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Outlook

Project “Click for Support”

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The project coordination reports

Final conference in Münster

In June the final conference of the European project “Click for Support” organized by the LWL-Coordination Office for Drug-Related Issues took place in the city of Münster, Germany. The project addresses the gap between the (digital) living environment of young people and the professional and personal background of drug prevention experts in regard to online communication. To narrow this gap, a guideline for web-based interventions for young drug users has been developed together with 26 partners from 13 European countries.

The fact that the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Consumption (EMCDDA) has shown special interest in the project and has sent a representative to the final conference shows the project’s relevance and the need for further development of drug prevention in order to reach young people by using new media and modern technologies.

At the final conference the partners have met to make last adjustments to the guideline which will now be translated in ten European languages and disseminated in the partner countries and beyond.



The project team of "Click for Support"

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“Click for Support” - Guideline released

A guideline for the development of effective web-based interventions (WBIs) for young consumers of illicit substances has been the main objective of “Click for Support”. After last adjustments at the final conference the guideline has finally been released in August 2015. It addresses numerous aspects important for the development of effective WBIs, such as preliminary considerations, technical issues and reaching the target group.

Resources

As the development, implementation and maintenance of these kinds of offers are expensive and require dedicated staff, an initial assessment of the available staff and financial resources is crucial for the decision whether it is feasible to develop a WBI in the first place.

Preliminary considerations and technical issues

After having decided to develop a WBI, further decisions have to be made concerning the specific target group, the substance(s) in focus and the type of intervention. Technical issues play a major role during the development process and should be handled by experts. A central feature of WBIs are interactive elements that are being used by young drug users, e.g. to receive an individual feedback on their substance use.

Access to the target group

When launching a new WBI finding access to the target group can be difficult, therefore one chapter deals with reaching young drug users. The offer needs to be attractive to young drug users in order to get their attention; to find out about what actually is attractive to the target group they should be involved in the development.

Make them stay and use the intervention

After reaching young drug users in the first instance, the following and even more challenging step is to keep them on the website and motivate them to actually use the intervention. The following aspects of a WBI play a role in this task and are addressed in the guideline:

- Design, structure and usability
- Content & way of presentation
- General attitude
- Communication with a counsellor
- Transparency
- Other factors that can increase adherence

Evaluation

Evaluation of WBIs is necessary to continuously improve and adapt the offer and should be involved from the beginning of the development.

The English version of the guideline is available [here](#); translations in German, French, Portuguese, Greek, Finnish, Dutch, Latvian, Slovak, Slovenian and Italian will be available on the [project's website](#).

Rebekka Steffens, LWL-Coordination Office for Drug-Related Issues
Münster, Germany

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Review of the project from the partners' perspective

The project's impact in Cyprus

KENTHEA's participation in the "Click for Support"-project is evaluated as very important and beneficial, both for our organization and the scientific community in Cyprus.

Our participation in this specific project has helped us to enhance our knowledge regarding web-based interventions and smart phone applications specific to drug prevention and treatment. Through the project we were able to research and gather information on web-based interventions and smart phone applications existing in Cyprus, but we were also fortunate to get acquainted with best-practice examples from other countries.

Besides the gained knowledge, as an organization we are content and optimistic with the end result of the project. We realize that the guideline can be used by everyone in the process of developing web-based interventions, in order to improve the quality of the offers.

We are now looking forward to the national conference in Cyprus which will take place in September in cooperation with the antidrug council of Cyprus. This is a great opportunity to present the guideline to local scientists in the fields of drug prevention and treatment, and also to IT scientists. We are hopeful that the presentation of the guideline at the national conference will be the reason for the improvement of the already existing web-based offers in Cyprus as well as the advancement of others.

The development of web-based interventions and smart phone applications according to guidelines will ensure certain quality standards which is very important to us, as it will reinforce the KENTHEA's offered services. We greatly believe that high quality web-based offers can be a very helpful adjunct to the work we are doing both in the field of prevention and treatment.

