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**Janika Lindström & Karoliina Nikula**

Professionals' perspectives on the competences of expert-by-experience workers with a history of crime and substance abuse in social-sector work

This article examines the competences of expert-by-experience workers from the perspective of social-sector professionals. We sought to discover what kind of competences expert-by-experience workers with a history of crime and substance abuse bring to their work with social-sector professionals and social workers. We used group interviews with employees of organisations employing expert-by-experience workers as research data. The data were transcribed, and content analysis proceeded in a data-driven manner. The competences of expert-by-experience workers were examined through Delamare Le Deist and Winterton's (2005) competence typology and the model of moral judgement proposed by Rest et al. (1999). The findings suggest that expert-by-experience workers have a wide range of competencies that not only complement those of professionals, but also enrich them with their unique perspective and ability to understand clients with a background of crime and substance abuse and their needs.

Keywords: expert-by-experience, competence, social sector, NGO