

May events

The month of May has heavily focused on the topic of mental health. Mental Health Europe (MHE), Europe's largest independent mental health NGO, organized the **European Mental Health Week**, an initiative that took place from **13 to 19 of May 2024**, with the aim to raise awareness about the importance of mental health in our lives.

During the same week, two other important initiatives were also held - **Mental Health Awareness Week** (coinciding with EMHW), and **European Public Health Week**, from May 13 until May 17.

Various **in-person and online** events offered a great opportunity to discuss issues of mental health, meanwhile highlighting the need for action and improved understanding of the factors that shape mental health, as well as celebrating the **success of best practices and policies** that promote positive mental health. See how some of the JA ImpleMENTAL countries participated and commemorated these events!



Greece

A 5-day conference on mental health was organized by the Hellenic National Public Health Organization (NPHO) from May 13 – 17, within the framework of JA ImpleMENTAL. The conference was scheduled to align with European Mental Health Week and its message “**Stronger and Better Together.**” The event highlighted the value of a comprehensive program that effectively combines education, research, knowledge, and information exchange, as well as networking and collaboration among professionals who must work together to promote mental health in the community.

The conference was attended by a total of 102 participants, including physicians, nurses, psychologists, other healthcare professionals, peer experts, and sociologists from Mental Health Services of Hospitals and Community Mental Health Services of the National Health Care System, Urban Non-Profit Mental Health Organizations, as well as psychologists and sociologists from municipalities, representatives of patient and family associations, representatives of the Ministry of Health, and officials from the 1st Regional Health Authority of Greece. These attendees had the opportunity to be extensively informed about the JA and the progress made so far in the pilot implementation of best practices. Additionally, they were updated on the overall current state of mental health in Greece, shared their experiences from their everyday practice, and received training from foreign and Greek experts on modern models of community-level care management.



The President of the National Public Health Organization, Prof. Christos Hadjichristodoulou with Ms Vasileia Konte and Ms Maro Stamou

Ms. Marina Zanchi, Director of the **European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA)**, visited the conference venue and referred to the event as “a relevant milestone in line with the chosen theme for this year’s edition of the EMHW.” The Director of HaDEA was also accompanied by Ms. Telea and Mr. Margetidis who were part of a broader delegation from the Agency, visiting Greece to inform stakeholders about the different EU funding programs managed by HaDEA.

WHO also had a notable presence at the conference. Ms. Jennifer Hall from the WHO Athens Office for Quality of Care and Patient Safety represented WHO/Europe, highlighting the synergy between the work of WHO/Europe in the field of mental health and JA ImpleMENTAL, including the organization of joint events and trainings.



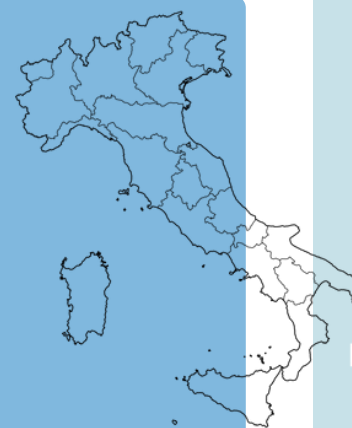
The representatives of HaDEA



Italy

The May events coincide with the **centenary celebrations of Franco Basaglia**, a prominent historical figure in both Italian psychiatry and psychiatry as a whole, whose efforts fostered a **humane approach** to working with individuals with mental health issues. Basaglia opposed the norms of 1960s traditional psychiatry, viewing patients not merely as numbers and objects but treating them humanely, thus restoring the **rights and dignity of thousands**. Events were being held across Italy to celebrate his achievements and the laws he inspired - Law 180 of 1978 mandated the closure of asylums and established mental health services for the outpatient treatment of mental illness.

Additionally, the Italian team of JA ImpleMENTAL held a **regional conference** to showcase the current **implementation progress** at the regional level in 20 provincial Lombardia hospitals participating in the project. The conference, attended by **over 100 participants** from mental health services and family associations, involved interactive sessions where attendees discussed the difficulties encountered in the implementation process and brainstormed solutions. The choice of **May 9** was deliberate, anticipating Mental Health Week, creating an opportunity to discuss aspects of mental health, exchange knowledge, and demonstrate a commitment to positive change.





Slovenia's Mental Health Festival

The **2nd Mental Health Festival**, held on **May 15** in Maribor, Slovenia, marked a significant step forward, emphasizing the importance of mental health and well-being for all members of the community, from children and adolescents to parents, seniors, and working professionals.

This year's festival was a collaborative effort between the **National Institute of Public Health (NIJZ)** and the Municipality of Maribor, with many engaging activities, including insightful lectures and interactive workshops. During the opening ceremony of the festival, esteemed speakers shared invaluable insights into the prevailing challenges and potential opportunities surrounding mental health in Slovenia. Attendees had the opportunity to deepen their understanding of mental health, acquire valuable knowledge on preventive measures against mental disorders, and actively contribute to ongoing efforts to combat stigma within the community.

Ultimately, the 2nd Mental Health Festival served as a beacon of hope and progress, inspiring attendees to continue their advocacy for mental health support and inclusion within their respective communities. By **fostering dialogue, raising awareness, and promoting a culture of compassion and understanding**, the festival left a lasting impact on all who participated, reaffirming the collective commitment to building a healthier and more resilient society.



Lithuania

On May 29, the 4th International public mental health conference **Community public mental health interventions** was held, organized in cooperation with EEA and Norwegian grants, the Norwegian Directorate of Health, the Central Project Management Agency, the Vilnius University Faculty of Medicine and the European Public Health Association (EUPHA).

