ME-Health's

GOOD PRACTICES GUIDEBOOK

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Introduction

All the countries participating in the project (Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Poland, and the Netherlands) have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Starting from March 2020, everyone's life has changed completely. In 2020-2021, school lockdowns and remote learning became commonplace. Throughout most of the school year, primary, secondary and tertiary schools experienced frequent closures or implemented a hybrid education model combining distance learning with limited in-person attendance by small groups of students. Some final exams in 2020 and 2021 were cancelled or postponed, causing additional stress among young people unsure of their and their families' future.

The sanitary crisis and the need to rely on distant education had brought to the fore social inequalities, with less privileged students struggling with a lack of access to digital resources. This situation compelled countries and local communities to confront the significant challenge of addressing the shortage of essential equipment, such as notebooks, tablets, and laptops, both for teachers and students. Schools, local administrations, and governments set up numerous support programs in this field to provide young people with the equipment that would allow them to get access to education. Distance learning has proven a big challenge for teachers, parents, and educators. They needed to adapt to new conditions of teaching and supporting young people via digital tools.

The COVID-19 crisis affected not only schools but also everyone's private lives. Public leisure facilities such as cinemas, theatres, and cafes were closed, and, in some countries, curfews were imposed, limiting the right to domestic travel. People had to face a new situation at home, living with their families 24/7 and spending most of their professional, educational, and private lives in front of the computer screen. This predominantly affected households facing harsh social conditions, with restricted access to private space and digital equipment.

Research conducted during the pandemic revealed a negative impact on children's well-being, learning opportunities, and safety caused by school closures. This situation harmed children's mental health and exacerbated societal inequalities – for example, in Poland, the Czech Republic, and France. Research worldwide confirms the increase of symptoms, especially anxiety and depression, among children and adolescents in connection with the pandemic and its consequences. In general, more and more children and adolescents under the age of 18 require psychiatric and/or psychological assistance[1].

Moreover, there was a rise in the number of children and adolescent admissions to hospitals at the beginning of the school year (a phenomenon not observed in previous years) and

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[1]   UNICEF, (2020). Averting a lost Covid generation. A six-point plan to respond, recover and reimagine a post-pandemic world for every child (from:) https://www.unicef.org/media/86881/file/Averting-a-lost-covid-generation-world-childrens-day-data-and-advocacy-brief-2020.pdf

emergency hospitalizations, mainly due to suicidal intentions and actions (Austria).[2] Less severe psychological and pedagogical problems began to appear more frequently. Fear for the future, fear of getting sick, dissatisfaction with the ban on leaving home alone and meeting peers, the feeling of isolation and loneliness, frustration with not being able to meet the school's expectations, distance learning, including the technical unpreparedness or insufficiency in the families, lack of motivation, problems with concentration, lower self-confidence, depressed mood, stress due to the uncertainty related to future exams, the course of recruitment to secondary and tertiary schools – these are only a few of them. For this reason, **the most frequent pedagogical and psychological problems** among the countries of the ME-Health partnership are the subject of exchange between partners. They will be presented further in this guidebook.

Additionally, the pandemic has clearly shown the vast importance of **digital tools** in school education. This challenge is still present. It requires continuous support, training knowledge, and know-how development to allow teachers to tackle learning disadvantages among young people and favor their education and mental well-being.

This is why this guidebook, which is a **collection of all partners' observations**, retraces the experiences in the partner countries that have brought about changes in teaching methods and psychological support for young people. It concentrates mainly on ages between 13 and 18, aligning with the primary focus of the ME-Health project. It provides an exhaustive description of the tools used and a **list of psychological and pedagogical institutions** in all partner regions.

This guidebook is primarily intended for teachers, parents, and various educators working with young people who support them psychologically and educationally. Moreover, different elements presented in the document about the crisis can be reused during events with comparable consequences.

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2   https://pflege-professionell.at/at-psychiatrische-versorgung-in-oesterreich-prekaer

CHAPTER

1

Identification and description

of the most frequent psychological and pedagogical problems that appeared among young people due to the COVID-19 crisis and changes in education

Age 13 to 18 is a crucial period of development[3]. It is a critical time for socialization and the pursuit of independence, marking the transitional phase between childhood and adulthood. Any unresolved issues during this period can potentially influence a person's future life and development. In essence, problems not addressed in adolescence can have lasting consequences.

A person's development is intricately linked to three key factors:

- **Social Context:** This encompasses interactions with others, including peers, family, and society at large. These interactions profoundly shape an individual's understanding of the world and their role within it.
- **Pedagogical Context:** This pertains to an individual's ability to learn and function within an educational system and environment. Schools and educational experiences play a significant role in shaping cognitive and social development.
- **Internal Psychological Factors:** These are unique to each individual and encompass their thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and personality traits. Internal psychological factors greatly influence how a person perceives and responds to their social and pedagogical contexts.

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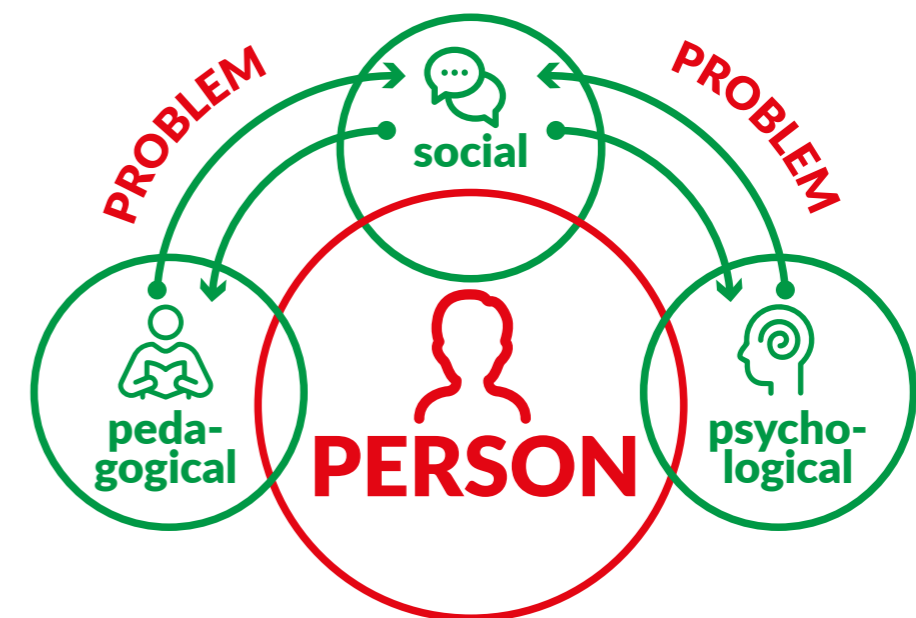
[3]   David R. Shaffer, Katherine Kipp: Developmental Psychology: Childhood and Adolescence, Cengage Learning, 2020

Addressing challenges and providing support during adolescence is crucial, as it represents a foundational period of growth and self-discovery. Nurturing positive development during this time can lead to a more well-rounded and capable adult.

The COVID-19 pandemic marked the first global health crisis in the 21st century. **Due to the restrictions, young people had to endure periods of isolation and quarantine, resulting in persistent fear and stress.** These adverse conditions contributed to setbacks in their developmental progress.

Adults, such as teachers, parents, educators, psychologists, and social workers who typically support adolescents aged 13-18, found themselves unprepared for dealing with issues arising from the pandemic. They experienced anxiety and confusion themselves, necessitating counseling and support. This situation led teenagers to feel they could not rely on these adults, even when they sought someone to lean on.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a catastrophic crisis, and we perceive it as such when discussing the most common psychological and pedagogical problems that arose during this period in the five regions of our partnership. We have categorized these issues into three distinct phases, which align with the progression of a catastrophic crisis[4]:

1. **Threat/Heroic phase**
2. **Aid organization phase**
3. **Reconstruction phase**

Given the intricate web of issues, often interwoven, it was challenging to establish clear demarcations. Nevertheless, we have organized all problems into three main categories:

A. **Psychological problems**
B. **Social problems**
C. **Educational/pedagogical problems**

This division helps us gain a more comprehensible understanding of this multifaceted situation.

