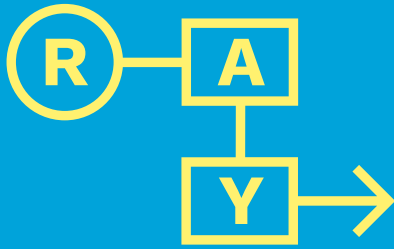


18.10.2023



Mental health in youth work

→ Findings and questions from the RAY network



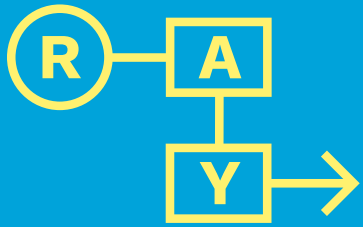
**Research-based
analysis of European
youth programmes**

Andrea Horta Herranz

- Youth researcher
- Background in Psychology

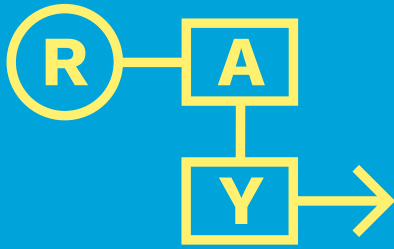
RAY Network

- 35 National Agencies of Erasmus +
- Monitoring of the European Youth Programmes
- Thematic research projects (e.g. on digital transformation, competence development, organisational learning, etc.)



**Research-based
analysis of European
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www.researchyouth.net



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SNAC

on

Mental Health

(Strategic National Agency Cooperation)

[WEB]

YRD

with

Elina Marjamäki

MIELI Mental Health Finland

[WATCH]

Crises and anxiety

Youth worker's mental health

Upskilling youth workers

Trauma-oriented practice

Lack of research

FOCUS ON PREVENTION *Needs attention*

Lack of clarity

Need for a big picture

Cacophony of ideas

networking with mental health professionals

FOCUS ON PREVENTION

How do we foster the mental and emotional wellbeing of young people?

How do we contribute to nurturing young people so that a stressor does not trigger a downward spiral for their mental health?

FOCUS ON PREVENTION

How do we foster the mental and emotional wellbeing of young people?

In other words, how do we help them **fulfill their needs**?

How do we contribute to nurturing young people so that a stressor does not trigger a downward spiral for their mental health?

In other words: how do we make young people more **resilient**?

