



Erasmus+ Programme

2014-2020

Key Action 2: Strategic Partnership Projects

**Skills and Knowledge Exchange Project for Drug and Alcohol Helplines (SKEPDAH)**

**Project Agreement No: 2016-1-IE01-KA202**

## SKEPDAH Project has its first exchange meeting on Helpline skills & burn-out prevention

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The Skills and Knowledge Exchange Project for Drug and Alcohol Helplines (SKEPDAH) was designed as a way for Drug and Alcohol Helplines to learn from each other and to exchange experience in a sustainable manner. This project is funded by the European programme for education, training, youth and sport (Erasmus +), through the Irish National Agency, Leargas. It is in fact a Strategic partnership for vocational education and training partnership under Key Action 2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices. The project is running from Jan 2017 to August 2018.

The first Transnational Learning Exchange Partner Meeting was held on June 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> in Sofia, Bulgaria and all nine partner services were in attendance, with one expert speaker from the UK also present. The topic being discussed was: "Helpline skills for new workers, experienced workers and burn-out prevention".

The agenda for the two day meeting was designed to maximise the learning exchange opportunities while also working towards the goal of creating a curriculum for training on this topic. Each partner brought resources to be shared and together we created an inventory on knowledge and skills needed for helpline work, as well as resources required to support that. Our expert speaker from the Self-Injury Support Helpline (UK) talked about burn-out prevention and helped us to look more deeply at this topic and the fact that it is something that needs to be kept on the agenda, throughout a helpline workers career, rather than as a single slot during their induction, never to be revisited again.

In advance of this meeting our Learning Outcomes Coordination partner, the Training Exchange (UK) had carried out a survey of partners to assess what learning they hoped to get from each of the Transnational Learning Exchange meetings. It was apparent from that data that though its always beneficial to revisit core helpline skills, Burn out prevention was a topic that warranted further discussion and insights. As Day 1 progressed, it became clear that Burn-out prevention was the topic that carried most potential for learning in this partnership, as on inspection the key Helpline skills and the resources that we use and shared are similar.

There was much useful discussion on the value of team work, supervision, peer support/intervision as well as the idea of including self-care and burn-out prevention as vital elements from the first moment someone is interviewed for a position at a helpline and continuing throughout. There was

also some discussion on the fact that sometimes if a person is burnt-out or close to burn-out, it may be best if they move to other types of work.

By the end of the two day meeting a draft curriculum had been prepared. This outlines what's best to include in Helpline workers training. This curriculum has to be completed in the weeks following the meeting and then shared across the partnership. Following this, some partners will elect to engage in training with their Helpline workers with reference to this curriculum and will feedback any learnings back to the partners. Key learnings and the final curriculae will be disseminated throughout the project through online resources and at the Dissemination meeting near the end of the project.

Partners in this project are:

The HSE Drugs & Alcohol Helpline (Ireland); De DrugLijn, VAD (Belgium); ARZ Solidarnost/Fracarita Bulgaria, National Drugs, Alcohol and Gambling Helpline(Bulgaria); SICAD (Portugal); PERSEAS (Cyprus); RUStelefonen (Norway); Drugs Infolijn, Trimbos Instituut (The Netherlands); Basis e.V.(Germany) and the Training Exchange Ltd (UK).

The second Transnational Learning Exchange Meeting will be held in Frankfurt, Germany in September 2017. At this two day meeting we will focus on Topic 2: *New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and the challenges for Helplines*. Once again we will refer to the Learning Outcomes that were noted in the survey at the start of the project and direct the agenda and the goals for the meeting based on that. Our third meeting will be in Cyprus in June 2018 and that will focus on Drug and Alcohol Helplines and Mental Health/Dual Diagnosis. The final meeting of the project will be a Dissemination meeting which will be held in Belgium later in 2018.

As an end result, these curriculae for continued vocational education and training for Helpline workers will be disseminated via the online resources and can be used freely by other Drug and Alcohol Helplines as well as similar services in Europe and beyond.

To follow are weblinks to the organizations involved in this project:

Erasmus + : [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en)

FESAT: <http://www.fesat.org/en/>

Drugs/HIV Helpline: <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/addiction/drugshivhelpline/>

VAD: <http://www.vad.be/>

De DrugLijn: <https://www.druglijn.be/>

ARZ Solidarnost/Fracarita Bulgaria: <http://www.solidarnost-bg.org/en/>

National Drugs, Alcohol and Gambling Helpline: <http://www.drugsinfo-bg.org/en/>

SICAD: <http://www.sicad.pt/pt/Paginas/default.aspx>

PERSEAS: <https://www.facebook.com/perseas.center/>

RUStelefonen: <http://www.rustelefonen.no/>

Trimbos Instituut: <https://www.trimbos.org/>

Basis eV. : <http://www.basis-ev.eu/>

The Training Exchange Ltd: <http://www.trainingexchange.org.uk/>