1. THREAT/HEROIC PHASE

In this phase, we emphasize three primary societal priorities: saving lives, minimizing harm, and anticipating the start of the next phase. COVID-19's initial phase began with the declaration of the first and subsequent lockdowns.

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[4]   Richard James, Burl Gilliland: Crisis Intervention Strategies, Cengage Learning Inc, 2020

1. A.
PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

At the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, countries struggled to find an optimal way to fight the pandemic. Restrictions imposed by authorities limited physical activities and face-to-face interactions. Many decisions, such as limiting access to public parks and even forests, were unclear to the public and led to organizational chaos. Additionally, there were conflicting arguments regarding lockdowns and vaccinations. Social media were inundated with fake news like never before, which laid the foundation for emotional turmoil. Strong emotions such as **fear of disease, insecurity, uncertainty about the future, confusion, frustration, and even anger** became a part of teenagers' daily lives. Concurrently, media consumption increased significantly. These developments resulted in three main problems: disrupted day and night routines, sleep and eating disorders, and self-esteem-related challenges.

1. B.
SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Due to a shortage of data, there was uncertainty about the disease's contagiousness. To mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the number of cases and deaths, lockdowns were implemented in all the countries participating in the ME-Health project. However, these measures were often enacted without proper communication to the public. As previously mentioned, these actions had implications for individuals' psychological well-being. Additionally, the lack of contact with peers and family members (either due to the lack of digital equipment or fear of contracting COVID-19) led to an **increased aversion to social interactions** and became a source of social problems. Physical distancing measures also resulted in **touch deprivation and declining social skills**. Some teenagers lost the sense of safety provided by the school environment and, in some cases, resorted to being on the streets. In contrast, some pupils were constantly with their parents, missing out on valuable time with their peers.

These significant changes in daily life routines resulted in disobedience, **rebellion, and even aggression and violence towards others or self-harm**. Additionally, we observed a rise in drug and alcohol abuse among teenagers.

1. C.
EDUCATIONAL/PEDAGOGICAL PROBLEMS

Our target group is composed of teenagers aged 13-18. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns shifted education from physical classrooms to virtual spaces and was a rapid change that prompted various responses from pupils. The suspension of school activities and exams without suitable alternatives, a scarcity of digital educational resources, and disruptions to daily routines and free time schedules caused significant upheaval in everyday life. Daily routines were altered, leading to an **increased reliance on technology**. However, the inadequate technological infrastructure of educational institutions posed a hurdle to effective online learning. **Pupils faced challenges related to motivation, technical skills, and collaborating with peers and groups during virtual classes.** Frequent technical issues further exacerbated these difficulties, resulting in erratic frustration and concentration issues during online lessons.

2. AID ORGANIZATION PHASE

This is a phase when the basic sense of security starts to rebuild. Society is learning how to deal with various consequences of a disaster, securing basic needs, and beginning to provide material, informational, and emotional support.

In the COVID-19 pandemic, this phase could be observed from April 2020 to March 2022.

2. A.
PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

In the second phase, we observed the deepening of problems that had already surfaced during the first. These included heightened confusion and chaos due to an evolving system, a **progressive decline in confidence, and lower self-esteem**. Escape behavior became more pronounced, with pupils becoming even more engrossed in digital media. Their online time was often unchecked and unrestricted.

New issues also emerged. **Fatigue, exhaustion, and heightened emotional stimulation** became increasingly common. Many pupils experienced **frustration, anger, sadness, and a desire for rebellion**. Pupils began to group themselves based on how they coped with these new challenges.

However, there were some positive developments as well. Teachers and parents became more attuned to the psychological challenges their pupils and children were facing, enabling earlier and more effective support. As the pandemic and lockdowns continued, new rules and regulations emerged, providing young people with a sense of stability.

2. B.
SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Lockdowns forced many families to spend much more time together under one roof than before. For adolescents, who typically, at this stage of life, broaden their social circles and explore new social roles, this period proved to be extremely challenging. Establishing new connections and forming an identity beyond the family unit are vital developmental aspects. During lockdowns, however, these **social interactions were severely restricted** and were mainly limited to online interactions with peers.

Moreover, conflicts within families, whether between parents or among siblings, coupled with witnessing their struggles and helplessness, eroded teenagers' trust in adults in general.

Compared to 84% of adults, 96% of young people in the EU between 16 and 29 reported accessing the internet daily in 2022[5]. Although most social media apps require users to be at least 13 years old, almost half of the children aged 9-16 visit social media at least once a day.[6] As online contacts became the easiest and safest way to maintain relationships during the COVID-19 pandemic, **the transition from physical to digital relations accelerated**. This shift also brought about changes in how children met and formed friendships.

Typically, during this stage of life, young people start gaining their initial work experience and building social skills in a work environment. However, with seasonal and part-time jobs put on hold, many teenagers could not do so. The absence of such activities prevented them from earning extra income and hindered their ability to take their first steps towards financial independence.

5   https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20230714-1
6   https://www.eukidsonline.ch/files/Eu-kids-online-2020-international-report.pdf

2.C.
EDUCATIONAL/PEDAGOGICAL PROBLEMS

Traditionally, teenagers encounter numerous challenges in the school environment, such as transitioning from primary to higher levels, adapting to new peer groups, adjusting to new school routines, and adopting new learning methods. They also grapple with peer pressure, exam-related stress, and bullying. However, during the pandemic, these issues migrated online, and new challenges arose.

Pupils quickly adapted to online education, which often led to increased cheating. **Reduced effort during classes, diminished satisfaction from studying and a decline in the value of grades since they no longer accurately reflected knowledge (due to widespread cheating) were among the most common problems**. Online distractions further compounded these issues, resulting in reduced concentration during lessons. Those who started a new school or class with unfamiliar peers faced additional adaptation challenges due to the shift to online learning, which limited their physical interactions with classmates.

Online classes also presented numerous issues. Pupils often struggled with motivation and engagement with no teacher or supervisor physically present. Communication problems between teachers and pupils, and among peers, were frequent. **The lack of face-to-face interactions and feedback**, often caused by turned-off cameras, significantly hindered the learning experience.

Furthermore, digital learning had a substantial impact on physical health. **Young people's posture deteriorated, their sleep schedules were disrupted, and their overall physical fitness declined.** Extended periods of sitting in front of a screen could lead to body pain, eye strain, and headaches.

3. RECONSTRUCTION PHASE

The third phase of this catastrophic crisis focuses on supporting individuals in coping with their difficulties, regaining a sense of control over their future, and addressing lingering issues from earlier phases. This phase can be further divided into two periods – a short-term phase, typically lasting from six months to at least one year, and a long-term phase that can extend over decades.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this phase commenced after the final round of lockdowns was lifted and continues to the present day.

3. A.
PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Even as lockdowns ended and pupils returned to physical school attendance, **many problems that arose during the pandemic continued to persist**. Feelings of anxiety and depression, in some instances, escalated to the point of addiction and eating disorders. Extended periods of isolation resulted in ongoing issues related to self-esteem, and social anxiety became a significant factor.

Mental fatigue, exacerbated by uncertainty about the future and fear of illness and death, further deepened the problems. Heightened mental fatigue resulted in a more pronounced **lack of motivation, decreased creativity and inspiration, and overall exhaustion**. In some cases, this deterioration in mental health led to an **increase in serious mental disorders**, contributing to issues like psychoactive substance abuse and self-mutilation.

3. B.
SOCIAL PROBLEMS

In the social sphere of adolescent life, a multitude of changes occurred. One of the most notable shifts was the overall change in lifestyle, characterized by significantly less physical activity and reduced physical contact. The transition to digital forms of peer-to-peer interaction had significant consequences, as teenagers became **more susceptible to fake news and conspiracy theories**, which tend to multiply on social media platforms.

