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LET'S TALK ABOUT SUICIDE: PRIMARY PREVENTION PROGRAMMES FOCUSING ON YOUTH, ELDERLY AND MEDIA

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Introduction: Slovenia is a country with a very high suicide rate. Unfortunately, there is a lack of primary suicide prevention programmes.

Objectives: Our main objective was to develop suicide prevention programmes, which would decrease suicide rate in Slovenia. We would achieve that by increasing awareness and knowledge of different professionals, who address or come in contact with the most vulnerable risk groups.

Methods: Firstly we identified school counselors, family doctors and media as professionals to target. School counselors have an important gatekeeper's role in youth suicide prevention and family doctors are of a similar importance for elderly population. Besides, media has a significant influence on any at-risk person regarding suicide prevention. Secondly, we prepared manuals with practical guidelines: for school counselors - how to recognize and deal with suicidal youth, for family doctors - how to recognize and treat depression and suicidal behavior among elderly, and for media representatives - how to responsibly report about suicide. Lastly, we performed 1-day workshops for all gatekeepers' groups covering the contents of the manuals.

Results: All the initiatives received highly positive expert-reviews and a lot of encouraging feedbacks from participants. An evaluation with pre-post questionnaire showed that participants' feelings of competency in dealing with suicidal person have improved after the involvement in programmes' workshops and reading the manuals.

Conclusions: Experiences showed that primary suicide prevention programmes are highly appreciated and we believe that is necessary to continue and deepen the work in this area also in the future.