Erasmus+

CURRICULUM FOR THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF HELPLINE WORKERS ON BURNOUT PREVENTION

SKEPDAH Project

The Skills and Knowledge Exchange Project for Drug and Alcohol Helplines is a European Union funded Erasmus +, Key Action 2 project. In 2016 research was done on Drug and Alcohol Helplines across Europe, identifying strengths and expertise as well as three key areas where skills and knowledge gaps existed. This project was designed to address these gaps in a manner that valued Continued Vocational Eduation and Training (C-VET) through both formal and informal learning. Partners were sought from both the Training and Helpline sector. Each partner was considered for what they might add to this project. This project comprises of 9 partner organisations, 8 Drug and Alcohol Helpline services and 1 Drug and Alcohol training organisation.

Learning outcomes for this project were identified and a plan was designed to meet, discuss and share on the three topics with the aim of developing a curriculum for each.

Three Transnational Exchange meetings were planned each to address one of the key areas of interest. The first meeting, looked at Helpline skills, with particular focus on burnout prevention. The second meeting looked at New Psychoactive Substances and the challenges they present for Helpline work. The third meeting looked at Co-occurring mental health and substance use issues and Helpline work.

To follow is the curriculum detailing for each learning outcome, some learning methods (What methods or learning approaches will support Helpline Workers to achieve the learning outcomes); some useful research on the topic; good practice and shared resources that support this work.

The SKEPDAH Project Curriculae are available for onward use and re-use by Drug and Alcohol Helplines, as well as by similar services anywhere in the world, for free under an Open License, with the support of the European Union and the Erasmus+ Programme.

The SKEPDAH project partner, FESAT and ERASMUS+ do not endorse nor guarantee the accuracy of the information provided by external sources/links, and accepts no responsibility or liability for any consequences arising from the use of such data.

Glossary of terms used in this document

- **Boundaries**: These are the limits, standards and parameters within which we work as professionals. Boundaries are there to make the interaction safe and keep the focus on the service users' needs.

- **Burnout**: 'A state of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that can occur in individuals involved in 'people work'. It comprises three dimensions: emotional exhaustion (emotional resources are depleted and workers are no longer able to give, at a psychological level); depersonalization (the development of negative, cynical and detached feelings about service users); negative self-evaluation (workers feel unhappy about themselves and their ability to work effectively)'. (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Awa, Plaumann & Walter, 2010).

- **Caller**: A person who contacts a helpline service via phone, email, text etc.

- **Compassion fatigue**: Compassion Fatigue is "a state experienced by those helping people or animals in distress; it is an extreme state of tension and preoccupation with the suffering of those being helped to the degree that it creates a secondary traumatic stress in the carer". (Dr Charles Figley, 1995).

- **Curriculum**: A list of the subjects comprising a course of study. In the context of this project a curriculum refers to a list of topics that are most important in the subject area of Burnout prevention. This curriculum details how competency or a learning outcome might be achieved on each topic, under the headings: Learning Method; Research on this; Good Practice in this area and Resources to be shared.

- **Debriefing**: In a helpline context debriefing is a support structure where a helpline worker can talk through one or a number of difficult calls with either a peer or senior person from within the organisation or sometimes outside of the organisation. The aim of debriefing is to reduce negative impacts from the work, on the worker.

- **External Supervision**: This is where someone from outside of the organisation, though often paid for by the organisation, offers supervisory support to a worker. The aim of supervision is to offer the worker a non-judgemental space to work on professional and personal development; good practice in the work and preventing negative impacts from the work (including burnout).

- **Learning outcome/ competence**: This is what the Helpline Worker should know, understand and/or be able to do at the end of a learning process.

- **Peer Supervision**: This is where a worker works with a peer using agreed supervision structures to identify good practice and to prevent negative impacts from the work (including burnout).

- **Reflective Practice**: This is a way of studying your own experiences in order to improve your way of work. See Gibbs Reflective Cycle for more.