Moreover, the surge in digital interaction brought about different challenges. Teenagers faced setbacks in developing their communication skills, particularly in resolving issues within their peer relationships. This, in turn, resulted in additional divisions and unsocial behaviors in schools, including disobedience of classroom rules, which were less prevalent during lockdowns.

There was also a **decline in the ability to work effectively in groups**. Excessive involvement in social media could lead to a decrease in individuality, as many social media apps are designed to promote specific trends that contribute to a "culture of conformity." The desire to fit in is strong among teenagers, especially younger ones, often leading them to become part of a larger trend or group that may not have been associated with their class, school, or pre-pandemic circle of friends. These dynamics have been linked to observed issues with empathy and cooperation during classroom-based teamwork.

3.C.
EDUCATIONAL/PEDAGOGICAL PROBLEMS

During the COVID-19 pandemic, schools had to adapt to new conditions, **transitioning from in-person teaching to digital formats**. Teachers faced difficulties with equipment, a lack of information and communication technology (ICT) skills, and the challenge of making online classes engaging. **The pandemic also exposed the digital divide in society.** It highlighted the important role that schools play in teaching children digital skills.

However, despite these efforts, most pupils lost significant learning time, resulting in gaps in their general knowledge. Many social issues mentioned earlier also had repercussions on the educational and pedagogical spheres, as schools play a crucial role in adolescent development.

The majority of pupils learned less than they would have in a typical year. This leads to new challenges. Pupils who advanced to the next grade often did so without being adequately prepared and missing key knowledge. This can lead to knowledge gaps that can impact their ongoing learning, performance in school-leaving exams, and potentially their performance in the workforce.

CHAPTER
2

Solutions
to tackle the most frequent psychological and pedagogical problems that appeared among young people due to the COVID-19 crisis and changes in education

The COVID-19 crisis has brought about significant changes in the education system, resulting in various psychological and pedagogical problems among young people, as described in Chapter I.

This chapter aims to explore **recommendations on how to implement the solutions**. Drawing on research, best practices and expert opinions, this chapter offers practical solutions that can help schools, families, and communities support the mental health and academic success of young people during challenging times.

The proposed recommendations and strategies can be applied to various stages of a crisis and adapted to different types of unexpected challenges, whether it be a pandemic, war, or any other crisis. Therefore, this chapter focuses on guiding a range of stakeholders who may utilize and tailor these recommendations to their specific needs in the future.

Moreover, regarding the previous chapter and the unique context that the ME-Health project addresses, we are now in the third phase of a crisis: the reconstruction phase. Our collective goal is to rebuild what we consider "normalcy" and to aid young people in regaining their psychological equilibrium, fostering a positive school environment, facilitating optimal learning conditions, and ensuring they receive the best possible support from adults.

We have organized the **solutions into four primary groups**, each corresponding to a distinct stakeholder in the realm of education and the well-being of young individuals. These solutions are not limited to these specific groups but are recommended to be carried out by them, given their capacity and relevance in addressing these critical issues.

1. PARENTS

Parents are the primary caregivers and play a crucial role in the upbringing and development of children. They are responsible for providing support and guidance, including their education.

SUPPORT PROACTIVELY, STAY CALM, AND MAINTAIN CONTACT.

Parents can contribute to their children's well-being by demonstrating emotional resilience and remaining composed when faced with the challenges presented by the crisis. Setting an example of positive coping strategies such as mindfulness, relaxation techniques, and fostering positive self-talk can aid their children in managing stress and anxiety effectively. Open and honest communication between parents and children about their worries and fears can create a supportive environment.

Furthermore, parents should maintain communication with both their children and their schools. Regular contact with teachers and school administrators enables parents to monitor their children's progress, identify emerging issues or concerns, and stay informed about their children's education and mental health. This collaboration can be instrumental in addressing any challenges that may arise.

PROVIDE AND KEEP ROUTINES.

Having a routine can be helpful in times of unpredictability, uncertainty, and stress. Implementing a structure to one's day can give a sense of control and increase feelings of security. Conversely, the lack of routine can exacerbate feelings of distress and make people dwell on the negative. Moreover, it can also negatively affect the ability to focus and learn. Therefore, parents should help their children establish structure and some schedule in their daily lives. This will allow young people to stay on track with their education and maintain a sense of "normalcy." This can include setting aside specific times for learning, exercise, sports, eating, socializing, and maintaining sleep and hygiene practices.

STRENGTHEN INVOLVEMENT IN EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES.

While introducing and keeping routines, it is crucial not to forget the importance of quality time spent with your children. Parents can strengthen their children's involvement in everyday activities by prioritizing family time, involving them in making decisions, supporting their interests and fostering collaboration. They might be concerned with daily household chores, leisure time, and educational activities. These actions can help promote family bonding, increase children's sense of belonging and engagement, and support their overall well-being.

SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALL SOCIAL SKILLS OR ACTIVITIES STIMULATING INTERACTIONS.

Social skills are essential for the development and well-being of young people. During lockdowns, in most cases, interactions between adolescents decreased significantly. Parents can support the development of social skills and stimulate interactions by promoting creativity, e.g., encouraging children to engage in art, music, or creative writing. They can foster communication skills by discussing feelings openly and by listening actively.

Another important social skill is building empathy. It can be enhanced through parents' interaction with their children. Parents can help them consider the perspectives and feelings of others during lockdowns. And when the lockdowns are over, they can provide opportunities to volunteer, donate to charity or engage in other community services.

LOOK FOR EXTERNAL HELP WHEN NEEDED (PSYCHOLOGISTS/ PSYCHIATRISTS/PEDAGOGUES/TEACHERS).

It can be difficult for adults to recognize when a child needs support with mental health issues. Parents rely on their knowledge about their children, changes in their behavior, the rise of new problems connected with a school or their environment, and their intuition. If they feel they cannot deal with their children's psychological or pedagogical well-being alone, parents should look for help. This can be provided at schools or specialized institutions that offer support from psychologists, therapists, psychiatrists, or pedagogues. Parents' well-being is also vital for their children's health and safety. So, if they feel overwhelmed by their emotions, frustrations, stress, or anxiety, they should not hesitate to seek help from specialists.

LIMIT EXPOSURE TO THE MEDIA.

During a crisis, young people's access to media and news should be monitored and limited. News coverage is frequently overwhelming, filled with dramatic footage easily engraved into a child's mind, thus increasing anxiety and trauma. Parents should try to monitor this exposure, limit it, and explain the situation realistically if possible. Try to be honest, but approach a crisis with hope and optimism. A positive outlook on the future will help young people look for good things around them, guiding them through challenging times. It is worth remembering that every cloud has a silver lining.

2. TEACHERS

Teachers are responsible for delivering education and supporting the academic and personal development of their pupils. They play a crucial role in identifying and addressing the psychological and pedagogical problems that young people face.

TEMPORARY REDUCTION OF EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for teachers and pupils. It has led to the temporary reduction of educational requirements. Teachers can adjust their teaching approach to accommodate these limitations. Here are some solutions teachers can use in their online classes.

Teachers can use alternative assessments such as projects, essays, and presentations that can be completed online or at home. The proposed activities can focus on positive aspects of peers and reinforce positive feedback and social exchange. An example could be pupils

preparing a short text or a drawing focusing on a particular/best quality of their peers within English, advisory, or art classes.

The pandemic has also led to increased learning gaps among pupils. Assessing the needs of each one individually and approaching them separately, or even creating an individualized learning plan, can be a practical/optimal solution for reducing these learning gaps.

MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH PARENTS.

The teacher-parent relationship is vital for effective education and training. Maintaining contact with parents can ensure a pupil's well-being by receiving frequent updates on the child's progress, strengths and weaknesses or offering advice on supporting their learning. This way, teachers can build trust and a sense of mutual support, which is especially important when there are no on-site classes.

