

# **European Local Initiatives Promoting Mentally Healthy Communities**

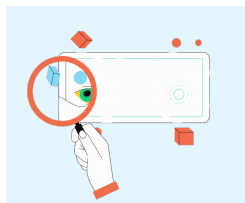


# Local Initiatives

Welcome to our booklet that puts the focus on a selection of local mental health initiatives within the diverse landscapes of Europe. From the cobblestone streets of Barcelona to the tranquil fjords of Norway, communities across this rich tapestry of cultures are trailblazing distinctive, community-led approaches to mental health. The importance of these local schemes is profound. They enable mental health services to be tailored to the specific needs, struggles and assets of each community, fostering a sense of connection and unity. Moreover, they act as essential links between individuals and larger national healthcare systems, reducing the obstacles that often impede access.

This booklet, therefore, honours these extraordinary initiatives that work tirelessly to revolutionise the panorama of mental wellbeing, making it more accessible, inclusive and impactful across Europe.

## INTERACTIVE MAP



Zoom in and click on the country name to go to discover its local initiative\*.



\*Countries without the names written above are where no data is available for local mental health initiatives.



Austria

## 01. MIND-BASE

### INSTITUTE FOR ADDICTION PREVENTION

MINDBASE is a digital initiative aimed at enhancing the existing psychosocial health care services in Vienna through the use of e-mental health technologies.

Its aim is to become a growing hub for accessing effective digital mental health resources. E-mental health involves utilising modern technology, such as online self-help programs, campaigns, interactive websites, apps, chats and forums,

to provide immediate and straightforward support for individuals. These online interventions supplement, rather than replace personal treatment, offering assistance in real time and combating the social stigma associated with mental health issues.

More [here](#).



Belgium (Brussels)

## 02. TANDEPLUS

### CBCS

TANDEplus, based in Brussels, Belgium, is a mobile crisis service dedicated to providing short-term, non-coercive support to adults experiencing crises. The initiative's key aim is to help individuals reactivate their local support networks, connecting them with relevant services and resources to meet their stated needs.

TANDEplus workers, who don't necessarily require professional mental health training, offer assistance through regular home visits, tackling both emotional concerns and practical issues like debt or family relationships. They operate on the core philosophy that individuals should maintain control over their own lives.

More on the project [here](#)



**Bosina and Herzegovina**

## 03. BOOK FOR THE FUTURE

### SOCIETIES

The association aims to ensure its long-term sustainability and improve its members' quality of life by boosting self-confidence and developing new skills. This is planned to be achieved through the production of a specialised didactic book by members, particularly those with mental disorders.

Participation in this endeavour will positively impact their self-image, confidence, and financial stability.

The target audience for these books includes not only the members who produce them but also parents of preschool children, kindergartens, children's institutions, healthcare facilities, speech therapists, defectologists, and faculties oriented towards health or rehabilitation.

More on the projects [here](#)



**Bulgaria**

## 04. TELL ME

### UNICEF BULGARIA

The initiative is aimed at assisting adolescents and youth in managing negative emotions such as anxiety, sadness, and fear. Accessible to all 14 to 24-year-olds and their parents for free, the platform offers resources to understand and cope with issues like panic attacks, depression, stress, and more. It also aids in building psychological resilience and understanding oneself better.

The platform is a significant step towards accessible, affordable, and equitable mental health resources in Bulgaria, reflecting young people's growing demand for mental health action.

More on the app can be found [here](#).



## Croatia (Istria)

### 05. PROJECT FOR IMPROVEMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

#### ISTRIAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

The county Istria is developing consulting centres equipped with experts to assist individuals and families with various mental health difficulties. It wants to offer early intervention and prevention services to protect mental health. The county is also committed to improving and expanding similar centres across the territory, with the goal of providing accessible, professional assistance to all its inhabitants.

The project is to improve mental health by bringing together representatives of local counselling centres and offering education to strengthen professional staff.

More information can be found [here](#)



## Czechia

### 06. EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT FOR TRANSITION TO COMMUNITY

#### THE CENTRE FOR MENTAL HEALTH CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Flexible Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) is a Dutch organisational model for community care aimed at individuals with severe mental health issues. It offers case management for those with lower care needs and team-based assertive community treatment for those in crisis or requiring high support.