- **Self-Awareness**: In a helpline context, this is about having insight into your own psychological make-up, so that you are aware about how the work impacts on your personally, as well as professionally.

- **Self-Care**: This is how we care for our own wellbeing on all levels. Measures that promote self-care include: counselling and supervision; yoga, mindfulness, healthy lifestyle, good work-life balance; self-compassion etc.

- **Vicarious Trauma**: This is commonly understood as the cumulative transformative effect on the helper of working with people who have experienced traumatic life events, both positive and negative (McCann & Pearlman, 1990).

- **Wellbeing**: This refers to your physical and mental wellness.

Aims of this document

The purpose of this Curriculum is to outline the key elements that should be included in ongoing training and development on the topic of Burnout prevention, for those involved in Helpline work, particularly Drug and Alcohol Helpline work.

The Curriculum aims to provide a framework, with supporting resources and ideas for good practice to:

- Raise awareness of burnout.
- Develop strategies to build resilience and prevent or address burnout.

Definitions

Helpline work can be challenging to the Helpline workers personal and professional resources. We talk with people who are experiencing thoughts and emotions including pain, loss, distress, anger, suicidal ideation. Ongoing exposure to other peoples' trauma can impact on the helper in a number of ways.

There are two parts to Compassion Fatigue according to the Professional Quality of Life Elements Theory and Measurement (ProQOL). The first part, Burnout, includes exhaustion, frustration, anger and depression. The second part of Compassion Fatigue is Secondary Traumatic Stress, a negative feeling driven by fear and work-related trauma. It is important to remember that some trauma at work can be direct (primary) trauma. In other cases, work-related trauma can be a combination of both primary and secondary trauma. Compassion fatigue is the negative aspect of helping those who experience traumatic stress and suffering. Compassion Satisfaction is the positive aspect of helping.

This curriculum is aimed at preventing all of the impacts that lead to Burnout.

Target

This document is targeted at Helpline Coordinators/ Managers to help guide them in how to design learning and development resources for Helpline workers and volunteers.

It is thought however that this curriculum could have a more far reaching use for Helplines and caring services internationally, which is why we invite you to forward this document onwards to any colleagues that you feel might benefit from its contents.

Designing a training plan

When designing any training plan you will need to consider many factors such as:

1. Why the learning programme is needed
2. Your aim
3. The learning outcomes and benefits from the implementation of the programme
4. Description of the programme content/agenda
5. Target groups
6. Learning methods. What methods or learning approaches will support Helpline Workers to achieve the learning outcomes/competences? These could include:
    I. Group learning: presentations; training activities – case studies, role play scenarios, quizzes etc., team meetings etc.
    II. One-to-one learning: supervision, shadowing, peer support/mentoring etc.
    III. Independent learning: reading, e-learning
7. The duration, context, place and time
8. Materials and equipment e.g. flipchart, projector, handouts, evaluation forms etc.
9. Reading and resources
10. Evaluation of how attendees experienced the learning activity and what was learned. This can be measured against the learning outcomes
11. Giving certificates that list the learning outcomes
12. Follow up evaluation to assess the impacts e.g. 3 -6 months after the learning activity.

Learning Outcomes

Below, we have listed 8 learning outcomes as identified through surveys done with Drug and Alcohol Helpline workers and coordinators in 2015 and again in 2016. Learning Outcomes/ competences are what the Helpline Worker should know, understand and/or be able to do at the end of a learning process:

These learning outcomes identified in this projects work are:

1. To understand what burnout is.
2. Recognise the internal and external causes of burnout (including vicarious trauma).
3. Recognise the signs of burnout in ourselves and others.
4. Gain clarity around the boundaries of the Helpline workers role, the expectations of the service, service policies and the availability of service support structures.
5. Develop strategies for self-awareness.
6. Identify specific tools for self-care.
7. Know how to make effective use of individual and team support including supervision, peer support, debriefing and team meetings.
8. Have awareness of the needs of new and experienced workers and how these needs evolve over time.

