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### **Improving Mental Help-Seeking in North-East Slovenia**

### Self-Stigma still Matters

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#### RATIONALE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY PROGRAMME

Rural settings worldwide report poor access to mental health services, and stigma related to mental help-seeking.

The same applies to mostly rural NE Slovenia with the worst mental health indicators.

Programme With Raised Mental Health Literacy to Better Managing of Mood Disorders (2017-2019; acronym: OMRA) aims to improve the help-seeking in NE Slovenia.

Before the Programme was launched, local research participants were asked: Whether and how to include the culture of shame and fear?

#### **RESULTS OF PRELIMINARY QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

(11 semi-structured culture-sensitive interviews + 1 group interview (7 participants) / Research participants: users and providers of mental health support in NE Slovenia)

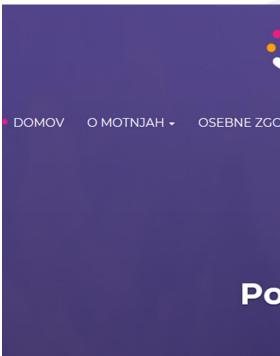
- The early recognition of mental disorder was rare among the research participants. 0
- Being advised to visit a mental health professional, the users insisted they 'were not the 0 crazy one'.
- Feelings of shame and fear prevented them from sharing their sufferings. 0
- Their low self-confidence and self-esteem caught them inside their own suffering worlds. 0
- The fear of NOT BEING UNDERSTOOD in spaces where 'everybody knows each other' 0 was the main reported obstacle in their help-seeking.
- Because of stigma, and avoiding of being seen in public workshops, various forms of 0 mental health literacy were recommended: e-classes, handbooks, guides, etc.

Programme With Raised Mental Health Literacy to Better Managing of Mood Disorders has to address (self)stigma and coping strategies.

Addressing various contexts (e.g. working environment, local community) of selfstigma disčlosure is necessary.

Self-stigma has to be addressed in order to improve mental help-seeking in NE Slovenía.

When, To Whom and How to disclose is a decision of the person with living experience of mental disorder and nobody else!



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#### CONCLUSIONS

Programme free accessed e-class about stigma and help-seeking

## Smra

O MOTNJAH → OSEBNE ZGODBE → POMOČ → AKTUALNO → KAJ JE OMRA? → E-UČILNICA → STIGMA IN ISKANJE POMOČI Poti iz labirintov  $\rightarrow$ Rešitev vedno obstaja



**REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA** MINISTRSTVO ZA ZDRAVJE