

Mental Health Support Teams will support children and schools in Kutná Hora region

From July 2021 two multidisciplinary Mental Health Support Teams will be launched in the Kutná Hora region. This will be possible thanks to the Educhange Foundation and the financial support from the Norwegian funds. The teams will be in place to promote psychological well-being of children and adolescents. They will also help prevent mental illness and consequent institutionalization. Above all, these teams will be supporting schools in educating children with mental health problems, behaviour issues and special education needs. Another aim of this project will be to set up better access to available services in the region, educating field experts and conveying effective foreign diagnostic-intervention approach NEUROSECENTIAL MODEL © to the local conditions. Last but not least, the project will also focus on de-stigmatization of mental illness.



75 % of chronic mental illness manifests itself for the first time before 24 years of age.



50 % of chronic mental illness manifests itself before 14 years of age.



One in five adults has an experience with mental illness



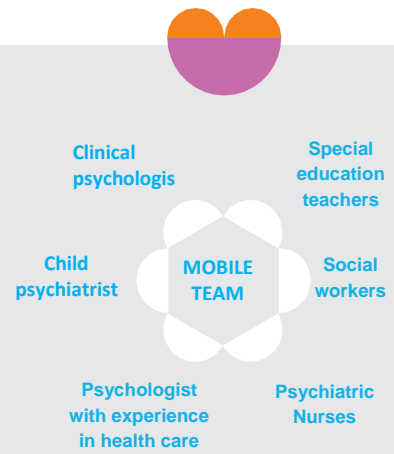
One in 25 adults lives with mental illness.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) one-fifth of adolescents suffers from mental health problems and 75 % of chronic mental illness cases first show by the age of 24. Out of that 50% cases appear by the age of 14. One in five adults has experience with mental illness and one in 25 adults, lives with mental illness. ¹ Children and adolescents are generally perceived as healthy group of population. However, in fact, they are exceptionally vulnerable group and often lack appropriate psychological support. Neglecting mental health of children can lead to school problems, bullying, substance abuse, self-harm, damaged relationships and suicides. Timely identification of mental health issues in children leads to decreased development of mental illness. This reduces the need for psychiatric care in adulthood. Due to the corona virus pandemic and the repeated closures of schools, it is expected that mental health problems in children and adolescents will rise. The increased amount of stress and fear for own life and the lives of loved ones during the lock downs, the societal uncertainty, the lack of information, and the helplessness in relation to regulations, are some common causes which contribute to the development of mental illness symptoms in children and young adults. In the Czech Republic, during the first COVID-19 pandemic outbreak the Helpline had registered up to 30 % increase of phone calls related to family violence, 30 % increase of calls related to personal and psychological issues, and 30% increase of problems related to internet and sexual abuse. ²

¹ A small guide to the psychiatric care reform, MZČR, 2017: [HERE](#).

² Impact of corona virus epidemic on the increase in mental illness in Czech population, 2020: [HERE](#)

The Mental Health Support Teams will base their activities on multidisciplinary cooperation between the professionals from the education, health care and social care sectors. They will include a child psychiatrist, a clinical psychologist and psychologists with experience in health care, special education teachers, social workers and nurses specialized in child psychiatry. The foundation of their work will be prevention and education targeted to children, young adults, parents, teachers, carers, etc. The teams will also aim to connect services in the region and provide direct help to children, their families and teachers. The teams will be mobile and offer support and help to children where most needed (in families, schools, low-threshold facilities for children and young people etc.)



"In our school we are not just prepared to contribute to the improvement of current situation in the area of childhood mental health in Kutná Hora region, but we are also ready to share experience with other schools in The Central Bohemian Region and the whole Czech Republic. Moreover, we would like to motivate others in showing that quality schooling and services can be provided on regional level."

Iva Stará, Director of the Zruč nad Sázavou Elementary School.

One of the teams will be situated in **ZŠ Zruč nad Sázavou**, which has applied for a pilot team operation in the Kutná Hora region. "In our school we are not just prepared to contribute to the improvement of current situation in the area of childhood mental health in the Kutná Hora region, but we are also ready to share experience with other schools in The Central Bohemian Region and the whole Czech Republic. Moreover, we would like to motivate others by showing that quality schooling and services can be provided on regional level." The second team will be based in **ZŠ Kamenná stezka** in Kutná Hora, which is another project partner together with the Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling Centre in Kutná Hora.

The professional partner of the project is the Czech Professional Society for Inclusive Education - ČOSIV. "Teachers deserve intensive support when working with children presenting demanding behaviours and mental health problems. The advantages of having such multidisciplinary team in the region will be its flexibility and timely intervention. We are honoured to be part of such innovative project and are looking forward to our cooperation with the team," claims Klára Laurenčíková, the Chairwoman of the Czech Professional Society for Inclusive Education - ČOSIV. Our professional foreign partner is the Østbytunet Centre for Treatment and Professional Development in Child Psychiatry in Oslo, Norway, which has been involved in the training of teachers in the area of support for children with difficult behaviours. It also develops specific methods for the de-escalation of difficult situations in everyday practice and runs a psychiatric clinic and school for the children who suffered some complex trauma. The centre applies a diagnostic-intervention approach based on the current knowledge in the field of neuroscience and developmental psychology **NEUROSEQUENTIAL MODEL©** developed by professor Bruce D. Perry, MD, PhD. The model is applied by providing therapy and education to children who present with developmental issues and builds on the targeted strengthening of competencies in professionals, who are in daily contact with children that is, their teachers and carers. One part of the project is therefore adaptation and transfer of this approach to the Czech conditions.

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The systemic goal of the project is to transfer the teams' good practice to other regions in the Czech Republic. **The sustainability of the existing teams in Kutná Hora region is also paramount. The pilot operation of both teams is financed from Norwegian funds for two years.**

We are looking forward to our cooperation with the teams!