CONSTANT COOPERATION WITH SCHOOL PEDAGOGUES AND/OR PSYCHOLOGISTS.

Maintaining contact with specialists on pupils' psychological and pedagogical well-being is as important as staying in touch with parents. Any issues connected with sudden and drastic changes in a pupil's behavior or emotional state should be addressed in consultation with specialized staff employed in the school. There are, unfortunately, educational institutions that do not have direct access to psychologists or pedagogues. In this case, teachers should seek help in specialized psychological and pedagogical centers. If a pupil sees an external psychologist or another specialist, both sides should be in constant contact regarding the necessary measures to tackle their problem. This approach will facilitate the helping process and directly impact the educational and psychological development of pupils in need.

GROUP ACTIVITIES FOR PUPILS WHOSE HOME RELATIONS WERE DISTURBED.

Teachers can organize group activities/cooperative games that help build relationships, promote social-emotional learning, and provide a safe and supportive environment. Pupils can also form discussion groups to reflect on topics related to the crisis/pandemic. They can discuss coping strategies and self-care methods or support each other.

SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING FOR PUPILS

Social skills training is a valuable approach. It teaches pupils how to engage with others effectively, foster relationships, and express their thoughts and emotions. Teachers can

incorporate this training into their curriculum to address the challenges stemming from reduced in-person interactions.

As part of social skills training, educators can emphasize active listening, encouraging pupils to listen attentively, ask questions, and contemplate what they have heard. Role-playing simulations can also be employed to enable pupils to practice these social skills in real-life scenarios. This approach aids in developing important attributes such as empathy, communication proficiency, and problem-solving abilities among pupils.

EXTRACURRICULAR CLASSES OR ACTIVITIES STIMULATE INTERACTIONS AND ALLOW TALENT DEVELOPMENT.

Any extracurricular classes focusing on topics of interest to students of a particular age or allowing them to develop their talents are beneficial during a crisis. They allow young people to forget about challenging times and focus on other activities and their interests, as well as social interactions in real life or online, depending on the circumstances. This class type is always fruitful and welcomed, especially after lockdowns during the COVID-19 crisis. Extra classes and thematic contests connecting groups of pupils around topics linked to robotics, circus, cooking, etc., allow them to readapt to the school's environment. They can work in groups, gain new skills and competencies, and discover new talents and development possibilities.

PEER EXCHANGE AND SUPPORT.

While helping and supporting young people during a crisis, teachers should consult and exchange knowledge and experience with their colleagues in or out of school. These consultations allow us to see the bigger picture and to think outside the box when it comes to problems and issues that seem to be overwhelming. They also have a beneficial effect on a teacher's well-being. This is crucial for their ability to help others. It is vital to be open-minded and capable of giving and receiving help, especially during such a crisis. "Teachers–for–Teachers" workshops and meetings may also be organized.

3. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Schools play a crucial role in both crisis prevention and response. They are responsible for addressing pupils' needs and extending support to staff, families, and often the broader local community. Schools provide a safe and inclusive environment for pupils from diverse backgrounds and households, making them central to several critical functions:

- **Disseminating Information:** Schools are a primary channel for distributing important information, especially during crises. They help communicate essential details to pupils, families, and the community.
- **Identifying Individuals at Risk:** School staff, including teachers and counselors, are well-positioned to identify at-risk individuals during crises. This early identification is crucial for providing timely support.
- **Mental Health Services:** Schools often offer mental health services or referrals to mental health professionals, recognizing the importance of addressing the psychological well-being of pupils and staff.
- **Linking to Community Services:** Schools act as a bridge to connect individuals with local community services and resources, ensuring that those in need can access the appropriate support.
- **Tracking Displaced Families:** In times of crises such as natural disasters, schools play a role in finding displaced families, helping to reunite them, and providing necessary assistance.
- **Supporting Long-Term Recovery:** Beyond immediate response, schools contribute to the long-term recovery of their communities by offering stability and support during the healing process.
- **Fostering Normalcy:** Schools serve as a beacon of normalcy during trauma, providing a structured environment where pupils can find routine and stability amid uncertainty.

School management is entrusted with the comprehensive oversight of a school or educational institution. They manage both the educational processes and administrative functions, ensuring that pupils' needs are met in an effective and supportive manner. Their leadership is instrumental in creating an environment where education, well-being, and community support can thrive.

SET UP TRAINING FOR TEACHERS IN EARLY CRISIS DETECTION AND INTERVENTION.

To effectively fulfill their role, schools must have comprehensive crisis plans and dedicated teams in place. These teams should encompass a range of measures. These should include proactive steps, prevention strategies, identifying crises, appropriate responses, and short- and long-term recovery efforts. Schools should be well-prepared to handle crises and support their teachers and pupils during challenging times.

Regular training for teachers and other staff members involved in the educational process is crucial here. Training sessions should cover various aspects, focusing on mental health, risk identification, building resiliency, and enhancing coping capacities among those affected by crises, especially pupils and teachers. This preparation ensures schools can effectively manage crises and support their communities through adversity.

SET UP WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILD'S ACTIVITIES.

Education thrives through close cooperation with parents, who significantly contribute to their children's learning and development. Therefore, schools should actively work on strengthening their relationships with parents and encouraging their active involvement in activities related to education, psychological well-being, and overall development.

One way to foster parental engagement is by organizing various workshops and events in collaboration with families. These can include school festivals, holiday celebrations, and other gatherings that aim to create a relaxed and enjoyable environment for parents while they participate alongside their children.

In times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, it becomes even more vital to reinforce and adapt this cooperation to the circumstances. Events and workshops can be shifted to online platforms, utilizing available digital tools to ensure continued engagement and support for parents during challenging times.

SET UP VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUPILS.

Volunteering serves as an effective means to mitigate the effects of stress and anxiety, and there is nothing quite like a meaningful connection with another person to alleviate stress. Therefore, it is crucial for schools to actively promote and organize volunteering opportunities for pupils, facilitating their engagement in community life and fostering increased social interactions.

One example of these activities could be forming peer support groups focused on academic assistance. When pupils take on the responsibility of helping their peers, it provides them with a valuable distraction from their problems and challenges. In turn, this experience helps to strengthen self-esteem and cultivate a sense of belonging. These factors are all essential for nurturing a positive self-perception.

SET UP INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES NEEDED FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF PUPILS.

A welcoming environment and modern infrastructure are essential for providing quality education and addressing pupils' psychological and pedagogical needs. The COVID-19 crisis

underscored the significance of access to ICT equipment, particularly during distance learning periods. These tools are also invaluable for maintaining social connections during lockdowns.

Schools have a role in assisting pupils by making such equipment as accessible as possible. Additionally, they should guide pupils on effectively utilizing these technologies to support their mental well-being and enhance their learning capabilities. This dual approach addresses immediate needs and equips pupils with valuable skills for the future.

Furthermore, each school needs to have on staff at least one psychology specialist available for pupils. This has been a mandatory requirement in Poland since August 2022. It plays a critical role in supporting pupils' psychological well-being and development.

4. THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

National and regional governments have a prominent role in shaping the experiences and opportunities of young people. This encompasses critical aspects such as their access to education, healthcare, and social services. Collaborating with schools, mental health professionals, and community organizations, local governments can play a pivotal role in developing and implementing programs that address the psychological and pedagogical challenges young people encounter during a crisis.

These programs should be designed to provide comprehensive support to young individuals, ensuring their needs encompass education, mental health, social services, and overall well-being. Through effective coordination and collaboration between various stakeholders at the local level, governments can create a nurturing environment that fosters the resilience and development of young people, even in the face of challenging circumstances.

SET UP NATIONAL AND REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND POLICIES TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH.

Regional administrations are frequently in charge of implementing mental health programs and creating regional strategies that matter. These documents should address problems stemming from the sanitary crisis and distance learning. Considering currently recurring problems among young people, they should be one of the target groups regarding various forms of support. Regional health institutions and psychological and pedagogical centers should be supported by national, regional, and local authorities in all possible ways.

