

Fact sheet (Estonia Family Doctor's Society; Estonia)

Intervention theme:	Mental health
User group:	Adolescents (15 to 16 years)
Used methods:	Focus group, hackathon, motivational interview
Used eTools:	Evidence based platform for adolescents with mental disease

Further information on the pilot:

Our partner PHA in Estonia is the institution “Estonia Family Doctors’ Society”. In cooperation with the Tallinn University of Technology they have planned and implementing a pilot of mental health by children and adolescents aged 15 to 16 years. The planning of the pilot phase was based on the internal intervention model of the project. There are two important user groups in this pilot. The family doctors and the adolescents themselves. In order to make a comprehensive needs and requirement analyze, a **focus group** interview was conducted with the adolescents on the one hand and **single and group interviews** with the family doctors on the other. From the analysis of the needs of the user groups, the intervention topic of mental health emerged. As part of the development of an eTool, a **hackathon** was conducted with young people. Together with the user group it was decided to use a platform for children and adolescents with mental health problems. This platform already exists (<http://peaasi.ee/en/>). It was created in a project financed by Norway Grants 2009-2014 Public Health Initiatives program. In Estonia the program was run by Ministry of Social Affairs. This will be used as an information and exchange platform to make it easier for the user group to talk about mental health problems. In the further process of the pilot, the user groups (family doctors &

adolescents) will **test** and evaluate the technique of the **motivational interviewing** and the **platform** itself.

The methods used and the intervention model applied will evaluate and adapted during and after the pilot phase in order to increase user-friendliness and implementability.

Results from the pilot:

Estonian Family Doctors' Society together with family doctors and adolescents involved in focus group interviews chose mental health platform called "peaasi.ee" as a platform to tackle adolescents' lifestyle related problems.

The Pilot Study included testing mainly two different approaches: **motivational interviewing technique** and suggesting "**peaasi.ee**" **platform** when adolescent had any mental health related questions during a family doctors appointment time.

The Estonian Family Doctors' Society had a mentoring role in a Pilot Study as the main key stakeholder was a Family Doctor's Centre where 2 family doctors were mainly involved in our Pilot Study.

We had an opportunity to use **motivational interviewing method together with a platform suggestion** during **4 adolescents' appointments**.

The **motivational interviewing technique was a great tool** for family doctors to guide an adolescent to understand his/her own needs, motivation and focus to change. During the first appointments the eTool "peaasi.ee" was suggested as it allowed to gain more insights about the mental health problems and provided an opportunity to read evidence-based articles about the mental health topics. The platform has a free chat where adolescents can have conversations with psychologists. The platform had been widely used for mental health campaigns

and have had a lot of publicity in Estonia, but still there were adolescents who haven't heard about the platform and its possibilities and free functionalities.

The same result arose during the focus group meetings with adolescents – they are interested in mental health topics, but they don't know the platforms where all topics are written in a form they understand and include evidence-based articles they can read.

All the adolescents involved in our Pilot Study saw the suggestion as a great tool to read more about the mental health topics, but it worked together with motivational interviewing method, because their own motivation and needs were assessed.

Tips/ lessons learned:

1. When different mental health campaigns are organized and planned, it is very important to address adolescents target group and their needs as well. All the campaign messages and mediums where the messages would be shared, should be analyzed and planned together with adolescents. The focus group format was very useful and gave wide understanding what might be the key issues and topics and ideas that adolescents themselves want to tackle.
 - a. Be prepared and choose a moderator – The moderator should be prepared to make an introduction and give a short overview of the topic, ask opening questions that lead discussions.
 - b. Ask open-ended questions – Who, What, When, Where and How. Avoid asking “Why?” questions. Asking open-ended questions encourages adolescents to talk more about their interests and needs. It allows them to discuss more than just answering questions.

2. Using motivational interviewing technique during a family doctor's appointment is very advisable. Its efficacy has been demonstrated in numerous randomized trials. Our pilot study phase was too short to analyze the results of behavioral change of one adolescent in terms of mental health changes, but the technique had good benefits.
 - a. Motivational interviewing is a person-centered method and a communication style that uses specific techniques and strategies such as reflective listening, shared decision-making, and eliciting change talk.
 - b. Appointments should be nonjudgmental and encouraging.
 - c. A core principle of motivational interviewing is that individuals are more likely to accept and act upon opinions that they voice themselves.¹
3. Suggesting an eTool during the family doctor's appointment time can have a positive outcome. In our example - suggesting an evidence-based reading and testing materials for further reading.
 - a. It is advisable to have a concrete list of apps, websites and platforms for family doctors that they can suggest to their patients, but platforms have to be guaranteed with high quality standard and clinical evidence.
 - b. If possible, choose an eTool that has partners and support from local governmental organizations. It will be easier to onboard family doctors as the trust and evidence has been already validated by the governmental institutions.

¹ Motivational Interviewing: moving from why to how with autonomy support. Ken Resnicow and Fiona McMaster. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3330017/>