1   Learning Outcome/Competence:
To understand what burnout is

Learning Method

1.1.1   Reading

1.1.2   Team workshop/ group exercises

Research on this

1.2.1   Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. P., and Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job Burnout Annual Review of Psychology 2001 52:1, 397-422 Retrieved from: *https://www.wilmarschaufeli.nl/publications/Schaufeli/154.pdf*

1.2.2   Freudenberger, H. (1974). Staff Burnout. Journal of Social Issues, 30, 159-165. *http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1974.tb00706.x*

1.2.3   Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Understanding the burnout experience: recent research and its implications for psychiatry. World Psychiatry, 15(2), 103–111. Retrieved from: *https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4911781/*

1.2.4   Heinemann, L., and and Heinemann. T. (2017). Burnout Research Emergence and Scientific Investigation of a Contested Diagnosis. SAGE Open. Retrieved from: *http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244017697154*

Good practice to support this learning outcome

1.3.1   For staff to learn about Burnout from when they join an organisation and for this learning and awareness raising, to continue as long as they work there.

1.3.2   For service policies and ethos to acknowledge that burnout exists and that guidelines are drawn up to help reduce burnout.

1.3.3   To work with people in similar areas of work to raise awareness of what burnout is.

Resources that support this learning outcome

1.4.1   Helplines Partnership (2015). Who helps helpline workers: Vicarious Trauma in Helplines. Retrieved from: *https://helplines.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Vicarious-Trauma-in-helplines.pdf*

1.4.2   Davis-Lack, P. (2013) Six Sources of Burnout at Work. Psychology Today. Retrieved from: *https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/pressure-proof/201308/six-sources-burnout-work*

1.4.3   North West Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (Ireland) Compassion Fatigue Handout, including self-assessment. Retrieved from: *http://nwdrugtaskforce.ie/wp-content uploads/2013/01/Compassion-Fatigue-Handout-6.pdf*

2   Learning Outcome/ Competence: To recognise the internal and external causes of burnout (including vicarious trauma)

Learning Method

2.1.1   Team workshop/Group exercise

2.1.2   Reading

Research on this

2.2.1   Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. (1981). *The measurement of experienced burnout.* Journal of Organizational Behavior, 2(2), 99-113.

Good practice to support this learning outcome

2.3.1   For people working at all levels of Helpline service provision to be aware of the internal and external causes of burnout.

2.3.2   To be aware of burnout as something we need be conscious of throughout working life.

2.3.3   To support Helpline workers to have the skills and resources to address the causes of burnout an ongoing basis.

2.3.4   To analyse the team dynamic and culture of the organisation

Resources that support this learning outcome

2.4.1   Helplines Partnership (2015). Who helps helpline workers: Vicarious Trauma in Helplines. Retrieved from: *https://helplines.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Vicarious-Trauma-in-helplines.pdf*

2.4.2   Wallace, A. (2016). Investigating risk and protective factors for burnout engagement in support workers working in the homelessness sector: an Irish context. University of Dublin. Retrived from: *https://www.tcd.ie/swsp/assets/pdf/Dissertations%20ASS/Wallace.Anna.pdf*

2.4.3   Davis-Lack, P. (2013). Six Sources of Burnout at Work. Psychology Today. Retrieved from: *https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/pressure-proof/201308/six-sources-burnout-work*

3 Learning Outcome/ Competence: To recognise the signs of burnout in ourselves and others

Learning Method

3.1.1 Team workshop/Group exercise

3.1.2 Reading

3.1.3 Supervision

Research on this

3.2.1 Oser, C. B., Biebel, E. P., Pullen, E., & Harp, K. L. (2013). Causes, Consequences, and Prevention of Burnout among Substance Abuse Treatment Counselors: A Rural versu Urban Comparison. Journal of Psychoactive Drugs, 45(1), 17–27. Retrieved from: *https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3652635/*

3.2.2 Questionnaires and diagnostic tools. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI); is a validated measure for assessing burnout. It is a 22-item scale that produces scores on three subscales: Emotional Exhaustion, Personal Accomplishment and Depersonalization.

