

"may your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears"

Nelson Mandela



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What's Inside:

About DSH Positive Choices
pages 1-2

The DSH partners
page 3

Third Meeting in Athens
page 3-4

Alexithymia. What is it and what can I do
page 5

DSH Partnership Map
page 6

About

Deliberate Self Harm (DSH): Positive Choices

What is the project all about?

DSH Positive Choices is a 2 year **Erasmus+ funded project** (2015-2017) that is being coordinated by Plymouth and District Mind.

The project aims to develop a comprehensive toolkit of resources and training materials that can be used with **young people** to enable them to become more **emotionally resilient, confident** and **self-aware**.

The project is specifically aimed at supporting those young people for whom their mental health is becoming, or has already become an issue. In particular, we will be looking at the issue of self-harm as a coping strategy.

Europe 2020 – European platform against poverty and social exclusion shows that 24% of all the EU population (over 120 million people), are at risk of poverty or social exclusion – this includes 27% of all children in Europe. The Europe 2020 agenda has issues of early school leaving and low educational achievement of young people as a high priority.



Erasmus+

ERASMUS+ STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/>

DSH Positive Choices is an Erasmus+ project coordinated by Plymouth & District Mind Association (PADMA), United Kingdom. It addresses a known cause of social exclusion (with progression pathways to early school leaving and low achievement): **Alexithymia** and **Deliberate Self Harm**.

The **DSH Positive Choices** partnership includes 6 associations from all around Europe. The project will be implemented in United Kingdom, Lithuania, Greece, Turkey and Romania.

DSH Positive Choices will “foster quality improvements in youth work, in particular through enhanced cooperation between organisations in the youth field and/or other stakeholders” (a specific objective of Erasmus Plus Programme in the field of youth). The project will deliver a series of workshops around promotion of emotional awareness, confidence building, self-exploration for young people and self-harm awareness for all stakeholders. Collectively, they will form an open training resource for all working in the field of youth, particularly with young people who may be, or at risk of, experiencing symptoms of Alexithymia and/or any other emotional distress.

Each partner will host a 3 day meeting and deliver 2 one day workshops around related themes that can help young people build emotional resilience and train youth workers in skills to recognize and deal with recognizable symptoms and how to empathically support the young person in getting local professional help.

There are 6 partners involved in the project. They will take workshops back to their own country to translate materials and deliver to 10+ people in the field of youth, and deliver at least 1 relevant workshop to 10+ young people locally.

It is important to include young people to get their feedback and evaluation as to fitness for purpose. All results will be presented at a final international conference.

The most relevant topics addressed by our project are **Early School Leaving** and **Combating failure in education**.

Over the 24 month duration of the project we will:

- **Deliver 72 workshops in the field of youth to address Alexithymia and DSH**
- **Translate materials for delivery in own country**
- **Create volunteer committees to monitor evaluation and sustainability of the project locally**
- **Evaluate the workshops and project**

The DSH Partners:

PADMA UK

Plymouth & District Mind
Association (PADMA) United
Kingdom

www.plymouthmind.com

ZISPB Lithuania

Vsi Zmogiskuju istekliu
stebesenos ir pletros biuras
(ZISPB) Lithuania

www.zispb.lt

SSP&MH Greece

Society of social psychiatry
and mental health (SSP&MH)
Greece

www.ekpse.gr

BEHDER Turkey

Behcet Hastalari ve Saglikli
Yasam Dernegi (BEHDER)
Turkey

www.behder.net

Bucovina Institute Romania

Asociatia Institutul pentru
Parteneriat Social Bucovina
(Bucovina Institute) Romania

www.bucovinainstitute.org

AUTH Greece

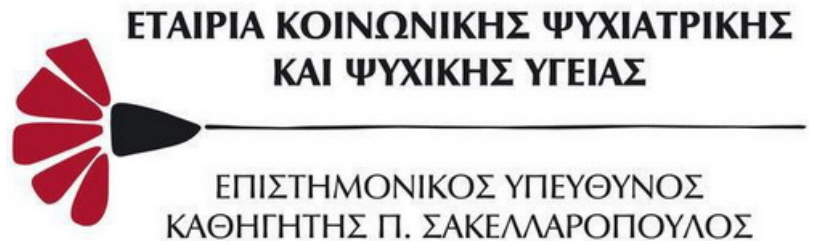
Aristotelio Panepistimio
Thessalonikis – Faculty of
Fine Arts (AUTH) Greece

www.auth.gr

3rd Project Meeting in Athens, GR 19-21 January 2016

Host:

The Society of Social Psychiatry and Mental Health



The third meeting took place in Athens from 19th of January to 21st of January 2016

The Society of Social Psychiatry and Mental Health presented the following topics

- **Understanding emotions**
- **The crisis of adolescents**
- **The importance of empathy**
- **Ways of recognizing and dealing with feelings.**



An excellent opportunity to meet new methods to work with youth and adults, talk and find more about emotions. We visited the emotions museum from Athens and we recommend this to be visited by all visitors interested on the topic. Many films and video materials were presented successfully by our colleagues from Society of Social Psychiatry and Mental Health on the period of 3rd mobility held in the period from 19 to 21 January 2016.



*Partners visited the “Emotions Museum of Childhood”
(<http://www.mce.gr/en/the-museum/>).*

*The exhibition entitled “Hello Mr. Fear!” was presented
and we learned how to express our fears and how to overcome fears.*

*The exhibition was very interesting because it provides creative and
alternative ways to deal with emotions.*



Good time spend at DIADROMES CAFE, a social economy cooperative working with people with mental disabilities and compete on the free market of restaurants.



**We look forward to the
next meeting in Aksaray,
Turkey**

12-16 April 2016

Alexithymia. What is it and what can I do

Alexithymia is a trait that makes it hard to find words for thoughts and feelings. It is experienced by both children and adults and can come in mild, moderate and severe forms.

If you live with alexithymia, the goal is to strengthen your ability to identify and understand feelings. Teaching yourself about the subjective experiences of others will be important too. Keep in mind that stretching and learning emotional awareness can be a very challenging journey. Here are some ways to broaden your skills:

***Reading Novels:** The language of describing thoughts, feelings, moments and experiences is literally found in novels. Studies suggest this is a great way to learn expressive language, develop the muscle of receptive language and gain mastery in how to describe a story or personal narrative*

***The Expressive Arts:** Taking a more formal approach with an acting, dance, art, music or movement therapy class has been shown to help those with alexithymia recognize and externalize feelings . Try signing up for courses offered in adult and child education in your town, community programs or college workshops.*

(source <http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/mind-guest-blog/the-emotional-blindness-of-alexithymia/>)

Watch this short video on the difference between empathy and sympathy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>

Watch this short lecture on alexithymia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDEYsgj5Cms>

Partnership Map

