

PASS

# Primary Mindful Schools

Project Manual and Materials Collection





With friendly support from



Okkar heimur



Our very special thanks  
go to the students and schools  
who participated in this project.

# PASS

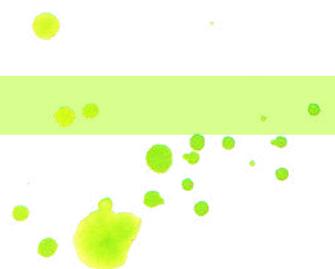
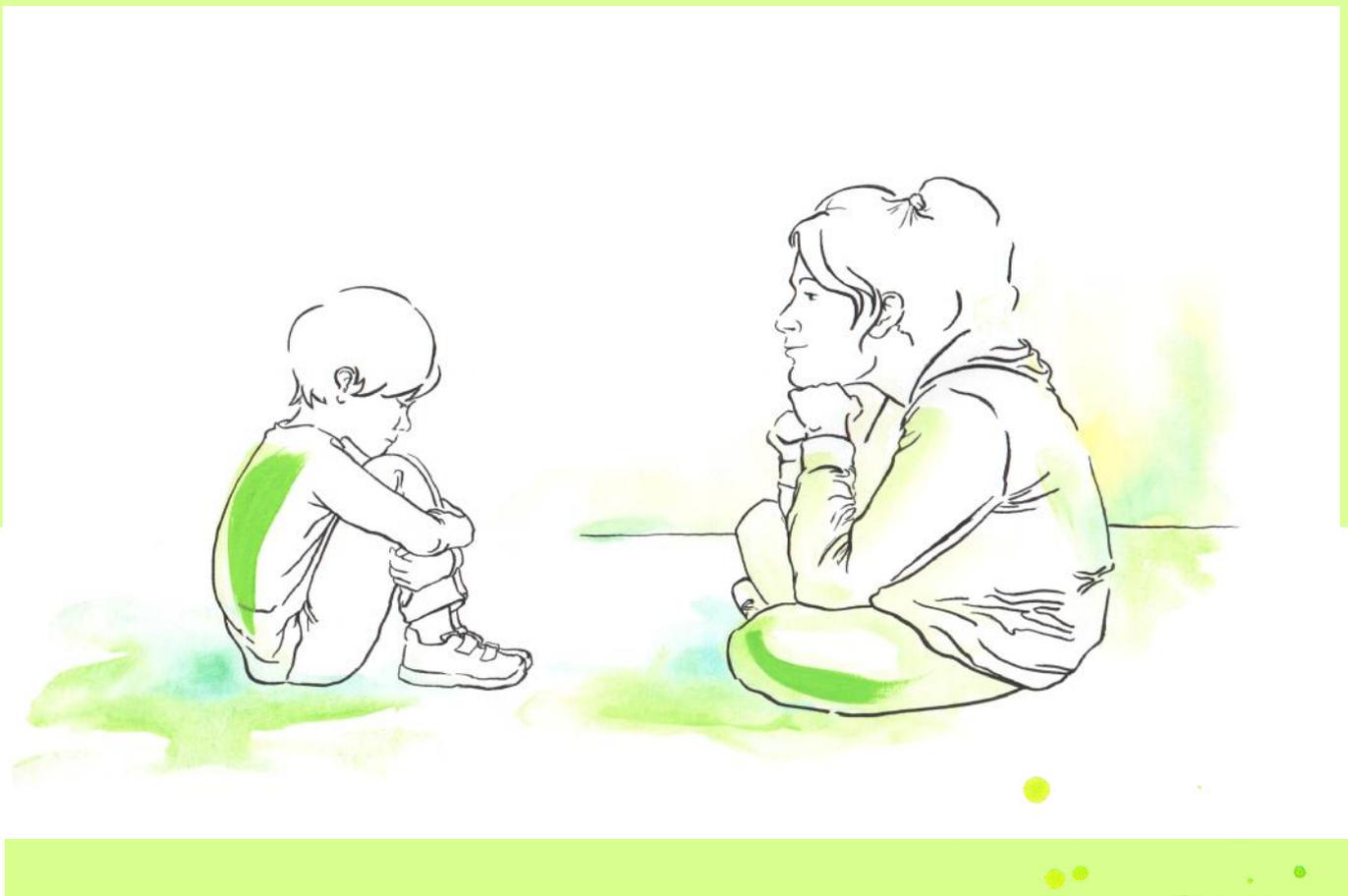
## Primary Mindful Schools

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# Project "PASS"



# 1 Project "PASS"

## 1.1 Living with Parental Mental Illness - About the Project

This manual is the result of an ERASMUS+ -project that was realised in a cooperation between institutions in Germany, Spain, Iceland and Austria with the support of the Our Time Foundation (London) in the period from January 2023 to the end of February 2024. The project aims to promote the mental health of pupils through psychoeducational teaching programmes. This goal is achieved by qualifying teachers on mental illness and resilience development and by building a supportive school culture. A particular focus is on the development of activities for primary schools (especially 3rd and 4th grade), as prevention is all the more effective the earlier it starts.

The most important priority is to counteract the educational disadvantages of children from families at risk. These disadvantages manifest themselves in the form of lower learning success, absence from school, early school drop-outs and less developed social and personal skills.

Families at risk are defined in particular as families with mentally ill and / or burdened parents, in which the children often take on the role of "young carer" in addition to their own developmental tasks. The effects can already be seen in pre-school and early primary school age.

In Berlin alone, around 11 000 children and young people care for and support relatives with illnesses and / or disabilities. Research describes at least two pupils in the "young carer role" per school class, for whom the resulting educational disadvantages have been described. In an average school class, there are also 4-6 children who live with a parent with a mental illness and who have a 3-7 times higher risk of developing disorders themselves.

Children of parents with a mental illness are therefore among the groups of people with the highest risks. They are particularly affected in their everyday lives, experience more frequent setbacks in school performance and are more frequently affected by dropping out of school and social exclusion. The difficulties associated with this stress are often overlooked in everyday school life or understood in terms of attention problems, learning deficits or school absences, for example, and are often pathologised and / or sanctioned unilaterally (e.g. for being late in the morning, incomplete homework, challenging behaviour). This is made even more difficult by tabooing and stigmatisation.

These children can benefit from increased teacher competence and a changed school atmosphere just as much as pupils affected by bullying, stigmatisation and exclusion. Positive experiences are reported, for example, from the "Who Cares?"-project already established in the UK. Similar effects were found in the preceding "Mindful Schools"-programme developed

from "Who Cares?", especially when families are also involved. The experiences from this preceding Erasmus+ -project "Mindful Schools", which specifically addressed the 7th and 8th grades, encouraged the project consortium to develop an approach in the primary school sector in order to offer easily accessible and preventative support and to avoid additional stigmatisation - and thus to better support affected children and their families in the school environment at an early stage.

### 1.1.1 Specific Objectives and Expected Results

The project enables teachers to offer teaching units on mental illness and resilience development in primary schools and to be available as contact persons for pupils in risk situations. A further goal is the development of a long-term mindful school culture regarding the mental stress of pupils.

**Measurable sub-objectives were defined and collected via questionnaire evaluations (pre/post):**

- ⇒ Improvement of information on mental health among teachers and pupils
- ⇒ Information on resilience development and self-care
- ⇒ Reduction of stigmatisation and exclusion of pupils with increased risks
- ⇒ Development of a continuous programme for all pupils

At all locations (Barcelona, Reykjavik, Vienna, Rotenburg / Bremen, Berlin) there was a cooperation with at least one school, which will be extended to the primary sector as part of the project.

## 1.1.2 Target Group

The direct target groups are teachers and educational staff at primary schools, who are enabled to:

- ⇒ offer lessons on mental illness and health
- ⇒ set up corresponding programmes for all pupils in the longer term
- ⇒ act as multipliers within the school system

Expected effects also affect the respective school as an overall institution: The project aims to change the school atmosphere in the sense of a secure and mindful learning environment.

For this purpose, roles are created within the school staff that act on the one hand as a point of contact for pupils in risk situations and on the other hand as a guide to further regional support services.

Teachers often feel overburdened in their profession - partly because behavioural problems are increasingly being described in children as young as primary school age. The project aims to empower teachers and educational staff. Better care services and support for children from at-risk families (especially in the role of young carers) expand the competencies of the school as an institution as well as the individual teachers and contribute to positively influencing the school climate as a whole, also in the sense that the actual teaching can be better focused on.

Teachers benefit from the training and support provided by the local partner organisation, which advises the school during the process, provides materials and coaching services and promotes networking in the social environment, for example with other aid service providers. As a result, teachers gain both increased expertise and support.

### **Teachers should therefore be offered, among other things:**

- ⇒ Filling knowledge deficits in the event of mental stress among pupils
- ⇒ Information on practical ways of dealing with behavioural problems in the classroom
- ⇒ Improved cooperation with families and, if required, external institutions (e.g. counselling services)
- ⇒ Avoidance of additional stress for teachers

## Indirect Target Groups

All pupils benefit from the programmes, but especially those from multi-problem families with their own and / or parental mental illness. They benefit from the fact that they receive information and guidance through the teaching programmes, as well as social support both within the class group and the school and gain access to a group of other children in a similar situation.

Other indirect target groups that benefit from the programme through cooperation impulses are supporting institutions from the youth welfare and from the healthcare sector.

### 1.1.3 Our Partners

All of the organisations involved in the project have many years of experience with children, young people and their families with mental health problems at the intersection with school. What all partners have in common is a special commitment to the developmental needs of children and young people from disadvantaged families.

An important conclusion from the preceding "Mindful Schools"-project was the desire expressed by schools to be able to install similar programmes adapted to the respective age group in primary schools. As preventative programmes are generally more effective the earlier they start, there was great motivation to take up this wish and extend the previous work to primary schools.

