

Working with families with addiction issues – Qualification makes the difference!

Rebekka Kleinat (LWL–Coordination Office for Addiction Issues) on behalf of the project consortium

BACKGROUND

- **EU project Make the Difference (2021-2023):** Focus on child protection in families with addiction issues and cooperation between addiction care and youth welfare services in 12 European countries. Key outputs: 12 cooperation agreements, the guide **“Building Bridges of Support” (LWL, 2023)** and joint professional trainings.
- **Needs:** Professionals in social work, child protection services, healthcare, education and other settings need to have knowledge, skills to communicate effectively, a non-stigmatizing attitude and collaborate across sectors in order to support families with addiction issues and look out for risks towards the child.

➔ **The follow-up Erasmus+ small-scale partnership “Qualification makes the difference” (2024) focuses on qualification of professionals from various sectors regarding families with addiction issues.**

OBJECTIVES

- Improve support for families with addiction issues.
- Develop a comprehensive curriculum to qualify professionals across sectors.
- Integrate lived experiences of families with addiction issues in curriculum.

METHODOLOGY

- Collection of insights from families with addiction issues in 9 EU countries by means of interviews (n=31) & online survey (n=33).
- Design Thinking workshop: Development of a curriculum prototype using methods such as personas, empathy mapping & prototyping.
- Agile & iterative project design to shape the final curriculum.

RESULTS

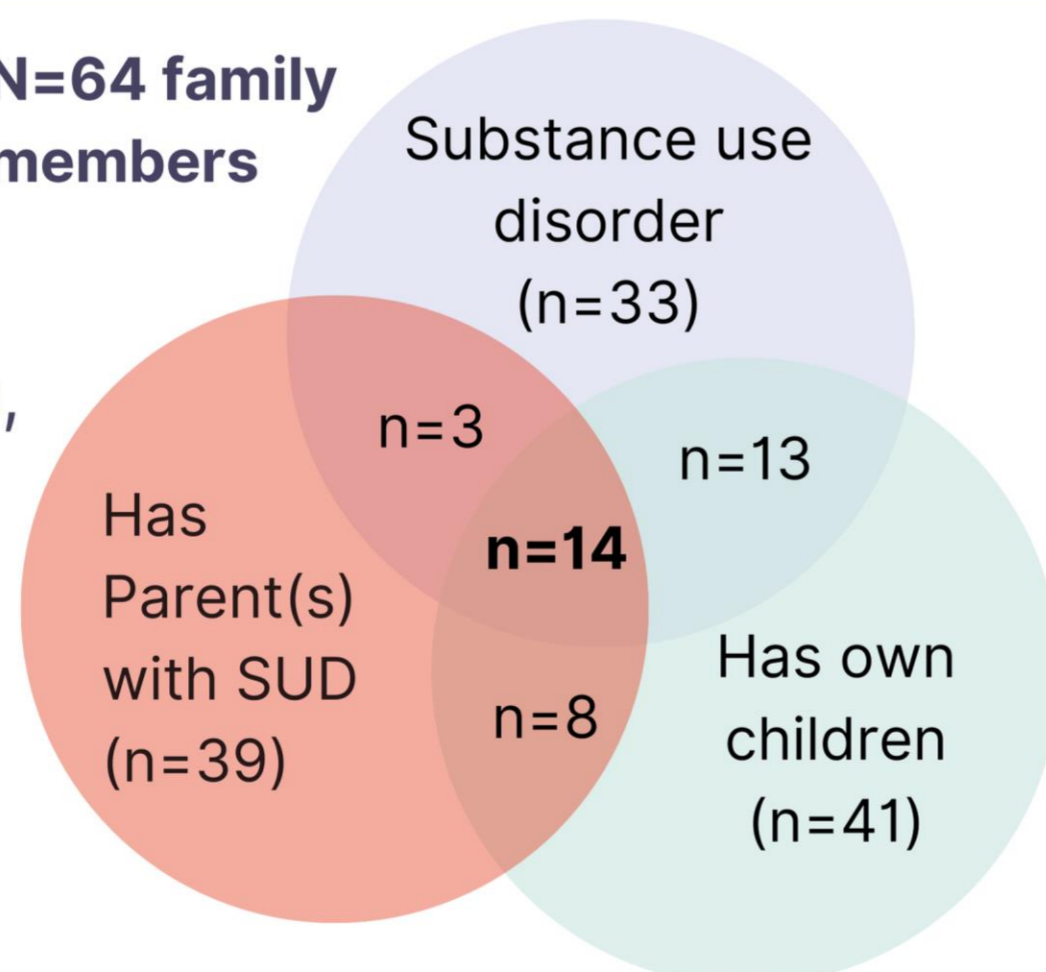
Experiences of families:

- **Motivations:** external interventions, health concerns, fears, perception of crisis and family responsibilities
- **Obstacles:** stigma & judgement, denial, systemic barriers, inadequate services & no help offers for children.
- **Helpful:** non-judgmental, empathetic, practical individualized support, consistent follow-up in therapy/counselling

Needs of families:

- Structure & support
- comprehensive, family-centred, non-stigmatizing approach
- empathy & humanistic view
- parental & life skills
- trauma-sensitive approaches
- specific support for the children.

N=64 family members



Additional needs of professionals (defined in workshop):

- Comprehensive understanding of the family situation
- Support from organization & supervision
- Continuous learning, access to resources & information
- Collaboration and networking

The curriculum: **“Breaking the Cycle: Professional Training for Supporting Families with Addiction Issues” (2024)** (Open Educational Resource)

- Module 1: Addiction in the family
- Module 2: Understanding addiction
- Module 3: Communication with families with addiction issues
- Module 4: Parent-focused support: Addressing risks, support & parental skills
- Module 5: Supporting the children across various settings
- Module 6: Integrated approach to family support and networking
- Module 7: Self-care and burnout prevention for professionals

Implementation:

- Target groups: Professionals interacting with families from various settings
- Defined trainer criteria
- Adaptable to national/local conditions
- Practical examples, scenarios, exercises & discussion prompts
- Evaluation & feedback form



“Addiction affects the whole family. Our curriculum can help professionals to make a difference.”

Project website:

<https://www.euronetprev.org/projects/erasmus/>

Consortium: LWL (Coordinator, Germany), Irefrea (Portugal), Gencat (Catalonia/Spain), Forum Prävention (Italy), NUDZ (Czech Republic), Integra Limburg (Belgium), EHYT (Finland), Educational Centre for Families & Schools (Latvia) & Athina Ygia (Greece)



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Contact: rebekka.kleinat@lwl.org