

## VET<sub>MH</sub> TUTO+: TRAINING OF TUTORS AND IMMERSION IN EUROPE OF YOUNG MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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**Abstract:** *The major changes in mental health epidemiology and the new therapeutic approaches, including information and computer technology are major challenges for the organisations involved but also for a political public health strategy. Mental health care is based on the interpersonal competences of the professionals. Research shows early retirement of the staff and a decrease of motivation after some years of everyday work. The quality of work life balance is of the most importance for the professionals dealing with mental health patients and users. The academic cursus does not correspond to the fast moving changes. So it is compulsory that all professionals can benefit from practical and lifelong training.*

*The shortage of qualified professionals is obvious for any mental health employer. A high level of stress and career burnout is extensively documented in researches and the early retirement of professionals causes a difficulty for the transmission of knowledge. Due to the gap between competencies of the young professionals and new trends in mental health, this project was of huge interest in the public health sector. This gap was the starting point for the consortium for building the TuTo project in 2013.*

**Keywords:** *mental health; psychiatry; vocational educational training; vet; Europe; labour market; tutoring; mentoring; training; certification; public mental health;*

## **Context**

On various levels (local, national, international, European), mental health is considered as a major issue; it is a growing sector, undergoing major changes and reforms. Data shows that depression is the biggest cause of disability worldwide and suicide is the second highest cause of death for young people.

The European Commission and the European Parliament are highly concerned by mental health problems. Projects discussed in this paper were co-funded by Erasmus+, strategic partnership programmes.

## **The TuTo project in a nutshell**

The main purpose of the former TuTo project (2014-2017 co-funded by Erasmus+ strategic partnership), was to organise traineeships that linked young professional trainees to experienced tutors on an European scale. The trainees were nurses, educators, social workers, doctors, occupational therapists, etc. They subscribed, left 3 times, 1 week per year to a selected partner project, where they could train and learn more abilities in an informal way which is the strength of our programme, as this cannot be learned at an academic level. The tutor's tasks are to support the trainees during the process with a focus on the transmission of knowledge, the choices of hosting institutions and a reflection on actions.

The Steering Committee (SC) of the TuTo project organised 5 international scientific conference in Belgium, France, Greece and Spain. The SC was also invited at 16 representations in training sessions and scientific meeting.

The TuTo project involved 10 partners and more than 30 organisations in 10 European countries. During several immersion periods spread over 3 years, Belgian, Luxembourg, French, Spanish, Swiss, German, Icelandic, Romanian, Greek and Swedish participants were enriched by the know-how of their counterparts, resulting in a consolidation of a European network of specialized centers in Psychiatry and Mental Health. More than 110 trips were planned for the trainees. Mental health organisations (hospital, support center, day center, etc.), research centers and educational partners were active in the partnership. Thanks to a close cooperation with universities and high schools we delivered more than 150 ECTS credits to the trainees. ECTS credits were assigned in a reception the 16 June 2017 in Berlin.

## **Main results of the TuTo project**

The cooperation of a wide variety of multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary organisations, generated related activities and following results:

- a. Consolidation of a European multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary network of organisations experienced in mental health.
- b. Manage a close cooperation between the educational system and the mental health sector.
- c. Building several tools: traineeship agreement, portfolio for trainees, inquiry form for trainees, list of hosting institutions, excel sheets for managing the time slots, etc.
- d. Construction of deliverables e.g.: two published books one in French, another in English in a famous academic worldwide publishing company located in Paris, some scientific and professional articles, a practical guide for tutoring, etc.
- e. Organisation of 6 scientific and professional conferences in famous places around Europe (Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Spain) reviewing the innovations in mental health through European projects.

### **Impacts of the TuTo project**

The impact on young professionals (trainees) is obvious with a better adequacy to the new mental health trends and further more a better employability. The impact on the tutors is impressive, motivation is reinforced and the transfer of competencies to the newest generation confirms their self-esteem. The impact on the organisation is mainly to fight the shortage of working force and avoid absenteeism. Obviously organisations gained also transcultural competencies. The impact on the educational system is to have a better match with current requirements in the mental health area. The educational system will benefit from several results of the programme and will tailor the training programme. With the TuTo programme, we developed individualised tutoring and an assistance-programme for young professionals, active in psychiatry and mental health care in general. To benefit from as much expertise and competences as possible, we opened up the programme to Europeans. Competencies are not concentrated in one country or region, which is why we need to upgrade this project from a regional level to a European one.