The project partners were able to access support and materials from the London-based **Our Time Foundation**, which has been pursuing this approach in a similar form in the UK for several years.

In addition, a student research group led by Anna-Maria Spittel at the **Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg** (Germany) in the working and research group "Special Needs Education; Rehabilitation / Health Care" at the Department of Special Needs Education and Rehabilitation was involved in the project in the research focus area "Young Carers and Children as Relatives". This group was responsible for the external evaluation of the project (see chapter 3 "Teachers' Feedback - Project Evaluation").

The **AGAPLESION Diakonieklinikum Rotenburg / Wümme**, as a general care clinic in the rural area of northern Germany, provides extensive healthcare services and sees itself as an institution that, in addition to direct and curative healthcare, promotes networking with other institutions (schools, youth welfare services, counselling services, healthcare authorities) and cultivates cross-sector cooperation as the basis for its own activities. The

clinic has experience and resources in the area of project administration and organisation. Through the existing local networks, other schools in the Rotenburg area (especially Bremen) could be reached.

Some of the project partners **Okkar Heymur** (Iceland), **Fundació Orienta** (Spain) and **FamilienANlauf e. V. (FAN)** (Germany) have been active in the field of health promotion and support for children and young people in multi-problem families for several years.

**Kidstime Deutschland e. V.** (Germany) coordinates the work with families of parents with mental illness as part of the Kidstime-workshops and provides counselling services for the participating partner institutions. The non-profit organisation cooperates with **REBUZ** in order to reach primary schools in the federal state of Bremen in this way.

The **Systemic Centre Wienerwald's** participation in the project offered the opportunity to develop and establish a broad and accessible prevention programme at schools in Austria.

All of the centres are committed to a cooperative and preventative approach. All centres have experience in working with the Kidstime-approach for children of parents with mental illness, and some have already successfully participated in the preceding project "Mindful Schools" for 7th and 8th grade classes.

All partner institutions see the school system as the social "crystallisation point" where pupils not only gain lesson-related learning experiences in everyday life, but also undergo important socialisation processes. Everyday integrated support with a high multiplier effect can be integrated there particularly effectively.

## International Cooperation

Kidstime-projects that support families with parents with mental illness exist at the three locations in Spain (Barcelona), Iceland (Reykjavik) and Germany (Bremen / Rotenburg a. d. Wümme and Berlin). In Austria (Vienna), the introduction of a Kidstime-workshop is planned, and team qualification of the participating institutions has already taken place in advance.

The above-mentioned "Mindful Schools"-project with similar content was previously installed at the three locations in Iceland, Spain and Germany, which has already provided important additional experience for the follow-up project "PASS" - both in terms of common topics and national similarities and differences, for example regarding the respective national, particularly school political, framework conditions.

A double expectation was confirmed in the preceding project "Mindful Schools":

⇒ The challenges faced by pupils from disadvantaged families are similar in the different countries and show close parallels in terms of specific support needs.

- ⇒ The differences between the respective school systems create additional challenges - both in adapting to existing structures and in taking into account existing gaps, some of which only become apparent in cooperative dialogue and in a comparison between countries.

A common approach is therefore required, as well as differentiated adaptation to school and country-specific characteristics. This is being realised through a joint project involving several European partners. It is also ensured that the materials produced are available in several languages (German, Spanish, English) and can be adapted for other countries in the future with little effort.

### 1.1.4 Participating Schools

The following schools participated in "PASS":

- ⇒ **The Colegio Pedagogium Cos in Sant Boi de Llobregat in Barcelona (Spain)**
  - o This school has 290 pupils in primary school and 350 pupils in secondary school (a total of 762 pupils including pre-scholars). The staff has 52 teachers (10 from preschool, 19 from primary and 23 from secondary) and 5 teachers for special needs / diversity attention. The school does not have any social workers.
- ⇒ **The Purkersdorf Primary School in Vienna (Austria)**
  - o This primary school has 408 pupils from 19 different nations in 19 classes with 31 teachers. The school is a "Healthy School" with a gold award as an "H2O school" and "nature park school" and cooperates with the music school, federal forestry, the Red Cross, the Samaritans and an Austrian charity / aid organisation, among others.
- ⇒ The inclusive **community school Grüner Campus Malchow in Berlin (Germany)**
  - o There are 322 pupils in the primary school (grades 4 to 6). School social work is firmly integrated into this with 2 school social workers, 1 educator and 1 teacher. The family café presented in chapter 2.3.1 originates from this school.

⇒ The open all-day **primary school in Scheeßel (Germany)**

- o This school, with around 460 pupils and 35 teachers, offers children who are particularly keen to learn challenging programmes, known as "EXTRAs", as part of the "network for gifted children", and it offers children with special needs specific support from special needs teachers. The school also cooperates with a school ("Lindenschule") of the local facility for people with disabilities ("Rotenburger Werke") in order to provide local schooling for children from Scheeßel who require support in the area of "cognitive development". As part of the "PASS" programme, a family café (see chapter 2.3.1) has been firmly established at the school.

⇒ The **Primary School in Borgarnes (Iceland)**

- o The school has 326 students in grades 1-10 (age 6-16). Each yeargroup is divided into two classrooms with 2-3 teachers. There are 20 classes in total and the staff consists of 70 persons. A study counselor is employed at school, the student's advocate and confidant, who works in close collaboration with parents as appropriate and other professionals inside and outside the school. There is also a school psychologist working in the school.
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# 2 Materials Collection



## 2 Materials Collection

In this chapter you will find a small selection of materials that have been used in the "PASS" project. If you are interested in further materials, please contact the authors of this manual.



The materials are from the three focus activities (WP = "Work Packages") that are being realised in the "PASS" programme:

#### **WP 1: Raising awareness among the school staff**

- ⇒ meeting with the entire school staff for approx. 4 hours
- ⇒ afterwards, formation of a core team in the school (2-6 persons, especially teachers and school social workers)
- ⇒ training the core team to realise the programme, in particular the teaching units from WP 2 (see below)

#### **WP 2: Implementation of the teaching materials**

- ⇒ approx. 2-6 school hours in total, depending on the possibilities and interests of the school
- ⇒ realisation by the respective core team and the teachers
- ⇒ supported by local project partners

#### **WP 3: Development of a long-term change in school culture**

- ⇒ through various elements such as a tutor / mentor system, after-school clubs, parent-teacher-pupil cafés, etc., orientated towards the opportunities, needs and interests of the school
- ⇒ supported by local project partners

### **2.1 Raising Awareness among the School Staff (WP 1)**

The first focus of the project, as described in chapter 1, is to raise awareness among the entire teaching staff regarding the mental stress of their pupils - with a particular focus on children from high-risk families (especially young carers) - and to recognise and make use of opportunities to promote mental health.

In the first WP, (reflection) exercises are used to analyse the current setting and the already existing support for children of parents with mental health problems or illnesses at the

respective school and to identify areas where there are gaps or where improvements can be made.

In the following, we present the worksheet "Mental Health Audit" (chapter 2.1.1) and "What Teachers Can Do - 12 Tips" (chapter 2.1.2) as examples.

## 2.1.1 Worksheet "Mental Health Audit"

### Guidance for completing your mental health audit:

The following audit is designed to help you assess your delivery by offering examples of best practice which you can compare against your setting's mental health provision and approach. For each best practice example, reflect on your own setting and provide some evidence of the actions you are already undertaking. You should then grade your performance by completing a Red-Amber-Green rating in the columns provided.

**Red** - indicates that you do not meet the best practice criteria and further action is required.

**Amber** - indicates that you meet some of the best practice criteria but some further action is still required.

**Green** - indicates that you meet the best practice criteria in full and endeavour to routinely review processes and respond to any changing circumstances.



Don't be concerned if there are gaps in your audit. This training course is designed to provide you with practical and effective strategies to promote an open culture of mental health in your setting and the second half of the session will go into greater depth about how to implement these strategies.

## Mental Health Audit

Best practice	Evidence from your setting <i>e.g. policy wording, curriculum examples, school website, newsletter, staff meetings, etc.</i>	RAG Rating (✓)		
		R	A	G
Conversations around mental health are encouraged and normalised among staff and students.				
Positive values of inclusion, openness and belonging are promoted and stigma associated with mental health is challenged.				
Support is available and clearly signposted to the whole school community.				
The school engages with local services and takes opportunities to promote open mental health culture within school messaging and through planned curriculum opportunities.				
Policies and processes are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they address mental health and wellbeing issues and that approaches are aligned.				
Students, including those with additional needs and communication difficulties, are given regular opportunities to express their views and participate in whole-school decisions, including policies, curriculum content and student support.				
Meaningful and appropriate student-led initiatives are made available to all learners to ensure everyone is included in the embedding of a whole-school mental health approach.				

<p>Scheduled events, resources and other opportunities to participate in promoting a culture of mental health, both in and outside of school, are made available to all parents, families and carers.</p>				
<p>Parents, families and carers are provided with accessible information to help them have better, more informed conversations about mental health with their children and seek further support if needed.</p>				

## 2.1.2 What Teachers Can Do - 12 Tips

- ⇒ Treat young people with **respect, appreciation** and **kindness**.
- ⇒ Know about **support services**.
- ⇒ Talk about **difficult life issues** during good times.
- ⇒ **Inform, exchange** and **train** as a staff.
- ⇒ **Network** with supporters in the community.
- ⇒ Try **small everyday gestures** - they help.
- ⇒ Be **genuine** and **authentic**.
- ⇒ Be **patient** and **reliable**.
- ⇒ Be aware of your **own limits**.
- ⇒ Transmit **normality** and **security**.
- ⇒ Strengthen **self-confidence** and **self-assurance**.
- ⇒ Be **empathetic**.

