

MOČ PROJECT FINAL PRESS CONFERENCE

Ljubljana, 8th June 2016

National Institute of Public Health hosted a final press conference where results of MOČ public health project were presented. The project was aimed at improving services in the field of mental health promotion and protection and was financed by Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014. Project started in February 2015 and will end in June 2016. It involved four project partners; National Institute of Public Health was the coordinator, while other three partners were Slovene Center for Suicide Research (UP, Andrej Marušič Institute), Slovenian Association for Suicide Prevention (Center for psychological counselling POSVET) and OZARA Slovenia, National Association for Quality of Life. In this pilot and comprehensive approach, we have contributed to a more organized and more effective mental health protection in Slovenia in one year and a half. All services were free of charge for all users.

The following **MOČ project results** are the most evident:

- **Increased accessibility of professional help in distress.** From February 2015 until April 2016, the network of nine MOČ counselling centres (Ljubljana, Kranj, Celje, Laško, Postojna, Sevnica, Murska Sobota, Nova Gorica and Slovenj Gradec) carried out 5,700 counselling hours. Almost 1,600 individuals in mental distress sought for help. The planned scope of counselling hours was overreached by 27 percent. Work concept of all nine counselling centres was unified (highly trained counsellors and supervisors were involved), professionally tested and justified, and established under the patronage of Slovenian Association for Suicide Prevention. This new network of counselling centres brought counselling services closer to a wider circle of people. The counselling was free of charge for clients and no referral or health insurance card was needed.
- **Increased number of experts from health, social and police sector who were involved in programmes for strengthening their own mental health.** More than 100 experts were involved in educational programme with exercises on the topic of mindfulness (NARA – MOČ Programme). By taking care of their personal mental health and personal growth, these experts can offer quality help to others.
- **Increased number of experts with different profiles** (police officers, social workers, physicians and nurses) **with increased competences for recognition and treatment of mental distresses and suicidal behaviour.** More than 600 experts who work with vulnerable individuals participated in educational programmes on the topic of mental health and suicide prevention.

- **Increased accessibility of expert support for parents, families and grieving people.** In Celje and Ljubljana, six experiential groups for parents were active (each group held up to 12 meetings in the period of three months; three groups were for divorced parents and three for married parents). According to evaluation, relationships between parents and their children as well as family atmosphere improved after the end of experiential groups. Parents' expectations were met. In Ljubljana, also a support group for grieving people took place.
- **Improved awareness on mental health.** OZARA Slovenia - National Association for Quality of Life prepared a comprehensive campaign for the promotion of mental health and suicide prevention with a television and radio commercial. They also set up more than 800 posters with preventive contents across entire Slovenia. Evaluation of this national campaign shows that it reached its goal and that such actions on the meaning of mental health are important and logical. 14 public lectures on depression and suicidality were carried out in different Slovenian regions as part of this campaign, and were attended by approximately 400 participants.
- **New communication materials in the field of information and raising awareness on mental health.** Three new informative brochures were published: 1) *Depression – recognize, treat and beat it* (60,000 copies); 2) brochure on suicide prevention *When we are afraid that someone might take their own life* (20,000 copies); and 3) brochure on the Network of MOČ counselling centres *Because conversation gives strength* (100,000 copies).
- **Added value in expert literature.** Two new handbooks were published: *NARA Programme – POWER to experts through mindfulness*, written by prof. dr. Vita Poštuvan and assist. MSc Alenka Tančič Grum; and *Recognizing and treating depression and suicidality in patients in outpatient clinics of family physicians*, edited by Nuša Konec Juričič, assist. prof. dr. Saška Roškar and Petra Jelenko Roth.

"MOČ project results show that there are some needs and challenges in the field of mental health protection and promotion. Among those needs, there is a great need for sustainability of the network of psychological counselling centres and thus accessibility of psychological help in all Slovenian regions; the need for continued and accessible educations for experts of different profiles; and the need for programmes aimed at strengthening of their own mental health. The need for activities aimed at de-stigmatization of mental problems and use of psychological help is also clear. The main challenges for the future are multi-level. One of such challenges is to find a way for sustainable operation of the network of counselling centres, which is problematic organizationally as well as financially. Maybe even greater challenge is to find a way for the simultaneous (multi-level) implementation of different approaches for mental health protection and promotion. Based on experiences of other approaches, only multi-level implementation leads to optimal results", said assist. prof. dr. Saška Roškar. Project brought new, innovative solutions, which overreached existing practice in the field of mental health and suicide prevention in Slovenia. By achieving pre-set goals, project also contributed to local capacity in ensuring more favourable conditions for mental health protection.