The "Support of FACT Model in the Czech Republic" project seeks to introduce and propagate this model among mental health care providers outside of Prague, with the goal of enhancing service quality.

The FACT fidelity scale tool is used to identify potential areas of improvement in the organizational model of participating teams, who will then create development plans based on the evaluation results.

The project also offers activities like conferences and consultancy to the teams, providing a platform for knowledge sharing, problem-solving, and queries related to the FACT model.

More information [here](#)

## 07. PLAY TOGETHER

### SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

The project is aimed at developing a method for creating real and close cooperative relations between municipal social psychiatric services and civil society. The goal is to give people with mental health problems access to meaningful communities in civil society as part of the individual's recovery process. The methods will be developed and tested in different municipal contexts.

All elements – involvement, exploration, development and testing – will be combined in one method description that other municipalities, services and civil society players can benefit from.

More information can be found [here](#).

## 08. VEPA BEHAVIORAL SKILLS GAME

### TERVISE ARENGU INSTITUUT

The VEPA Behavioral Skills Game methodology is grounded in the belief that children may need guidance in understanding how to behave in various situations and handle their emotions, which involves developing self-regulation and social-emotional competence. These skills, much like cycling, numeracy, or reading, can be taught through progressive, repeated practice, faith in the child's abilities, and positive reinforcement. Teaching complex skills in small, manageable chunks and allowing repeated practice in different situations can bolster self-confidence and establish new habits.

The methodology emphasizes positive attention for desired behavior and neutral feedback for unwanted behavior, preventing reinforcement of negative habits. This concept is encapsulated in a metaphor by international VEPA trainer Jeanette Puskas: "If you want flowers in your bed, water them and not the weeds."

For more info, please click [here](#).



## 09. OPEN DIALOGUE

### VARIOUS ORGANISATIONS

Open Dialogue, a mental health approach that has gained recognition for significantly improving patient outcomes, focuses on dialogue and immediate support instead of primarily relying on pharmaceutical interventions. This approach views psychosis as a phenomenon occurring between individuals, not within one. It seeks to address issues within the relational network surrounding a person in crisis, rather than attributing the problem solely to the individual.

The approach recognises the potential for confrontation and challenge within these dynamics as a means for personal growth and resolution of deeper issues, cautioning that avoidance may lead to unresolved feelings impacting future relationships and life experiences.

For greater details, click [here](#)

## 10. CITIZEN PSYCHIATRY

### THE PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTION LILLE MÉTROPOL

The network, also known as "citizen psychiatry," champions respect for the human rights of service users and empowers them, even within a restrictive national legal context. The underpinning themes of this network include upholding human rights, refraining from associating mental health care with violence and risk suppression, adapting services to people's needs, advocating for the closure of institutions that isolate residents from their communities, and combating stigma and discrimination based on mental health conditions.

The network collaborates with various stakeholders, such as service users, their families, NGOs, and elected officials.

Within this broad initiative, two key components of the program are the Coordination Territoriale du Parcours de Rétablissement ('Territorial Coordination of the Recovery Path') and 'Availability, Reactivity, Outreach'.

For more info click [here](#).





Germany (Saarbrücken)

## 11. MENTAL HEALTH CITY

### CITY COUNCIL OF SAARBRÜCKEN

This initiative has been split into three different pillars that are all aimed at strengthening mental health within the community (plus a fourth pillar for public administration workers).

The first pillar relies on information for self-help. Citizens receive up-to-date information on various topics, including offers of pastoral care or contact points for people affected by domestic violence

The second pillar, the state capital offers those interested the transfer to local guided offers to strengthen mental health: from coaching to creative workshops to meditation. The initiative also includes offers for sporting activities, such as Nordic walking or Tai Chi courses for children, as well as lectures and workshops on relaxation.

For info on the other pillars, click [here](#)



Greece

## 12. MOBILE MENTAL HEALTH UNITS

### VARIOUS NGOS

Mobile Mental Health Units (MMHUs) in Greece is a cost-effective initiative to provide community psychiatric services in rural, remote and underprivileged regions where access to mental health services is challenging. These publicly funded services, managed by General Hospitals or non-profit organisations, comprise a diverse team of professionals including psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, social workers and speech therapists.

