

Adopted by the council's e-voting decision on 07.05.2022

ASSOCIATION OF ESTONIAN STUDENT SOCIETIES

MENTAL HEALTH IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Estonian Student Union 2022

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION

The Eurostudent VII survey revealed that 9% of Estonians have mental health problems of students and even half of the students have recently had a mental illness conditions indicating a health problem. But the situation is even more worsened, both because of the corona crisis, but even more so because there are no concrete solutions to the problem yet. Universities and other participants understand the importance of the topic, but have yet to find a good way out of the situation

there isn't.

If the wider society has started to talk about mental health, why? is it important to pay attention to students? Studying in college can be oppressive, because it is the beginning and environment of an independent life for a person with a big change. Many students (approx. 50%) work alongside their studies (approx. 50% work for a living), which in turn means that time planning is difficult and there tends to be little free time for rest stay. Balancing studies, work and other life is for students one of the key questions. Of course, it cannot be over or around at the moment social gaps caused by distance learning. Both in general and in particular in higher education institutions, the support system is sometimes weak - there are few psychologists and the waiting time for them is quite long. However, mental health concerns are not to be expected suffer. The topic has also been on the table at the European level in recent years European Student Union. This document is a continuation of Estonian Student Associations to the Union's Mental Health Positions adopted in 2020.

WHAT CAN'T BE DONE IN EU?

- **Lobbying at the state level** - for officials of ministries and state offices
presenting your proposals and views and with politicians
communication.
- **Supporting student councils** through information exchange, trainings and
encouraging the mediation of contacts and, among other things, student representatives
to deal with the topic.
- **Popularizing the topic of students' mental health** to the public
in front to reduce taboos and increase practical knowledge
in society (including both decision-makers and students' close relatives).
- **Preparation of instructional materials** (with experts),
how to deal with basic mental health challenges.
- **Communication - articles, podcasts, etc.** for students' mental
to maintain the topic of health, to share tips and
to convey stories of experience.
- **Organization of university-wide events and campaigns** to raise awareness
for education in the Estonian student body.

WHAT CAN THE STUDENT COUNCIL NOT DO?

- **Mental health weeks** - preferably a week held once a semester,
during which attention is paid to mental health and what
includes, among others, workshops and guests. It is good to organize them in cooperation
with professional organizations.
- **In-school lobbying** - regarding services offered to students
raising awareness. Both by the university and by other organizations

Adopted by the council's e-voting decision on 07.05.2022

related to the support services provided and the improvement of mental well-being wider dissemination of information.

- **Creating positions within the school so** that the school family can agree together, what values are there in the school regarding mental health issues and how to keep these values in practice.

- **Communication** collaboration University own communication specialists and with psychologists, which the aim is to share information as well as thematic events organizing.

- **Mapping the situation of your school** (with experts) makes it possible act according to the situation of the school and the students. The easiest an option for mapping is to conduct a survey among the school family.

- **Maintaining the mental health of student representatives** so that active students would not burn out next to studies and student representation. It means for example, keeping an eye on the workload of student representatives, motivational and team events, as well as vacations for them enabling.

- **Popularization of the topic among school activists** - introduce yours to university student organizations, societies, collections, which themselves for the mental health of their members/other students can, and direct them to projects supporting mental health to arrange.

Ensuring the availability of mental health information for students must be

organized in cooperation with the university and support specialists, so that the information is permanent available. You can use the websites of higher education institutions and, if possible, also representative offices' own platforms. Information must be easy to find, understand and

usable and could include specific instructions on how to get help.

For example:

- taltech.ee/psukhologiski-noustamine
- tlu.ee/psukhologiski-noustamening
- ut.ee/et/sisu/psukhologiski-noustamening

ORGANIZATIONS TO BE INVOLVED

- **Peaasi.ee** - a non-profit organization that promotes mental health, with problem prevention, early intervention in our society.
The main thing offers information, training, mental health first aid, counseling as well as e-courses.
- **Estonian Mental Health and Welfare Coalition (VATEK)** - mental health umbrella organization of the field, which deals with interest protection, network development and mental health assistance.
- **soluš.net** - an NGO that offers free services to registered users internet-based anonymous psychological counseling, as well on the page psychology-related information and contacts.
- **Estonian Youth Mental Health Movement (ENVTL)** - NGO, which the goal is a growth environment that supports mental health for young people creation. On their website, they share information that young people could find out about mental health help, and organize a mental health-related events.
- **The Estonian Association of Psychology Students (EPSÜ)** is in Estonian higher education institutions volunteer connecting students studying and studying psychology an organization that organizes various developmental events and connects those interested in the topic.

Adopted by the council's e-voting decision on 07.05.2022

- **Ministry of Social Affairs** - shapes Estonia's healthcare policy, including the national one approach to mental health and contributes to its implementation, invites people-citizen associations to involve and participate in policy making.

EXAMPLES OF HIGHER SCHOOLS

- Mental health weeks are held twice **at the Estonian University of Life Sciences** per year. In their framework, workshops are organized for students and seminars, motivational seminars are also held. School psychologist deals thoroughly with tutors and the student council, which is why students are not afraid to go to him if necessary.
- The psychologist **of the Estonian Academy of Music and Theater** performs the monitoring himself and overview. There is a strong team spirit at EMTA, students are treated with respect development conversations, which are very useful. There is a psychologist at school outstanding and extremely friendly, he has an inviting office and a gratitude wall at the university. It is very easy to book an appointment with him online.
- **Tallinn University** has two part-time advisors who are overbooked. **Green Month** takes place , where rather the focus is on sustainable development goals, but it was done within this framework movement and meditation workshops. It is at the student council information materials about mental health.