### **Necessity of going further: VET<sub>mh</sub> TuTo+ project**

After having developed a tutoring programme in the mental health sector in a previous project (TuTo 2014-2017 co-funded by Erasmus+ strategic partnership), with focus on the young professionals in the mental health field, the new project VET<sub>mh</sub> TuTo+ submitted for a European funding in March 2018, has the ambition to develop the support to tutors and proposes a training of trainers combined with the activation of a network of exchanges of European professionals. The newly founded partnership

involves 6 European countries (Belgium, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Romania, and Spain), and a variety of complementary organisations: mental health facilities, higher education institutions, research centers and small or large associations. It aims to support strong institutional partnerships for the implementation of an internationalization strategy for Vocational Educational Training - VET learners in the mental health field. In Europe, the training of the professionals of the Mental Health field is of multiple levels and often heterogeneous. The academic achievements do not always prove to be adequate enough for the expectations of the professionals and the current evolutions of the sector. Young professionals in this field need additional training in the basic clinical curriculum. Indeed, academic achievements are not always in line with the professional world of mental health and changes in the field. It is therefore necessary to develop closer ties between the two, in order to complete and perfect the training of young professionals. The shortage in some mental health professions is important, it is therefore necessary to continue to develop their attractiveness by strengthening our tutoring program allowing the transmission of skills between young workers and the most experienced, allowing a transgenerational transmission.

That's why it's important to develop tools and practices for the Tutors in charge of that coaching, and to develop a more precise framework fully beneficial for everyone: professionals of the Mental Health field but also weakest populations: mental health concerns the general population as a whole but also some specific groups like migrants, people with less opportunities, etc. We pay a special attention to this issue during the implementation of the project. The project will run the training of Tutors in Mental Health over three academic years. This training consists of theoretical seminars, practical workshops and visit of mental health settings to simulate and provide feedback on field experiences. The Tutors will therefore supervise trainees in their professional immersions, in their reflexive and editorial activities but also with their feedback to the teams. This training aims at the acquisition by Tutors of transversal skills. The focus will be on the transnational and pedagogical skills needed to monitor trainees. The strategy is to build a set of educational tools and implement them for volunteer Tutors. Evaluation and certification of Tutors and trainees will be carried out with the obtainment of ECTS credits.

Roughly these projects aims to:

- a. Increase the level of expertise of the employees in the mental health sector.

- b. Increase the level of skills of monitors trainees by training based on scenarios and feedback's experience.
- c. Creation and distribution of tools allowing future Tutors to accompany young professionals.
- d. Enhance the attractiveness of the professions linked to mental health.
- e. Positive impact on the motivation of the professionals both young and old and reduce absenteeism.
- f. Create a link between the generations via a formal and non formal transmission of knowledge.
- g. Make the socio-professional integration of the young employees easier.
- h. Propose numerous, flexible and quality job openings to the young persons in training in the mental health field.
- i. Consolidation a European network of centers specialized in psychiatry and mental health in close cooperation with the research and academic fields.
- j. Destigmatisate of the mental health field by media and communications events and also with a reinforcement of the link between the academic world and mental health.

The intellectual outputs created, taught and distributed during the VET<sub>mh</sub> TuTo+ project are concrete and transferable advances in the field of tutoring and include a recruitment strategy manual, the designing of a training session and its material, a booklet for tutors, a scientific article and a collaborative book.

### **VET<sub>mh</sub> TuTo+ in short**

The new VET<sub>mh</sub> TuTo+ project has a twofold contribution: on one hand a training of tutors specialized in Mental Health in 6 European countries (and 6 countries with associated partners), and on the other hand a cycle of exchanges for young professionals of psychiatry, mental health and the psychosocial sector. The project will begin in September 2018. It is therefore a training of trainers combined with the activation of a network of exchanges of European professionals.