Pantelitsa Nikolaou
KENTHEA
Nicosia, Cyprus

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“Click for Support” in Latvia: Experiences and lessons learned

As the project is drawing to a close, we are taking a look back on its process from the Latvian perspective. First of all, in Latvia, “Click for Support” has been co-financed by a special programme supporting NGOs participating in EU co-financed activities which is funded by the Latvian State; therefore, the state has a special interest in the project and we are pleased to say that “Click for support” has been assessed as of great significance for our country.

The major issue for us during the first project phase was gathering detailed quantitative and qualitative data about young people’s needs, interests and experiences concerning web-based interventions (WBIs). The demand and need for online offers in drug prevention has been indicated by young drug users we have interviewed and who have shown great interest in WBIs.

During the project its results have been presented in three conferences in Latvia, two of them in university environments. The overall feedback pointed out the importance of promoting WBIs in Latvia as young people who are using various substances are otherwise hard to reach. Also, it has been concluded by national experts that it might be possible to adapt the web-based approach for other fields of prevention work.

This leads to the conclusion that the project results are further reaching than initially expected. The project has stimulated the consideration of new ways for social work that can fit the needs of different target groups.

With our last national “Click for Support”- conference in Latvia we want to strengthen the prevention experts’ awareness of the necessity to actively use online methods to reach young drug users. Further it is planned to discuss the possibilities to use the guideline in practical prevention work.

Considering that the majority of decision makers and funding distributors in the Latvia are still mainly digital immigrants, the guideline will be disseminated as a printed version to regional and national policy makers and social workers despite its content of web-based interventions.

Solvita Lazdina and Anvars Zavackis
The Education Centre for Families and Schools
Riga, Latvia

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Youth involvement in Greece

Being involved in “Click for Support” has been a very engaging experience. Apart from the lovely communication and collaboration with the other prevention experts, the most important part of the process has been the involvement of young people in the second phase of the project - in the form of focus group workshops.

When having the task to develop an intervention that targets young people, it is of great importance that they are consulted with in some way and that the outcome is a result of the partnership between the experts and the young people themselves. That is even more important in the case of web-based interventions because young people are the principal consumers / users of such online offers. It is a preventive measure itself as it puts young people in the process of giving input on issues that are relevant to them and from a completely different perspective.

For example, the participants in the workshops that took place in Athens hadn't shown much interest in looking for and / or using a web-based intervention specifically about drugs, but as one was presented to them, they experimented with its features and scrolled through it with eager. They also expressed their opinion about it with zest and conviction. It seems that, when given the opportunity - and with the right stimuli, young people get seriously involved and show interest in prevention itself.

So - as one can read in the ‘Click for Support’ guideline - youth involvement (even throughout the whole process) is a key factor that an organization or an expert that is planning to design, run and support a web-based project should definitely consider.

Natalia Tzovara,
Center for Prevention of Addictions & Promotion of Psychosocial Health “Athina Ygeia”
Athens, Greece

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National conferences for dissemination

“Click for Support” convention in Italy

To introduce “Click for Support’s” guideline a convention took place in Bolzano on June 17th 2015, for which 15 representatives of institutions and organizations of the Italian prevention network, that offer counselling for young people with addictive disorders, came together.

After the introduction of the project, we presented the guideline document and engaged in a discussion with the Italian prevention experts. As four of the represented institutions are already working online and use media channels in different ways and on a regular basis, they were invited to report about their current activities. In between we referred back to the guideline and addressed potential developments in the future as well as possible difficulties.



The leader of two projects in the district of Florence (“*Youngle*” & “*sostanze.info*”) which had been included in the national research in Italy shared his experience. The project “*Youngle*” has already attracted broad interest; it provides online counselling with the help of social networks and apps as well as relationship building through peers all over Italy.

Other projects like the online counselling service “*Young & Direct*”, the project “*MediaLab*” by the youth centre “*Jux*” and the work with social networks by an educator of the “*Gruppo Abele*” from Torino were presented as well. Issues that have been the subject of lively discussions were the observation of data privacy, possible difficulties in the execution of web-based solutions and the appropriate approach and role of the educator, counsellor and psychologist in the online setting.

