



# MHPSS TWG - Bulgaria

## Meeting Minutes

18/05/23



Members

WHO, NCPHA, UNHCR, IOM, BRC, CRWB, FSCOD, USRF, USAR

### 1. Updates from chair and TWG members

- **NCPHA** (MH and Addiction prevention directorate) published a manual focused on supporting clients with MHPSS challenges, including migrants and refugees; the manual is addressed to social workers, psychologists and general practitioners and includes theory and tools covering multiple technical topics as interview techniques, how to treat clients with addictions, how to prevent suicide and more. Readers can also see references to the IASC MHPSS pyramid of interventions and its practical applications in the context of Bulgaria.
- **WHO** informed of incoming partnership with NCPHA for rolling a burnout prevention program targeting staff working in the emergency response; additional partnerships with TWG members are in the pipeline, and more info will be shared once grant agreements are finalized.
- **FSCOD** Informed that on 8-11 June the conference: Way to resilience – Effective Psychosocial Support for Displaced Ukrainians will be held in Sofia. The conference, hosted by the Institute of Supporting Communication, targets experts from organizations who offered MHPSS support to displaced Ukrainians in the field for the past year, as well as organizations specialized in MHPSS support for a wide variety of crisis situations. Participants will be from organizations that currently offer MHPSS support to displaced Ukrainians in 13 European countries. Speakers will intervene from Bulgaria, Ukraine, Israel and Poland. Further info will be circulated in due course.
- **BRC** Support and supervision system, based on IFRC model, will be soon implemented across field locations. In June, BRC will organize an International festival and Health Films. The program includes a round table on MHPSS in crisis situations. More info on this event to come. BRC is part of a new IFRC – EU health program aiming to support Ukrainian refugees who plan to stay in Bulgaria. The program include MHPSS activities.

### 2. Reporting updates Activity Info

The TWG members jointly selected a pool of indicators to be included in the 2023 RRP monitoring and evaluation framework for the emergency Ukraine response. The data collected for the period January – April was presented during the meeting by UNHCR Activity Info focal point (slides attached). It was noted that 8 organizations uploaded information in the system for MHPSS; however, the shared information appeared partial (e.g. data uploaded for some indicators and not others) and hints that some indicators would require additional clarifications. For instance, the difference between community-based and focused PSS indicators was addressed during the meeting. Unfortunately, some indicators did not receive any data, despite organizations implement activities in the targeted sectors e.g. Health, Protection and Child Protection indicators. Finally, it was concluded that despite encouraging efforts done by partners to report MHPSS progress for some sectors, more support from the TWG is required in this area of work and additional discussions should be held to troubleshoot, further clarify and ensure data is reported adequately to fully capture the significant amount of work that partners do on a day to day basis.

### 3. MHPSS TWG way forward

Following the development and the endorsement of the ToRs, it was agreed among members that the next step would be the draft of a simple and realistic workplan for 2023, comprising a limited number of activities, identified by the members as of collective interest and need. This discussion was held during the last TWG, on 16<sup>th</sup> March. Members were asked to have this reflection internally, with respective technical and frontline staff, and report back to the TWG accordingly. Some opinions have been shared with the group today, and in particular: **CRWB**: Psychologists from CRWB (and Zadobroto) suggested the need for training on trauma-informed psychological interventions and self-help protocols; the WHO models of PM+ and Self-Help+ could be a good option, as already discussed in previous meetings; moreover, awareness campaigns and thematic discussions internal to the TWG, with experts from different organizations taking the lead around topics selected by the group. Of particular concern is also access to services from 3<sup>rd</sup> national refugees, who struggle to know where to turn to for MHPSS services; some community-based approaches taken from other contexts could be applicable in Bulgaria to provide services in a culturally appropriate fashion.

All these inputs were found reasonable and supported from meeting participants.

### 4. AoB

This was the last meeting chaired by Andrea Paiato, who handover the coordination of the TWG to Nela Vamporova, joining WHO from June 1<sup>st</sup>. It was noted that the successful coordination of the TWG is dependent on members participation and sharing of respective expertise.

- Chair to circulate the link to download the NCPHA MHPSS manual
- Chair to circulate the MHPSS Regional Indicator Guide 2023
- Chair to continue the discussion around the work-plan and identify focal points for agreed upon activities



Updates & Achievements



Action Points