SET UP NETWORKS OF VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS.

Regional government can also facilitate collaboration and coordination among stakeholders in the community. By bringing together schools, mental health professionals, community organizations, and other stakeholders, local government bodies can create support networks to help young people overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic. These networks can involve local partners and expand to bigger groups of partners and international cooperation within the European structures or European projects.

Tools

As part of the ME-Health project, partners searched for digital solutions that could provide psychological and pedagogical assistance for young people. A multitude of online applications and digital best practices were found. Based on the issues previously listed as the most prevalent among the youth who had experienced the pandemic crisis, 21 tools were chosen.[7]

The digital resources listed below can be used by parents, teachers and other specialists, individually at home or in the classrooms. Most of them aim to relieve pressure, bring calm, release tension, and prevent panic or anxiety attacks. However, additional resources are available that let you add entertainment and playfulness to the teaching process and promote student engagement.

While most of them are available in several languages or have their national equivalents, we also chose to highlight the ones accessible in national languages as examples of best practices.

We have chosen to emphasize the languages of our partnership and consider English an additional shared language. Additionally, we have opted not to provide details about the cost of each application as this frequently changes.

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[7] During the tool-selection process, the partners have identified more theoretical and technical resources, such as The Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale (KADS), but decided not to focus on them in this guidebook, as they would be of greater use to qualified specialists (psychologists, therapists).

Name: Don't panic
Link: nepanikar.eu
Languages: CZ, DE, EN, FR, PL

Main category:
Mental Health Support

For whom?
People over 12 who are experiencing a crisis and facing various problems

Descriptors
Anxiety relief, depression support, stress management, emotional resilience, coping strategies, emergency helplines, teen support

Short information and examples of use

Teachers:
Teachers can integrate this tool into classroom resources and recommend it during stressful exam periods or when students show signs of distress.

Parents:
This tool can help them recognize mental health issues in young individuals and provide guidance in supporting them effectively.

Young People:
Thanks to a user-friendly interface, young people can easily use it for self-help during difficult moments.

Name: Rootd – Panic Attack Relief
Link: www.rootd.io
Languages: EN, FR, PL

Main category:
Guidance

For whom?
Everyone, but particularly helpful for young adults

Descriptors
Anxiety relief, self-care techniques, stress management, coping strategies, problem-solving, teen support, behavioral guidance, gamification

Short information and examples of use
The basic options are free. Premium options are available for paid subscriptions.

Teachers:
The application can be used to introduce stress management techniques, especially before tests, stressful events or during classroom integration. Teachers can use the journal option in the classroom to check in and out at the beginning and end of the school day. It invites students to share/have a conversation with their teacher or peers about how they feel.

Parents:
They can use this app to support young people during panic attacks. Using the app's journal might be a means to promote emotional expression or provide quick assistance.

Young people:
They can use the app during panic attacks or moments of stress for guided support and relief techniques. The journaling feature allows them to express emotions, track their feelings, and foster self-awareness.

Name: Headspace
Link: www.headspace.com
Languages: DE, EN, FR
Main category:
Guidance
For whom?
Everybody
Descriptors
Stress management, self-care techniques, mindfulness practices, anxiety relief, coping strategies
Short information and examples of use
Paid, subscription-based
Teachers:
Teachers can assist students in learning mindfulness techniques to help them focus better, to manage stress and regulate their emotions. Headspace provides exercises that are specifically useful for this. Teachers can use it for self-care and personal stress alleviation.
Parents:
They can use the app to assist their children in managing their emotions or anxieties and to guide them through mindfulness activities or meditation. The app can also be a helpful tool for parents to manage their own stress and mental health.
Young People:
They can use the app to manage stress related to school, social pressures, or personal challenges. In times of stress or anxiety, they can utilize mindfulness activities to sharpen their focus or relaxation techniques to enhance the quality of their sleep.

Name: Kids helpline Anytime Any Reason
Link: kidshelpline.com.au
Language: EN
Main category:
Guidance
For whom?
Kids, teens, young adults, parents, teachers
Descriptors
Anxiety relief, depression support, stress management, emotional resilience, coping strategies, remote learning, subject-specific help, study tools, social connection, parenting tips, behavioral guidance, teen support, emergency helpline, safety checklist, crisis response, immediate support
Short information and examples of use
Teachers:
The website provides a list of lessons and exercises to practice with a class when there is a need for mental health support. It can also be used as a starting point for discussing mental health and how to support it. The list of topics is extensive, divided by age group, and includes mental and physical health, relationships and sex, life or family concerns, and e-safety. There is an Instagram account (@kidshelplineau) providing content that may interest young people.
Parents & young people:
Guides, advice and videos on different topics (stress in the family, suicidal thoughts, etc.), as well as a link for online exchanges.

Name: Mentimeter
Link: www.mentimeter.com
Languages: DE, EN
Main category:
Educational Assistance
For whom?
Teachers, students
Descriptors
Academic tutoring, distant learning, subject-specific help, study tools, homework help, interactive lessons, distant learning
Short information and examples of use
Teachers & young people:
It is a brainstorming, kickstarting and ice-breaking tool that can engage a group of people/students in a classroom activity. Students and teachers can use it to create a presentation and display findings/results. The tool provides everyone with a voice and enables knowledge assessment. It offers various activities: homework online together, word field creation, feedback solicitation and anonymous opinion sharing.

Name: Calm
Link: www.calm.com
Languages: EN, FR
Main category:
Mental Health Support
For whom?
Public audience (children and adults)
Descriptors
Emotional wellness, mindfulness practices and stress management
Short information and examples of use
Paid, subscription-based
Teachers:
They can use it to conduct breathing exercises during tense periods and to guide students in returning to a relaxed state, enhancing focus and productivity. They can also play stories or sounds during breaks to refresh and re-energize students.
Parents:
They can use Calm's sleep stories or soothing sounds to help children wind down for bedtime, promoting better sleep habits. They can engage in guided meditations or relaxation exercises as a family to reduce stress and promote family bonding.
Young People:
They can introduce brief mindfulness sessions during breaks or study periods, using guided meditations or calming music. They might encourage group relaxation or mindfulness sessions among friends, using Calm's features to destress together.

Name: Wheeldecide
Link: wheeldecide.com
Language: EN
Main category:
Educational Assistance
For whom?
Teachers and parents
Descriptors
Remote learning, study tools and interactive lessons, gamification, distant learning
Short information and examples of use
Teachers:
Teachers can use this resource to help pupils entertainingly communicate their emotions. For example, at the start of the lesson, the teacher could ask a student to spin the wheel and share his feelings about the day. In a music lesson, the student can utilize the wheel to select music and describe the emotions it generates.
Parents:
By selecting a shared activity, for instance, parents might use it to enhance social relationships and communication within the family.

Name: Gratitude – Journal Prompts
Link: https://apps.apple.com/us/app/gratitude-journal-prompts/id1372575227
Language: EN (this type of application is available in every language)
Main category:
Mental Health Support
For whom?
Everyone
Descriptors
Anxiety relief, stress management, emotional resilience, mindfulness practices, coping strategies
Short information and examples of use
Teachers:
At the start or end of the school day, teachers can encourage students to write down one thing they are grateful for. Then, they can propose a weekly gratitude session where students share journal entries, fostering a sense of community and positivity. Teachers can use the gratitude journal as part of a self-care routine to reflect on positive aspects of the day, enhancing resilience against stress. It can be used to discuss the benefits of gratitude with students and share personal experiences to encourage them to adopt this practice.
Young people:
Young people can use the journal to express emotions, emphasizing the positive aspects of life to counterbalance negative feelings. It can also be a way to enhance mindfulness routine, helping young people develop a positive outlook and resilience.