## 2.2 Implementation of the Teaching Materials (WP 2)

The respective core team of the school, which is formed as part of WP 1, and the teachers carry out teaching units on the topics of mental illness and mental health in WP 2. Below we present a small selection of teaching materials designed for this purpose.

The materials in chapter 2.2.1 help to clarify the difference between mental health and mental illness.

The materials presented in chapter 2.2.2 focus on one's own mental health and how to protect it.

### 2.2.1 Session 1: "What Is a Mental Health Problem or a Mental Illness?"

**Objectives:**

- ⇒ The pupils learn that being unwell in your mind needs to be treated as seriously as being unwell in your body, and with the same respect and kindness.
- ⇒ The pupils understand that the mind can get ill, just like the body, and they explore the differences between physical and mental illness.
- ⇒ The pupils feel safe to talk about their feelings.

## Resource A: "Myth-Busting Challenge" Worksheet

### (Resource A)

Name: .....

Class: .....

Age: .....



## Myth-Busting Challenge

This is not a serious test, just a way for your teacher to find out what you know.

For each question put a tick in the 'yes', 'no' or 'not sure' box to show what you think.

Each of the questions will also be shown in the slideshow you watch.

### Questions on mental health and mental illness

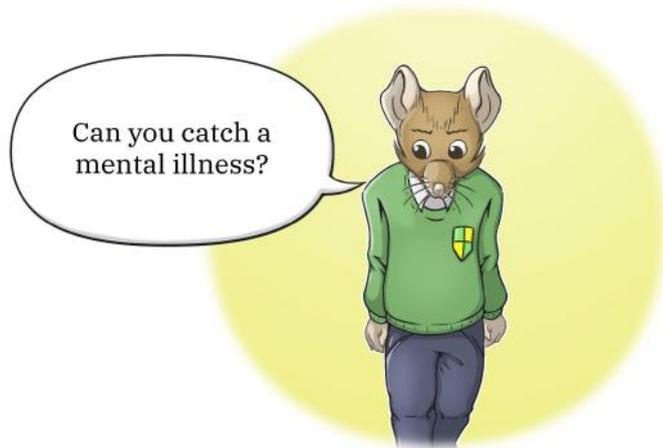
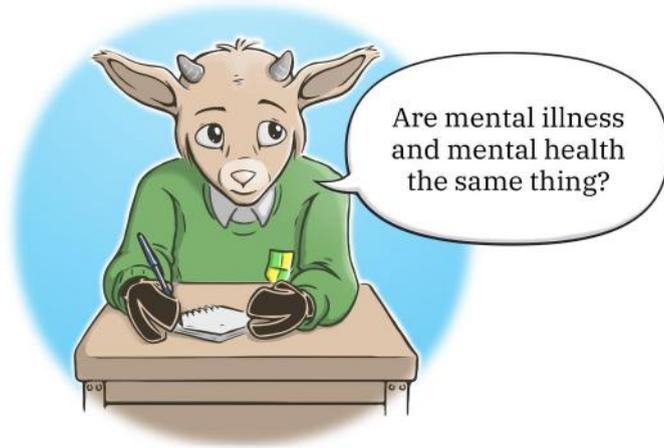
Put a ✓ in one box for each question to show what you think.

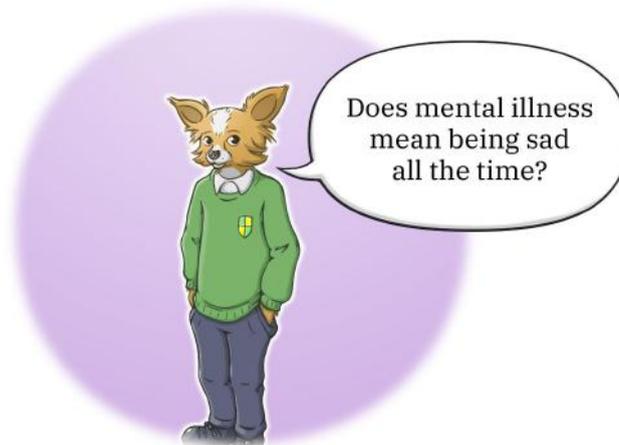
	Yes	Not sure	No
1. Are mental illness and mental health the same thing?			
2. Can you catch a mental illness?			
3. Can only adults get a mental illness?			
4. Can children get a mental illness?			
5. Does mental illness mean being sad all the time?			
6. Does mental health mean being happy all the time?			
7. Can a person grow out of their mental illness?			
8. Is mental health as important as physical health?			
9. Does having a mental illness mean you're a bad person?			
10. Does a person choose to have a mental illness?			

**Our Time**

Helping young people affected by  
parental mental illness

## Resource A: "Myth-Busting" Slides





Does mental health mean being happy all the time?

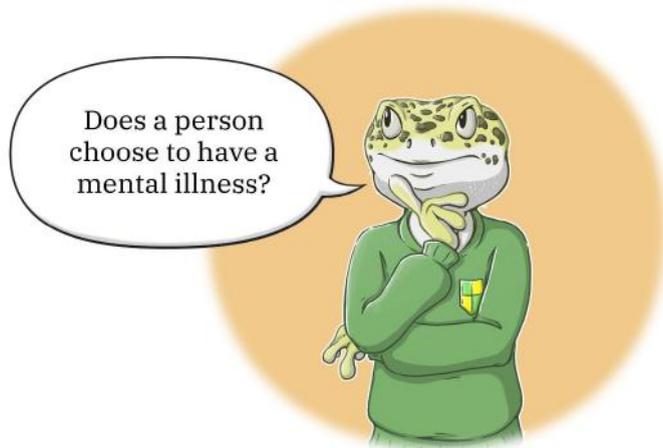
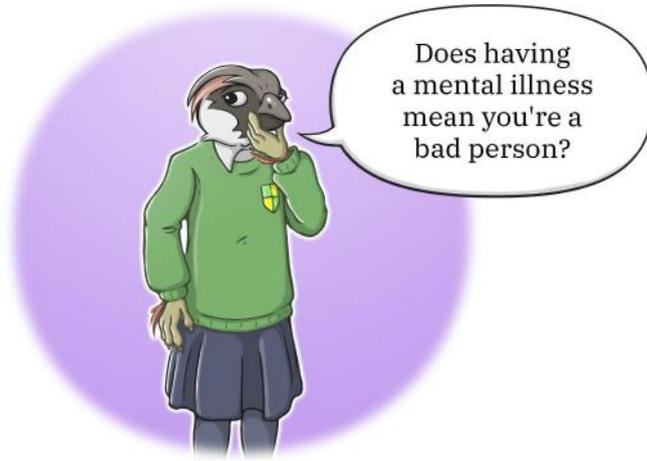


Can a person grow out of their mental illness?

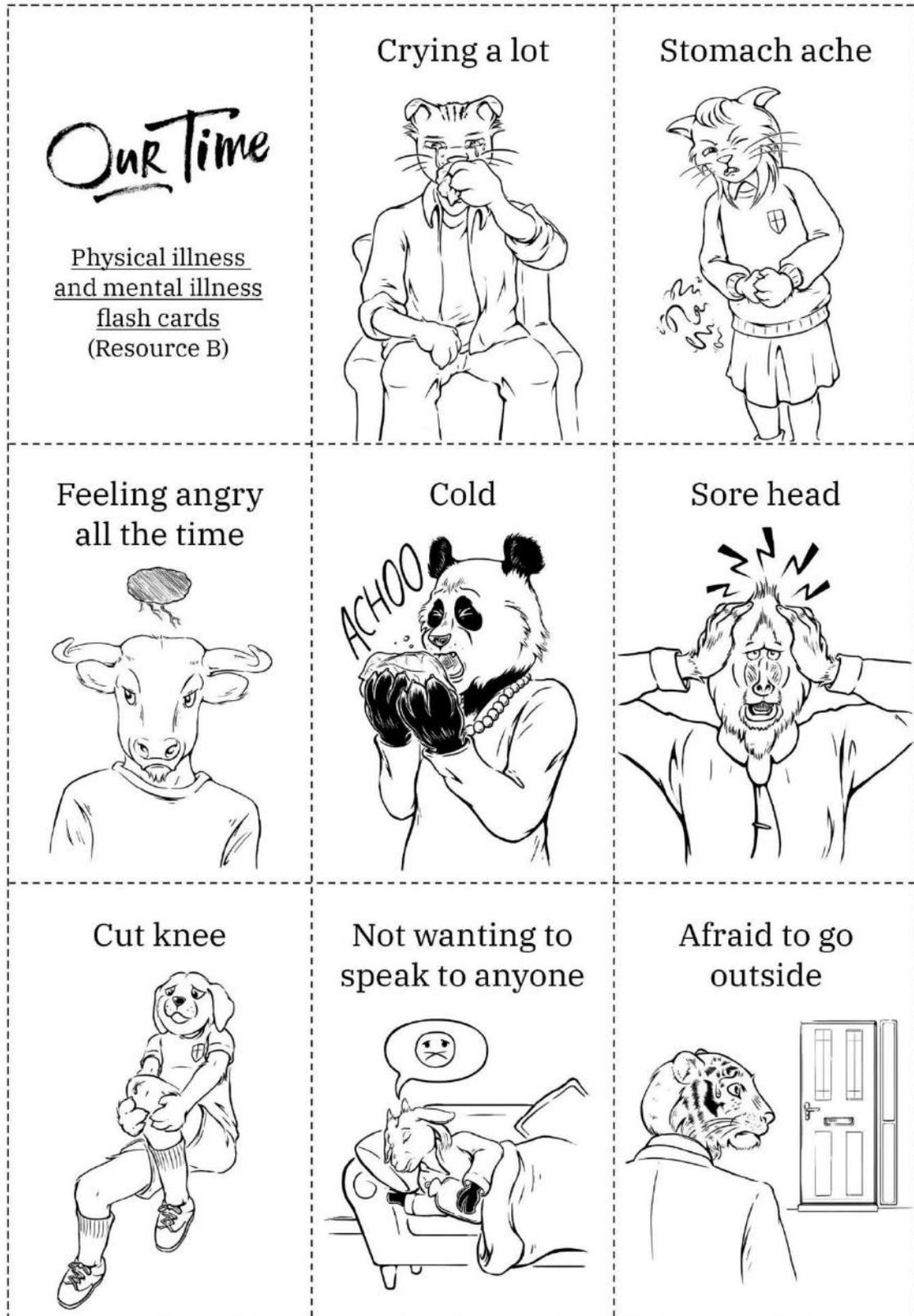


Is mental health as important as physical health?





