professional identity. The answers to these questions are not taken in account, but it could give important information to know how to connect as much staff as possible to the method of LSCI. The questionnaires were taken anonymously.

The extensive information from the answers of the open-ended questions were processed per question.From all answers, keywords were chosen. Next, the keywords were clustered – similar words were grouped and named.Than the original answers were re-read and categorized into a cluster and counted.With this method I could find out what was important for the staff in connection with LSCI-fidelity.

The questionnaire was distributed by e-mail to the professional e-mail addresss. The employees had about a month to answer. During that month, people were reminded to the questionnaire several times by e-mail and by means of the internal newsletter.

Finally, 59 people responded to the questionnaire. This is a low number, compared by the total of employees in our organization and compared by the number of employees that have been trained in LSCI.

This can be explained by the fact that people in our organization frequently are invited to fill in questionnaires.

2.2 The results

The first question about professional identity shows us a job function ratio as shown in figure 1: special educators – 47.46%, teamleaders – 22.03%, management staff – 16.95%, therapists – 13.56%.
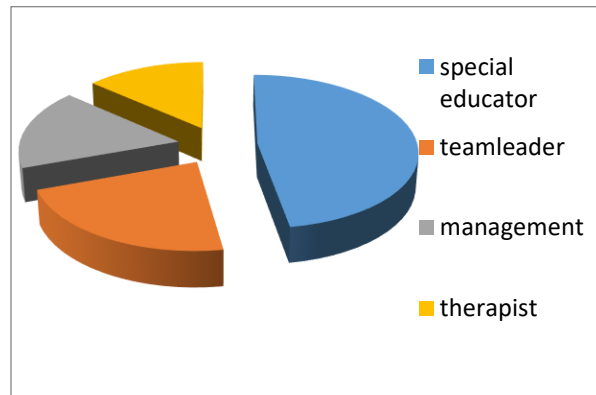

Figure 1: Professions

This is a realistic view on the real situation in our institution.

The second questions asks for the years in service of the people who answered the questionnaire. It shows that 47.46% of the people is working in our organization for more than 10 years. This means that nearly 50% of the employees witnessed most of the process we ran with LSCI. This is an interesting thought.
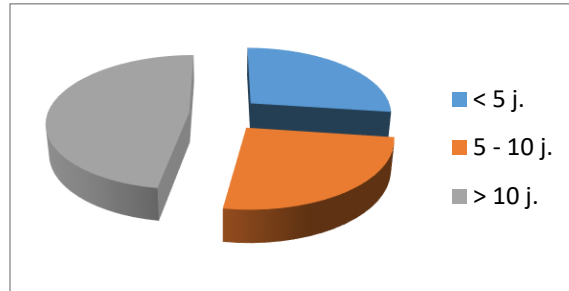
Figure 2: years in service

The third questions learns us that 83,05 % of the respondents work directly with children and youth. They are the special educators, teamleaders and therapists from the first question.
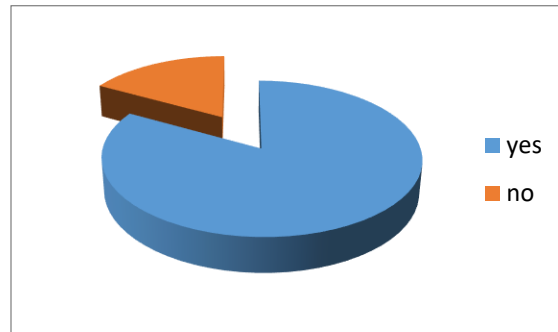

Figure 3: working directly with children

And finally, the fourth closed-ended question helps us to find out that 91.53% of the respondents have taken the 5-day course of LSCI. This is not a surprise, because, from the very start our pedagogical director has taken the decision that everyone who works directly with children must take the course; together with their management.
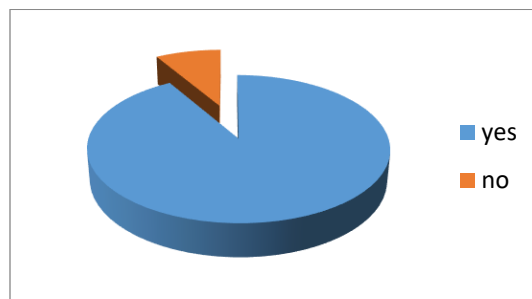

Figure 4: LSCI trained personnel

Next, we are looking to the information that comes from the open-ended questions.