Name: VOS.HEALTH
Link: vos.health/en
Languages: CZ, DE, EN, FR, PL,
Main category:
Mental Health Support
For whom?
Everyone
Descriptors
Anxiety relief, depression support, mindfulness practices, stress management, emotional resilience
Short information and examples of use
Teachers:
Teachers can use this tool to focus better, reduce stress and maintain mental well-being. They can also introduce VOS as a resource for students.
Parents:
Parents can use VOS to manage stress, foster better sleep habits, and strengthen relationships within the family. They can also discuss the importance of mental health and the benefits of employing VOS as an emotional support tool.
Young People:
Young people can use mindfulness exercises, meditation, and self-help tips to reduce stress and improve sleep. To develop self-awareness and emotional control, they can also monitor their mood to identify emotional triggers and patterns.

Name: Project SAVE
Link: osf.io/vguf4
Language: EN
Main category:
Mental Health Support
For whom?
Teenagers
Descriptors
Stress management, emotional resilience, coping strategies, immediate support
Short information and examples of use
Teachers:
Teachers can acquire knowledge about recognizing indications of self-destructive ideas or actions in pupils. They can acquire techniques to provide initial support and direction to pupils exhibiting similar ideas or actions.
Parents:
Parents can obtain knowledge to comprehend adolescent self-harming behaviors and find solutions to offer suitable support at home. They can acquire skillful communication methods to talk about delicate subjects and provide a secure environment for their child to express their emotions. This tool can assist in determining when and how to get their child professional intervention or treatment.
Young People:
The intervention might serve as a starting point for young individuals who need help or direction in controlling their thoughts or behavior.

BEST PRACTICES

Name: IFIghtDepression
Link: ifightdepression.com/pl/mlodziez
Languages: CZ, DE, EN, FR, PL
Main category:
Mental Health Support
For whom?
Everyone
Descriptors
Depression support, coping strategies, emotional resilience
Short information and examples of use
Teachers:
Teachers can access comprehensive information about depression to understand its causes, signs, and symptoms. They might gain insights into recognizing signs of depression and offering appropriate support or guidance. The provided materials should be used to educate students about mental health, promote well-being and reduce stigma. The website allows understanding of how and where to guide students or colleagues to get help for depression.
Parents:
Thanks to the website, they can educate themselves about depression, its signs, and consequences to support their children better. Therefore, they might learn how to identify signs of depression in their children or family members and offer appropriate support.
Young People:
They get access to information about depression, its symptoms, and available strategies to promote mental health. They can explore this tool to learn and implement strategies for managing mild to moderate depression and understand where and how to seek help for themselves or friends who might be dealing with depression.

Name: App První psychická pomoc
Link: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=cz.nic.ppp&hl=pl&gl=US
Language: CZ
Main category:
Crisis Intervention
For whom?
Members of the first aid services and people in non-profit organizations, teachers, and parents
Descriptors
Crisis response, coping strategies, emotional resilience, stress management, self-care techniques
Short information and examples of use
Free of charge
Teachers:
The application assists in identifying and comprehending students' crises. It offers fundamental guidance for educators to provide initial psychological support for students.
Parents:
It provides support in managing mental health crises involving their children and guidance on how caregivers can take care of themselves after helping individuals through difficult situations.

Name: Psycom
Link: www.psycom.org
Language: FR
Main category:
Mental Health Support
For whom?
Everybody
Descriptors
24/7 assistance, emergency helplines, teen support, anti-stigma
Short information and examples of use
Free of charge
Teachers:
The website provides a platform to initiate conversations and teach students the importance of openly discussing mental health issues. Teachers can also use personal stories displayed on the platform to encourage discussions related to mental health.
Parents:
The website offers details on events and workshops related to mental health across France and provides information about organizations offering help and support services nationwide.

Name: Ommetje
Link: www.hersenstichting.nl/ommetje
Languages: NL, EN
Main category:
Mental Health Support
For whom?
Everybody
Descriptors
Behavioral guidance, physical exercise, gamification
Short information and examples of use
Teachers & Parents:
Teachers can use this app to introduce more physical activity in class, i.e., set class challenges to walk a certain number of steps in a week or a month. A similar approach can be used between family members. Moreover, teachers can use the app to incorporate discussions on the benefits of physical activity for mental health. There is also a possibility to set up group activities to collectively achieve milestones and fitness goals.

Name: FCPE Website
Link: www.fcpe.asso.fr/les-conseils-aux-parents
Language: FR
Main category:
Guidance
For whom?
Parents, Children
Descriptors:
Anxiety relief, depression support, stress management, social connection, problem-solving, teen support
Short information and examples of use
Parents:
They can get access to articles and guides on identifying and understanding signs of mental health issues among children. There is helpful advice concerning open communication, creating a supportive environment and encouraging healthy habits. The website provides numerous online events, such as webinars and workshops focused on mental health, featuring experts who can guide parents.

Name: 2023 Research Report on Mental Health
Link: mlodeglowy.pl
Language: PL
Main category:
Mental Health Support
For whom?
Parents, children/adolescents, teachers/educators
Descriptors
Coping Strategies, Depression Support, Stress Management, Emotional Resilience, Parenting and teaching Tips, Teen Support, Self-care Techniques, Emergency Helplines, Emergency Resources, 24/7 Assistance
Short information and examples of use
Teachers:
The webpage features a compendium for young people, parents and teachers. Based on the resources provided by the website, teachers can prepare workshops for parents and students. Statistical data in reports can be used during classes to start conversations about mental health issues.

Name: MENTAAL VITAAL
Link: www.mentaalvitaal.nl
Language: NL
Main category:
Guidance
For whom?
Pupils, teachers, parents, teenagers
Descriptors
Anxiety relief, depression support, stress management, emotional resilience, mindfulness practices, coping strategies, parenting tips, behavioral guidance, child development, teen support, problem-solving, care techniques, emotional wellness, chat
Short information and examples of use
Teachers:
It can be used in classrooms as educational material or a way to start a discussion about mental health. It can help to raise awareness about mental health, including signs, symptoms, and where to seek help. There is also information on mental illnesses, which can be used to familiarize students with the most common mental problems.
Parents:
The website contains a section about resolving problems. There is also an extensive contact base for all institutions that can help in crisis situations.
Young people:
Young people can use the tests available on the website to assess their mental well-being. There is also information about how to foster long-term mental fitness.

Name: Interactive guide
Link: przewodnik.
wychowaniewszkole.pl
Language: PL

Main category:

Guidance

For whom?

Headteachers, tutors, teachers

Descriptors

Parenting tips, behavior guidance, child development, teen support, problem-solving, self-care techniques

Short information and examples of use

Teachers:

They can use the guide to organize classroom spaces promoting mental health. It can also help incorporate preventive measures and care strategies into daily teaching practices. Teachers can also use the guide's tools to strengthen bonds between parents, students, and the school community.

Parents:

Information in the guide can help parents gain insights into creating a mentally supportive home environment. The guide also explains parenting practices that can foster positive school connections and support children's educational aspirations.

Young people:

The guide provides practical information on effectively engaging in school responsibilities, extracurricular activities, and normative behaviors. Young people can explore alternative activities and resources suggested by the guide to enhance their educational experience and well-being. They can also benefit from the guide's tips on psychological and emotional safety to understand and promote their well-being within the school environment.

Name: Youth Health Wire Health Prevention 3.0
Link: www.filsantejeunes.com
Language: FR

Main category:

Guidance

For whom?

Teenagers and young adults (particularly ages 12-25)

Descriptors

Teen support, self-care techniques, child development, behavior guidance

Short information and examples of use

Teachers:

Teachers can use the articles during classes to offer alternative and more entertaining ways to talk about difficult topics and to inform students about the different implications of their actions, such as cheating at school.

Young people:

They can find examples of how to express their feelings (such as a guide to express emotions), information about psychological self-diagnosis, and how to make decisions. The website offers information about various topics: generational differences and conflicts, how to cope with puberty, how to choose friends wisely, facts and myths about cannabis, etc. It is also a guide for adolescents to find help should they need it. A big platform is available where they can find guidance (open seven days a week from 9 AM to 11 PM).

