MHPSS TWG - Bulgaria

Meeting Minutes

16/02/24

Members

WHO, UNHCR, Energy, Foundation Ukraine Support and Renovation, Bulgarian Association of Social Workers, Open Doors Situation center, Ukrainian Hive, IOM, UNICEF, NCPHA, Animus, Dokovi Foundation

Updates & Achievements

1. **Up-dates from members – all members were asked to briefly inform the group of the services and priorities they will have in 2024**

-Presentation from Animus Association of their new service, available for all refugees – "Women and girls' Save space". It will focus on psycho-social support with cooking classes, yoga, information about school admissions, etc. It will be complemented by the rest of the services offered by the foundation – two crisis centers in undisclosed locations for victims of GBV, Mother and baby unit, where for up to 6 months single mothers will be supported to become independent, Center "Protection zone" that offers specialized MH services.

-USRF will continue to offer MHPSS in the transit center "Second Home". There priority will be teenagers as they notice a decline in their MH but also resistance to leave the house and except help. They will continue to organize group meetings and lectures to bring people together but also introduce topics like immunization, sexual and reproductive health, MH to these gatherings.

-UNHCR informed the group that the Blue Dots no longer exist but will be transformed into Community centers. They will continue to offer MHPSS.

-Ukrainian Hive shared their priorities for 2024 to be young children to be prepared for Bulgarian schools, children with special educational needs and their families and elderly people 60+.

-IOM will continue to provide food vouchers and cash support; they will keep the mobile teams of psychologists and social workers in Varna and Burgas as well. They also underlined the issues of domestic violence as a growing concern.

-Energy will take over the coordination of the Community center from Bulgarian Red Cross in Varna; they will offer community level and specialized MHPSS services. They will also support "Jelesnichar" station where the most vulnerable Ukrainians are stationed.

-NCPHA presented their work on MH system reform.

-WHO will continue to support implementing partners in offering MHPSS but also work on national level to offer technical support to the Ministry of Health on the MH reform.

2. Feedback on the work of the TWG

The group agreed to keep the meetings monthly with the option to have online meetings in between on specific topics if needed.

The group agreed that they would like to see more meetings in person to be organized, including a retreat for the group members as they all report signs of burnout.

A request from The Hive and Second Home for a Burnout prevention training was voiced.

The members of the group also agreed that having specific topics for the meetings is something they find useful and would like to continue in 2024. For the first two topics the suggestions are GBV (a big discussion on this took place with several organizations agreeing that this is s priority topic for them) and children with disabilities, with a focus on prevention of abandonment.

Next Steps:

Action Points

- Chair to organize next meeting with focus on GBV, UNHCR to facilitate involvement of the Protection TWG.
- Members to update the email list and suggest new members.
- WHO and UNHCR to discuss organizing a training on Burnout prevention.