

SUPPORT Project Bulletin: World Mental Health Day 2008

October 10th is World Mental Health Day. On World Mental Health day, we ask you to bear in mind some of the reasons that mental health and well-being are important:

- Mental health is important to all areas of public policy, in health, social affairs, justice, education, labour and economic development. People need well-being to be productive at schools, in work and as parents and citizens. Improving mental health improves quality of life, work and relationships.
- Changes in population across Europe mean that we will have to ensure our society can adapt to the mental health challenges of the modern Europe. These include ageing, migration and increasingly the effect of global economic difficulty.
- Poor mental health costs every household in Europe more than €2,000 each year. For most age groups suicide is second only to road accidents as a non-medical cause of death.
- Mental health problems are increasingly common in Europe, and individuals and families affected by severe mental illness are amongst the most socially excluded people in Europe.
- Addressing the effects of social exclusion on mental health are as important as addressing the social exclusion of those with mental health problems.

This bulletin gives a flavour of some of the work underway across policy areas and programmes to improve the mental health of European Citizens, an outcome that can often be achieved alongside other policy initiatives, without additional resource. Details of more activities, projects and news and events relating to the field are available at www.supportproject.eu

The European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being

The Health and Consumers Directorate General of the European Commission is leading an initiative that will bring together policies, programmes and activities across Europe, under the banner of a European Pact for Mental Health and Well-Being. The Pact was launched by Health Commissioner Vassiliou in June this year, with the support of Commissioner Spidla (Employment and Social Affairs).

Work is now underway to enable a broad range of organisations to take part in a process of exchange of practice and the collection of examples, to illustrate and celebrate action by Member States, policy directorates of the European Commission, civil society, academics and other stakeholders.

The Pact will only be truly successful if actors from all areas of policy and interest recognise the mental health dimension of their work, and highlight their ongoing activities under the umbrella of the Pact. This will enable exchange of information and practice, and enable new networks and collaborations.

A series of consensus papers in each of the five priority areas of the Pact were produced for the June conference. A Background Paper was produced by the SUPPORT Project for the event. The five priority areas of the Pact are:

- [Prevention of Suicide and Depression](#)

- [Mental Health in Youth and Education](#)
- [Mental Health in Workplace Settings](#)
- [Mental Health in Older People](#)
- [Combating Stigma and Social Exclusion](#)

For more information on the Pact, and the opportunity to contribute, visit http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/mental_health_en.htm

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About the SUPPORT Project

The SUPPORT Project is co-financed under the EU Public Health Programme (2003-2008). The Project is led by the Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health with STAKES and NHS Health Scotland. The Project is supported and co-financed by the Scottish Government Directorate General for Health and Wellbeing. SUPPORT provides administrative, technical and scientific support for the mental health activities of the European Commission. This work has centred on the development and implementation of the European Pact on Mental Health and Well-being launched in June 2008.

SUPPORT works with project outcomes and stakeholders from across policy areas relevant to mental health, to ensure these are included in the policy development process.

SUPPORT uses an interactive website, seminars, presentations and a range of communication techniques to share knowledge, raise the profile of European mental health activities, and to build capacity in stakeholder groups to participate.

Current News and Events

SUPPORT gathers news stories and events information, and makes these available on the project website, arranged by topic area. We are always interested in assisting projects and interested parties to promote events and activities.

Activities in 2008/9

SUPPORT will continue to work closely on activities to support the implementation of the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being. The project will directly facilitate meetings and stakeholder involvement, including the facilitation of an NGO stakeholder's forum in Brussels in January 2009.

SUPPORT will continue to publish news and events details, and make these available electronically. During 2009 the project will publish a series of papers highlighting the outcomes of EU funded projects that relate to mental health in each of the five priority areas of the Pact.

If you want to contact the project, or have a news story, a report to disseminate or an event to promote, contact supportproject@sdcmh.org.uk

Projects Database

SUPPORT has created a database of mental health related projects across at least six programmes funded by the European Commission. These include projects in the Public Health Programmes, Research Frameworks, DAPHNE, EQUAL and the transnational Exchange Projects on Social Exclusion. Over the coming months projects from ESF, EQUAL, Comenius, Gruntvig, Leonardo and the Culture programmes will be included. Details of close to 100 projects are now available in the database, which is searchable by topic, theme, and programme.

The database will continue to grow in the coming months. If you are involved with a project and would like to submit or update information for the database, please contact us and fill in the [project pro-forma](#).

The database is available at: www.supportproject.eu/projectsdefault.htm

News

Mental Health features in the new FP7 Health Call

The second Health call under the EU Seventh Research Framework has been published ([OJ C226 of 03 September 2008](#)). The call presents opportunities for researchers in mental health, with topics of interest in the fields of neurosciences, health service delivery, public health and health information. The call opened on September 3rd and will close on December 3rd 2008. Projects can receive up to €3m funding from the European Commission.

Health falls under the FP7 strand 'Cooperation'. The overall objective of the Health Theme is to improve the health of European citizens, increase the competitiveness and boost the innovative capacity of European health related industries and businesses, while addressing global health issues including emerging epidemics. Basic information on FP7 is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/index_en.cfm?pg=understanding

Annual calls for project proposals are made according to an annual workplan published around the time of the call. The current workplan is available. Several relevant workplan topics have been 'called' this year, and these invite proposals for projects of different types and scale.

For further information on the workplan and the areas that relate to mental health, visit:
<http://www.supportproject.eu/news/homepage-news/fp7health2009.htm>

Strategic Choices for Young Europeans: An EU-Wide Public Consultation on the Future of Youth Policy

The European Commission has launched an online public consultation on how the EU's youth policy should develop in the future. This year, the EU's Youth policy is celebrating its 20th anniversary, and this consultation will help the Commission to evaluate the achievements of European cooperation on youth policy since 2000. In the months to come, it will also lead to definition of fresh objectives for the next decade.