Maslach, C., Jackson, S.E., & Leiter, M.P. (1996). The Maslach Burnout I nventory (MBI) Retrieved from: *https://www.researchgate.net/profile/ChristinaMaslach/publication/277816643_The_ Maslach_Burnout_Inventory_Manuallinks/5574dbd708aeb6d8c01946d7.pdf*

Manual available from: *https://www.mindgarden.com/maslach-burnout-inventory/685-mbi-manual.html*

Good practice to support this learning outcome

3.3.1 To have mechanisms and time within the working day for support to take place through:
- Regular supervision
- Debriefing
- Have reflective practice built into the call-log sheet
- Check-in process as part of the helplines daily practice.

3.3.2 For those working at all levels of the Helpline service to be aware of Burnout, its causes and its signs.

3.3.3 For staff to have training how to address burnout concerns with their colleagues.

Resources that support this learning outcome

3.4.1 The ProQOL (Professional Quality of Life Scale) Measure *http://www.proqol.org/ProQol_Test.html (in 23 different languages)*

4 Learning Outcome/ Competence: To have gained clarity around the boundaries of the Helpline workers role, the expectations of the service, service policies and the availability of service support structures

Learning Method

4.1.1 Reading and discussion within the team on service policies and roles

4.1.2 Training on Strategies for dealing with challenging calls

Research on this

4.2.1 Lambert, E.G., Hogan, N.L., and Jiang, S. (2010). A preliminary examination of the relationship between organizational structure and emotional burnout among correctional staff. SAGE Open. Retrieved from: *http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2158244015590444*

4.2.1 Onyett, S., Pillinger, T., and Muijen, M. (2009). Job satisfaction and burnout among members of community mental health teams, Journal of Mental Health, 6:1, 55-66, DOI: 10.1080/09638239719049

4.2.2 Mahon, E.G., Taylor, S.N., & Boyatzis, R.E. (2014). Antecedents of organizational engagement: exploring vision, mood and perceived organizational support with emotional intelligence as a moderator. Frontiers in Psychology. Retrieved from: *https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01322/full*

Good practice to support this learning outcome

4.3.1 To have clear policies and service guidelines to support Helpline workers, supervisors and coordinators in their work.

4.3.2 To have organizational structures in place that look to the needs of workers, supervisors and coordinators alike and fosters a person-centered culture.

4.3.3 To have suitable Induction processes to inform new workers on the structure and culture of the organization.

4.3.4 To review organisational policies so that self-care and burnout prevention measures can be incorporated into the working day for all workers.

4.3.5 To have mechanisms and time within the working day for support to take place, including:

- Have reflective practice built into the call-log sheet;
- 'Check-in' process as part of the helplines daily practice.
- Regular supervision;
- Debriefing;
- To encourage regular breaks
- Clear work/holiday times
- Flexibility – consider potential for role rotation

4.3.6 To have access to External Supervision and personal therapy.

4.3.7 To have provision for Team building / group dynamic workshops.

Resources that support this learning outcome

4.4.1 Clement H., Winter C. (2018). EHBBO Zakboekje. For employees, teams managers and organizations face burnout (in Dutch). Retrieved from: *https://www.arteveldehogeschool.be/sites/default/files/projectfiche/ehbbo_zakboekje. voor_medewerkers_teams_leidinggevenden_organisaties_geconfronteerd_met_burn-out.pdf*

5 Learning Outcome/ Competence: To develop strategies for self-awareness

Learning Method

5.1.1 Workshop on 'knowing your triggers' / how to be self-aware.

Research on this

5.1.1 Nowack, K. (2017). Sleep, Emotional Intelligence, and Interpersonal Effectiveness: Natural Bedfellows. Consulting Psychology Journal: Research and Practice, 69:2, 66-79. Retrieved from: *https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/afd0/d2f8062160de67306e7b45aae9297469c89c.pdf? ga=2.102815747.2051527500.1528378625-691738519.1528378625*

