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## ii. Improved mental health services - Bulgaria

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| <p>Organisation</p>  | <p>National Center of Public Health and Analyses</p>    |
| <p>Location and timing of practice</p>   | <p>The project was developed and carried out in Bulgaria from 2015 – 2017. The information and methodologies created as part of this project are available for free use by all interested parties and can be found on the project’s website.</p> |
| <p>Title</p>   | <p>Project “Improved mental health care services”</p>  |
| <p><b>Objective:</b></p> <p>The main aim of the project was to improve public health and develop evidence-based policies on mental health. The specific objectives of the project were to increase the knowledge of GPs, doctors, psychologists and social workers for early detection and treatment of common mental health issues. Target groups and final beneficiaries were GPs; school teachers and psychologists; those with mental health issues and their families.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Detailed content:</b></p> <p>The activities of the project cover two areas – information and training.</p> <p><b>Information:</b></p> <p>The project took a public campaign to raise awareness of mental health problems and suicidal behaviour. A brochure with useful information about depression and anxiety was prepared, printed and distributed across the country, as well as an information leaflet about child aggression in schools and how to overcome it.</p> <p><b>Training:</b></p> <p>Experts from the Regional Health Inspection of the Ministry of Health were trained to work with young people in schools on topics such as depression, anxiety, aggression and self-aggression (which includes self-harm, self-blame, self-humiliate etc). GPs, psychologists and social workers were also trained for the early detection of these disorders. A web portal was developed to provide online training on mental health, providing lectures, case studies and video examples which allow the individual to gain a theoretical knowledge on the most important aspects for the early detection of anxiety and depression. There is also an offline</p> |  |



“Guide to Early Detection of Anxiety and Depression in Primary Care” which is provided to the professionals. Additional specialised Guides were developed for teachers and psychologists working with students in the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades.

In addition to this, material was published regarding the formation of support groups for people that have experienced a suicide of someone close, as well as materials covering suicide prevention, for the rest of the project’s target groups.

Since the beginning of 2017, an online platform for data on suicide attempts was launched.

### Evaluation of results:

More than 2000 professionals from 16 districts in Bulgaria have undergone the online training for early detection of anxiety and depression. As part of a public campaign, 6 TV shows were broadcasted in highly rated national TV stations and 8 radio interviews on national radio. 10 interviews were also published in a national daily paper and 12 materials in regional newspapers. As an echo of all the activities of the public campaign, over 20 news broadcasts on various TV channels mentioned the project, and there have been more than 40 publications in print media and 200 online. The information campaign videos (a 3-minute and a 10-minute video) were available across 10 news sites and health portals.

### What makes it a good/best practice?

This is innovative project for Bulgaria because it is the first large-scale training that has been carried out for GPs and professionals at schools with the aim to prevent and detect mental health issues and symptoms. The project partners are aware that the project results are the foundation for future work, because the attitudes towards the people with mental health conditions and the knowledge regarding mental health cannot be changed in two years. Nevertheless the information campaign, the training courses and the developed offline materials provide considerable information on the topic and place an important emphasis on its significance.

### How can it be adapted to VET?

In order for the goals to be obtained, the project encompasses a wide range of target groups - the final beneficiaries are GPs; school teachers and psychologists; those with mental health problems, their families and other vulnerable groups.

In order to be used into VET, the project could be adapted mostly in its part targeting school teachers and school counsellors..

Detailed manuals for school teachers can be designed on a local (school), regional or national levels that include the most important theoretical aspects for early detecting of depression and anxiety. This way the group of the teachers will be informed and actively included in the process of detecting such states.

Along with all this, a material can be designed for school counsellors to provide them help in creating support groups for students that have experienced a suicide of a close one.



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| Brochures can also be made, as well as short video clips or another kind of informative materials to be spread amongst the students and the trainees, aiming to prevent suicide and to provide wider understanding of the states of anxiety and depression. |   |
| Other information   | Website: <a href="http://www.bgmental.info/bg">http://www.bgmental.info/bg</a><br>Facebook <a href="https://www.facebook.com/ncpha.government.bg/">https://www.facebook.com/ncpha.government.bg/</a><br>Available in Bulgarian and English. |
| Contact   | <a href="mailto:ncpha@ncpha.government.bg">ncpha@ncpha.government.bg</a>  |

### iii. PERMIND - Spain

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| Organisation                    | Fundación INTRAS   | <br>Permaculture applied in the recovery process of people with mental illness |
| Location and timing of practice | The project has been developed in Valladolid, Castile and León and Tarroconte, in Tenerife, Canary Island, both in Spain. The project started in June 2017 and finished in August 2019.  |   |
| Title                           | PERMIND Project  |   |
| Objective:                      | <p>PERMIND is a horticulture training course for people with mental health issues that uses permaculture as a therapy aiming to improve social and personal development. Permaculture is an innovative, and therefore relatively unknown) system of agricultural and social design principles imitating the no waste, closed loop systems seen in diverse natural systems and inspired in the patterns and features observed in natural ecosystems.</p>  |   |
| Detailed content:               | <p>Permaculture is a multidisciplinary toolbox including agriculture, hydrology, energy, natural building, waste management, animal systems, appropriate technology, economics and community development. It is based on care of earth, care of people and fare share.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Permaculture as therapy: Several studies have reported the benefits of horticultural therapy and garden settings in reduction of pain, improvement in attention, lessening of stress, modulation of agitation, decreasing the need for medication, antipsychotics and thereby reducing hospitalisations.</li> </ol> |   |

