



Art therapy for mental health patients (Slovakia)

Summary

The project encourages new and creative ways to deal with patients with psychiatric problems. Through supporting the use of art therapy in diagnosis and treatment process, the project aims to change the perceptions and experiences of mental health patients. The art works created by mental health patients are exhibited to the general public. This also changes pre-conceived perceptions of mental health problems in society.

The project

The project aimed to create a more innovative way of diagnosing and treating psychiatric disorders. In the majority of cases, patients with psychiatric disorders are treated by pharmacological treatment and psychotherapy in out-patient care or in hospitals. Art therapy should markedly contribute in the diagnosis and therapy success. However, very few doctors use it in Slovakia.

Sector(s) covered

Main sector

Society: Health care, Mental health patients, Improved quality of life

Other sectors

Arts and creative sectors

Business: CSR

Public Administration

Approach

Together with a patients' association, the League for Mental Health, the project asked specialists taking care of patients with psychiatric disorders to start the creation of artworks.

More than 400 artworks were created by patients. A panel of art specialists from the University of Arts selected the most talented patients. These patients attended a one-week intensive workshop focused on improving their painting technique.

The exhibition of the patients' artworks was then presented publicly in the Bratislava's downtown gallery during the 'Week of Mental Health'.

In the building of the League for Mental Health a Gallery called 'Forget me not' has been established where patients' artworks are regularly exhibited for the public. The artworks were exhibited not only in the capital, but also around the whole country with the 'Gallery on the road' project.

Element of innovation – the process

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Key successes

(outcomes, results, impacts)

The key successes of the project are improved attitudes toward mental health disorders and psychiatric patients in Slovakia and an innovative way for patients to express their feelings effectively and more comfortably than speaking. Improving methods of diagnosis and treatment of psychiatric disorders is innovative and can only benefit society as a whole.

The project was initiated by a pharmaceutical company Pfizer. For the company, the project showcased innovative and creative solutions far outside their normal practice. This has been seen as strength in enhancing the knowledge of traditional treatment methods with more non-conventional methods.

Transferability and sustainability

The project can be considered as transferable to any country.

Special Highlights

The project supported the introduction of art therapy into the diagnosis and treatment process of mental health patients. This was innovative in Slovakia where doctors tend to rely on more traditional methods.

Exhibiting art works created by mental health patients in public is helping to change the attitudes towards mental health problems in the society.

The project helped to showcase internally the importance of non-conventional methods in diagnosis and treatment of mental health patients.

Key characteristics

General purpose of the practice	Promote an innovative/creative approach to tackle problems in society
Target group	Mental health patients
Type of learning	Non-formal
Level of implementation	National
Funding	Private – Pfizer
Time frame	Implemented for two years
Leading organisations	Pfizer



Further information

Website of the project

<http://www.galerianezabudka.sk>

<http://www.pfizer.sk>

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