5.1.2 Essays, UK. (2013). The Importance and Significance of Self Awareness Social Work Essay. Retrieved from: *https://www.ukessays.com/essays/social-work/the-importance-and significance-of-self-awareness-social-work-essay.php?vref=1*

Good practice to support this learning outcome

5.2.1 For those working at all levels of Helpline work to have awareness of the signs of burnout.

5.2.2 For staff and volunteers to have access to supports including supervision and personal therapy.

5.2.3 For burnout awareness and skills to combat burnout to be part of training and support within the service from when people join the service and for that to continue throughout their career.

5.2.4 For service policy and procedures to give due consideration to the issues around burnout, so that there are sufficient breaks, supports etc in place.

5.2.5 To have scheduled time for self-evaluation with an internal or external supervisor

Resources that support this learning outcome

5.3.1 Bourg-Carter, S. (2013). The Tell Tale Signs of Burnout. Psychology Today. Retrieved from: *https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/high-octane-women/201311/the-tell-tale-signs burnout-do-you-have-them*

5.3.2 Rosen, K. (2017). How to Recognize Burnout Before You're Burned Out. New York Times. Retrieved from: *https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/05/smarter-living/workplace-burnoutsymptoms.html*

5.3.3 Stamm, B., H. (1999-2002). Quick Guide with Suggestions for Prevention/Intervention with the Negative Effects of Caregiving. Retrieved from: *http://www.proqol.org/uploads/Prevention_suggestions.doc*

6 Learning Outcome/ Competence: To identify specific tools for self-care

Learning Method

6.1.1   Workshops/ Training on the importance of self-care

6.1.2   Training on Tools for self-care

6.1.3   Reading

Research on this

6.2.1   Gracia-Gracia, P. and Oliván-Blázquez, B. (2017). Burnout and Mindfulness Self-Compassion in Nurses of Intensive Care Units: Cross-Sectional Study. Holistic Nursing Practice, 31:4, pp. 225-233 Abstract retieved from: *https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324763988 Prevalence_of_burnout_in_paediatric_nurses_A_systematic_review_and_meta-analysis*

6.2.2   Smullens, S. (2015). Burnout and Self-care in Social work Washington DC: NASW Press

6.2.3   Skovholt, T. M., & Trotter-Mathison, M. (2011). The resilient practitioner: Burnout prevention and self-care strategies for counselors, therapists, teachers, and health professionals, second edition. (2nd Edition) New York: Taylor and Francis. DOI: 10.4324/9780203893326

6.2.4   Aked, J., Marks, N., Cordon, C., and Thompson, S. (2008). Five Ways to Wellbeing New Economics Foundation. Retrieved from: *https://b.3cdn.net/nefoundation/8984c5089d5c2285ee_t4m6bhqq5.pdf*

Good practice to support this learning outcome

6.3.1   For Helpline trainers to keep up to date on tools that can be shared with helpline workers to help promote positive mental and physical health, and particularly burnout prevention.

6.3.2   For service policy and guidelines to be aware of the need for a strong supportive helpline team and to consider team building initiatives to support that.

6.3.3   For regular support, debriefing and supervision structures to be in operation at the Helpline service.

6.3.4   For the service to offer employee benefits that encourage activities such as sport etc.

Resources that support this learning outcome

6.4.1   Five ways to wellbeing app: *http://mentalhealthpartnerships.com/resource/five-ways-to-wellbeing-app/*

6.4.2   Handout: Quick Guide with Suggestions for Prevention/Intervention with the Negative Effects of Caregiving by BH Stamm PhD: *http://www.proqol.org/uploads/Prevention_suggestions.doc*

7 Learning Outcome/ Competence: To know how to make effective use of individual and team support including supervision, peer support, debriefing, team meetings

Learning Method

7.1.1 Training and informing on support structures that are available internally and externally and how they can be accessed and used effectively.

