



HOW TO TALK TO YOUR STUDENTS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

TOOLS, PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES

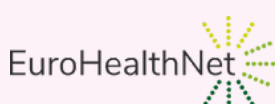
EVENT REPORT



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**Mental
Health
Europe**



Liga za
duševné
zdravie



Introduction

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, children across Europe have been experiencing increasingly worrying amounts of stress, anxiety and mental health problems, highlighting the significance of proactive and comprehensive solutions. In the current mental health crisis, youth's struggle for well-being requires immediate attention and action as we navigate the complexity of contemporary culture. A Hopeful, Healthy, and Happy Living and Learning Toolkit, co-authored by PS Centre Technical Advisor Ea Suzanne Akasha and clinical psychologists Mark Kucklow and Jonathan Morgan, is designed to facilitate support for children, parents/caregivers and teachers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic—and proven to be impactful in improving youth mental health in diverse contexts as well. During this webinar, the two organisations, Prolepsis (Greece) and Liga for Mental Health Slovakia will share their experiences in implementing the Toolkit/Guide for teachers in two different national contexts. Participants will discover the Guide for Teacher's main features, implementation challenges, and future possibilities, all with one common goal: supporting the mental health of children

Objectives

This webinar, targeted at teachers and educators, aimed to:

- Present the A Hopeful, Healthy and Happy Living and Learning Toolkit/Guide for Teachers.
- Outline strategies for integrating mental health literacy into the educational framework.
- Reflect upon how to adapt the Guide for Teachers to diverse cultural contexts within European educational settings.
- Find common solutions to challenges and barriers that may impede the promotion of mental health literacy among children.
- Share tools and practices to empower children in managing their mental health and promote their awareness, resilience, and personal development

About Mentality

This webinar was developed as part of the MENTALITY project. MENTALITY pilots established European promising practices targeted at children, healthcare and other care workers, people with pre-existing mental health problems and psychosocial disabilities, migrants, and service providers.

The project establishes a path for successful and sustainable transfer and adaptation of practices in participating countries, which will also lead to in-country upscale and further future implementation in other EU countries. [Learn more about Mentality.](#)

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A Hopeful, Healthy, and Happy Living and Learning Toolkit

Arz Stephan, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Advisor

IFRC Centre for Psychological Support

A Hopeful, Healthy, and Happy Living and Learning Toolkit

The Toolkit presents a series of tools designed to facilitate support for children, parents/caregivers and teachers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, but may be useful for anyone, anywhere, and at any time.

- **Components:**

- **Guide for Teachers:** Promotes the role of teachers in fostering mental health and well-being.
- **Guide for Parents/Caregivers:** Family-based activities to ensure continuity between school and home environments.
- **Activity Guide:** Fun-based play activities with learning objectives for various age groups.

The toolkit was developed by the PS Centre, [REPSSI](#) and [APSSI](#) with support from [MHPSS.net](#) and funding from [Education Cannot Wait](#). [More information here](#).

Good practice in action: Slovakia

Tetiana Kulish, Project Manager Liga for Mental Health Slovakia

Implementation Process:

- First step: **identification of needs of teachers and children in Slovakia.**
- Collaboration with schools, psychologists, and mental health professionals to create a support network.
- Activity selection through group discussions and workshops, focusing on the most interactive and engaging activities.
- 18 schools participated in the project (12 primary, 3 secondary, 3 joint schools).

Online Course for Teachers:

- Participation: 128 teachers signed up, 104 completed the course.
- Contents: Entry questionnaire, introduction to exercises, exit questionnaire, and downloadable toolkit.

Feedback:

- From Teachers: The Toolkit had a positive impact on classroom climate, relationship building, and reducing conflicts.
- From Students: Activities were enjoyable, inclusive, and promoted self-awareness and emotional intelligence.

Good practice in action: Greece

Vicky Bempi, Project Manager Prolepsis Institute

Implementation Process:

- Assessed needs and priorities for mental health support in Greek schools.
- Engaged with educational authorities, mental health professionals, and school communities.
- Activity Selection: Prioritised activities that foster emotional resilience and stress management.
- Focused on creating a supportive network for teachers and students.

Online Course for Teachers:

- 2 webinars hosted online to offer flexibility for teachers.
- Extensive participation and high engagement.
- Comprehensive introduction to the toolkit, practical applications, and follow-up resources.

Feedback:

- From Teachers: Reported improvements in student behaviour, classroom management, and overall mental health awareness.
- From Students: Found the activities engaging and helpful in managing stress and emotions.

Lessons Learnt and Next Steps

Pania Karnaki, Director of European and International Programs, Prolepsis

- **Teacher Workload:** Teachers often have a significant workload, making it challenging to incorporate additional activities. Ensuring that the Toolkit activities are easy to implement and providing adequate support and resources will help them integrate the Toolkit without feeling overwhelmed.
- **Implementation Timing:** Starting the introduction and training sessions earlier in the school year could lead to better integration and effectiveness, still allowing schools to choose their own start times within a suggested timeframe to accommodate different academic schedules.
- **Communication:** It is crucial to maintain consistent communication and high engagement with all involved parties, including schools, teachers, and mental health professionals, as well as regular updates on progress and challenges to ensure continuous program improvement.
- **Cultural Adaptation:** Adapting the activities to the specific needs and cultural sensitivities of different regions ensures that they are culturally relevant and resonate with the local context. This can be achieved by involving local educators and mental health experts.

- **Teacher Training:** Provide thorough training sessions to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge and incorporate practical, hands-on workshops to complement theoretical training. Encourage the creation of peer support groups among teachers to share experiences and best practices.
- **Student Engagement:** Design activities that are engaging and interactive to maintain student interest. Offering a variety of activities to cater to different age groups and learning styles. Actively seek and incorporate feedback from students to improve the activities.

Recording

The full recording of the event can be found [here](#).

Contacts & Info

For more information about the MENTALITY project and *A Hopeful, Healthy, and Happy Living and Learning Toolkit/Guide for Teachers*, you can contact e.delsavio@mentalhealtheurope.org and m.marchetti@mentalhealtheurope.org.





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