The first questions aims to find out which actions and initiatives for keeping LSCI 'alive' in our organization are remembered by the respondents.

The answers need to be divided in two main groups and then answers are clustered in one group or the other. actions taken in connection with other organizations and actions within our own organization.

1. Actions taken in connection with other organizations (Fig. 5). This type of actions were mentioned 12 times by the respondents and they consist in support from scientific researches (41,67%), the insights and suggestions provided by other collaborative organizations (25%;), and being part of organizations such as EFeCT (European Federation of Conflict Management and Treatment in Education and Care) and MIGES (Minors with emotional and behavioral disorder) (33,33%).
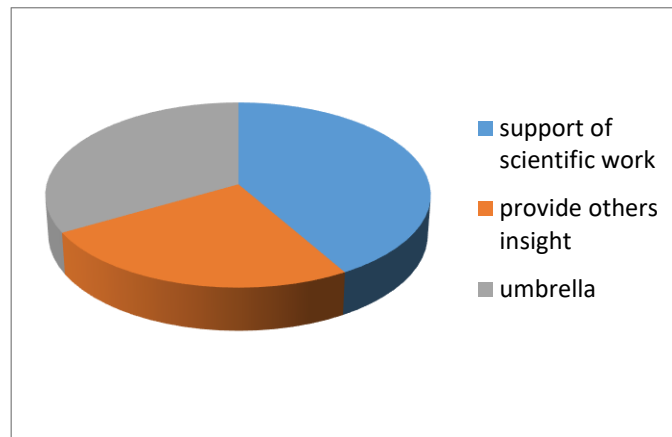

Figure 5: Actions taken outside the organization

2. Actions taken within the organization (Fig. 6). The main actions within the organization that keeps LSCI alive and assure the use of this method as the primary strategy are: the training in LSCI method (31,25 %), follow-ups (23,86%), registration (10,80%), the use of the correspondent materials (2,72%), daily work and procedures (11,36%), and out of the box actions (20,45%).
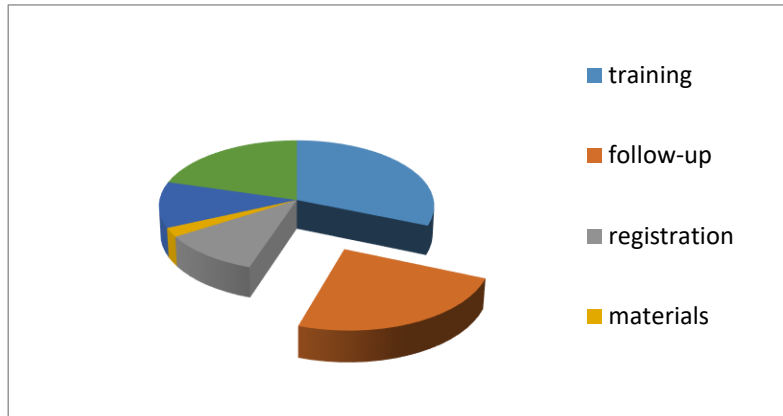
Figure 6: Actions taken within the organization

The second questions aims to find out why actions to keep LSCI 'alive' are appealing to employees.

The answers can be divided in two clusters: characteristics of the actions (Fig. 7) and effect of the actions (Fig. 8).

The characteristics of the actions mentioned were: variation in actions (29,23%), the link with the daily practices (20%), the lesser duration of the actions (13,85%), the frequency of the actions (12,31%), low threshold, attractiveness, clarity, and the visually presentation availability.
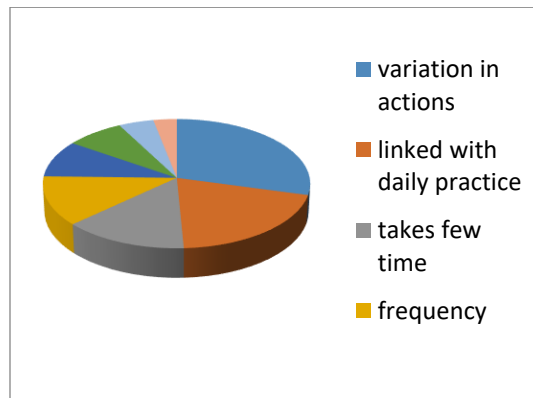

Figure 7: Characteristics of the actions.

