

FREE, ANONYMOUS E-COUNSELING SERVICE: MEANS FOR PEOPLE TO OVERCOME FEAR OF THE FIRST APPEAL FOR HELP FROM MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST, TO ENCOURAGE PREVENTION

S. Marceniene, V. Dapsiene, V. Maciulis, J. Utkuviene

Republican Vilnius Psychiatric Hospital, Vilnius, Lithuania

Introduction: In Lithuania psychiatrist's service are easily accessible due to a wide network of Mental Health Centers; however, specialists recognize the existence of information gap, myths and attitudes that discourage well-timed appeal.

Method, results: The project has guaranteed access for anybody to anonymous, free consultation on any problem from a psychologist, the possibility being introduced on the website of Republican Vilnius Psychiatric Hospital. The ways of communication are via e-mail or online/Skype (specialists are available at given hours). During two years approximately 1000 people has appealed concerning a variety of problems (from problems in interpersonal relations to complicated situations that urgently required interventions from mental health specialist).

During our work we have discovered that about 25% required direct help from a psychiatrist, we were trying to keep emphatic contact and rapport with them, to give well-timed emotional support, to encourage and motivate to see a specialist eye-to-eye, to help to overcome fear of the first appeal, to dispel myths and attitudes towards psychiatrists, which are still present in our society. About 10 % were appealing due to dangerous, troublesome behavior of their closest relatives, friends. They were also extensively informed about possibilities and ways of getting help.

Conclusion: The Internet, simple to use, easy accessible for anonymous services that require low material resources, opens up new possibilities to inform/educate people, to help them overcoming fear of the first help appeal from a specialist, to encourage and motivate search for direct help, to provide with adequate, extensive and well-timed information.