**Teacher Mental Health Literacy**

Assessment and promotion of teacher mental health literacy in order to promote child related mental health.

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**Background**

TEACHER-MHL investigate pupil-related mental health literacy in teachers with a focus on children of mentally-ill parents:

- over 3 million children experience at least one parent with mental disorder in Germany every year (Mattejat 2008) (approx. 25% of all students)
- and have considerably higher risk of developing serious mental health problems
- Importance of schools & teachers:
  - burdens & coping strategies often manifest in children's school lives
  - teacher see children every day

School = creation of risk potentials or protective function? But: Lack of information on the extent of teachers' abilities

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**Objective I**

- measure the extent of pupil-related mental health literacy in teachers (grade 1-6)
- focus on knowledge about the children’s living conditions and psychosocial strains

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**Objective II**

to promote the health of a high-risk group
develop and test a training program for teachers within the framework of the professional role based on the results of research stage

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**Methods**

- 6 databases searched in English & German
- different search terms for example: 'teacher' AND 'mentally ill parents' 'school' AND 'awareness' AND 'mentally ill parents'

Inclusion criteria:

- studies about teachers capability of identifying pupils with a mentally ill parent and how they deal with this situation (1990 – 2015)

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**Narrative Content Analysis**

- difficulty for teachers to identify burdened pupils (i.e. no formal school structures)
- mostly teachers know about parental mental illness through informal interactions with colleagues (Not clear why colleagues know)
- or communication with the community (relatives or friends of the family)
- If Teacher identify pupils living with a mentally ill parent, they are usually troubled by the situation of the child and the consequences for that child

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**Conclusions**

- research gap
- main focus: pupils mental health problems
- research on teacher mental health literacy focuses on children's problems but not on children at risk!!

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**Quantitative Results**

- only three studies specifically focusing on teachers and children of mentally-ill parents (Bibou-Nakou 2004, Reupert and Maybery 2007, Brockmann 2014)
- several articles focused on mental health literacy of teachers & mental illnesses of students/children
- search strategy was modified and broadened (by e.g. using cross-referencing, or looking at specific diseases, as depression)
- authors of these articles have been contacted & confirmed the gap found in the state of the art

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**Stage 3 (in 2016)**

Quantitative Online Survey:

- based on results Stage 2
- approach: assess the extent of socio-analytical skills in general as well as in relation to institutional and individual characteristics
- circa 2.500 teacher in the federal republic of North Rhine-Westphalia

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**Stage 4 (in 2017)**

develop and test a training program for teachers based on results of Stage 2 and 3

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**Expected Outcome (2018)**

Enhancing profession-specific mental health literacy gives reason to expect high long-term effectiveness:

- in schools children are especially „accessible“ for measures of health promotion
- leads to teachers discharge
- and increases school health promotion

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**References:**


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TEACHER-MHL is part of the German-wide Health Literacy in Childhood and Adolescence (HLCA) Consortium, which is a partnership of five German universities that conduct evidence-based health literacy research in ten subprojects for three years from 2015 on. Therein three sub-projects will examine Mental Health Literacy, each one with a different focus on children of mentally ill parents.

See also www.HLCA-Consortium.com