We expect a European consensus on the training of Tutors in mental health and an official certification of it. This training aims at the acquisition by Tutors transversal skills. The focus will be on the transnational skills and pedagogical skills needed to monitor trainees. The development of the tutoring programme was the main focus of the TuTo project completed in 2017, which helped develop a tutoring program adapted to the needs of our sector and aimed at young professionals integrating into the mental health sector (Deloyer & Fond-Harmant, 2017). However, this project, which focuses on young professionals, has revealed an important need to develop

tools and practices in order to supervise the tutors in charge of these young people, in order to develop a more precise framework fully beneficial for everyone. The strategy will be to build a set of educational tools and implement them for volunteer Tutors. Then these tutors will put these contributions into practice in the concrete accompaniment of the trainees. An evaluation and certification of Tutors and trainees will be carried out with the obtainment of ECTS credits. Although the local network is dense, it is imperative to have a European dimension to investigate different practices in the Mental Health field. In addition, the actors are confronted with migratory phenomena and cross-border transfers of mental health users. Certification must also be recognized at a European level in order to facilitate professional mobility. The young generation will be more mobile in their careers, the VET<sub>mh</sub> TuTo+ project is part of this new trend open to Europe and the construction of a more homogeneous mental health if possible on this great territory, so that the employees Tutors and trainees (young professional beneficiaries) take this training as a multi-sectoral and multi-geographical opportunity for continuing education. Indeed, the project's actors come from 6 European countries with different geographies, North, West, South and East. These countries have particular contexts as well as various public policies of psychiatry and mental health that have a proven impact on the conception of care or support but also on the transmission of knowledge. We also know that community or family solidarity is manifested differently according to the historical and cultural contexts. The trained Tutors must benefit from an exchange of good practices from one end of Europe to another by considering the specific environments of each partner configuration in order to enrich the support of young people trained with a plural view. Without the support of the Erasmus+ programme, it would be very difficult to carry out this ambitious programme whose goals are in line with the societal shifts, the legislative developments and the transformation of care facilities.

### **Conceptualisation and modelling of the monitoring**

These inter-European internships in mental health aim to implement the discovery of different conceptual models of care, assisted learning, contextualised share and the spreading of new knowledge and innovating practices. The plan established by Vanpée, Frenay, Godin and Bédard (2010) helps working on these objectives on the basis of contextualized and authentic learning and teaching (AECA, from the French acronym, ndlr.). This learning depends on various conditions. An immersion is not necessarily educative. Immersion becomes educative when treated and integrated in a structured process of professional development. This process is eased by regulation and shoring given by a third party who intervene

(hosts and tutors). The AECA model is focusing at the same time on the Tutor's role (position of support) and on the intern's role (position of learning) in the contextualization of the learnings. It holds on two major principles: authenticity of context and cognitive mentoring (Frenay & Bédart, 2004). The first principle invites the student to live real situations in another culture in order to train the student to transfer his knowledge. The second principle is focusing on the quality of mentoring and on the will to guide the intern to the appropriation and mobilisation of professional skills to refresh according to the available contexts and resources. The aforementioned two principles are divided into 7 conditions to develop (Vierset and others, 2015):

- a. The respect of the rallying context.
- b. The development of skills.
- c. The experience of complete and complex situations.
- d. The use of multidisciplinary content.
- e. The use of multidimensional situations.
- f. The use of various situations.
- g. Multiple developments and conclusions.

The cognitive mentoring, second principle of the AECA, highlights the importance of the bond between the Tutor and the intern. It is divided into 7 conditions. The first three conditions represent the intern's learning positions and the four other conditions define the mentoring position to be adopted by the Tutor (Vierset and others, 2015).

- a. The knowledge structuring.
- b. The reflection on action.
- c. The generalisation and discrimination of the learning situations.
- d. The coaching.
- e. The scaffolding.
- f. The modelization.
- g. The fading.

Conceptualisation and modelling of mentorship (Gallagher, 2011).

The functions of tutorial supervision can be distinguished from the functions ensured during the immersion in the host institution and from the functions within the sending institution.