## Resource B: "Physical Illness and Mental Illness" Flash Cards



## 2.2.2 Session 2: "Mental Health and Me"

### Objectives:

- ⇒ The pupils understand the importance of looking after our mental health.
- ⇒ The pupils identify tools to protect their mental health.

### Resource C: "Snakes and Ladders" Worksheet

#### Snakes and ladders (Resource C)

Names .....

For **snakes** write in things that make you sad, low or unhappy.

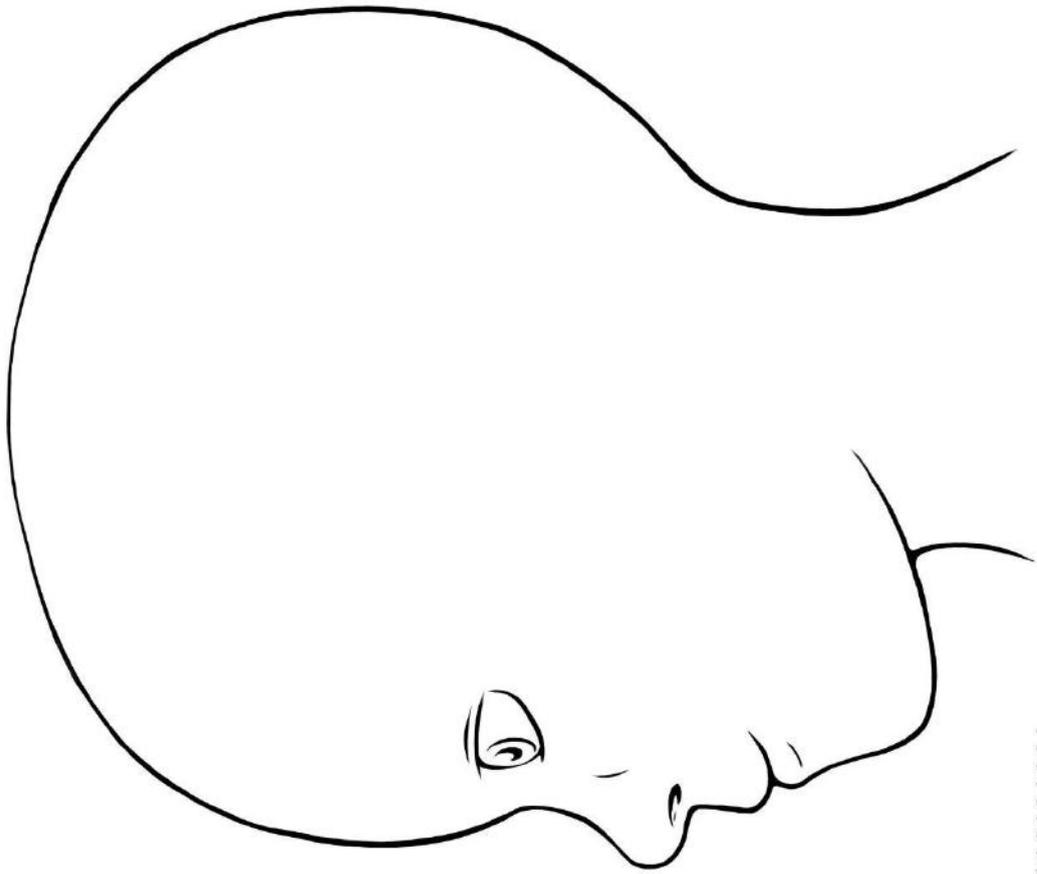
For **ladders** write in things that make you happy or calm.

64	63	62	61	60	59	58	57
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41
33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

*Our Time*

Resource D: Brain Worksheets

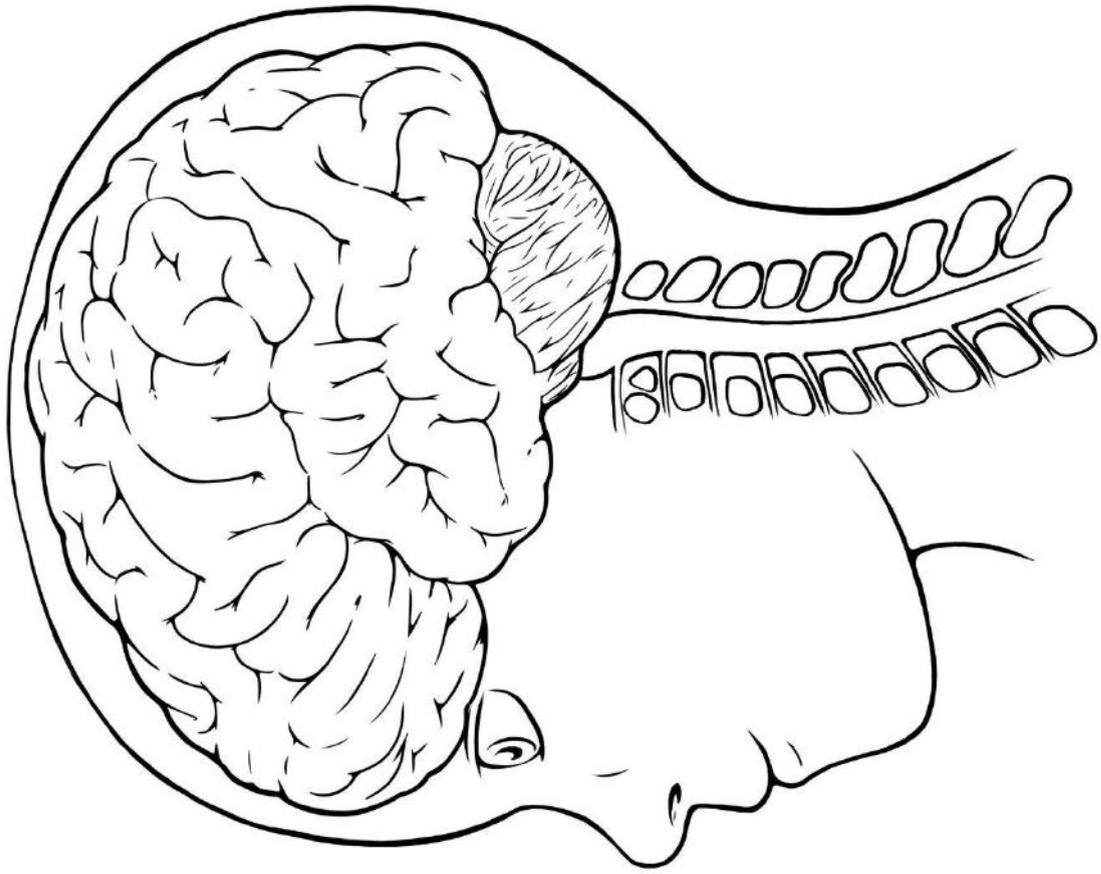
Brain worksheet (Resource D)



*Our Time*

Name.....

Our Time



Brain worksheet (Resource D)

# Resource E: "Protecting My Mental Health" Worksheet

Protecting my mental health (Resource E)