The effects of the actions mentioned were: the prompt to open debates (28,83%), the improvement of personnel's self-confidence (28,83%), the feeling of appartenance to a community (16,67%), the efficacy on working with children and youth(12,50%), positive reinforcing, stimulation, and supportive effects.
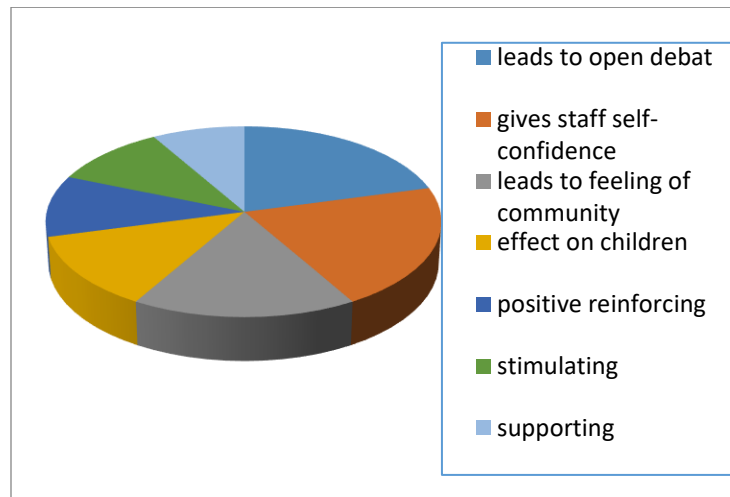

Figure 8: Effects of the actions

The last questions is concerned with identifying possible missed opportunities. This questions offers two types of suggestions: the actions that functions and should be continued (Fig. 9), and, also, some propositions and suggestions for further development and refinement (Fig. 10).

The respondents consider some actions that are relevant and useful and need to be carried out in the future: the trainings (basic and refresh courses) (26.14%), the supervision/intervision sessions (24.62%), the persistence in applying LSCI on a daily base (12.31%), the necessity of variation and creativity in working with LSCI (10.77%), the importance of working and discussing based on case studies (10.77%), the importance to embed LSCI in group plan, to develop and strengthen the LSCI community, to develop task force, to have common meetings, and so on.
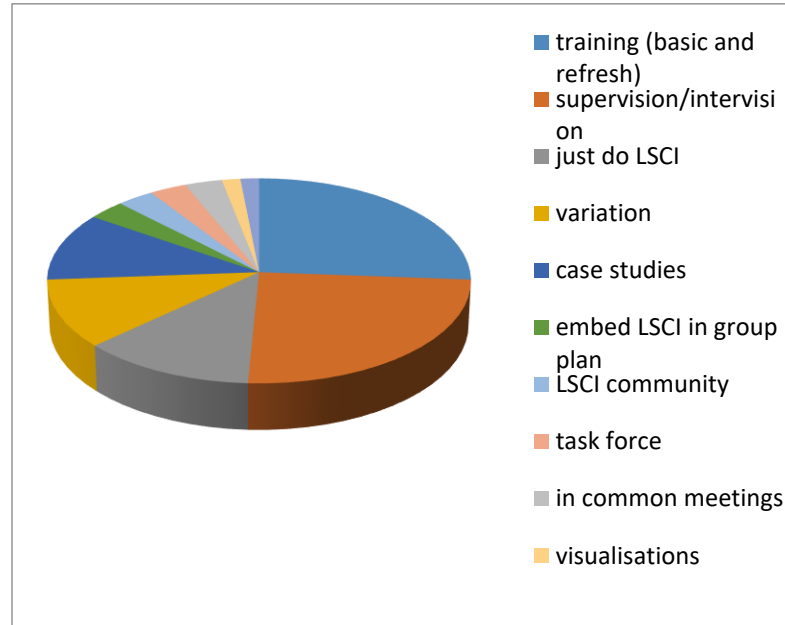
Figure 9: Actions to hold on to.