The questionnaire covers issues regarding education and informal learning, employment, discrimination, social integration and voluntary activities of young people. Many of these issues are critically important to achieving the aims of the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being, and this consultation gives an opportunity for stakeholders in the Mental Health pact to contribute to shaping policy in another policy area.

To find out more about the consultation, visit:
<http://www.supportproject.eu/news/poicynews/children/strategicchoicesconsultation.htm>

Flash Eurobarometer on Mental Health and Well-being of Children and Young People

A Flash Eurobarometer survey on the Mental Health and Well-being of Children and Young people was carried out during September 2008, using the well-established and methodological robust index, KIDSCREEN 10. The first results of this work are due imminently.

Emotional Well-being and behaviour has been tested extensively and the results indicate that the proportion of children and adolescents showing signs of mental health problems varied across countries, demographic and socioeconomic subgroups, and according to the presence of risk and protective factors.

The objective of this project is to obtain more data about the mental health and well being of children and adolescents, which can complement existing health data, and consequently to acknowledge the mental and psychological well-being of children and young people in the monitoring of population health.

For further information, and the results when available, visit:
<http://www.supportproject.eu/news/policynews/children-education-and-young-people/flash--eurobarometer.htm>

Renewed EU Social Agenda

This summer the European Commission set out a Renewed Social Agenda. It demonstrates commitment to the social dimension of Europe, and brings together policy areas. It demonstrates the potential of the EU to help to create opportunities, provide access and demonstrate solidarity – by taking initiatives to foster employment creation, education and skills development, fight discrimination, support mobility and enable Europeans to live longer, healthier lives.

The renewed social agenda seeks to empower and equip Europeans, in particular young people, to deal with rapidly changing realities. These are shaped by globalisation, technological progress, ageing societies – and developments such as the recent hikes in food and oil prices and turmoil in financial markets. It also aims to help those who have difficulties coping with these changes.

By their definition, success in these initiatives should help to increase the mental health of European citizens. Many of the ingredients of positive mental health relate to people's sense of purpose, security, value and adaptability to change.

For more information on the renewed Social Agenda, visit <http://ec.europa.eu/social/>

ProMenPol Database and Toolkit

The FP6 Scientific Support to Policy project ProMenPol is making good progress, with the tools database now live on the website and the field trials underway. ProMenPol is collecting examples of tools for mental health promotion in three settings; Workplaces, Schools and Residential Care for Older People. The tools are presented on a comprehensive database, and during the second half of the project field trials will test tools, leading to the production of a 'toolkit' of well used interventions or activities, tried and tested by field trial participants.

For more information on ProMenPol visit: www.mentalhealthpromotion.net

WHO Europe 'Policies and practices for mental health in Europe' Report

The report of a major WHO Europe project is due to be published on Friday 10th October. The report, co-funded by the European Commission, is to be launched at a meeting hosted by the UK Department of Health in London. It will provide data on mental health policy and practice across the WHO European Region. It will also highlight important information gaps. This landmark piece of work will allow comparability between countries on a number of domains of mental health information, provided by ministries in the participating countries.

The paper will be available on Friday 10th October from:
http://www.euro.who.int/mentalhealth/20080602_1

Events

Prima EF Project: Psychosocial Risk Management at Work

5th November 2008 – Rome

According to the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, over 40 million workers in the EU are being affected by stress with an estimated cost of around 20 billion euro per year. Stress, related to work activity, is a risk with growing impact for the health and safety of workers.

This conference, through the presentation of the main findings of the PRIMA-EF Project (FP6, SSP), will be an important forum for discussion between experts at national and international level and an opportunity for promoting possible strategies for the evaluation and management of psychosocial risk factors in the changing world of work.

For further information and registration for this conference: <http://prima-ef.ispesl.it/index.asp?lang=en>

Fourth International Stigma Conference - Together Against Stigma

21st - 23rd January 2009, London

This international conference is being organised by the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College, London and the World Psychiatric Association Scientific Section on Stigma and Mental Illness and will be held on 21st - 23rd January 2009 in London. It will bring together the outstanding global research leaders in stigma and discrimination in mental health. The meeting will focus on the state-of-the-art knowledge on effective interventions to reduce stigma and discrimination. The presentations will be of keen interest to anybody involved in working against stigma.

The early bird registration deadline has been extended to 31st October 2008. For Further Information:
<http://www.stigma.iop.kcl.ac.uk/Welcome.htm>

2nd European Brain Policy Forum: A focus on Depression and the European Society

25th-26th February 2009, Brussels

The 2nd European Brain Policy Forum will focus on Depression and the European Society and will take place at the Renaissance Brussels Hotel, in Brussels on 25-26th February, 2009.

For further information on the event please visit: <http://www2.kenes.com/ebpf/pages/home.aspx>

A copy of the 1st European Brain Policy Forum report (2008) which focused on Parkinson's disease and the European Society, can be found at:
<http://www.europeanbraincouncil.org/pdfs/EBPF/2008/EBPF%202008%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf>

ESCAP 2009: Quality of Life in Child and Adolescent Mental Health

22-26th August 2009, Budapest

This conference will focus on quality of life in childhood and adolescence. It is clear that psychiatric disorders are those that – besides the sociocultural conditions and effects of organic diseases – can influence the quality of life for children and young people in the most negative way. The human rights of children and young people with mental illness and/or learning disabilities must be taken seriously. This conference will consider a wide range of concepts and issues in this field. Further information is available at:

<http://www.escap2009-budapest.com/>