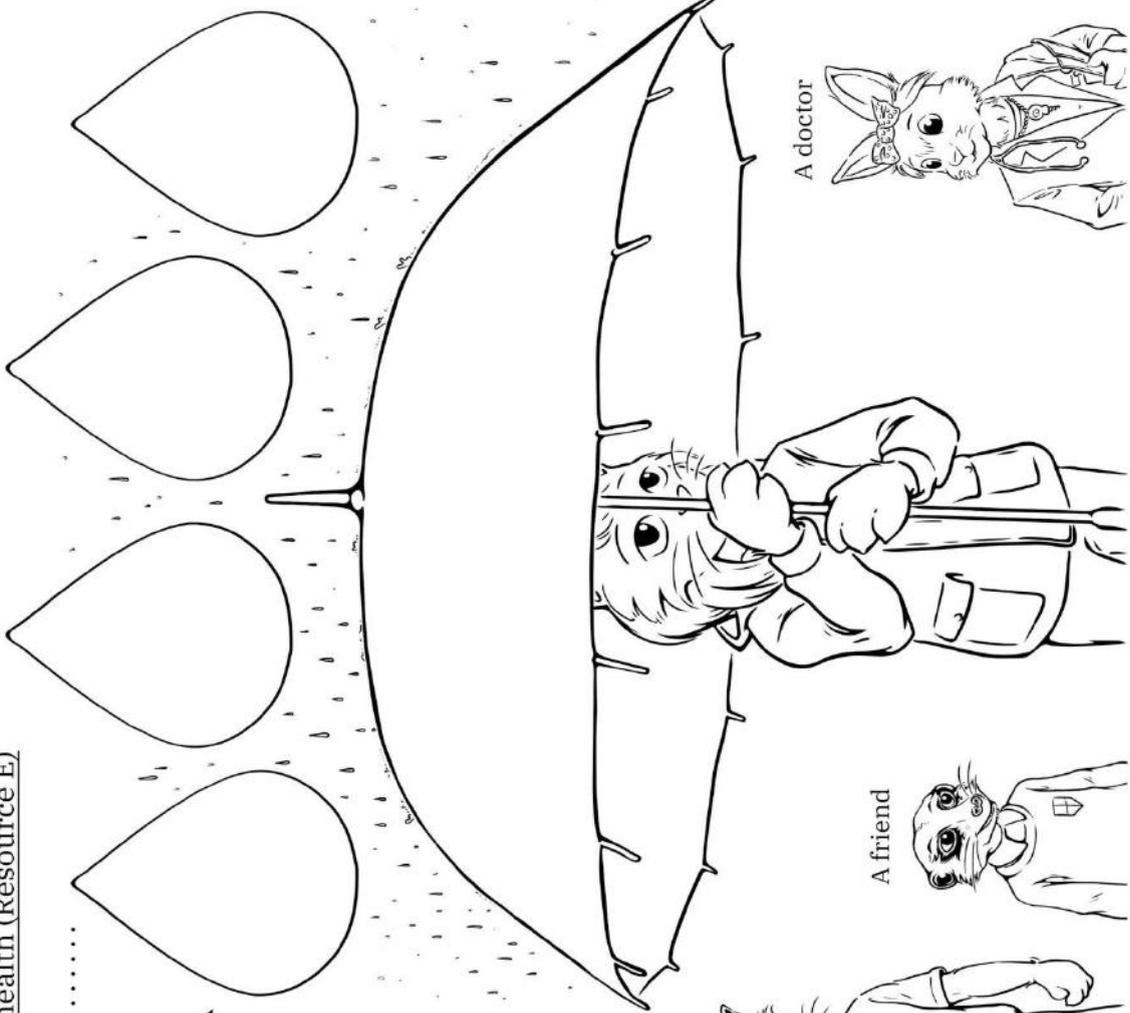
*Our Time*

Name .....

Write your worries in the rain droplets

Write what helps with your worries on the umbrella

Draw a line between your worry and the person you want to talk to about it



A teacher

A doctor

A friend

A parent

A brother or sister

## 2.3 Development of a Long-Term Change in School Culture (WP 3)

A further objective of the project is to evolve the school culture into a mindful culture with regard to the mental stress of pupils in the long term. In addition to the establishment of various functions within the staff (contact person for pupils, pilot function for further support services), various extracurricular elements and activities such as tutoring / mentoring systems, afternoon clubs, parent-teacher-pupil cafés, etc., which are supported by the local project partners, can also contribute to this.

The family café at the school Grüner Campus Malchow in Berlin (Germany) is presented below as an example.

### 2.3.1 Example: Family Café

The family café described here started at the inclusive community school Grüner Campus Malchow (Berlin, Germany) and is run by teachers who have an additional qualification as multifamily therapists / multifamily trainers.

Our special thanks go to Franziska Kuhn, Alexandra Manke and Saskia Kijewski, who created the concept and made it available to us for the manual. Below you will find some extracts from this concept, which was developed during the planning phase of the family café and shows how a family café can be organised and adapted to the individual circumstances of each school. As part of the current "PASS"-project, it has been fully established at the primary school in Scheeßel (district of Rotenburg (Germany)).

## Multifamily Therapy

### What is MFT?

The concept of multifamily therapy, a systemic family group therapy, was developed by Eia Asen based on the experience of the Marlborough Family Service in London. Multifamily therapy combines action-orientated, family therapy interventions within a group context. The content of MFT is orientated towards the needs and skills of the respective family members. Families, parents and children are supported by the other families in recognising

their own family interaction and relationship patterns. In the group context, solutions for the concerns of the individual families are sought and tried out. The experiences are discussed and reflected upon in the group.

### **MFT is based on the following basic ideas:**

- ⇒ Not being alone with a particular problem
- ⇒ Solidarity
- ⇒ Do-it-yourself: Responsibility remains with the parents - the helpers are in the back seat
- ⇒ Mentalizing and bonding: Mentalizing is the ability to perceive and react to one's own mental states and those of other people. Mentalizing is the requirement for a secure bond. In MFT contexts, specific exercises are used to promote mentalizing and are constantly being developed.
- ⇒ Doing-as-if: Exercises in which families try out solutions and behave "as if" these new solutions had already been implemented: e.g. behaving as one would if the child had achieved a good grade, or as if an argument had been resolved. MFT does this in the form of games/role-playing or scenic games. Children can play parents, children give a press conference as school experts and parents ask the experts or parents play children who have a different idea of what to do than the parents.
- ⇒ Playing
- ⇒ Multiperspectivity
- ⇒ Reflection

### **Connection between MFT and parents' café**

The objective of MFT is to bring families together so that they can advise each other and support each other in their task of taking parental responsibility for their children. In terms of creating favourable developmental conditions for the children, the experience of supportive social interaction between several families who find themselves in comparable life situations and are struggling with similar everyday problems is of central importance. This exchange should take place between parents and guardians within the framework of the family café under the guidance of the MFT trainers.

## About the Family Café Project

The family café is intended to be a meeting place for parents and guardians, as well as family members of and with pupils in the 4th to 10th grade at the Grüner Campus Malchow.

Parent and family cafés have established themselves as a low-barrier educational programme to reach parents who rarely or never attend formal educational programmes such as lectures or seminars. Open programmes create an informal framework for exchange in which teachers or school headmasters can also get involved in an informal atmosphere. Parents can get themselves involved, particularly in the organisation of the setting, for example by organising meals together, and take responsibility. Following the joint meal, educational topics or school-related issues are discussed, possibly also organised by external referents.

A family café consists of children and their families from different classes and grades. The children are accompanied by at least one parent or an older family member. Participation usually lasts about a half school year (8 meetings per half school year). Participation is voluntary and promotes mutual appreciation among the participants, their ability to self-help and their self-reflection.

## Staff and Areas of Responsibility

The Family Café project is organised, run and managed by three pedagogues from the organisation FAN FamilienANlauf e.V., who are based at the Grüner Campus Malchow. They have an additional qualification as multifamily therapists / multifamily trainers.

In addition, the school psychologist from Berlin's school psychology and inclusion education counselling and support centres (SIBUZ) in the district of Lichtenberg (Berlin) has agreed to accompany lectures, individual counselling if required, but also activities such as cooking with the families and to support the family café in certain occasions.

## Existing Infrastructure / Premises / The Pupils' Café as a Place of Encounter

The family café will take place in the student café. The student café is located at the Grüner Campus Malchow in the Fontane-Building (FG) II and was created in a typical dining room of

this type of school building. Attached to this room is the student kitchen, which has three fully equipped cooking islands. This is the basis of the student company "Stullenbar" and is also used to accompany classes for economics-work-technology / compulsory elective classes (WAT / WPU) as well as for open programmes. The student café has a sales area for the student company with a counter and freezers.

Two spacious couch areas and several tables with chairs, a pool table, two soccer tables, a shelf with books for exchange and a media system for events are also available in the room. There is also the option of borrowing various games and accessories for sports activities.

Families can see where their children spend a large part of their day and can therefore better put themselves in their children's shoes. In addition, the fact that the room can be locked, its size and the many tables and chairs make it ideal for seminars and creative activities. For this reason, it is also the ideal space for a get-together.

## Target Group

The target group for our programme are parents and guardians for whom the concerns and problems of and with their children play a central role. It is aimed at "multi-problem families" who have difficulties in providing their children with adequate developmental conditions, but also at families without problems and families who have everyday questions, for example on the following topics:

- ⇒ Child development
- ⇒ puberty / being a teenager
- ⇒ Reflection on the parental role

Specific problems for parents and guardians could be:

- ⇒ School distance
- ⇒ Welcome classes
- ⇒ Children with special educational needs
- ⇒ Overburdened parents / educational difficulties
- ⇒ Parents-child conflicts
- ⇒ Living with children with behavioural challenges
- ⇒ Transition from primary to secondary school

The family café is particularly aimed at families whose children have a recognisable need for special support in their emotional and social development and whose care needs go beyond the regular school routine. Based on the concept of multifamily therapy, parents learn in a parent group to act independently and appropriately and to support each other in challenging situations. Parents are particularly sensibilised to the challenges of school and their parenting skills are strengthened. The participating schools learn to perceive parents in a more resource-orientated way and to communicate with them on an equal basis. The children are encouraged to pursue their own goals, to take responsibility for themselves, to improve their acceptance of rules and not to blame others in conflicts, but to find support from other people.

## Central Topics

Anyone in a conflict situation usually has a narrow view of their own problem, but a lot of understanding, empathy and problem-solving skills for similar problems in others (parenting issues and questions, communication, developing relationships and organising everyday life in the family, overcoming social isolation and speechlessness, patchwork issues, (parental) couple relationship issues, children's rights and needs, puberty and teenage development, ...).

## Activities

All meetings will include input on a specific topic and MFT exercises. Furthermore, the participants should be able to co-determine the activities of the family café. A few examples of possible activities are cooking and baking together, discussion rounds, meditation, role-playing games and so on.

## Time frame

The multifamily therapy, as part of the family café, is designed as an open, ongoing group so that new parents, guardians and families have the opportunity to join at any time. The duration of participation is set individually. As a rule, participation for at least one school half year is advisable. An MFT session usually lasts about 2 hours. They are scheduled every 14 days.

## Objectives of the Family Café

A central goal is to strengthen the self-efficacy of all those involved (children, parents, teachers). Because only those who experience themselves as self-effective and influential can develop solution strategies and have the confidence to allow new experiences. The special thing about the family café is that families with similar problems come together. As a result, parents can support and advise each other and thus increasingly experience themselves as competent and take on more responsibility for their children. By participating in the family café, parents are strengthened in their role as parents and are seen by their children as competent and active parents who cooperate with the school, which can have an influence on the children's behaviour. One principle of the work of the family cafés is that parents take responsibility for their children's behaviour at school and feel that they can also influence their children in everyday school life.