They work closely with local communities, primary health systems and municipal services. MMHUs offer community-based treatment for a broad spectrum of mental disorders, for both adults and children.

More information can be found [here](#)



Hungary

## 13. FELEPULES (RECOVERY)

### AWAKENINGS FOUNDATION

This project, initiated two years ago, is a support network implemented across Hungary, the initiative employs digital platforms to connect experienced mental health experts with patients, their families, and healthcare professionals. The heart of the project is a dynamic online booking system that functions like an airline reservation platform, allowing users to schedule appointments with certified peer support workers.

These workers are provided with ongoing support and self-training sessions.

Collaborations have been formed with GP communities in the capital to expand the reach of the service, which operates on a donation basis.

Find out more and follow the project [here](#)



Iceland

## 14. UNGHUGAR

### HUGARAFL

The group was founded by young Hugarafli members on August 24, 2009. The goal of establishing Unghugi was to create a platform for young people within Hugarafli to talk with other young people who have similar experiences. The group meets in weekly meetings. At Hugarafli youth meetings, empowerment and recovery are paramount.

In addition to weekly meetings, Unghugar actively participates in Hugarafli's other activities and other projects, domestic and foreign, depending on the interest of the group at any given time.

Find more info [here](#)

## 15. JIGSAW

### THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

The unique primary care youth mental health service, Jigsaw, seeks to increase its reach to accommodate more young individuals aged between 12–25. The launch of Jigsaw Connect, an integrated suite of accessible mental health supports and services, aims to provide more flexibility and choice. The objectives of these services include expanding therapeutic supports, and ensuring high-quality, impactful clinical supports.

Jigsaw is committed to mental health promotion and aims to equip young people, and those in their surroundings, with improved mental health knowledge, skills, and resources. Jigsaw's mental health promotion work will occur in various environments, such as places of living, learning, working, and socialising. This will be directed by youth voice, evidence, and national policy.

Read more [here](#)

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## 16. FAMIGLIA A FAMIGLIA

### PROGETTO ITACA

The Progetto Itaca initiative offers a free training course for relatives and other caregivers of individuals with mental health disorders.

The course, among other things, covers various key topics, such as information on mental health disorders, up-to-date information on medications and their side effects, and strategies for maintaining therapeutic continuity.

The course also offers strategies for managing crises and relapses, and it addresses the needs of family members, including managing fears, stress, and emotional overload. Lastly, the course provides a guide to finding appropriate support and services within the community.

All info found [here](#)

## 17. BREATHE TO BE HAPPY

### LATVIAN RED CROSS

The initiative aimed at promoting mental health among people aged 13 to 30 living in Latvia. The project was motivated by the recognition of the need for mental health discussions and access to quality information among young people.

A series of activities, including seminars led by mental health specialists, art therapy, meditation, and breathing technique workshops, were designed to increase mental health knowledge, reduce stereotypes, and mitigate potential risks of mental health disorders.

The initiative collaborates with various organizations and professionals, including psychotherapists, child psychologists, and child psychiatrists, and has produced materials such as newsletters, social media posts, postcards, and a guidebook to continue expanding its reach.

More info [here](#)

## 18. MENTAL HEALTH AMBASSADORS

### MENTAL HEALTH PERSPECTIVES

The project was designed to empower individuals who have encountered mental health challenges, or their relatives, by training them to become mental health ambassadors within their communities. The intention is to utilize their personal experiences to promote open and transparent discussions about mental health issues among the public.

The project aims to achieve several goals.. Training programmes for these ambassadors will be carried out and the initiative will be promoted to raise awareness about the campaign.

The project will also organize or participate in a minimum of eight events. During these events, it is expected that contacts will be established with community members while the ambassadors share their personal experiences of mental health conditions. The idea is to foster an environment of understanding, acceptance, and open dialogue about mental health.

