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RELEASE DIARY - Course Curriculum - Design and Development

International meeting and Workshop Booklet 3. - Summary

The 3rd Transnational meeting was held in Pazardzhik, Bulgaria by IGA. The Transnational Meeting was focused on IO5 – the Release Diary and the ways to incorporate art therapy in the tool.

The goal of the IO5 - The Release Diary, is to help target individuals in considering what and how they want to change and what steps are needed, where they are at the given moment, how will others realize that they have changed, what are the qualities of their relationships, and how can they change, expand, develop them (if they want to), what resources they have for all this, is there anything they already do well, how can they improve.
The Release Diary should be a coaching tool, in order to help in change and development. It is the desire of the project co-ordinator to collect, edit and use art therapy tools in that, because a tangible product and the creative process both provide participants with a flow experience. Another reason for art therapy is the liberation of emotions and values, a complete restructuring, which would be the corner stone of the change and development process.
Therefore the Release Diary should be seen as a new and creative tool for both the direct target group members and the experts dealing with them. The target group of the Release Diary is therefore marginalised target group with high criminality risk of detainees, ex-detainees and addicts, and the expert group working with them.

The Transnational meeting involved a presentation of the host organization & presentations of the partner organizations, project discussions regarding administrative, financial and dissemination tasks, short discussion of the finalization of IO4 as well as future steps. Regarding the IO5, it was discussed that a number of art therapy methods should be used by the organizations in developing the parts of the Release Diary. Different options for structure of the tool were discussed, including the Good Lives Model of offender rehabilitation. Concrete ideas for possible methods were also discussed, including in informal setting during the dinner on the 28th of October.

Additionally, several presentations were made by experts external to the project. IGA's social services expert coordinator Valentina Gesheva presented the legal framework of social work

and the provision of social services in Bulgaria. Valentina also presented information about the different types of social services in Bulgaria, the mechanism for funding of social services and the process of management of these services by municipalities, NGOs or private companies.

IGA's Andrey Momchilov presented about the Circles of Support and Accountability. This community intervention aimed originally towards medium and high risk sex offenders was first introduced in Canada in 1994. It consists of groups of volunteers with professional supervision, who support sex offenders as they reintegrate into society after their release from incarceration. Evaluations of CoSA indicate that participation in a CoSA can result in statistically significant reductions in repeat sexual offenses in 70% of cases, relative to what would be predicted by risk assessment or matched comparison subjects.

On the 29th the participants heard a presentation by Gergana Nacheva, coordinator of the Observed Home for young people leaving institutions in Plovdiv. This transition type social service is aimed at supporting young men (18 to 25 years old) in their transition between residential institutions (most often orphanages or Family Type Placement Centers) and the community. The most interesting part for participants was the practical approaches to everyday life in this residential service.

Professionals who participated in the 3rd TM evaluated the meeting highly. Unfortunately we couldn't welcome in person our colleagues from Antropos Association, because of Covid related restrictions, but at least they managed to participate actively via the provided Zoom platform. Among the highlights according to the participants' evaluation forms have been the presentations on the Circles of Support and Accountability and the Observed Home.