Through the family café, parents and guardians can come out of their shame-filled isolation and experience a feeling of solidarity when they meet other families with similar problems: "We're all in the same boat. We're not the only ones." The parents experience themselves in the role of "professionals". In the group process, they take on the role of counsellors for others and learn that they can be helpful for other families. At the same time, they receive support and advice from other parents. This enables them to overcome the feeling of powerlessness and helplessness and experience themselves as capable of acting. The group develops a dynamic together to look for solutions and new ways to solve their family problems: "I can do more than I thought. I like the way the other families do it."

## Exemplary Programme of a Family Café

### Week 1: Getting to know each other - creating positive group cohesion

- ⇒ Game to get to know each other
- ⇒ Summarise expectations / fears
- ⇒ Explanation of the trainers, objective of the MFT group

#### Examples of games to get to know each other / opening games

**Hypothesising:** What makes person X instantly likeable? What competences does he / she radiate? Children? Pets? Restaurant or home cooking? And so on. If necessary, provide positively formulated questions.

**Set of keys:** All participants unpack their set of keys and use them to tell things about themselves, e.g. "This is the key to my bike, I ride it everywhere and I'm also very sporty in other ways.", "This is the key to my flat where I live with my girlfriend." The participants then introduce themselves to each other and say what surprised them the most.

**Alliteration:** One after the other, all participants say their name and a characteristic that begins with the same letter and ideally applies to them ("friendly Franziska", "sceptical Saskia", "anxious Alexandra"). Before doing so, however, everyone must repeat all the names and characteristics that have already been said one by one.

### Week 2: Family exercises

- ⇒ Increasing family cohesion
- ⇒ Strengthening family identity

### Examples of family games / exercises

**Family emblem:** The families develop an emblem that reflects their strengths and specialities. They design it on paper and present it to the group.

**"Who is who?":** The children paint self-portraits, focussing on their particular characteristics, both in terms of how they see themselves and how the other children see each other. The parents are in a separate room. The parents then have to find the portraits of their children and pay attention to their special characteristics.

### Week 3: Parent coaching / specialist lecture on group topic

The MFT trainers prepare the families' existing issues thematically and give a short presentation and also recommend appropriate external specialist centres to the families if required.

In addition, the school psychologist from Berlin's school psychology and inclusion education counselling and support centres (SIBUZ) in the district of Lichtenberg (Berlin) has agreed to give lectures, provide individual counselling if required, but also to accompany activities such as cooking with the families and support the family café in certain occasions.

### Possible topics could be

- ⇒ Child development
- ⇒ Puberty / being a teenager
- ⇒ Reflection on the parental role
- ⇒ School distance
- ⇒ Welcome classes
- ⇒ Children with special educational needs
- ⇒ Overburdening of parents / parenting difficulties
- ⇒ Parent-child conflicts
- ⇒ Living with children with behavioural challenges
- ⇒ Transition from primary to secondary school

#### Week 4: Methods / Prospects

- ⇒ Discuss methods for a more favourable family life
- ⇒ Develop the family's perspective

#### Examples of family games / exercises

**Reframing:** Together, the group collects phrases that are frequently used in conflict situations and that hurt and offend others. In "adoptive families", the sentences are then translated and translated into an appreciative, non-offensive formulation.

**Family boat:** The families make family boats with crew and use them to visualise their responsibilities and roles within the family.

**Flow of life:** The boat is positioned along a rope and important anchor points of the family are developed. The further course of the river / perspective life path is discussed.

#### Week 5: Farewell / Networking

- ⇒ Summary MFT Group
- ⇒ Joint meal
- ⇒ Enabling the families to network with each other
- ⇒ Farewell

### Planned Time Schedule

For examples of content, see examples mentioned above.

Activity	Content	Approx. Duration
<b>Arrival</b>	Arriving in the room, greeting the other participants, taking a seat	10 minutes
<b>Input / Seminar part</b>	Short lecture on a specific problem, moderated discussion round: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What experiences do you have regarding this topic?</li> <li>• How do you feel?</li> <li>• What do you wish for?</li> </ul>	20 minutes
<b>"Murmuring group"</b>	Exchange in small groups, discussions among each other	10 minutes
<i>Break</i>	<i>Coffee, Tea etc.</i>	<i>10 minutes</i>
<b>MFT exercise</b>	At the beginning, exercises to get to know each other, then topic-specific and adapted	20 minutes
<b>Pedagogical activity</b>	Should be co-determined by the participants	30 minutes
<b>Reflection</b>	Positive criticism, exchange of experiences	10 minutes
<b>Closing</b>	Collect wishes and topics for the next meeting, organisation, who will bring what, etc.	10 minutes

### Acquisition of the Target Group

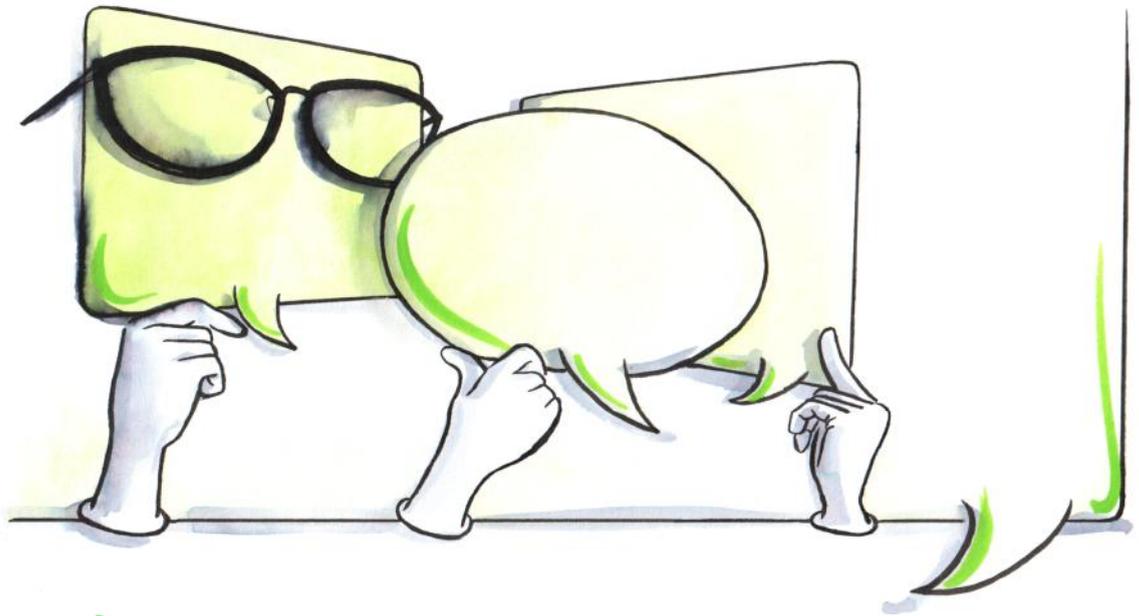
The target group of the project are parents or legal guardians of pupils from 4th grade to 10th grade. In consultation with the school headmaster, visits are made to parents' meetings for acquisition purposes. There is a verbal invitation and an approx. 10-minute presentation on the content of the family café. There will also be close cooperation between the programme "family classroom" and the family café. This means that parents will find out about the family classroom in the family café and vice versa. There will also be posters and flyers.

## Funding

The funding for the staff is provided by the organisation FamilienAnlauf (FAN) e.V. . The rooms and various materials are available to us free of charge. Otherwise, the idea is to provide coffee and tea and give the rest to the group so that each party contributes if the group wants e. g. to cook or go on a trip.



# Teachers' Feedback - Project Evaluation



## 3 Teachers' Feedback - Project Evaluation

As already mentioned in chapter 1.1.3, a student research group led by Anna-Maria Spittel was responsible for the scientific project evaluation, which focussed its research on "Young Carers and Children as Relatives". This research group is part of the "Special Needs Education; Rehabilitation / Health Care" working and research group at the Institute for Special Needs Education and Rehabilitation at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg (Germany).

Of particular interest is, of course, what the teachers themselves have to say about the "PASS" project.

- ⇒ In chapter 3.1 you will find the voices of the teachers who were involved in the project and took part in a group discussion. Teachers from schools in Spain, Iceland, Austria and Germany participated in this discussion.
- ⇒ Furthermore, you will find the results of the teacher survey conducted as part of the above-mentioned project evaluation in chapter 3.2. Teachers from Spain, Iceland and Austria were interviewed.

### 3.1 Results of the Group Discussion (Focus Groups)

#### 3.1.1 Iceland, Austria, Spain, Germany

The following summary shows the results of an online group discussion that was held after the project and in which teachers from the schools in Spain, Iceland and Austria as well as a representative from the German school Grüner Campus Malchow in Berlin participated.

All in all, how did you like the project and the collaboration?

- ⇒ "children were really interested and open-minded and wanted to talk about the topic"
- ⇒ "teachers liked the project"
- ⇒ "important topic to talk about"

- ⇒ "good ideas from the expert team → children did not want to talk about it at first, but then they were really happy with it"
- ⇒ "not enough time for the students to internalise all the things"
- ⇒ "How can it be implemented into the curriculum?"

