

Y UTHMINDS

YOUTHMINDS

*Promotion of Youth Mental Health through Awareness,
Prevention & Resilience Building*

FOCUS GROUPS EXECUTION AND REPORTING.

TAVO EUROPA FINAL REPORT

Authors:



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PROJECT INFORMATION**Project acronym:**

YOUTHMINDS

Project title:

Promotion of Youth Mental Health through Awareness, Prevention & Resilience Building

Project Number:

2021-1-BG01-KA220-YOU-000028603

Sub-programme or KA:

KA220-YOU - Cooperation partnerships in youth

KA2: YOUTH: Increasing quality, innovation and recognition of youth work

Website:<http://youthminds.eu/>**CONSORTIUM:**

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Project N°:2021-1-BG01-KA220-YOU-000028603



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Agenda

A general agenda for both focus groups is provided below, please adapt it in case of deviations:

1. Welcoming. Introduction of moderator and observers.
2. Asking participants for consent to record the discussion.
3. Project and focus group structure short presentation.
4. Asking participants to introduce themselves briefly (in case you opted to make a short ice-breaker, name it here).
5. Discussion based on proposed questions and Focus group guidelines.
6. Closing session, wrap-up and summary.
7. Final words and a “thank you” note by the Partner Organization.

Focus groups detail

FOCUS GROUP N°1	
HOSTED ON	21.04.2022 16:00-17:00
FORMAT	Face-to-face
FACILITATOR	Indrė Apuokienė, social worker
OBSERVER(S)	Greta Paskočiumaitė, youth worker at Tavo Europa
ACTUAL DURATION	40 minutes
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	14
PARTICIPANTS AVERAGE AGE	18
PARTICIPANTS PROFILE	High school and university students, except one youth worker. 5 men and 9 women.
MINUTES	<p>The focus group was assembled in the small Lithuanian town of Marijampolė. The presentation and survey of the project took place during additional activities.</p> <p>After the introduction of the moderator, observers and participants, a short presentation of the project “YouthMinds”. Participants were interested in the objectives of the project and the planned activities, which were presented in more detail.</p> <p>Most of the members of the group knew each other, the moderator was also a well-known social worker who organized various activities.</p> <p>After presenting the questionnaire, participants have time to answer the questions online. In response, participants wanted to clarify some of the concepts, so they were explained in detail.</p> <p>After everyone completed the survey, there was a short discussion during which participants shared their personal experiences. It turned out that almost all participants had people in their environment who suffer from</p>

	mental disorders. Various solutions have been suggested as to where professional advice can be sought.
COMMENTS / OBSERVATIONS	Adults, most of them university students, were more courageous in the conversation. Most participants revealed they had heard of mental disorders, but lacked specific knowledge about their symptoms, treatment, and key challenges.

FOCUS GROUP N°2	
HOSTED ON	27.04.2022 12:00-13:00
FORMAT	Face-to-face
FACILITATOR	Indrė Apuokienė, social worker
OBSERVER(S)	Greta Paskočiūmaitė, youth worker at Tavo Europa
ACTUAL DURATION	40 minutes
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	16
PARTICIPANTS AVERAGE AGE	18
PARTICIPANTS PROFILE	High school and university students, two youth workers. 6 men and 10 women.
MINUTES	<p>The survey of the Focus Group took place in Marijampolė, during one additional activity. Participants did not know each other, but they knew the moderator from previous activities, so more time was devoted to presentations than in the case of the first group.</p> <p>The presentation of the YouthMinds project was welcomed. Participants were interested in social networking accounts to track the progress of the project.</p> <p>Questions were presented that participants completed online. No additional questions were asked in response.</p> <p>During the discussion, participants admitted that they did not know how to answer some questions, such as stigma. It is mentioned that the word is rarely mentioned in the public media, so it is not easy to understand its meaning, although in fact it is well known that people with mental disorders often experience shame, discomfort; the public is often not ready to provide the necessary assistance and respond adequately.</p>
COMMENTS / OBSERVATIONS	Participants were actively involved in the discussion, especially with regard to mental disorders in the immediate environment. Some participants admitted to speaking for the first time in a larger group about mental disorders and their determinants.