Also, there were some interested new ideas and suggestions mentioned:

- Regardingthe foundations of LSCI, 6 respondents indicated that is also important to pay attention to the theoretical foundations of LSCI, to broader the framework of the method (22.22%);

- setting LSCI as high profile: 18.52% of the respondents emphasize that we should see and present LSCI as a high profile technique;

- 14.81% express the need for adaptation of LSCI for children that are less verbal; while LSCI is a verbal strategy

- the importance of connecting and correlate the LSCI theories and strategies with other theories and pedagogical frameworks is a need of 11.11% of the respondents.

- 11.11% indicate that it would be useful to have a LSCI-representative in each team; "a super-trained colleague that can be addressed anytime."

Further on, there are some other ideas which are mentioned one or two times: the necessity and utility of training parents in LSCI method, the relevance of developing and stating the long term goals of the LSCI method, the usefulness of systematically measure the effects of interventions and to adapt the strategies (RtI).
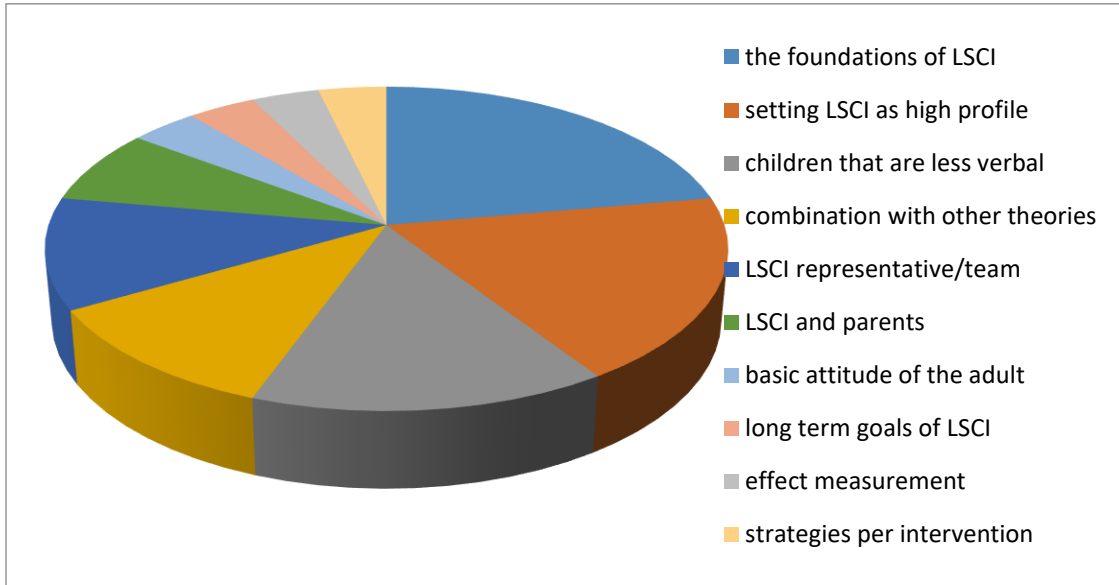
Figure 10: New ideas

2.3 Discussion

The most relevant and insightful ideas were obtained via the open-ended questions of the questionnaire. These questions assessed three main topics: the supplementary, outside the organization actions that promote fidelity for LSCI method, their appealing and valuable characteristics, and the suggestions for future developments and actions that could keep the enthusiasm for LSCI method alive.We will present the conclusions of these open-ended questions.

Relevant and fidelity-promoting actions

The actions outside the organizations seems of minor importance compared to the actions taken within the organization since these actions are fewer mentioned.But although these action are fewer in number, they always give a boost for the actions within the organization. So a few actions in connection with other organizations boost and support the internal actions. Therefore, even few in number, they are important.

For the inside actions, training and follow-ups are the foundation of the LSCI fidelity. Here we are talking about initial training and refresh courses. Follow-up actions lead to implementation into daily work and procedures. Registration should be a standard procedure too, but it is not for the moment.

