

Research Institute of Public Health Psychological Institute

# Take Care - Mental Health of Patients in Medical Practice

In children and adolescents, mental health problems are often difficult to detect. However, early recognition of developmental difficulties is central to counteracting a negative course. To raise awareness of mental health among adolescents, parents and professionals, the ZHAW Institutes of Public Health and Applied Psychology have developed flyers and brochures on the topic in a joint research project.

## Initial situation

Almost 17 percent of the Swiss population suffers from mental disorders or illnesses of varying severity. In about one third of the cases, comorbidities are present. Mental and non-communicable diseases show increasing incidence and prevalence nationally and globally and represent a relevant public health issue for those affected and for society.

In order to provide optimal care for people who have a mental health condition in addition to a somatic condition, there is a need to raise awareness of mental health impairments. This is particularly important when the physical suffering of those affected is immediate and visible, while mental suffering tends to be in the background. Here, measures should be made available for primary care physicians and pediatricians to raise awareness of mental health problems and promote mental health.

## Objective

To promote increased integration of mental health in pediatric and family practice, the project aimed to research or develop appropriate tools to help pediatricians and family physicians identify mental disorders earlier.

## Method and procedure

To clarify the need for action and the needs of pediatricians and family doctors, focus groups were conducted in German- and Italian speaking parts Switzerland. Based on these results, a package of measures was decided upon. Conducting scientific literature research, focus groups and expert interviews, resource-oriented materials for the promotion of mental health and early detection of mental disorders were developed with the participation of the relevant professional societies.

## Results

The results are resource-oriented information brochures for strengthening the mental health of children and adolescents, as well as specialized information for pediatricians and family physicians. These informational brochures help raise awareness of mental illness among parents of school-age children and adolescents and offer concrete tips for health promotion. The specialist brochures provide important background information and support the early detection of mental illness in pediatric and family practice.



Illustrationen: Malin Widén

### Project management

Prof. Dr. Frank Wieber  
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### Project duration

05.2018 - 04.2020

### Project team

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### Partners

Kinderärzte Schweiz

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completed

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