More info [here](#)



Malta

## 19. COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

### THE RICHMOND FOUNDATION

The Supportive Housing Scheme, a collaboration with the Housing Authority and private sector, offers a long-term housing solution for people with chronic mental health problems. The scheme provides a supportive environment where eligible individuals are assisted in managing their homes and maintaining an adequate living standard.

The service is available to adults up to 65 years of age who have chronic mental health issues, don't have a secure home, and are either completed or undergoing a rehabilitation programme. These professionals are expected to provide long-term support and community follow-up.

Find out more [here](#)



The Netherlands

## 20. FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCING

### THE EIGEN KRACHT CENTRALE FOUNDATION

The "Eigen Kracht Conference Project" is designed as a formal initiative aiming to assist individuals grappling with daunting, complex or ambiguous daily life events such as mental health issues. This initiative is based on the principle that when individuals confront intricate challenges, a structured, cooperative approach involving their social network can provide an effective resolution while preserving their autonomy and control over the process.

The central element of the project is the Eigen Kracht conference, a formally structured meeting, where participants collaborate to create a comprehensive plan for the future. This plan, known as the family group plan, addresses the individual's specific challenges and provides a roadmap for future actions.

A full description and information can be found [here](#)

## 21. VENN1

### MENTAL HELSE

The "Venn1 Initiative" is a health-enhancing, preventative basic course on mental health, tailored specifically for young individuals. Predicated on values such as acknowledgement, empathy, comprehension, unity, and equality, this project is aimed at providing students with fundamental knowledge and practical tools pertinent to mental health.

The course is delivered by youthful instructors who leverage their personal experiences with mental health to facilitate a safe and open discourse on the subject matter.

Interactive discussion groups and exercises form an integral part of the course, with a special emphasis on friendship and inclusion.

All the info can be found [here](#).

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## 22. TOGETHER IN THE KITCHEN

### FUNDACJA EFKROPKA

The initiative is strategically designed with the primary objective of serving two distinct groups: those who have previously encountered a mental health crisis and restaurant staff, who are positioned as trainers. The innovative approach of this project is characterised by the incorporation of a socially engaged business model, aimed at facilitating the reintegration of individuals recovering from severe mental ill-health.

It is envisaged that the successful execution of this project will contribute to countering stigmatization and social exclusion faced by individuals recuperating from mental health crises – a key mission of our foundation.

Full project info [here](#)



Portugal

## 23. USO

### ENCONTRAR+SE

The initiative is constituted as a response within the domain of Continuing Integrated Care in Mental Health. It is designed with the intent of catering to adults experiencing serious mental illnesses that result in psychosocial disability and dependency. The goal of this project is to foster autonomy, emotional stability, and social participation with a perspective geared towards social, familial, and professional integration.

A range of services is provided by seasoned practitioners, who possess expertise in both clinical practice and research across diverse sectors of mental health intervention. Among these services are psychotherapeutic follow-up, support in daily activities, socio-occupational assistance, training for family members and caregivers, self-help group support and many more.

For more info please visit [here](#)



Romania

## 24. MAP OF ROMANIAN MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

### MENTAL HEALTH FOR ROMANIA

The "Map of Romanian Mental Health Professionals" is an initiative by Mental Health Romania aiming to create a comprehensive directory of mental health professionals across the country. The project is designed to facilitate access to mental health resources for individuals in need. This interactive map features details about various mental health practitioners, their specialization, and contact information, enabling people to find suitable mental health support near their location.

It includes filters such as "discounted services, experience with LGBTQA+, and experience with minorities. The map serves as an effective tool for making mental health care more accessible and transparent to the Romanian population.

Try out the interactive map [here](#)





**Slovakia**

## **25. AVAILABILITY OF THERAPIES FOR CHILDREN**

**LIGA ZA DUŠEVNÉ ZDRAVIE**

The project has created a hub for parents that cannot afford psychotherapy for their children and therapists willing to provide their services for free.

The hub has lists of different psychotherapists within different regions of Slovakia where parents are encouraged to contact them explaining that they are part of the project.