Finally, a review of possible networks and twinning projects on mutual web-based platforms took place which all of the participants seemed very interested in. Other Italian experts, who were not able to attend the meeting, expressed their interested in the subject and their wish to exchange further information.

Manuel Oberkalmsteiner
Forum Prävention
Bolzano, Italy

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National conference provides new impulses for Luxembourg

The national “Click for Support” conference took place in the city of Luxembourg on July 2nd 2015 with about 40 experts from different working fields: from several ministries (departments of health, youth, family), psychological services in secondary schools, from the youth information centre, the police and from different services of addiction prevention, early intervention, drug counselling and help.

After an introduction of the project and a presentation of the national research by the Centre de Prévention des Toxicomanies (CePT), further short presentations on the topic of web-based interventions by the Luxembourgish psychological service for secondary schools (CPOS) and the institution for drug-related early intervention for youngsters (impuls) followed. However, the main item on the agenda has been the presentation of the elaborated guidelines with focus on the key recommendations by CePT and the discussion in working groups on perspectives in Luxembourg.



Results of the discussions and further perspectives

Due to a not existing supply of web-based offers for young drug consumers in Luxembourg, a general need has been stated by the invited experts. The general opinion has been that a web-based platform, providing information, prevention, counselling and help – not only for young people – should be developed for the existing Luxembourgish services.

The objectives of such a platform (information, orientation, help, safer use, etc.) have been discussed as well as the potential content and an attractive presentation for different devices in the form of a website and/or an app. However, indispensable for the implementation of this kind of interactive counselling offers and help tools, that need to be professionally managed by experts, are a political will and a corresponding budget.



Conclusion

The conference achieved its aims to present “Click for Support’s” elaborated guidelines to relevant national experts, to raise awareness for the topic and to enforce the discussion about a web-based support in Luxembourg.

Feedback on the conference has been entirely positive and the significance of the project has been realized. The invited experts have actively participated in working groups and showed keen interest in further development of concrete perspectives for Luxembourg. Encouraged by the results of the conference, the CePT announced to organize a meeting in autumn 2015 to discuss further steps with national experts and institutions.

Jean-Paul Nilles and Roland Carius
CePT – Centre de Prévention des Toxicomanies
Luxembourg

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Dates of further national conferences

Country	Date
Germany	August 17 th -18 th
Slovakia	September 4 th
Greece	September 9 th
Slovenia	September 10 th
The Netherlands	September 10 th /11 th
Latvia	September 11 th
Cyprus	September 15 th
Portugal	September 16 th
Austria	September 23 rd
Belgium	September 23 rd
Finland	September 24 th

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Outlook

During the first national conferences in Italy, Luxembourg and Germany the elaborated guidelines have been assessed as a valuable and helpful document, not only for selective prevention but also for indicated prevention and treatment. Feedback from national experts has confirmed the demand for further web-based interventions. Still, concerns have been voiced regarding the security of clients' data and possibilities for financing. Financial costs and staff resources are not to be underestimated when developing and implementing web-based interventions. Therefore, it does not make much sense if every small counseling facility would develop its own offer.

As there still seems to be much potential in the field of online prevention the project partners are motivated to continue their work after having taken the first step in developing the guidelines. The aspired aim of the "Click for Support" consortium is to either develop a common European web-based intervention offer or common modules that can be used and included in already existing websites. This way, a waste of staff and financial resources will be prevented.

A worthwhile goal is also the development of a quality seal for existing web-based offers which would be given based on a criteria catalogue derived from the guidelines. Naturally, for these aspirations additional funding will be necessary for which the partners will apply in adequate programmes.

Having arrived at the end of "Click for Support", it can now be stated that with the development of the guidelines the improvement of existing web-based interventions and the development of further offers has been promoted. However, keeping high costs and a high demand of staff resources in mind, it should be rather aimed at the development of common offers from which a maximum of clients can benefit in the future.

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