The out-of-the-box actions are important because it holds something for everyone. It keeps the professional actions fun, light and creative.The use of LSCI-materials such as the book and manual seem of less importance for LSCI-fidelity. But they can be a back-up and reference for other actions or for difficult situations.

It is important to emphasize that it is the decision of the pedagogical director to obligate all employees, from management to field workers and therapists, to attend the 5-day LSCI course.

Other actions or initiatives are taken by a variety of employees: management, team leaders, special educators and therapists can bring in ideas or actions to keep LSCI 'alive'. This way of working helps to keep fidelity to the method high for everyone.

Why actions are appealing?

It is remarkable that respondents indicate the characteristics of the actions to point out why something is appealing; but they also see effects of the actions that have been taken as important to be appealing.

For the characteristics, the variety in actions is very important. It makes that some actions appeal to some people; other actions appeal to others. That is why we reach many employees. Also the frequency of the different actions plays its role for LSCI fidelity.

Also the fact that LSCI is linked with the daily practice, is important. People experience that many aspects of LSCI have an influence how to work with children and youth; so 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating' and if it tastes well, it leads to fidelity for the method.

For the effects of the actions, it strikes that bringing in LSCI as a method leads to open discussions; the perspective of the professional adults is broadened. Together with a increase of self-confidence of the staff and the effect on the children's behavior, the employees start believing in the power of LSCI.

The common language to define behavioral patterns and to frame certain behavior, the sharing of experiences and the idea that LSCI transcend the organizational hierarchy leads to a feeling of community; belonging to a larger LSCI-world.

Ideas for the future

When we ask people for ideas for the future, it strikes that they have a need to stick to actions and initiatives that occurred in the past. Not only people refer to what they know,

but it emphasizes the impact of earlier actions. The training, follow-up and the variety of actions are the main backbone.

Nevertheless, we missed some opportunities in the past. People not only need a good method, but have also a need to know the foundations of the method. It makes the practice of the method more profound. And it helps to link LSCI to other methods.

The respondents also see a need to define LSCI as a high profile method and a way to identify our organization.

Adaptation of a verbal strategy for children that are less verbal is another challenge for the future.

Furthermore, there are some more different ideas that need to be investigated for their importance towards LSCI fidelity.

Conclusion

KOC St.-Gregorius in Gentbrugge, Belgium was chosen as an example for good practice in the field of LSCI fidelity for a number of reasons.

The first one was to identify what are the memorable and relevant actions and initiatives that keep LSCI 'alive' in the organization? What makes such an action appealing for the employees? What opportunities did we miss in the past and are important for the future?

The fact that all employees are obligated to attend the training, together with refresh courses and follow-ups is the backbone of the LSCI-fidelity.

All along this backbone, there are a number of important preconditions that ensure the fidelity for LSCI.

First of all, LSCI is a strong method that is directly linked to the daily work and brings changes in the children, the staff and the organization.

Besides training, refresh courses and follow-ups, there are wide variety of actions that aim for LSCI fidelity; formal and informal. The method of LSCI is embedded in the daily work procedures, but there are also a lot of actions that have, in origin, nothing to do with LSCI, but are informally linked with LSCI in a creative way. This helps to make LSCI more than a method, but also a way of thinking and forming community.

This wide variety of actions is the main fact when it comes to be appealing; certainly when there is a high frequency of appearance of LSCI actions. The link with the daily work makes an action also appealing, certainly when it takes few time.

Furthermore there are some important effects of LSCI actions and initiatives that makes it appealing; such as the increase of the staff's self-confidence, the effect on the children's behavior, the feeling of community and open communication that will bring the organizational hierarchy in another perspective.

The respondents highlight the need to keep up this way of working and they point out some ideas and challenges for the future. Especially the foundations of LSCI and the compatibility with other methods is an important issue for the future, together with the challenge to adapt LSCI so it could be of more importance for children that are less verbal.This way of working leads to fidelity toward the LSCI method, and this fidelity is boosted from time to time by actions that transcend the boundaries of our own organization.

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