MHPSS TWG - Bulgaria

Meeting Minutes

23/01/25

Members

WHO, UNHCR, NRG-Compass Center, Association Animus, USRF, Dokovi Foundation

Updates & Achievements

1. Up-dates from members

UNHCR and the Bulgarian Red Cross are organizing an awareness raising meeting in February on information on MHPSS for refugees. Following the UNHCR RFQ call, Mini Art Foundation will be providing group sessions to children, starting in Sofia and further on across the country. Mini Art has already provided MHPSS services named "social circus" at Voenna Rampa and Ovcha Kupel.

WHO CO Bulgaria shared that the provisional dates for the conduction of PM+ training are 7-11 April (theoretical part) and 21-25 April (practical part). Official application will be soon open and communicated among MHPSS TWG Members. A key consideration for participation is the commitment to participate in post-training supervision sessions. Professionals are kindly invited to consult the Training outline and application process for detailed information. Association Animus and UNHCR will implement a MHPSS project for Ukrainian and other refugees, scoping individual and group sessions and information sessions covering MH, GBV and domestic violence. The project is currently under planning and further information will be provided in due time. For the first three months implementation will take place in Sofia and for the next months will cover other cities.

Dokovi Foundation will continue with the provision of individual and group consultations, and with the organization of information seminars to adults. Their Center for child development "Usmivki" is still providing MHPSS services and educational activities to children with developmental difficulties and organizes group discussion meetings in support to the parents. USRF started "equal-to-equal" sessions in 2025, destined to parents and adults who are going through or went through traumatizing experiences. The psychologists work as moderators to the discussions – as equals to the group. Also, USRF psychologists were granted with two public apartments to serve as a new location for the provision of the MHPSS services. One is destined to consultations with children and the other to consultations with adults.

2. Thematic focus of the meeting: Review of vote results for defining needs and priorities and setting thematic focus of meetings for 2025

Results from the survey at the end of 2024 express a need for more concrete information on child development, developmental educational activities for children with special needs in early childhood development and good practices to address the needs of children. Also, identification of good MHPSS practices for elderly with specific focus to people with severe health conditions. Further, a need for coordinated MHPSS presentation on GBV, risks of GBV and human trafficking. This to be further supported by information meeting on the role and place of the psychologist, particularly regarding disclosure of information in front of authorities.

Action Points

3. Topics for next month's meetings

1. Presentation on GBV and the provision of mental health support, as well as on the role of the psychologist and disclosure of information from legal perspective.

4. AoB

Next steps: Chair to identify panelists for the thematic focus of the following meeting.