



emcdda.europa.eu

Overview

Therapeutic Programme EXODOS: Counselling Centre of Nea Ionia, Volos (Central Greece)

Quality level

Quality level : 1

Executive summary

The primary objective of the Centre is to inform and motivate drug users in order to enroll into therapy. Moreover, it aims at harm reduction, since most of the clients are liable to high risk behaviours.

Type of intervention treatment

Sub-area drug free treatment

Setting

Type of approach

Target group
(universal) adults

Age group

Target group
(specific) adults

Annual coverage 124

Substances
addressed cannabis, opiates, alcohol, cocaine and
derivatives, inhalants/solvents

Evaluation type outcome evaluation (how far are the specific objectives
achieved)

Country Greece

Start date 01/05/1991

End date

Overall objective

The general aim of the centre is to motivate, sensitise, prepare and refer drug users to the therapeutic community of the programme EXODOS, as well as to reduce drug-related harm.

Abstract

The Counselling Centre of Nea Ionia Volos of the Therapeutic Programme EXODOS (KETHEA) was founded in May 1991. The particular Centre meets the drug users' and their families' needs for therapy in the wider area of the Municipality of Magnisia, Sporades and Fthiotida (Central Greece). The prior lack of similar centres in the region had as a result for drug users not to have any therapeutic options or to have to go away from their place of residence in order to enrol in treatment. The services of this information and admission centre are multiple and multi-level since they are addressed to: - drug users who wish to enrol into the Therapeutic Community, - drug users who do not wish to enrol in treatment, - the families and relatives of drug users and - the wider community. In this vain, the actions of the Centre aim at treatment or motivation to seek treatment, harm reduction as well as provision of information and awareness raising for the wider public. The Counselling Centre constitutes the first phase of a complete multi-phase programme, where the user makes his/her first contact with the treatment programme. The population approaching the Centre is usually barely or not at all motivated for treatment. The primary objective of the Centre is to inform and motivate drug users in order to enrol into therapy. Moreover, it aims at harm reduction, since most of the clients are liable to high-risk behaviours and are hardly informed on their health situation. In the Centre, the needs of drug users are assessed, while the users are referred to services on or off site. The first therapeutic contract is concluded and drug users commit themselves to reduce drug use and abstain from delinquency. After that, the users are placed to groups in order to prepare for the admission to the therapeutic community.

Context and theory

Initial situation

The Counselling Centre of Nea Ionia Volos of the Therapeutic Programme EXODOS was initially created in order to cover the needs for therapy of those drug users and their families who live in the Municipality of Magnisia and Sporades (Central Greece). Prior to its creation no other respective centre existed in the region and individuals in need were lacking in any therapeutic help. This lack had as a result for those who claimed therapy either to have no therapeutic options or to have to go away from their place of residence in order to enroll in treatment. The fact that the Centre was approached not only by drug users from the Municipality that the Centre was created for, but also by individuals from another geographically close one (i.e., Municipality of

Fthiotida) proves that the Centre fills the lack of therapeutic services in the wider area of Central Greece.

Basic assumptions/theory

The Centre has been organised so as to provide a friendly and "safe" environment where the use of substances is out of bounds. The creation of such environment is considered to be of major importance so that the drug user can approach without fear the programme to get informed on its services and the recovery procedure. During the stage of information, motivational interviewing is applied. The rationale behind the application of this type of interviewing is that the client is more effectively motivated to enter treatment by the means of this client-centred counselling style for eliciting behaviour change. Moreover, to achieve the same objective, group counselling -based on the principles of systemic approach- is employed. In the context of preparation to enter therapy which constitutes the initial phase of recovery, it is assumed that drug users need support and encouragement. Along these lines, the Centre operates counselling and self-help groups. In these groups the principles of social learning theory are employed. Within this framework, it is believed that attitudes to drug use can be learned; thus emphasis is laid on skills development. In the context of the programme, it is assumed that the protection and/or restoration of the clients' well-being is of major importance. In this vein, the clients of the Centre are motivated to look after their health and are referred to medical services and hospitals so as to deal with physical illnesses. Moreover, to achieve the objective of harm reduction, it is assumed that the provision of well-documented information on substances and their negative consequences will help the drug addict to alter drug-related behaviour. Along these lines, the information on health and hygiene issues provided is based on the cognitive model.