#### Which components did you find particularly helpful?

- ⇒ "teacher education"
- ⇒ "teachers liked working with experts, experts liked working with teachers"
- ⇒ "involvement of the parents:
  - o started working with parents, with whom they already have a good relationship
  - o parents appreciate the project"

#### Were there any surprises?

- ⇒ "children were very open-minded and interested"
- ⇒ "some kids know a lot about the topic"
- ⇒ "space for children to talk about problems at home → good moment for them"

#### What obstacles did you encounter?

- ⇒ "lack of time but interested in doing more (but good that it is not too much at the beginning)"
- ⇒ "more material and more teacher-workshops needed to learn to give lessons about this topic to the children"
- ⇒ "child with ADHD crashed the group"

#### What concrete effects of the project do you experience in your school? / What specific tools would you like to have for the future?

- ⇒ "It would be good to have small exercises at first and then additional exercises."
- ⇒ "more resources / models / materials needed"
- ⇒ "Get photos and so on from other schools and countries to show the children that mental health is not just important on that single school or country but in the whole world"

### 3.1.2 Spain

A similar discussion round also took place at the Colegio Pedagogium Cos in Sant Boi de Llobregat (Spain) and resulted in the following conclusions:

#### What aspects of the project were useful?

- ⇒ "Address the importance of emotional management in 4th and 5th grade students."
- ⇒ "Raise awareness among teachers about the need to implement emotional and mental health within the primary curriculum based on prevention."
- ⇒ "The proposed activities were appropriate to the age of the students."

#### What obstacles have you detected?

- ⇒ "A topic of little significance for the students since the activities proposed in two days of one hour each are somewhat blurred within the large amount of content and learning that they do daily."
- ⇒ "When trying to resume learning from these workshops in January, the vast majority of students did not remember anything."  
*(Note: At this school, the teaching materials were implemented at different times with a break of several weeks between the sessions / units.)*
- ⇒ "Difficulty of inserting this project with complementary activities in the classroom once the school year is fully scheduled."

#### What recommendations would you make to improve the project?

- ⇒ "Seeing the real impact in the classroom (two hours per group), the amount of training and meetings to be carried out by teachers is too enormous."
- ⇒ "There is a greater demand for coordination and management compared to real evidence within the classroom."
- ⇒ "Increase activities/workshops/talks. Make this project something larger in terms of timing."
- ⇒ "The activities carried out could be more diverse, carrying out some more experiential activities based on role-playing."

## 3.2 Teacher survey

As part of the above-mentioned project evaluation, a survey of the teachers from Iceland, Austria and Spain involved in the project was carried out at the end of the project.

Unfortunately, the German schools from Berlin and Scheeßel did not take part in this part of the study for time and organisational reasons, but did actively participate in the focus group (see chapter 3.1.1).

### 3.2.1 Participants

In the teacher survey took part:

Questions on WP 1 (Raising awareness among the school staff):

⇒ from Iceland: 48 persons

⇒ from Austria: 26 persons

⇒ from Spain: 45 persons

making a total of 119 persons.

Questions on WP 2 (Implementation of the teaching materials):

⇒ from Iceland: 16 persons

⇒ from Austria: 27 persons

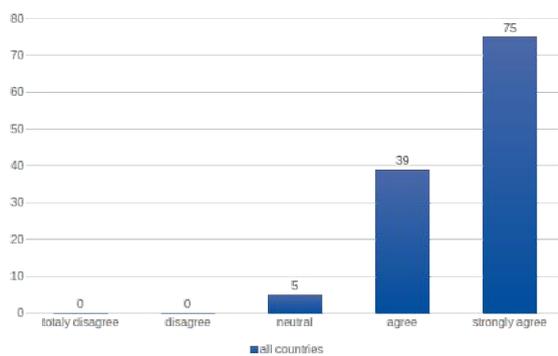
⇒ from Spain: 7 persons

making a total of 50 persons.

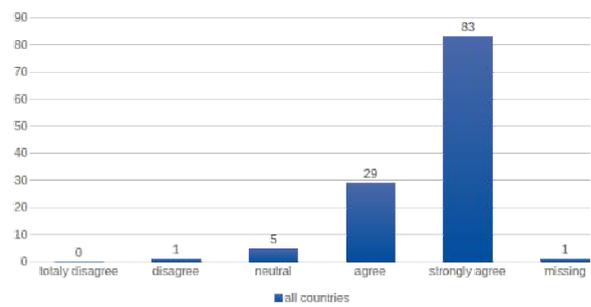
## 3.2.2 Results

### WP 1 (Raising awareness among the school staff): Structure

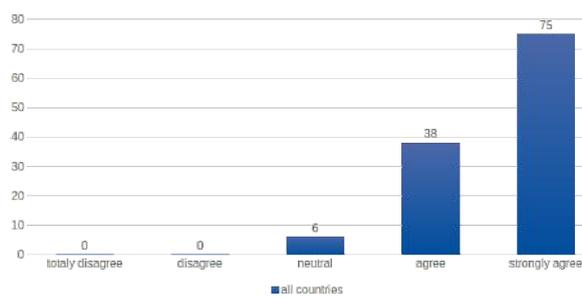
**Question 1:** The structure of session 1 was logical.



**Question 2:** I was able to follow the structure of session 1.



**Question 3:** I think the modality in which the information was presented was adequate.



**Open question:** Do you have further feedback regarding the structure of session 1?

⇒ Iceland (*partly translated from Icelandic*)

- o "For my sake I would like to know more about the ideology behind the intervention at the beginning"
- o "No"
- o "Well conducted session"
- o "Very interesting. Made me think."

⇒ Austria (*translated from German*)

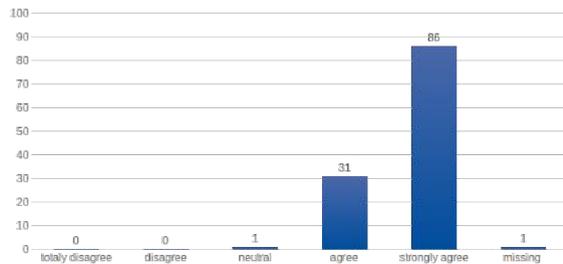
- o "Well-prepared presentation, pleasant, varied moderation"
- o "Great videos - very comprehensively explained"
- o "Feelings / understanding is gained for children with parents with mental illnesses"
- o "I had the impression that I lacked prior information. I didn't know anything about this project, for example, but it was required"
- o "Very interesting and relevant for everyone, comprehensible, involving, precise, no unproductiveness"

⇒ Spain

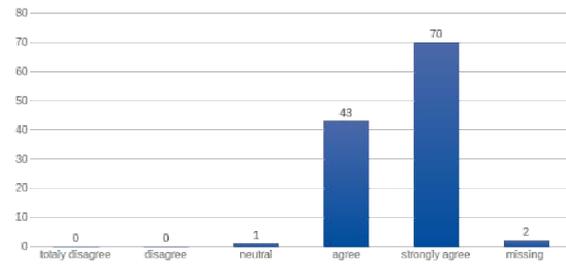
- o "comprehensible"
- o "balance between theory and interaction"
- o "too little time"

## WP 1 (Raising awareness among the school staff): Content

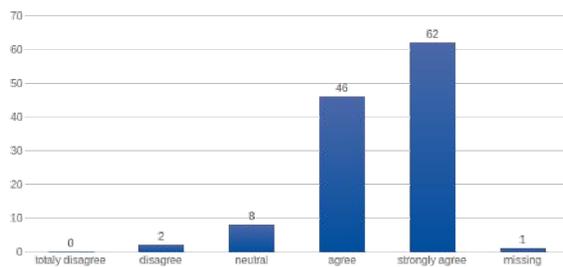
**Question 1:** I was able to follow the content of session 1.



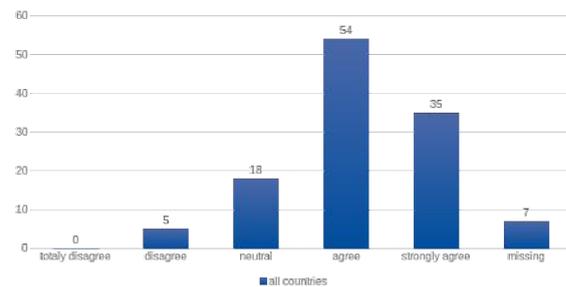
**Question 2:** Session 1 gave me a good overview of the topic "Young Carers".



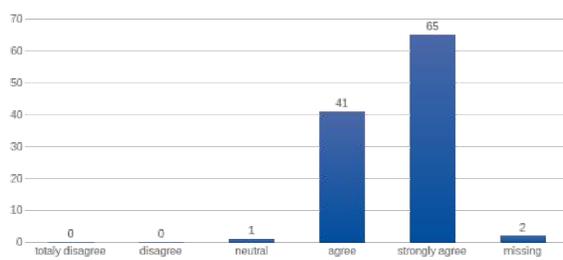
**Question 2.1:** I know what "Young Carers" are.



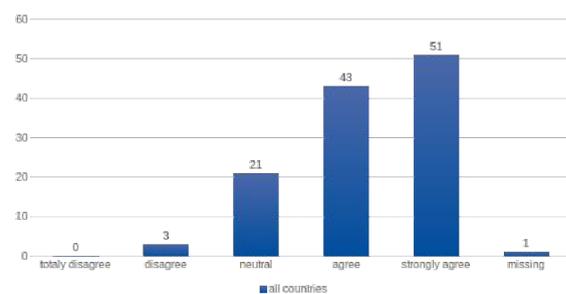
**Question 2.2:** I know how to potentially recognize "Young Carers".