Pictures and/or screenshots



Discussion outcomes

KNOWLEDGE - MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

QUESTION 1. *In your opinion, what is Mental Health and wellness?*

- a. *What do you think a Mental Illness is?*
- b. *Which mental health disorders or illnesses do you know?*

Summary of feedback: 6 participants did not answer the question of what they thought is mental health. The rest described mental health as: inner experiences, harmony and health of body and mind, adequate assessment of the world and environment, having no problems. 5 respondents associated mental health with disorders, mentioning depression, mood swings, insomnia, eating disorders.

In providing a definition of mental illness, participants mentioned that having a mental illness interferes with normal life and has a strong impact on its quality to the detriment. Mental illness is thought to be more difficult to treat than physical injury. Mental illnesses are very common, but at the same time they are thought to be incurable (3 respondents). 2 participants reviewed mental illness in more detail, noting that their untreated harm could be both personal and societal, and treatment options need to be selected on a case-by-case basis.

6 participants did not provide any examples of mental illness, the rest mostly mentioned depression (22 responses). Other popular responses include anxiety (8), schizophrenia (7), and various eating disorders (4).

Main conclusions: All participants associate mental health with a healthy approach to lifestyle and the surrounding environment. The most common disorder is depression. Although it is known what depression

is and how it occurs, there is a fear of depression due to societal reactions. Maintaining good mental health is very important for everyone, both for their own well-being and for their relationship with other people.

QUESTION 2. For you, what does it mean to be mentally healthy or have good mental health?

Summary of feedback: For most, being mentally healthy means feeling well, enjoying life, being happy, being able to react rationally to different situations, and feeling responsible for yourself and your actions. It has also been considered that being mentally healthy means not having the mental disorders mentioned earlier. According to one participant, there is not a single person who is completely healthy. 3 participants consider good mental health a gift.

Main conclusions: Mental health is associated with good physical and mental well-being, taking responsibility and happiness. Most respondents provided their definition as relatively short, mostly mentioning positive aspects of life.

QUESTION 3. In your opinion, what factors might cause mental health problems?

Summary of feedback: Factors that are detrimental to mental health can be divided into several categories: 1) interpersonal relationships (bullying, quarrels, loss of loved ones, global situation); 2) internal attitudes and personal experiences (bad mood, self-harm, stress, insomnia, unhealthy lifestyle, bad habits, other long-term illnesses); 3) irresponsible use of various substances (alcohol, drugs). Among the less frequently mentioned options was the Internet in general, which contains a lot of harmful information. Several participants believe that mental illness may be hereditary.

Main conclusions: Based on the results, it can be stated that mental health is influenced by both internal and external factors. Some of the reasons mentioned cannot be controlled, but it is believed that the individual can control his own reactions and thus help himself.

QUESTION 4. What do you think, are the most important mental health issues faced by youth nowadays?

Summary of feedback: As many as 20 respondents mentioned depression, 10 mentioned anxiety, 5 - eating disorders, 4 - panic attacks. Stress mentioned several times is also classified as a mental health problem. Smoking, alcohol use, bullying, relationships with parents and school were all once mentioned.

Main conclusions: Some of the respondents' experiences of unpleasant emotions are attributed to mental disorders, so it can be argued that there is a lack of knowledge about what mental illness is and how to recognize it.

ATTITUDES – SOCIAL STIGMA:

QUESTION 5. *Have you ever encountered a peer or another individual who had mental health problems or psychological distress?*

- a. *How did you realize they were in distress and what did you do?*
- b. *In your opinion, is it treatable? If yes, why yes? If not, why not?*

Summary of feedback: Only three focus group participants said they had not encountered people with mental health problems. In most cases, participants were willing to help a friend or loved one in a difficult situation. Conversations and attempts to appease are cited as one of the main aids. Only a few respondents named how they understood when a friend found themselves in trouble: unusual behavior, crying, trying to withdraw, changed communication. Only two cases mention professional help offered or received. 1 respondent admitted that he had difficulties himself/herself – he/she was thinking about suicide, he/she did not evaluate himself/herself properly. Almost all respondents believe that mental illness is treatable, but only if the sick person wants it and quality help is provided. There are those who believe that not all illnesses can be cured or that a visit to a psychologist is enough.