Name: Upbringing and prevention
Link: www.ore.edu.pl/2023/03/zdrowie-psychiczne-dzieci-i-mlodziezy-materialy-do-pobrania
Languages: PL, EN

Main category:

Guidance

For whom?

Parents, teachers

Descriptors

Parenting tips, behavior guidance, child development, teen support, problem-solving, self-care techniques

Short information and examples of use

Teachers:

Teachers can use the materials provided by the website to organize school activities, implement procedures, and establish conduct guidelines beneficial for students' mental health. This tool can enhance educators' knowledge and competency in dealing with mental health issues. Teachers can incorporate the provided scenarios and tips to facilitate discussions and educational sessions. Contact information can be used as a guide to direct students and parents to relevant support systems or organizations for mental health assistance.

Parents:

They can use the website to gain insights into effective parenting techniques and strategies that promote children's mental health and well-being. Moreover, they get access to better tools for identifying and addressing potential mental health issues of their children.

Young People:

The website provides age-appropriate resources for self-education on mental health issues, fostering a greater comprehension and consciousness of the welfare of young people. They can comprehend and relate to any mental health issues they may encounter by using the situations and cases provided as examples. If they run into problems, the contact information is provided as a resource for locating support groups or institutions.

Name: Test je leefstijl
Link: www.testjeleefstijl.nl
Language: NL
Main Category

Guidance/Educational Assistance

For whom?

Students, teachers

Descriptors

Academic tutoring, subject-specific help, study tools, self-care techniques, problem-solving, teen support

Short information and examples of use

Teachers:

With this tool, educators may assess students' lifestyle attitudes, utilize the results to spark discussions and incorporate the findings into their lesson plans. The website also features information about how to live a healthy lifestyle.

Young people:

The website can help young people to develop healthy lifestyles in multiple aspects of personal and social life. Young people can learn to develop healthy habits and incorporate them into their daily routines.

Conclusion

In 2022, ME-Health partners took on the difficult task of assessing the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on young people's mental health, as well as investigating how hybrid and online learning influenced the education process. A range of stakeholders, including teachers, parents, regional administrations' staff, psychologists, pedagogues, therapists, and headteachers, shared their experiences and insights from the sanitary crisis. **The primary focus of this study was on teenagers' behaviors, problems and challenges in connection with everyday life, family, relationships, health, education and social media.**

All the members of this European partnership agreed that the pandemic and its implications for education and daily life have had a severe impact on young people's mental well-being. It is impossible to see COVID-19 any differently than a multi-faceted crisis unfolding in stages. The pandemic's aftereffects and long-term consequences are still being felt today. Moreover, some of them remain unnamed and undefined.

The most recent OECD data indicate that in certain EU states, the percentage of young people experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression has more than doubled from pre-pandemic levels8. According to UNICEF research, suicide is the second most frequent cause of death for young people in Europe, behind car accidents9. What is more, a whopping 49% of young people – compared to 23% of adults – lack access to mental health services10.

These numbers are alarming. A strong team effort and responses from various stakeholders are required to combat the detrimental impacts of COVID-19 on students' mental health and capacity to meet academic demands. Within the ME-Health project, we focused on possible actions that could be carried out by those closest to young people in need: parents, teachers, and educators. We created a list of recommendations that can be considered as guidance whenever a crisis emerges.

Numerous social, economic, geopolitical and environmental factors can contribute to stress, psychological challenges and disorders among young people and general populations. The pandemic, rising living costs, natural disasters, climate change, military conflicts and tensions in different parts of the world can increase the risks of experiencing problems linked to mental health. Therefore, professionals working with young people and their parents must possess all the possible resources to minimize the effects of stressful situations on the mental health of young people. This strategy ought to be seen as preventive: ensuring the well-being of children, adolescents, and young adults. Addressing their mental health is all about preventing mental illness and fostering mentally healthy communities, especially since approximately 50% of adult mental health issues begin during or before adolescence[11].

With complicated access to professional assistance in various EU state members and regions, all the competencies and experience that might be acquired by community members responsible for young people's education and upbringing are invaluable. Supporting young people psychologically and pedagogically as a teacher or a parent is challenging, requiring a lot of time, energy and knowledge. Hence, they need help from other stakeholders and an environment of ongoing, cordial support. Teachers and parents can benefit from readily available materials, particularly in digital formats. That is why we focused on researching digital applications and tools that might be useful in supporting young people psychologically and pedagogically. We believe that the ones listed in this guidebook are a great help in making learning more enjoyable, fascinating and engaging. They can also introduce themes of mental health in daily school or family life, helping to tackle daily stress and rush, as well as to deal with episodes of panic, stress and anxiety.

Nevertheless, none of the recommendations in this guidebook or suggested tools is or will be a solution to mental health issues. Those require professional help and assistance. Therefore, we included a list of institutions located in each of the partner regions of this project. They can be contacted whenever professional consultation is needed. They are not the only ones but can be considered first-line contacts.

To sum up, the problems and situations addressed within this project do not represent an exhaustive list of circumstances a crisis might entail. Mental health issues will certainly continue to affect our society. Therefore, common EU policies and strategies are being undertaken and planned. In November 2023, the 27 EU Member States agreed on conclusions related to mental health and the specific needs of young people. It was decided that measures should be taken to improve living and working conditions, facilitate access to mental health care for young people, encourage research on the impact of mental health on young people, combat stigma, share best practices across EU countries and promote a safer and healthier digital space, including to fight against hate, violence and abuse in the media and on social media[12].

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[8]   Health at a Glance: Europe 2022, 507433b0-en.pdf (oecd-ilibrary.org)
[9]   SOWC-2021-Europe-regional-brief.pdf (unicef.org)
[10]   Mental health – Consilium (europa.eu)

[11]   Adolescent and young adult health, https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescents-health-risks--and-solutions
[12]   Mental health – Consilium, europa.eu

LIST OF INSTITUTIONS – STYRIA (AUSTRIA)

Schulpsychologie der Bildungsdirektion Steiermark
Körblergasse 23, 8010 Graz
+43 800 211 320

RAINBOWS Steiermark – Unterstützung für Kinder und Jugendliche nach Trennung/Scheidung/Tod
https://www.rainbows.at/steiermark/
Grabenstraße 88, 8010 Graz
+43 316 678 783

GFSG Gesellschaft zur Förderung seelischer Gesundheit GmbH
https://gfsg.at/
Several locations
Several phone numbers!

BfP – Beratung für Pädagog*innen
https://bfp-stmk.at/
several Locations
+43 670 552 81 87

Institut für Familienberatung und Psychotherapie
https://www.beratung-ifp.at/
Kirchengasse 4/2, 8010 Graz
+43 316 825 667

Dachverband der sozialpsychiatrischen Vereine und Gesellschaften Steiermarks
https://www.dachverband-stmk.at/
Grieskai 52/2, 8020 Graz
+43 676 847 886 101

GO-ON Suizidprävention Steiermark
https://suizidpraevention-stmk.at/
Grieskai 52/2, 8020 Graz
+43 676 847 886 100

Hotlines
Rat auf Draht
http://www.rataufdraht.at
147

Ö3 Kummernummer
https://www.roteskreuz.at/steiermark/freiwillig-beim-blutspendedienst-1-1-1-1-1#:~:text=Die%20%C3%963%20Kummernummer%20ist%20eine,%3A%20Karin%20Rainer%2C%20eine%20Kummernummermitarbeiterin
116 123

PsyNot, psychiatrisches Krisentelefon
https://psynot-stmk.at/
+43 800 449 933

LIST OF INSTITUTIONS – MORAVIAN-SILESIAN REGION (CZECH REPUBLIC)

Centrum duševního zdraví Ostrava
Centrum duševního zdraví Ostrava | Další web používající WordPress (cdzostrava.cz)
Kafkova 1116/13, 702 00 OSTRAVA
+420 595 223 166