Visit the [website](#) for more

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**Slovenia**

## **26. DNEVNI CENTRI (DAY CENTRES)**

**OZARA**

The project revolves around the operation of day care centres, whose central objective is to provide professional counselling and conduct various professional activities aimed at fostering and bolstering the individuality of the participants. These initiatives aim to assist participants in overcoming their personal difficulties, thereby fostering their integration into active life. These centres also serve as venues for various leisure, social, and group activities, allowing participants to engage in enriching experiences.

Among the resources offered to participants are educational and interest activities, such as literary, musical and culinary workshops, and foreign language courses along with various social events. This project supports the rehabilitation process in a comfortable setting, assisting participants in navigating numerous crisis situations.

More information [here](#)



Spain

## 27. WORK WITHOUT MASKS. EMPLOY WITHOUT BARRIERS

SALUD MENTAL ESPAÑA

The specific objective of raising awareness about the reality of individuals with mental health problems within the business community. Simultaneously, efforts are made to ensure that companies comprehend the significance of mental health care within work environments.

It aims to disseminate information about mental health issues, their associated needs, and the valuable job-related skills possessed by individuals experiencing such challenges. To achieve these objectives, informative talks and awareness-raising sessions are conducted for companies.

More details can be found [here](#)



Sweden

## 28. VARA NERE

MIND SWEDEN

The Vara Nere initiative aims to equip young people with knowledge about mental health and provide tools for open conversations. It addresses the lack of understanding among young individuals regarding mental illness and seeks to eliminate the confusion between common feelings and diagnosable conditions. Instead of focusing on specific diagnoses, the initiative emphasizes the concept of "being down," which is universally understood and devoid of stigma.

The project offers various resources, including an Instagram account, a knowledge portal, a leadership course, a podcast, and study circle materials. To facilitate communication and engagement, a fictional character named Nere has been created as a relatable messenger. Nere, represented through a 3D animated figure, approaches sensitive topics with humor to alleviate seriousness and build connections.

Read more [here](#)



Switzerland (Lausanne)

## 29. MAD PRIDE IN LAUSANNE

### PROMENTESANA

Mad Pride Lausanne (and more generally Mad Pride in Switzerland) aims to address this issue by actively reducing the stigma associated with mental ill-health, promoting the inclusion of individuals with mental health challenges, and strengthening the overall mental well-being of the Swiss population. The project provides a platform for people with mental disabilities, their families, professionals, and sympathizers to come together, participate, and support the cause of mental health.

By creating an open and accepting environment, Mad Pride Switzerland seeks to generate greater understanding and empathy while engaging public and political authorities to acknowledge the challenges of mental health prevention.

For more info, click [here](#)



Ukraine

## 30. COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH TEAM

### UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT WITH THE WHO'S SUPPORT

Community Mental Health Team (CMHT). The CMHT will provide assessment, formulation (including diagnosis), and treatment for individuals with moderate to severe mental ill-health or mental health problems.

It will also offer interventions for those with complex and long-term needs, involving multiple services and agencies, as well as individuals with time-limited conditions who can benefit from specialized interventions and meet the referral guidelines.

More details [here](#)

## 31. COMMUNITIES THAT CARE

### RETHINK MENTAL ILLNESS

This initiative highlighted the six pillars of community care: clinical, social connectedness, physical health, housing, finances and employment, and volunteering. They have also developed guides called 'Thinking Differently' to assist place-based teams in other regions to initiate their own community mental health transformations.

To further their mission, Rethink Mental Illness has established the Community Mental Health Unit as a platform to explore innovative approaches and influence the adoption of the Community Mental Health Framework.

The Community Mental Health Team offers support in comprehending local contexts, facilitating strategic and co-produced work for implementing the Community Mental Health Framework, demonstrating effective practices, and designing outcomes measurement in collaboration with stakeholders.

Find out more [here](#)

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## CONCLUSION

To conclude, this booklet stands as a tribute to the inspiring local mental health initiatives across Europe. These community-led strategies have shaped a more inclusive, accessible mental health landscape, catering to local needs and connecting individuals to broader healthcare systems. Their invaluable work reaffirms the power of community in promoting mental wellbeing.

Let their achievements inspire continued innovation in mental health care across Europe, ensuring every individual has the support they need. Here's to a future of more connected, healthier communities.