Objectives and indicators

Evaluation design

outcome evaluation (how far are the specific objectives achieved)

Specific objectives and outcome indicators

Specific objective 1

To inform and orientate drug users in relation to the services of the programme, to promote drug users' participation in the therapeutic procedure and to refer to the treatment programme. To inform and to increase the motivation of the drug users' families.

Outcome indicator 1

Quantitative indicators deriving from the reviews of the programme (i.e., admissions, rates of staying in the programme and of referral to the main therapeutic phase, drop-outs, etc.).

Specific objective 2

To prepare drug users in order to enroll into the therapeutic community.

Outcome indicator 2

Social characteristics of the individuals approaching the counselling centre and patterns of use (i.e., main substance, way of administration etc.).

Specific objective 3

Harm reduction. More specifically, to motivate and encourage drug users approaching the Centre to adopt basic personal hygiene practices. In addition, in the cases of drug users who do not wish to enter the therapeutic community, to motivate the reduction of drug use and of its negative consequences.

Outcome indicator 3

Referral to medical tests and degree of participation in them (i.e. for Hepatitis B and C, HIV, Tuberculosis) as well as in educational programmes concerning harm reduction.

Instruments used

Type of quantitative instrument

Type of qualitative instrument

Action

advice and support, alternatives to drug use, brochure/leaflet, care, community work, crisis intervention, day care, education (skills, abilities, etc.), group therapy, information, low level intervention, music, newsletter, out-patient detoxification, parents' meetings, peer-group counselling, posters, referral point, street work, theme days/weeks,

Results

Outcome evaluation

Results

In 2003, the Counselling Centre of Nea Ionia Volos offered its services to 124 individuals (the respective figure recorded in 2002 was 119) and all of them received information on issues related to substance use and addiction as well as on the drug recovery process and agents. Moreover, the individuals who have approached the Centre were informed specifically on the services of the treatment programme EXODOS and approximately 30% of them was referred to the treatment community or other relevant services (while for the year 2002 the respective percentage was 40%). In addition, a large share of the users' families approaching the Centre got informed on issues regarding drug addiction and its treatment and was referred to the Family Support Centre of EXODOS or to other services.

Over 80% of the individuals who have approached the Counselling Centre of Nea Ionia Volos reported heroin as the main substance of abuse, out of which 50% reported daily and injective use of the substance. Yet during their participation in the Centre's group meetings -within the framework of the preparation in order to enroll into the main therapeutic phase of the programme- the aforementioned drug users discontinued substance use. Moreover, at admission time a large share of participants (79% in 2003) were involved in illegal activities, and during the period of the programme attendance, they appeared to abstain from criminal behaviour.

At admission time the majority of the individuals who approached the Centre were barely informed on their health situation. Despite the frequent occurrence of high risk behaviour (according to recent data 43% reported lifetime needle sharing, while the rate referring to the last month prior to the contact is 14%), only 27-30% has ever been tested for HIV, Hepatitis B and C and Tuberculosis. Since their first approach to the Counselling Centre, all drug users are referred to medical services for tests. Since 2003 the Counselling Centre has established collaboration with a general practitioner who implements information seminars to drug users on their health condition, hygiene issues, risks of infectious disease transmission and safe use conditions. Moreover, all participants are motivated and encouraged to adopt basic personal hygiene practices.

References

Brochures; newsletters; posters

Contact

Responsible
organisation

Therapy Centre for Dependent Individuals (KETHEA)

Name of
organisation

Therapy Centre for Dependent Individuals (KETHEA)

Street address	24, Sorvolou str. Mets
Postal code	11636
City	Athens
Country	Greece
Website	www.exodos.org.gr
Email	admin@kethea.gr
Partner organisation(s)	Prefectorial Hospital "ACHILLOPOULEIO" Municipal Organisation for Health and Social Issues Drug Prevention Centre "PROTASI ZOIS"
Contact	Mrs. Meropi Pentedeka
Name of contact	Mrs. Meropi Pentedeka
Email	meropi@exodos.org.gr
Phone	+30 2410 251839
Fax	+30 2410 251148

Additional information

Number of staff involved	
Status/profession of staff involved	Teachers / educators; Sociologists; Physicians; Social workers / drug workers; Clerks
Type of evaluator	Internal evaluator
Name of external institution(s)	
Full reference to evaluation report	

Budget

Annual budget	Up to 100 000
Sources of funding	National government
Percentage from each source	National government=100%

Additional remarks