**Question 3:** I understand the purpose of the content discussed in session 1 and how our school will benefit.



**Question 4:** I feel more comfortable and competent talking about mental illness.



**Open question:** Do you have further feedback regarding the content of session 1?

⇒ Iceland (*translated from Icelandic*)

- "Great awareness raising"
- "Don't have the feedback form in English"  
*(Sometimes the materials and feedback questions offered partly in Icelandic and partly in English were perceived as confusing.)*

⇒ Austria (*translated from German*)

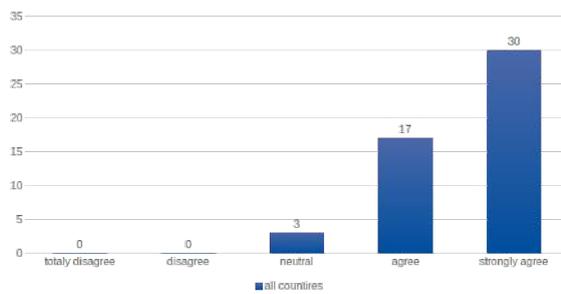
- "Everything is comprehensible"

⇒ Spain

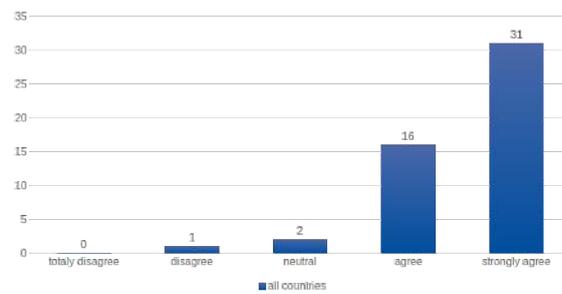
- "illustrative"
- "interesting"
- "It can give us tools and ideas on how to work in the school to care for students with parents with mental illness."
- "flow of information"
- "lack of information on how different mental illnesses affect parents and their children"
- "more strategies for dealing with children of parents with mental illnesses"

## WP 2 (Implementation of the Teaching Materials): Structure

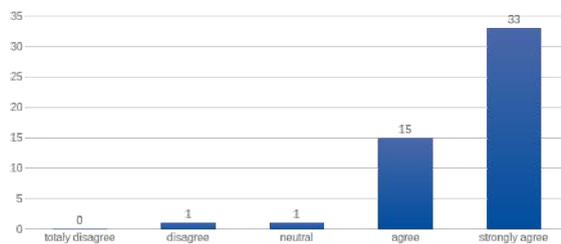
**Question 1:** The structure of session 2 was logical.



**Question 2:** I was able to follow the structure of session 2.



**Question 3:** I think the modality in which the information was presented was adequate.



**Open question:** Do you have further feedback regarding the structure of session 2?

⇒ Iceland

(no data)

⇒ Austria (translated from German)

- "Very enlightening, but due to the number of unknown cases there is also a lot of 'stumbling in the dark'."
- "It's good to know who to contact!"

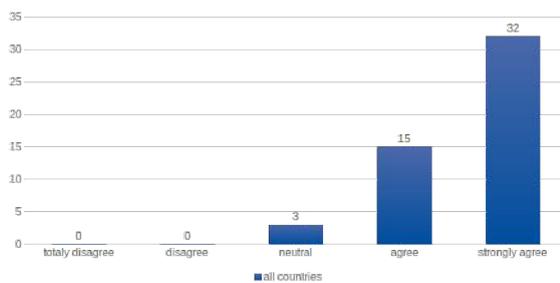
- o "I think it would make sense to create the short films in German."
- o "The noise (ambient noise) is too loud to be able to concentrate on listening at this time of day (4 pm)."
- o "Which role-playing game?"

⇒ Spain

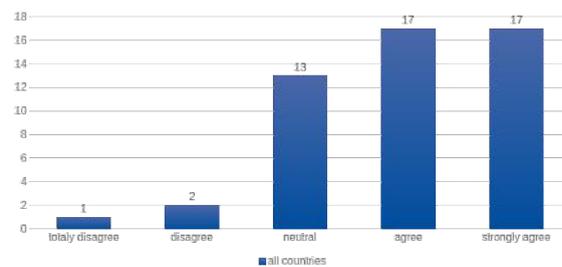
- o "very practical"
- o "I missed the point of talking about how to integrate the sessions into the work with the students and the insight into the materials used in the oral sessions."

## WP 2 (Implementation of the Teaching Materials): Content

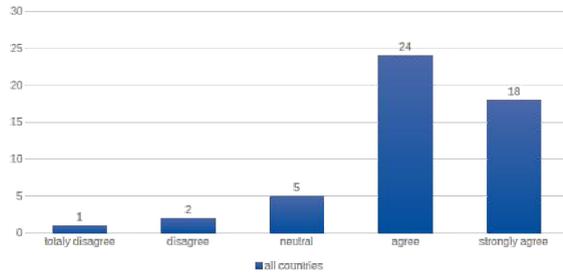
**Question 1:** I was able to follow the content of session 2.



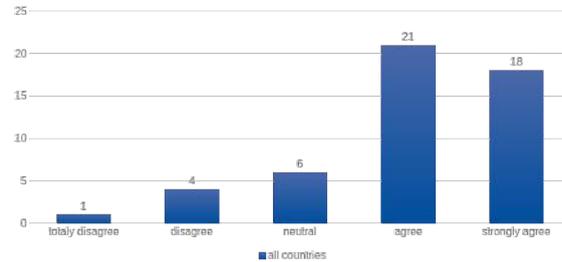
**Question 2:** Session 2 gave me the tools to appropriately address the topic of mental illness with my students.



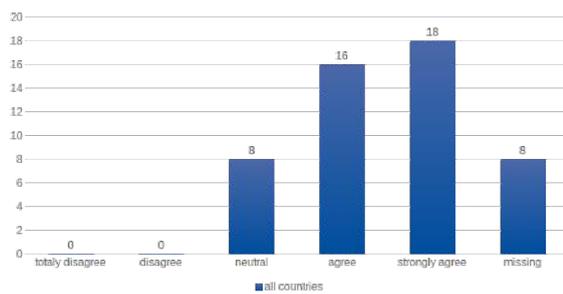
**Question 3:** Session 2 gave me the tools to react appropriately when a student of parents with mental illness approaches me.



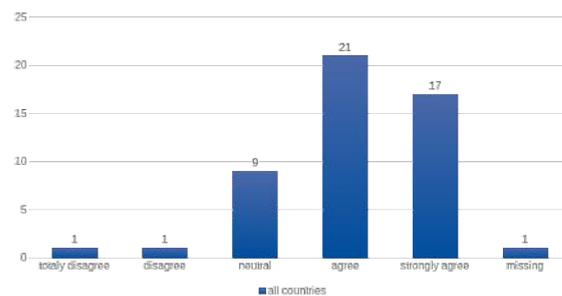
**Question 3.1:** Throughout session 2 I learned how to help students of parents with mental illness.



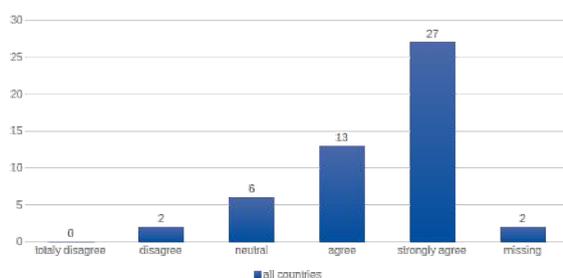
**Question 4:** The "scenarios activity" helped me to strengthen the content of session 2.



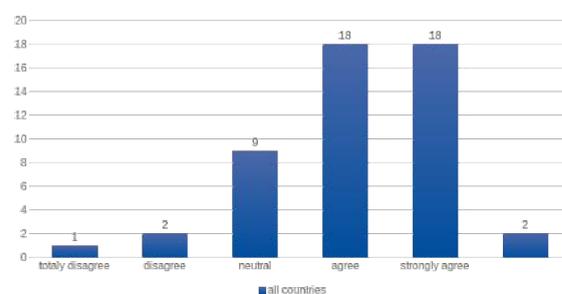
**Question 5:** I know now where to find specific resources in case I need further explanation.



**Question 6:** I understand the purpose of the content discussed in session 2 and how our school will benefit.



**Question 7:** I feel more comfortable and competent talking about mental illness.



**Open question:** Do you have further feedback regarding the content of session 2?

⇒ Iceland

*(no data)*

⇒ Austria *(translated from German)*

- o "Thank you, it has helped me to repeatedly reflect on myself!"
- o "Fits in secondary school / high school"
- o "Video with the elephant is difficult to understand for primary school pupils"
- o "We were taken seriously and there were some good ideas for dialogue. A great initiative!"

⇒ Spain

- o "wish for more sessions about mental illness"

### 3.3 Conclusion

The evaluation of the feedback (see chapter 3.2) and the final group discussion held with project participants from the schools and the project coordinators (see chapter 3.1) make it clear that the project has aroused interest among teachers, children and parents. The structure and content were judged very positively.

During the project it became apparent, that, with regard to national, linguistic and cultural differences, some materials were evaluated differently in terms of their effectiveness and suitability: For example, in Spanish schools, material that was developed in the UK (and therefore from an English-speaking background) and contained the metaphor "elephant in the room" was found to be difficult to understand and therefore of little use for approaching the content linked to the material, as this metaphor is not or hardly used or known in Spanish-speaking countries. In Austria, the choice of a wolf as a figure for a teacher, also from the English material that was provided, was felt to be inappropriate for their primary school pupils and will be replaced by another figure for future projects.

In such a joint project across national and language borders, country-, language- and culture-specific characteristics and differences must always be taken into account with regard

to the teaching material. The material should be reviewed in this regard (for metaphors, image content, etc.) and, if necessary, different, country-specific versions must be created.

Furthermore, it becomes clear that although the project has given teachers an initial introduction to the topic, they would like more material and resources to deal with the topic of mental health in greater depth. The feedback obtained after WP 1 and WP 2 shows that aspects associated with the application of the content presented (e.g. dealing with pupils whose parents have a mental illness or their own experience of competence in talking about mental health and discussing it with pupils) were rated somewhat less positively than aspects such as the structure and the content itself.





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Design: Anne Flad

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