Centrum duševního zdraví Opava
CENTRUM DUŠEVNÍHO ZDRAVÍ OPAVA — www.cdzopava.cz
Olomoucká 2520/74, 746 01 Opava
+420 721 858 044

Beskydské centrum duševního zdraví, Frýdek-Místek
Beskydské centrum duševního zdraví (charitafm.cz)
Elišky Krásnohorské 249, Frýdek-Místek 738 01 (budova bývalé lékárny, přízemí), u zastávky MHD „Frýdek, nemocnice"
Sociální úsek: +420 603 977 988, Zdravotní úsek: +420 704 987 719

Krizové centrum pro děti a rodinu
Krizové centrum pro děti a rodinu | Centrum sociálních služeb Ostrava, o.p.s. (css-ostrava.cz)
Syllabova 1161/19, 703 00 Ostrava – Vítkovice
+420 778 111 281

Duševní zdraví (edu.cz) NPI
duševní zdraví (edu.cz)

Linka bezpečí
Linka bezpečí | Pomáháme dětem a studentům (linkabezpeci.cz)
Pro děti a studenty +420 116 111, Pro rodiče +420 606 021 021

Česká odborná společnost pro inkluzivní vzdělávání, z.s.
https://cosiv.cz/cs/
Krásný život 286, Stará Huť 262 02

Centrum inkluze o.p.s.
Centrum Inkluze, o.p.s.
Švermova 249, 749 01 Vítkov
+420 728 343 747

Centrum Anabell, z. ú.
Knihovna Anabell – Knihovna Anabell
Masarykova 506/37, 602 00 Brno
+420 542 214 014

Na vlně změny, z.ú.
BNA Ostrava – Na vlně změny | Blázníš? no a! (blaznis-no-a.cz)
+420 601 243 099

Spirála o.p.s.
Spirála Ostrava – Podpora & příležitost (spirala-ops.cz)
Čujkovova 3165/40a, 700 30 Ostrava – Jih
Kontakt

LIST OF INSTITUTIONS – GREAT EASTERN REGION (FRANCE)

MDA Meuse Department

www.resadom.fr

8 rue Theuriet – 55000 Bar-Le-Duc + several locations (one MDA per department)

+ 33 329 45 02 88

MDA of Strasbourg

http://www.maisondesados-strasbourg.eu/

23 rue de la Porte de l'Hôpital – 67000 STRASBOURG

+ 33 388 11 65 65

CMPP Meurthe-et-Moselle – Nancy

https://www.peplorest.org/

73 rue Isabey – 54000 Nancy + several locations in different cities

+ 33 383 27 31 70

CSAPA ADDICTIONs FRANCE

https://www.drogues-info-service.fr/

0 800 231 313

POINTS ECOUTE JEUNES REIMS

https://www.reims.fr/enfance-jeunesse-education/laccompagnement-des-jeunes/le-point-ecoute-jeunes

11 rue Eugène Wiet – 51100 Reims

+ 33 326 35 60 52

FCPE

https://www.fcpe-marne.fr/

5 rue Charrière – 51000 Châlons-en-Champagne

+ 33 326 64 66 19

FIL SANTE JEUNES

https://www.filsantejeunes.com/

0 800 235 236

LIST OF INSTITUTIONS – GELDERLAND (THE NETHERLANDS)

GGD Noord- en Oost Gelderland

www.ggd.nl

Rijksstraatweg 65, 7231 AC Warnsveld

+31 (0)88-4433000

GGD Gelderland-Midden

www.ggd.nl

Eusebiusbuitensingel 43, 6828 HZ Arnhem

0800-8446000

GGD Gelderland-Zuid

www.ggd.nl

Groenewoudseweg 275, 6524 TV Nijmegen

+31 (0)88-1447144

Bindkracht 10

Stichting Bindkracht10, Boekweitweg 6, 6534 AC Nijmegen

Bezoekadressen

MIND

www.wijzijnmind.nl

Stationsplein 125, 3818 LE AMERSFOORT

+31 (0)33-3032333

Wijkteams Arnhem

https://www.wijkteamsarnhem.nl/

Mr E.N. van Kleffensstraat 12, 6842 CV Arnhem

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LIST OF INSTITUTIONS – LUBELSKIE VOIVODESHIP (POLAND)

Poradnia Psychologiczna dla
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Neuropsychiatrycznym
im. Prof. M. Kaczyńskiego Samodzielny
Publiczny Zakład Opieki Zdrowotnej
w Lublinie
https://www.snzoz.lublin.pl/index.php?s=2
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Zespół Poradni Nr 2 w Lublinie
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Centrum Psychologii i Psychoterapii Euro-
Medica
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Towarzystwo Nowa Kuźnia
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Specjalistyczne Centrum Psychoneurologii
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NZOZ Ośrodek Profilaktyki, Diagnozy i Terapii
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i Młodzieży – NZOZ Marmed
https://www.nzoz-marmed.pl/index.php/
component/content/article/poradnia-
zdrowia-psychicznego-dla-dzieci-i-
mlodziezy?catid=24&Itemid=101
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Telefon zaufania dla dzieci i młodzieży
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About the ME-Health project:
**Supporting the mental health
of young people in the era of coronavirus**

The ME-Health project was born from the need to help young people with all the psychological and pedagogical challenges that appeared during the COVID-19 pandemic and last until today. Helping young people means supporting people who are with them daily: parents, teachers, pedagogues, psychologists, etc., to understand the problems and their contexts. The pandemic and its challenges were, and still are, mutual to numerous European countries. Therefore, we decided to look for solutions within an international partnership. That way, the ME-Health team was created.

It brought together regional administrations:
- **Lubelskie Voivodeship (Poland, Project Leader),**
- **Moravian-Silesian Region (Czech Republic),**
- **Great Eastern Region (France),**
- **Board of Education Styria (Austria);**

as well as psychological centers, schools and parent associations:
- **Psychological Centre No. 2 in Lublin (Poland),**
- **Pedagogical and Psychological Centre in Bruntal (Czech Republic),**
- **Territorial Association PEP Lor'Est (France),**
- **Primary School No. 51 Jana Pawła II in Lublin,**
- **Gymnazium Josefa Bozka in Cesky Tesin (Czech Republic) and**
- **Union Chalonnaise FCPE in Chalons-en-Champagne (France).**

These were joined by an **associate partner: Rijn IJssel**, a vocational school from the Netherlands.

Our objective was to exchange experience, knowledge and know-how regarding the psychological and pedagogical problems that appeared among young people due to the COVID-19 crisis and its implications for education. The project was also an opportunity to discuss and share more efficient ways of using ICT in online education and supporting young people psychologically with digital tools. This guidebook provides the key conclusions, findings and observations.

All these goals were achieved thanks to the activities within the ME-Health project. The core of this initiative was a series of training events held in four European countries: Austria, the Czech Republic, France and Poland (three days of training). The events were attended by teachers, psychologists, headteachers, officers, parents, physicians, psychiatrists, NGO volunteers, IT specialists and pupils. Over 140 participants took part in training events, with almost half of them funded with Erasmus+ grants. Moreover, the training activities were complemented by transnational meetings involving smaller groups of participants called "regional coordinators". Their task was to make sure the project was implemented and managed efficiently and prepare dissemination events in all the participating regions. Dissemination events promoted

the project's results, especially the most tangible one, this guidebook, among a larger number of institutions and actors working with young people. It is important to note that the project's activities were promoted and disseminated for the entire duration of the project (from February 2022 to May 2024).

There is a saying – **"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."** With this in mind, we would like to express our gratitude to all the partners, including associate partners, and their representatives involved in this project. Thank you for your dedication and hard work. Particularly for your willingness to share your experience and knowledge with colleagues and peers from the European community. Special thanks to all our local partners who generously contributed to preparing all training events in the regions, exhaustive discussions and the wide exchange of ideas and best practices. We are looking forward to working with you soon on other European projects!