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Promotion of Mental Health and Well-being in Children and Young People - Making it happen

Parents and the early years

With the eyes of a child

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- Background paper and implementation framework
 - Implementation – General issues
 - Good practice - Examples from Austria
 - What do children and young people need?

- Cross-linking of topics, viewpoints and strategies
 - Within one sub-theme and
 - Cross-linking of all 5 sub-themes (Public health approach)

- Topics requiring more attention
 - Family systems
 - Young people/adolescents
 - Protective factors
 - Culture/value systems/beliefs
 - Prevention
 - Research/evidence



Implementation – General issues



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- Take a broad view
 - Cross sector
 - Multi-disciplinary
 - → Co-ordination mechanisms
- Overall framework, targets, priority setting, terminology
- Capacity building
- Universal versus targeted approach
- Evidence base, research, evaluation, data
- Practicability



Good Practice - Austria



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- Mother-child-pass programme
- Healthy schools project
- Austrian league for child- and adolescent health
- Pro mente youth/Fund for a Healthy Austria (FGÖ): *Gehsteig project*. Youth health promotion in the city
- Psycho-social interventions for pregnant women and mothers

- S.I.N.N. (Social Innovative Network)
- Self-help movement: e.g. HPE: Assistance for families of individuals with a mental illness



From the eyes of a child



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“Your family system constituted your entire reality when you were young”

“Family beliefs determine our attitudes, judgements, and perceptions... and form the skeleton of our intellectual perception of the world”

“Parents can provide a solid basis for a child’s development and subsequent independence”

“Disadvantaged parents may develop a distorted view of reality”

“Children lack sophistication to discriminate between true reality and distorted reality”

“Disadvantaged children may enter adulthood with tremendous emotional deficits and unmet needs”

Source: Susan Forward (2002) Toxic parents



Children have the right to ...



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-
- Be protected
 - Act like children
 - Ask for help, be heard
 - Receive support and guidance
 - Experience stability, safety and continuity
 - Be involved
 - Encounter age-specific services and receive age-specific information



Needs of children and young people



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-
- Representatives, a voice
 - Prevention and early assistance systems
 - Protection and early warning systems
 - Someone to turn to
 - Increasing awareness and sensitivity, destigmatization
 - Improved welfare services



Needs of children and young people



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-
- Cross sector co-operation and networking
 - Involvement of all stakeholders
 - Targeted support of high-risk families/children
 - Long-term programmes
 - Systematic data collection and research
 - Capacity building



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THANK YOU

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