Schools of Support

Programme for wellbeing, mental health and emotional resilience in schools

Ivana Ćosić Ana Munivrana



Škole podrške





za svako dijete



Why Schools of Support?



Everybody participates: headteacher, teachers, students



School as a point of healing and resilience for teachers and students



Additional support for students at risk





Teacher PD

Series of teacher trainings

Supervisions

After trainings to check in on progress in school

Workshops

As stand-alone classes or integrated





Analysis

- Teachers say they feel they increased their socio-emotional competences
- Students enjoy workshops and talking about emotions and human relationships
- Students are more empathetic to teachers and to other students





Results

COUNTIES	• 3 (Sisak-Moslavina, Medjimurje, Varazdin)
• SCHOOLS:	. 72
• HEADTEACHERS:	• 39
• TEACHERS:	• 793
• STUDENTS:	. 11,742







What does it look like in practice?





In first interviews with the schools, teachers wondered...

- How can I support students if I am also in distress?
- Should we talk about difficulties topics and emotions or avoid them in the classroom?
- How will I deal with students' emotions and demanding life situations?
- My school does not even have a psychologist, how will we provide psychological "first aid"?





Škole podrške The Schools of Support: first support the teachers

















Protresi! (Shake it up!): a collection of teaching plans for the development of emotional resilience and coping with crisis

- The Manual in the field of personal and social development
- 20 workshops or lesson plans
- Coping with stress, anxiety, anger, sadness, loss, isolation and loneliness, shame, how to communicate with others in nonviolent way...

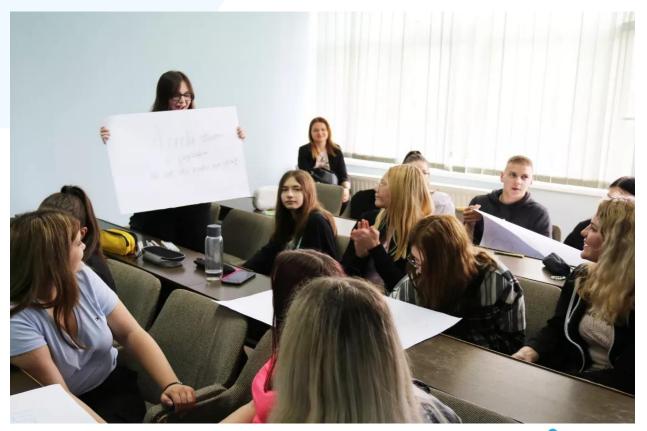




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Workshops methodology







Each topic starts with a "story"

To talk about emotions we used stories:

- they can be from class subject, literature, film, comics, music, pop culture...
- we also used short original video works of students that they sent to the "Paint the world" competition of the Forum for Freedom of Education: available on the Youtube channel of the FSO.
- they can serve as additional inspiration and insight into children's view of the topics.







Each workshop allows expression

Workshops encourage:

- students'voice
- creative writing
- drawing, painting
- role play
- conversation
- brainstorming ideas

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"*You are not alone, we are by your side."* High school students, Sisak, Croatia





Feeling secure: no "wrong answers"

- the context of the educational system: children might fear judgment and assessment, therefore it is important to create pressure-free environment
- no right or wrong answers
- creativity and freedom of expression

What you shared with us is very original, I would never have thought of it.

Be free, be creative while preparing, there are no right or wrong answers.



"It's OK not to be OK sometimes. We must allow ourselves to feel because this is the way to save our mental health and stay human." Primary school student, Mala Subotica, Croatia

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The skills of leading the group process

The workshop leader makes sure to:

- create a pleasant and safe environment
- ensure the space for each member of the group (according to his or her capabilities and age)
- use inclusive and interactive methodology
- encourage good relationships and communication
- demonstrate appropriate level of personal disclosure
- recognize and respond to children's basic needs (belonging, competence, freedom, fun...)
- be flexible with the processes in the group: recognize what children need to process today.
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Knowing our limitations

- taking care of our own mental health and emotional needs
- asking for help and collaboration
- knowing when we've reached our limits
- creating a supporting network (social services, school expert team, headteacher, mental health services...)





Learning support for children belonging to disadvantaged groups

- empowering weekly workshops for targeted groups of children belonging to disadvantaged groups.
- collaborative teaching and stimulating environment through a series of methods and techniques of the Reading and writing for critical thinking (RWCT) philosophy.







Whole-school approach: Headteacher Academy

Academy **training for head teachers** was organized through 5 modules (55 hours) in order to empower their school management competencies with a special emphasis on creating a **comprehensive school approach for mental health**.

Modules:

- SCHOOL MANAGEMENT WITH A CLEAR VISION
- RELATIONS AND COOPERATION
- SCHOOL CURRICULUM
- INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL
- VISIBILITY OF THE SCHOOL





More publications

- 22 IDEAS FOR RESILIENCE collection of lesson plans for developing emotional resilience and dealing with crisis.
- "Your Superpower: A Collection of Teaching Cards for Developing Emotional Resilience"
- Creative **notebook for students**: Worksheets for students in the form of a "diary"
- Leaflet for parents "We are here for you"



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Schools of support: conclusions

- Headteachers: ensure collaboration and recognise mental health and emotional resilience in school documents
- Teachers: lead by example and promote wellbeing and mental health for all
- Students: trust, participate, voice
- \cdot Parents: important partners for success



Thank you!

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