FOCUS ON PREVENTION

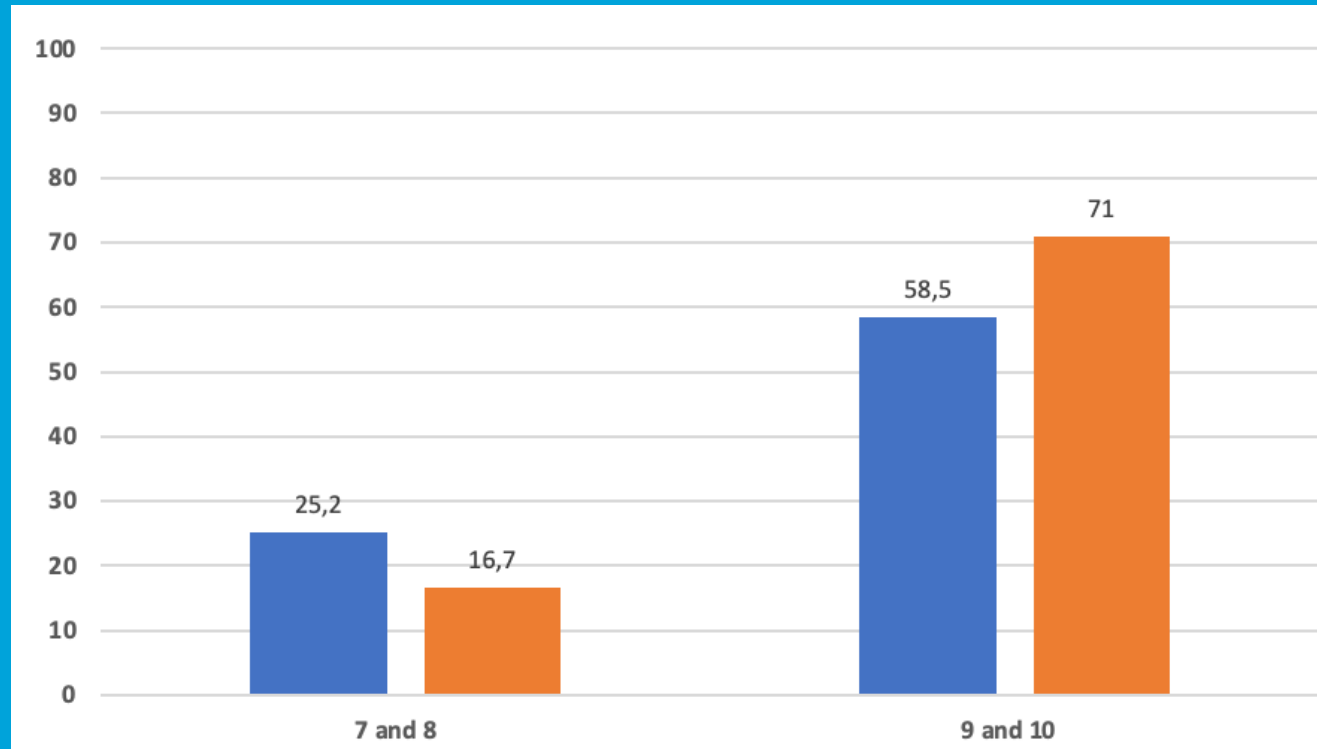
Psychological needs⁴

- Attachment
- Control
- Self-esteem
- Pleasure
- Coherence

Resilience factors⁵

- Self-efficacy
- Meaning in life
- Cognitive flexibility
- Expressive flexibility⁶

- How much did you enjoy participating in the project?
- How meaningful was the project for you?





Q: Has your involvement in youth work helped you during these times?

● strongly agree

● partly agree

0 20 40 60 80 100

Being involved in youth work made me laugh and made my days better.

71%

Being involved in youth work gave me something meaningful to do.

74%

“Young people participating in and contributing to youth work”, self-report, sample size 378, RAY COR⁸ data

FOCUS ON PREVENTION

Psychological needs⁴

- Attachment
- Control
- Self-esteem
- Pleasure

Resilience factors⁵

- Self-efficacy
- Meaning in life
- Cognitive flexibility
- Expressive flexibility⁶

70%+

Of young people

“I have a better idea about my educational pathway/career aspirations”

Over 80%

Of participants, as a result of their project, ...

- Are more self confident
- Are more self-reliant
- Learned about themselves
- Are better at dealing with new situations
- Are better at expressing their thoughts and feelings

‘When you do something, you’re really kind of ‘wow, I did it myself’. Even if it’s not a success.’

Project participant

FOCUS ON PREVENTION

Psychological needs⁴

- Attachment
- Control
- Self-esteem
- Pleasure

Resilience factors⁵

- Self-efficacy
- Meaning in life
- Cognitive flexibility
- Expressive flexibility⁶

“Beside the educational part . . . finding friends and creating a sense of belonging is considered to be an important part of [the project]”

Project participant

“[participants] know that they need to be part of the community. You need to be a good friend.”

Project leader

FOCUS ON PRVENTION



FOCUS ON *MANAGEMENT* ?

FOCUS ON *MANAGEMENT*

What do we do when we **unexpectedly** come across...

- strong negative emotions (sadness, anger)
- difficult/odd behaviors (drug abuse, odd social conduct)
- shocking backstories (running away from home, trauma)

What **policies** and **skills** can ensure **inclusion**?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. **What** situations specifically make youth work stakeholders feel like mental health needs more attention? What kind of knowledge/guidance is needed at the moment?
2. **What** mental health “issues” (diagnoses, everyday stressors) are the most relevant to talk about in the context of youth work?
3. **If** we think of creating a “big picture” of the situation of mental health and youth work right now, what components do we have and what is missing? What would you add to the word cloud?
4. **How** can and should youth work relate to young people with mental health “issues” in a responsible way? How does it relate at the moment?

WHAT MENTAL HEALTH “ISSUES”?

- **Remember...**
 - **There is a difference between having a diagnosed disorder¹ (e.g. ADHD, depression) and dealing with stressors (e.g. changes in important relationships, exams)**
 - **Socio-economic and environmental factors have an influence on mental health^{2,3}**

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- [9]** RAY Network. (2021) Data Report // Effects and outcomes of the Erasmus + Youth in Action Programme. Available at www.researchyouth.net/reports/
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