Main conclusions: Mental illness is known to the public today. In most cases, young people who come into contact with friends with a mental disorder take help for themselves by offering to speak out. Only in rare cases have attempts been made to offer professional help, so there is no clear knowledge about the methods of treating mental illness and the benefits of quality care.

QUESTION 6. *When you think on a person with mental health problems,*

- a. *what characteristics or traits do you attribute to him/her?*
- b. *In your opinion, should they speak out loud about their problems?*
- c. *In what ways can stigma be reduced?*

Summary of feedback: People with mental disorders are imagined to be lost, to have an unusual perception of themselves and the world, unable to express their emotions properly, to behave strangely. Sadness is mentioned several times as one of the signs that something is wrong with a person. Almost all respondents say it is necessary to tell others about the difficulties they are experiencing, with some detailing that it is best to talk to a best friend. It is pointed out that it is often too difficult to talk about difficulties, and sometimes people cannot be trusted. 6 participants do not know how to reduce stigma, the rest point to a number of options, including: professional counseling, stories and attention from famous people, talking about it at school, support from loved ones.

Main conclusions: People with mental disorders are seen as not fit in society, but there is a clear need to talk about these issues, both at school and in public life, in order to reduce this stigma.

SKILLS – DEALING WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS.



QUESTION 7. Do you see mental illness as a stressor for youth today? YES or NO

a. If yes, do you think stigma influences a young individual's willingness to seek help?

Summary of feedback: 21 respondents believe that mental illness is a stressor in the lives of modern youth. The link between stigma and young people's decision to seek help is not very clear. The majority of respondents mentioned that stigma influences the decision to seek help, but also the reluctance to seek help for fear of bullying and misunderstanding, ultimately shame.

Main conclusions: Mental illness is perceived by most as a factor influencing the daily lives of young people, but stigma is perceived as an obstacle to seeking quality help.

QUESTION 8. Do you believe Covid-19 has impacted your Mental Health? YES or NO

a. If yes, in what way?

Summary of feedback: Opinions on the effects of Covid-19 on mental health were evenly distributed. Respondents who emphasize the influence of Covid-19 mention changed communication with friends, loss of loved ones, lost motivation to learn, and significant changes in daily life. It is felt that the effects of the pandemic are still being felt.

Main conclusions: Opinions on the effects of Covid-19 on mental health were divided. It is important to note that the effects of the pandemic wave are still being felt.

QUESTION 9. What stressors undermine your mental wellness?

a. What strengthens or supports your mental health and resilience?

Summary of feedback: Respondents mention bad habits (smoking, alcohol consumption, unhealthy lifestyle, and lack of sleep), feelings of stress and nervousness, unpleasant relationships with others (strict communication, bullying, misbehavior), economic factors, and the consequences of Covid-19 as negative factors. The effects of these stressors and overall mental health can be enhanced through the help of friends, relatives, the professional help of psychologists, self-esteem, positive thoughts, and consistent work with oneself. Hobbies are also often mentioned as improving well-being.

Main conclusions: Mental well-being is mainly affected by bad habits and personal attitudes, and health is best improved by activities and support from loved ones.

QUESTION 10. When you become overwhelmed or the circumstances are too much for you to handle on your own, what kind of support, coping mechanisms or resources do you use to face it?

Summary of feedback: A large number of respondents stated that they did not have any support tools or resources to use to try to overcome the disasters. Some mentioned communication with friends and family, hobbies and professional help. For some, being alone and concentrating also helps to solve troubles.

Main conclusions: Although all respondents are aware of and have experienced mental disorders, most do not envisage self-help measures.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION.

QUESTION 11. Is there something else that we did not mention and you would like to discuss?

Summary of feedback: The only additional suggestion was to talk about alcohol.

Main conclusions: In terms of mental health, the most common factors could be further discussed.

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YOUTHMINDS – Focus Group Participation list

No	Name & Surname	Form of interview (Face-to-face, online, telephone, other)	Occupation	E-mail	Signature (if face-to-face)	Age
1	Samantha Kamašičič	face-to-face	student	saman.0422@gmail.com	[Signature]	18
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Attachments

- Participants' list (if face-to-face format).
- Registration form (if virtual format).
- Legal representative's declaration of participants' list (if virtual format).