There exist different educative functions for the hosts (helps and guides the intern in the developing of his capacities *intra muros*, immersion and modelling, in real time, Gallagher, 2011) and for the tutors (management function : plan, organize, coordinate the interns and hosts, establish a framework of learning – rhythm, place and time – and a framework of educative support – actions of mentoring, help through reflexive process, setting of a sphere suitable for learning: CARE (Théorêt et St-Pierre, 2007, quoted by Gallagher, 2011). Throughout the interviews preparing the project,

the tutors of the previous Erasmus+ project have globally shown a stronger ease in the role of hosts for interns than in the role of tutors. One of the concerns of the tutors' training is to give them the tools in this role less oriented on support during the immersion than on the support for the metacognitive activity and the establishment of a professional identity acquired by the intern during the periods between the internships.

Think of the tutorial mentoring from the educative paradigms:

- a. Constructivism and socioconstructivism: learning and accommodation.
- b. From constructivism to socioconstructivism: regulation and shoring.
- c. Reflexivity: the double traject interiority-exteriority or socialisation of the experience.

Engineering of and mentorship, skills «tools box» helping the tutors (Baudrit, 2011), (Menart, 2013), (Daele, 2011). This tools box proposes techniques of mentorship systematically documented on his educative bases. This reference “tools box” is available for the tutors and helps to build a corpus of common and lasting professional references. The tutors' feedbacks about experience will be likely to help this tools box to ameliorate. Reflexive approach Schön, 1994, Perrenoud, 2011, Lafortune and others, 2012 & Gallagher, 2011. The portfolio is the chosen material for the structuring of the tutee's reflexive processes with the mentoring Tutor. Its creation of allows the intern to think about his experience and comes up with occasions to interact in a training way with the Tutor on questions the tutee could have. Furthermore, it consists in a manner of organizing the coherence of experiences, to build the thought process between the different steps of the project.

### **The consortium**

The selection of partners was based on project objectives, and on one side their experience acquired in very specific areas of psychiatry and mental care, and on the other side, their activities in the area of education and pedagogy.

Finally, partners active in research and internationally recognized research centers were also invited to ensure the scientific rigor to the project and the ability to publish in scientific journals.

We have selected partners of trust with whom we already had common projects in the past and with who we wanted to continue developing a close collaboration.

The consortium is voluntarily designed as trans-sectorial as the mental health sector is in need of the dialogue between professional health organisations (small and large), research centers and academic world (higher education establishment and university).



This selection of partners has also been conducted looking at a holistic view of mental care and its various dimensions applied in the field for patient care but also possibly used for research and analysis.

We looked at keeping a balance between the educational part, hospital and ambulatory care and research, insourcing in the project a diversity and a complementarity in the various expertise areas.

### **Our strengths to successfully deliver the project are:**

A partnership strong and reliable: The collaboration history started in 2009 and the outcome of several projects witnesses our ability to work together. The new partners will be integrated into this solid core team. Supporting and helping each others with integrity will allow to reach project objectives.

Openness - Research - Innovation - Culture: our partners have a well established culture of sharing practices and knowledge. To address this challenge successfully, specific and complementary knowledge are required to be able to have a multidisciplinary overview.

The dynamic created by these four categories of partners (mental health facilities small and large, research centres and academic) will uplift this ambitious project.

We will organise during the three following years, three training sessions for the Tutors. The added value of these activities is essential to the project as they constitute an important part of the research-action we plan to conduct. This face-to-face trainings, unlike a distance learning device, has the advantage of "personifying" the tutor's network in order to create a form of "college".

The objectives of these activities are:

a. Professionalization of the coaching skills of Tutors. These skills can be mobilized in the long term, in the many situations of accompaniment of student trainees or novice colleagues that the caregivers of the institutions are brought to coach.

b. Networking of tutors, potentially supporting long-term exchange of practices (in the field of peer coaching, beneficiary care or any other professionally relevant field).

c. Acquisitions and/ or consolidation of new professional knowledge and skills (including in the field of documentary research, writing skills, etc.) in the trainee's head and transfer of these to their professional practices and within the team.

d. Softskills development in the trainees and tutors heads, such as increased reflexive skills, a better understanding of cultural diversity, greater