

FACULTY OF SOCIAL
AND ECONOMIC SCIENCES

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Bratislava

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY



EFPTA

European Federation of
Psychology Teachers' Associations

Mental Health Education and Teaching of Psychology: EFPTA and EFPA BEA project

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Abstract:

The mental health of children and young people is considered a global challenge for both public health and educational systems. There are several ways to support and promote mental health in children and youth, including implementing mental health education in school curricula. A joint project of the European Federation of Psychology Teachers' Associations (EFPTA) and the Board of Educational Affairs of European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA) aimed to discover and map the provision of mental health topics and skills in the school curriculum in different European countries, to identify how mental health topics are included in psychology courses and other areas of the curriculum in upper secondary school education. Representatives of national psychologists and psychology teachers associations from 10 countries reported on mental health education in their countries.

The analysis of course content illustrates the diversity of mental health education provision in Europe. Schools provide students and teachers with not only educational content but also additional information and services related to mental health. The quality of mental health education and psychology courses have the potential to support mental health literacy in young people. Based on a small-scale survey among Slovak secondary school students (N = 250), students who attended psychology courses scored significantly higher on the mental health literacy scale.



About the project

- A joint project of the European Federation of Psychology Teachers' Associations (EFPTA) and the Board of Educational Affairs of European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA) aimed to **discover and map the provision of mental health topics and skills in the school curriculum in different European countries**, to identify how mental health topics are included in psychology courses and other areas of the curriculum in upper secondary school education.

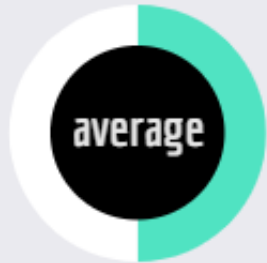


National projects and funding of selected activities:

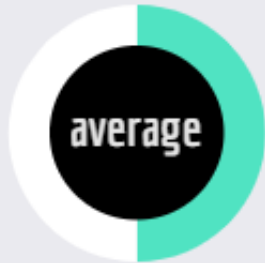
KEGA 035UK-4/2022 Psychology education for non-psychological professions: Methodological and content support
APVV-22-0078 Mental health among adolescents in the context of current societal challenge



Main findings: brief overview (10 countries)



The expert psychology educators usually consider the **mental health of students and teachers** in their country to be average.



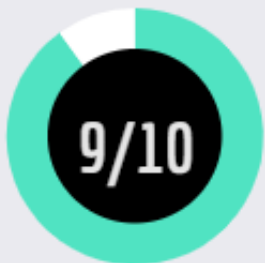
The psychology educators usually consider the **provision of mental health and well-being education** for both students and teachers in their countries to be average.



In 5 countries, **special courses focused directly on mental health and well-being are available**, usually as an optional course.

Where mental health topics are included in the psychology courses, approximately 10 hours of teaching (from 2 to 40) are dedicated to the topic of mental health in a one-year course.

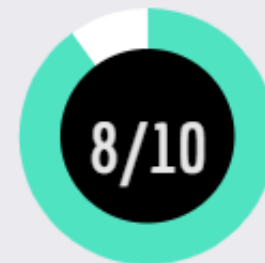
The content is usually focused on understanding mental illnesses and disorders rather than on developing self-care skills. Psychology teachers are often involved in supporting mental health in school, however, it is not their main responsibility. In some countries, they have a role in choosing the content and methods of delivery and so influence provision of mental health education.



Psychology as a subject is available in 9 countries, however, it is optional, or compulsory only for some students (e.g., vocational).



In 8 countries, **the topic of mental health and mental illnesses is a compulsory part of the psychology course curriculum**.



In 8 countries, **mental health and well-being topic are included in the curriculum of other subjects**, e. g. Health Education, Sociology, or Biology.

Main findings: brief overview (10 countries)

Main categories	Subcategories
Mental health education as part of the psychology course	Approaches and explanations, Mental health disorders and diseases, Addictions, Stress and coping, Therapies and treatment, Psychohygiene (mental hygiene)
Mental health education as part of health education	Healthy lifestyle, General health prevention, Prevention of addictions, Understanding different aspects of health, Stress and coping
Mental health education as part of personal development courses	Social and emotional education, Social skills and social support, Bullying and discrimination, Resilience, Relationships and sex education
Mental health education as a standalone course	Understanding mental health and well-being, Mental health disorders and diseases, Destigmatization of mental health, Positive psychology, Stress and coping, Coping strategies and informed choices, Resilience and personal responsibility, Self-help and help-seeking



Mental health literacy (MHL)

- Mental health literacy (MHL) covers a variety of **knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to mental health**, including, e.g., knowledge about mental health and mental disorders, attitudes, and skills related to the prevention of mental health problems, self-help, self-care, or help-seeking behaviors.
- **Individuals who studied psychology report higher levels of MHL** and lower levels of self-stigma related to professional help-seeking, which is considered a protective factor.
- (Jorm, 2000; Jorm, 2012, O'Connor et al., 2018; Sokolová, 2024)



Project activities and dissemination

- **EFPTA webinar** on mental health education (spring, 2022)
- **Conference presentations:**
 - EHPS 2022 Bratislava, Slovakia (poster)
 - 3xKAM 2022 Bratislava, Slovakia (presentation)
 - ICP 2025 Prague, Czechia (presentation at EFPA BEA symposium)
- **Study on mental health education in European countries:**
 - Sokolová, L., Williamson, M., & Papageorgi, I. (under review). Promoting mental health in schools: Mental health education in twelve European countries.
- **Study on mental health literacy (brief report):**
 - Sokolová, L. (2024). Mental Health Literacy and Seeking for Professional Help Among Secondary School Students in Slovakia: A brief report. *Frontiers in Public Health*.



Ideas for psychology classroom

V - MENTAL HEALTH

 <p>WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST WAY TO RELAX?</p>	 <p>WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HEALTHY?</p>
 <p>WHAT PART OF THE DAY DO YOU FEEL MOST AT EASE?</p>	 <p>WHICH OF YOUR STRENGTHS DO OTHERS PERCEIVE AS A WEAKNESS?</p>



QUESTions UNI A Game Full of Questions

Miroslava Lemešová, Lenka Sokolová



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Thank you for your attention.

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