

Improving Mental Help-Seeking in North-East Slovenia

Self-Stigma still Matters

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RATIONALE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY PROGRAMME

Rural settings worldwide report poor access to mental health services, and stigma related to mental help-seeking.

The same applies to mostly rural NE Slovenia with the worst mental health indicators.

Programme With Raised Mental Health Literacy to Better Managing of Mood Disorders (2017-2019; acronym: OMRA) aims to improve the help-seeking in NE Slovenia.

Before the Programme was launched, local research participants were asked: Whether and how to include the culture of shame and fear?

RESULTS OF PRELIMINARY QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

(11 semi-structured culture-sensitive interviews + 1 group interview (7 participants) / Research participants: users and providers of mental health support in NE Slovenia)

- The early recognition of mental disorder was rare among the research participants.
- Being advised to visit a mental health professional, the users insisted they 'were not the crazy one'.
- Feelings of shame and fear prevented them from sharing their sufferings.
- Their low self-confidence and self-esteem caught them inside their own suffering worlds.
- The fear of NOT BEING UNDERSTOOD in spaces where 'everybody knows each other' was the main reported obstacle in their help-seeking.
- Because of stigma, and avoiding of being seen in public workshops, various forms of mental health literacy were recommended: e-classes, handbooks, guides, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

Programme With Raised Mental Health Literacy to Better Managing of Mood Disorders has to address (self)stigma and coping strategies.

Addressing various contexts (e.g. working environment, local community) of self-stigma disclosure is necessary.

Self-stigma has to be addressed in order to improve mental help-seeking in NE Slovenia.

When, To Whom and How to disclose is a decision of the person with living experience of mental disorder and nobody else!

Programme free accessed e-class about stigma and help-seeking

