



MHPSS TWG - Bulgaria

Meeting Minutes



Members

WHO, UNICEF, IOM, NCPHA, USRF, CRWB, FSCOD, BAPO, AKNO, Pituitary Foundation, Aid for Ukraine, Razkazhi Mi

1. Intro and revision of action points.

- The ToRs was circulated for further revisions. The received comments have been incorporated. It was noted that exchange of best practices and lessons learned to make work more efficient for everyone should be a more prominent point in the ToRs (FSCOD)
- Offline discussion occurred and clarified that NCPHA visits to Blue Dots were not intended to provide supervision to staff, so there was no need for further coordination and meetings around this matter.
- A brief survey about frequency of MHPSS meetings was circulated. The preferred option is monthly frequency with ad hoc meetings (50% of the 12 respondents voted this option). This modality will be in force from April 2023.

2. TWG action-plan: way forward

The ToRs shall be accompanied by an action plan for 2023. The group shall discuss priorities and identify few achievable deliverables to pursue collectively. There is available data that might be taken into consideration to outline priorities (e.g. age and gender of the refugee population), geographical distribution of beneficiaries, but also staff capacities and current state of program implementation. The MSNA conducted by UNHCR in Dec-Jan provide some baseline information too, in terms of prevalence and barriers to access the services. Priorities indicated by partners during bilateral interviews have been presented in slides. In order to address this, the chair asked members permission to call for an ad-hoc meeting next week Thursday 16, also in light of chair imminent 3 weeks break and importance of the matter. This motion was not objected by the group.

3. UNICEF: Mental Health online platform for adolescents

UNICEF and digital service provider Razkazhi Mi developed in 2022 a dedicated UNICEF room, within the Razkazhi Mi's mobile app, and a self-help tool for adolescents and young adults aged 14 to 24 was created. In 2023, the phase 2 of the project will be related with providing psychological support through talk and text therapy for interested adolescents and youth. The team is presenting at today's meeting the full concept and seeking feedback from the group (full presentation attached to the minutes). The presenters clarified that the project is still at concept development level, and number and criteria for selection of personnel operating the service will be determined in due course; a vetting system will be in place for compliance, taking into consideration Bulgarian standards and capacities of Ukrainians psychologists currently in Bulgaria. It was noted that the service should be also provided in Russian language as some Ukrainian nationals might have it as preferred language, despite nationality. It was also mentioned that it would be important to ensure coordination and integration with already existing hotlines for children, like 116111. It was also agreed that a communication channel could be opened between members and UNICEF/Razkazhi Mi for further discussion on Ukrainian adolescents and youth specific needs in Bulgaria.

4. BAPO: Bulgarian Association of Psycho-Oncology

The Bulgarian Association of Psycho-Oncology (BAPO) unites professionals who work in the field of psychotherapy and psychological counseling for people affected by cancer, their families and treating medical teams in all stages of the disease (diagnosis, active treatment and palliative care). The organization is a member of the National Joint Cancer Network-BJCN and recently partnered with NGOs to provide its services to Ukrainian refugees in Bulgaria (full presentation attached).

5. USRF: Assistance to people with disabilities

USRF with its presentation raised attention toward the positive impact of employment on people living with disabilities' mental health. The aim of the proposed platform is to provide equal employment opportunities for PLWD and to connect employers who value diversity in the workplace (full presentation attached). The project is still in a planning and fundraising stage. Nonetheless, it is relevant to keep this topic in focus for the TWG moving forward.

- Chair to circulate again the ToRs for final revision and comments
- Chair to connect TWG members to UNICEF and Razkazhi Mi for further dialogue on the online psychotherapy app for adolescents and youth



Updates & Achievements



Action Points