7.1.2 Reading

7.1.3 Identification of specific support needs of home-based or lone workers

Research on this

7.2.1 Abassary, C., and Goodrich, K.M. (2014). Attending to Crisis-Based Supervision for Counselors: The CARE Model of Crisis-Based Supervision. The Clinical Supervisor, 33:1, 63 81 Abstract retrieved from: *https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07325223.2014.918006*

7.2.2 Oser, C. B., Biebel, E. P., Pullen, E., & Harp, K. L. (2013). Causes, Consequences, and Prevention of Burnout among Substance Abuse Treatment Counselors: A Rural versus Urban Comparison. Journal of Psychoactive Drugs, 45(1), 17–27. Retrieved from: *https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3652635/*

Good practice to support this learning outcome

7.3.1 Clear policies and service guidelines to support Helpline workers in their work.

7.3.2 To have systems and time allotted within the working day for support to happen.

7.3.3 Regular supervision.

7.3.4 Debriefing.

7.3.5 Have reflective practice built into the call-log sheet.

7.3.6 Check-in process as part of the helplines daily practice.

Resources that support this learning outcome

7.4.1 Kolb, D. A. (2015). Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. 2nd Edition. New Jersey, Pearson Education.

7.4.2 Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Service Director (ONMSD) (2015). Clinical Supervision Framework for Nurses working in Mental Health Services. Health Services Executive (HSE), Ireland. Retrieved from: *https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/onmsd/nmpdu/nmpddn clinical-supervision-framework.pdf*

8 Learning Outcome/ Competence:
To have awareness of the needs of new and experienced workers and how these needs evolve over time

Learning Method

8.1.1 Raise awareness of the need for burnout prevention needs to be an ongoing part of the Helplines plan from recruitment onwards

8.1.2 Training on Self-awareness that caters for new and also experienced workers.

8.1.3 Organisation-wide training that acknowledges the importance of Self-care and burnout prevention for new and experience workers

Research on this

8.2.1 Public Health England and Leeds Beckett University (2016) Interventions to prevent burnout in high risk individuals: evidence review. Retrieved from: *https://www.gov.uk/government publications/interventions-to-prevent-burnout-in-high-risk-individuals-evidence-review*

8.2.2 Essays, UK. (November 2013). The Importance and Significance of Self Awareness Social Work Essay. Retrieved from: *https://www.ukessays.com/essays/social-work/the-importance and-significance-of-self-awareness-social-work-essay.php*

Good practice to support this learning outcome

8.3.1 For there to be awareness at all levels of the Helpline service of what Burnout is and for it to be part of the training and support offered to helpline workers throughout their time working or volunteering with the Helpline service.

8.3.2 For periodic review meetings to form part of the supervision structures, so that issues including burnout prevention can be noticed and discussed.

8.3.3 To have a 'growth mindset' when it comes to helpline work and the need for ongoing raining and development throughout a persons time working or volunteering with a helpline.

8.3.4 To have allow flexibility within the work schedule, to allow people move roles if necessary

Resources that support this learning outcome

8.4.1 Mindset, The New Psychology of Success by Carol S. Dweck

8.4.2 Handout: Quick Guide with Suggestions for Prevention/Intervention with the Negative Effects of Caregiving by BH Stamm PhD
http://www.proqol.org/uploads/Prevention_suggestions.doc

8.4.3 North West Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (Ireland) Compassion Fatigue Handout, including self-assessment. Retrieved from:
http://nwdrugtaskforce.ie/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Compassion-Fatigue-Handout-6.pdf

**For more information on
'The Skills and Knowledge Exchange Project
for Drug & Alcohol Helplines' (SKEPDAH) visit:
www.fesat.org
and
for more information on
Erasmus+ programme
visit:
www.ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus**

The SKEPDAH project partners, FESAT and ERASMUS+ do not endorse nor guarantee the accuracy of the information provided by external sources/links and accepts no responsibility or liability for any consequences arising from the use of such data.

FESAT
EUROPEAN FOUNDATION
OF DRUG HELPLINES

June 2018