The conference was intended for practitioners, policy makers, researchers and all professionals interested in the field of public mental health.

The Deputy Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania Aurimas Pečkauskas gave a welcome speech, while the head of the Department of Mental Health of the Ministry of Health, Ignas Rubikas, also a member of the JA ImpleMENTAL project, participated in the panel discussion












4th International Public Mental Health Conference under 2014-2021 European Economic Area Financial Mechanism Program „Health“


COMMUNITY BASED PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTIONS
(Hybrid event)

29th May, 2024
 Conference venue:
Merchants' Club
 (Pirklių Klubas, address:
 Gedimino pr. 35)
 VILNIUS, Lithuania

Lithuania

Physical activity is an important ally in support of our mental health, not only improving our physical health, but also **promoting our psychological well-being and reducing stress**.

The Public Health Offices of Lithuanian city municipalities organized free trainings for community members, encouraging people to be as active as possible during their free time. Residents were offered various activities such as hikes, nature walks, pilates, yoga, Zumba, general exercise programmes.

Moreover, various psychological well-being and mental health **strengthening group activities** were held: clay therapy, art therapy, mobilography, practical stress management and mental health strengthening activities using muscle relaxation, visualization and breathing exercises, allowing the participants to know themselves better and get in touch with their emotions.

In school and other educational institutions, children were learning to recognize emotions and name them, as well as the benefits of physical activity for both physical and mental health.

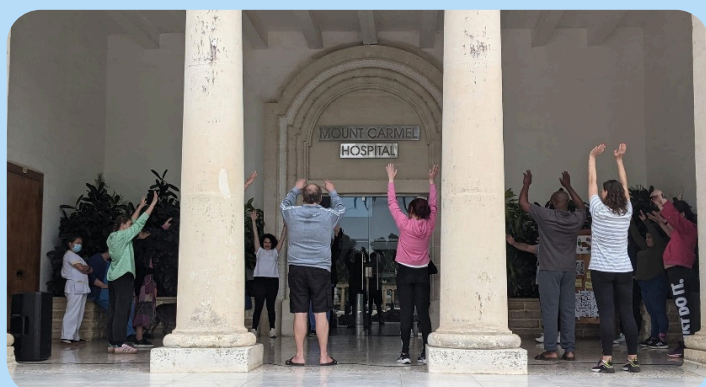


Malta

On Wednesday, May 15, the Social Work Department at Mount Carmel Hospital, in collaboration with Moveo Dance Company, organized an inspiring '**movement workshop**' for patients and staff. This event was a highlight of Mental Health Awareness Week. During the workshop, participants immersed themselves in various dance-like exercises. This event underscored a powerful message: **incorporating movement into our daily lives** significantly enhances our mental health.

Various **other activities** were also organized for patients and staff:

- Treasure hunt in the hospital's gardens. Participants also had the opportunity to tour the war shelters present on the hospital grounds, receiving information about the history of mental health and the current vision. Participants also had the opportunity to **practice mindfulness** in the hospital garden.
- A **lecture** on service dogs, carried out in collaboration with the psychiatric trainees and Service Dogs Malta Foundation.
- A small group of inpatients had the opportunity to visit and participate in activities at **Helpers on Hooves** - Equine Facilitated Learning Malta. This event was supported by the Welfare Committee.



Furthermore, The Friends of Mount Carmel Hospital Society organized a **webinar** on June 27, discussing this year's European Mental Health Week. Speakers from Malta, Ireland, Scotland, Italy, and Spain were present. The main psychiatric hospital and other public locations were lit in green for the occasion of EMHW.





Croatia

The majority of the EMHW activities were organized, co-organized, or sponsored by the **Croatian Institute of Public Health (CIPH)** – a JA ImpleMENTAL partner.

On May 14, the **Round Table** of the Croatian Association of Mental Health Associations (SUMEZ), supported by the CIPH, was held at the House of Europe in Zagreb. The topic was **good practices** in the EU and Croatia in the field of **community services** for people with mental health difficulties, marking the beginning of the campaign called “Our Voices for Mental Health.” The Round Table brought together experts and activists to discuss key issues and challenges related to mental health in Croatia, while citizens and EU representatives followed the discussion from the audience.

The presentation of the interesting and useful publication, the **mental health glossary** “Do You Know What Mental Health Is?”, was held on May 15 at the Croatian Institute of Public Health. The glossary was created as part of the National Healthy Living Program by experts from the Counseling Center for Mental Health Promotion, part of the Health Promotion Service of the Croatian Institute of Public Health.



Several **conferences** were held with participation from CIPH's own Professor Štimac Grbić, an integral part of JA ImpleMENTAL. Professor Grbić gave a lecture on **youth mental health** within the project “If You Only Knew” at Otočac High School on May 15. She also participated in another conference, “Mental Health and Well-being of Employees in the Workplace,” organized by the Croatian Chamber of Economy on May 16. She spoke about the improvement of **mental health in the workplace** within the Strategic Framework for the Development of Mental Health in the Republic of Croatia until 2030.

Finally, on May 17, a recognition ceremony was held for the most active schools in the Zagreb area and their employees who were involved in the PoMoZi Da educational program. The program aims to improve the **health literacy of educational workers** in the area of mental health for children and youth.

Due to bad weather conditions, the public health campaign Walking for Mental Health, organized by SUMEZ and the CIPH, was postponed to May 23.

