

## MHP-Handbook - Handbooks for promoting mental health

In the MHP-Handbook project (2010-2013), partners from Ireland, Germany, Finland, Estonia, Austria, Poland and Greece produced 3 handbooks for promoting mental health and wellbeing. These handbooks relate to 3 settings:

- Schools
- Workplaces
- Older People's Residences

### Who can use the handbooks?

They are aimed at e.g. teachers and educators; managers and health and safety staff; nurses and carers. All materials are in the handbooks and more tools are available through the European Network for Mental Health Promotion Network website<sup>1</sup>.

### What is Mental Health Promotion?

#### **Mental health promotion:**

- Focuses on enhancing wellbeing rather than on illness
- Addresses the population as a whole, in the context of everyday life
- Acts on the determinants of health rather than on outcomes
- Acts on protective factors, rather than only risk factors
- Uses strategies such as communication, education, policy development, organisational change, community development and local activities
- Acknowledges and reinforces the competences of the population
- Involves the health and social fields as well as medical services

Mental health promotion *"aims to promote positive mental health by increasing psychological wellbeing, competence and resilience, and by creating supporting living conditions and environments"*<sup>2</sup>

### *Why should you use the handbooks?*

The issue of mental health is increasingly important in society. Psychological problems and mental illness are more prevalent across much of Europe and there is an emerging realisation that we must promote good mental health and wellbeing, as well as improve mental health services.

Good mental health and wellbeing is a function of the settings and environments that we interact with, the way in which we behave and the supports that are available to us. These settings include the schools that we attend, the workplaces we work in and the residences that we live in.

Many people have difficulty understanding how an environment can promote mental wellbeing. These Mental Health Promotion Handbooks address that gap in knowledge. They provide users in the schools, workplace and older people's settings with a set of validated tools to promote mental health, as well as providing methods to implement actions to promote mental wellbeing.

<sup>1</sup> [www.mentalhealthpromotion.net](http://www.mentalhealthpromotion.net)

<sup>2</sup> WHO (2004) Prevention of mental disorders. WHO, Geneva.  
[www.who.int/mental\\_health/evidence/en/prevention\\_of\\_mental\\_disorders\\_sr.pdf](http://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/en/prevention_of_mental_disorders_sr.pdf)

# Why the workplace?

Mental wellbeing influences the workplace in many ways – indicators include low morale, strained team work, bullying and the destruction of working relationships. Ultimately, this leads to increased absenteeism.

The costs of absenteeism from mental health problems in 2007 in Europe was estimated at €136.3 billion – approximately €600 per worker per year. Presenteeism may increase these costs by between 50% and 500%.

This handbook provides managers with practical and effective tools to improve the wellbeing of workers. It has techniques to help prevent problems from arising and for promoting mental health.

## Workplace MHP topics addressed

There are 4 key areas addressed in the handbook:

- The impact of leadership
- The role of communication
- Understanding stress in the workplace
- Dealing with work related stress

Each area has a number of subtopics. For example, area 1 addresses 8 subtopics, including:

- Identifying your own leadership style
- Valuing staff
- Dealing with conflicts
- Dealing with Bullying or Harassment

## Exercise: Theme Centred Interaction

The team knows the common goals and concrete tasks and agrees to them.



Interaction, cooperation and reflection are part of the learning process of the team.

Everybody has the chance for personal development, to deal with issues, and can bring in his/her own personality and energy to the activity.

Results fit to the needs of the organisation or clients and can be implemented.