

Mental Health Briefing Sheets

Facts and Activities in Member States

NETHERLANDS

Situation on Mental Health

Suicide: According to EUROSTAT standardized suicide rates per 100.000 persons in Netherland vary from 8.8 to 9.5 for the period from 1995 – 2006.

Depression/anxiety: A total 12.4% of all the adults in the Netherlands have had an anxiety disorder in the past year and 19.3% have had a mood disorder at some point in their life. More than 700.000 people a year have a depression. Approximately 15% of the elderly people in the Netherlands have clinically relevant depressive symptoms.

Children's mental health: Of all the schoolchildren in the 11-17 age group, 12% are in the clinical area as regards internalizing problems such as depression, anxiety and loneliness, and 11% for externalizing problems.

Policy context

National infrastructure has been developed in Netherlands for health promotion and prevention. It includes a network of health promoters, prevention workers and trained caregivers at local and district level. National policies for promotion and prevention in mental health can be found mostly as a part of an overall mental health policy or health promotion and prevention policy. Mental health problems are one of four major health problems in the national policy document "Longer healthy living 2004-2007". Since the 1980s public health services are providing health education and health promotion activities, including mental health. The Netherlands is divided into around 50 mental health districts, each with a comprehensive system of inpatient and outpatient mental health services, including provision of preventive services.

Examples of activities on priority areas:

Prevention of suicide and depression

There is a state-funded National prevention Support Centre affiliated with the Trimbos Institute which sees to nation-wide coordination and consultations. The National Prevention Support Centre is responsible for the development of the basic programmes that have made prevention in the Netherlands visible, standardized and widely implemented. A special programme has been developed for an integral approach to the prevention of depression among the elderly.

Mental health in youth and education

The youth directed prevention programs provided by local mental health services are mainly targeted at the children and families of mentally ill parents, child abuse, conduct problems, social skills enhancement, and prevention of depression, anxiety, and eating disorders. Prevention for children and parenting programmes are provided by a range of local agencies (public health and mental health services, parent

education agencies). Schools are supported by public health programmes to develop school-based health promotion policy that includes mental health issues (bullying eating disorders). The Netherlands Institute for Care and Welfare (NIZW) focuses on health promotion and well being for children and youth. They advise agencies and municipalities on youth-related issues and policies like for instance child abuse.

Mental health at the workplace

The Dutch governmental shift in policy measures away from a culture of early retirement, towards comprehensive active ageing policies includes options such as part-time pensions, removing barriers to demotion (e.g. from collective labour agreements), financial incentives to prolong working and life-course HR policies.

Mental health in older people

Programmes directed to older people mainly target: patients with mental disorders, caregiver of chronic mental patients, refugees, work related problems, depression and anxiety disorders, and social integration of chronic mental patients.

Combating stigma and social exclusion

From 1 January 2007, the general Special Illness Costs Act is being implemented in the frame of the Social Support Act and it covers the following aspects:

- identifying and combating risk factors in the field of public mental health care
- reaching and counselling vulnerable groups and high risk groups
- serving as a spot where people can report crises or impending crises
- providing psychosocial assistance after disasters
- stimulating agreements between relevant organizations about the implementation of public mental health care.¹

¹ Sources of information for the production of this briefing sheet:

Healthy Children and Young People: Laying the Foundation for Lifelong Wellbeing. Consensus paper
Mental Health and the Workplace. Consensus paper (2008)

Mental Health in Older People. Consensus paper (2008)

Prevention of Depression and Suicide. Consensus paper (2008)

Contributions from Member States - 2008, available at: <http://www.ec-mental-health-process.net/>

EMIP Consortium (2006). Country reports: Implementation of Mental Health Promotion and Prevention Policies and Strategies in the EU member states and applicant countries (EMIP)

McCollam et al., (2008). Mental Health in the EU - Key facts, figures and activities. A background paper.

Jané-Llopis & Anderson (2006). "Mental health promotion and mental disorder prevention across European Member States: a collection of country stories" (2nd edition), Luxembourg: European Communities