Building the capacity for mental health protection and psycho-social assistance for members of the MoD/AF BiH through the Project „Preventiva“

and

Experiences and activities of psychologists in AF BiH

Expert Advisor for MH and PSA
CP Vesna Ležaja, psychologist

Sarajevo, 06.-10.05.2019.
Organizational structure

MINISTRY OF DEFENSE BiH
ARMED FORCES BiH
JOINT STAFF AF BiH
SUPPORT COMMAND AF BiH

PERSONAL MANAGEMENT COMMAND
The strength of an army is not in its weapons, its strength is in its people!
• BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE AND FUNCTIONAL SYSTEM +
• AFFIRMATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT MH IN THE MILITARY POPULATION AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS +
  • RAISING PSYCHIC COMBAT READINESS +
• DESTIGMATIZATION THE PERSONS WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFESSION +
  • FUNKCTIONING OF ALL WITH „LESS DAMAGE“ +
  (because of the known risks of carryng out military service)
Project „Preventiva“: Reason? Why? How?

- Engaged one person – psychologist long time
- Program initiative in November 2013:
  "Program reintegratin afer the mission and prevention PTSD"

- Project "Preventiva" organized by IOM – for 5 years = IOM staff Đanluka, Peter, project coordinator Danijela Torbica with associates Alena, Dijana, Danijela, Snježana, Mahir
  with donor support countries:
  - Norway Kingdom (until now) Geir, Jacob, Jan, Tom ... and
  - Denmark Kingdom Webecka, Niels, Henrick, Felicia ...
Continuation of the Project and activities in MoD/AF BiH

• **July 2015.** - employed 5 psychologists + 1 from the existing structure = engaged 6 psychologists - in JS Lucija, in PMC Vesna, and 4 in RTC, Sarajevo Sanela, Banja Luka Sanela, Tuzla Marija and Čapljina Neda (with regional responsibility)

• **By September 2018.** – capacity building through various activities: study visits to AF donor countries and exchange of experience and knowledge with their psychologists, many workshops in the country with expert from different fields, establish cooperation with the civil health sector in the field of mental health (CMH), cooperation with the psychologists of the countries of the region, last year attended the IAMPS symposium in Bucharest, 2017. Evaluation activities by international experts (Subur Consulting from Spain and Custom Concept - BiH)

• **Parallel activities in MoD/AF:** psychologists regular work task and making missig necessary documents – Ethical standards of psychologist work, SOP...
More about activities regards to the project „Preventiva“

- HEAVY WORK OF MoD/AF STAFF in SEARCH FOR LEGAL OPTIONS (limited number of personnel and change of formation structure), creating Policies and Regulations for protection MH and PSA in MO/AF BiH, planning of activities...

- Important support and understanding in capacity building in the field of protection MH and PSA in MoD: Marina Pendeš, Sead Muratović, Miro, Hasret, Neđo, Andrija) and in AF BiH (general Ilić, Ahmić, Kolenda, Knežević, brigadier Duspara, Kopuz, Nišić, colonel Ibrić, Sačić, Majors RTC Suada, Tiho, Dalibor, Ekrem and many others in the system

- Ministry of Health of the Federation and Republic of Srpska were active in the project through establishing our system and connecting with CMH (Goran Čerkez and Milojko Grujičić)
• PROTECTION OF MH THROUGH DIFFERENT PSYCHOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES
  PREVENTION, SUPPORT and HELP (3 P)
• PSYCHOLOGICAL SELECTION OF CANDIDATES FOR RECEPTION IN AF AND CLASSIFICATION MIL.PERSONNEL
• EDUCATION
• GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING
• BUILDING PSYCHIC READINESS FOR COMBAT AND NON-COMBAT TASKS
• REDUCTION OF TENSION, STRESS, FATIGUE – DEFUSING, DEBRIEFING, DECOMPRESSING
• PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION FOR THE TRANSITION (RELEASE, RETIREMENT)
• WORKING WITH FAMILIES
• COOPERATION WITH CIVILIAN HEALTH INSTITUTION (CMH)
• HELP CIVILIANS WITH ELEMENTAL DISASTERS
• RESEARCH, CONTINUOUS PERSONAL EDUCATION
• MANY ADMINISTRATIONS, PLANS, DOCUMENTS, REPORTS....
ZONE OF RESPONSIBILITY
RTC AF BiH

KANTONI:
1. Una-Sana
2. Posavina
3. Tuzla
4. Zenica-Doboj
5. Bosansko - Podrinje
6. Centralno - Bosanski
7. Hercegovina-Neretva
8. Zepedno Hercegovina
9. Sarajevo
10. Kanton 10

REGIONI:
1. Banja Luka
2. Doboj
3. Bijeljina
4. Višegrad
5. Sarajevo
6. Foča
7. Tuzla

LEGEND
- Crna (grade)
- Bela (općine)
- Oranžna (granična linija)

Zona odgovornosti centara za regrutovanje i tranziciju MO i OS BiH
• **Selection** of candidates:
  - for training at MAcademies of others countries
  - for NCO and OF
  - soldiers (this year)

Reason: **Adaptation of normative legal acts**
Gradually introducing with psychologist job in AF and
Supply of measuring instruments

• **Transition**: modeled in project „NATO Perspective“
- transition workshops with released, individually consultation, working with a family members, monitoring at home users with staff for transition in RTC *(the process lasts from 1-2 years)*
MISSION (PSO and UN) - before

- Priority of work for two psychologists (4-6 months)
- Classification in accordance with the criteria and as a rule: „the real man - on the right duty"
- Before the mission - individual work, educational workshops, observing behaviors, exercises on the field
- Pre-deployment education (10 topics)
- Family Day – preparation of the family members, relatives and friends, workshops with children, coloring book, (introduction each other – civilians and mil.personal included in preparation)
- Deployed in the mission area
• **During the mission** – visit in mission area, defusing, individual counseling

• **After the mission - debriefing** – immediately upon return in the state
  - **dekompressing** – (4 days)
  - usually in 30 days after the mission
  - in the spa-recreational center (305 participants)

• **Questionnaire** about the experiences related on the mission
  (6 months after the mission – now more than 600 participants, researching and processing results are ongoing

• **Work with family members** – **continuously**
MOST COMMON PSYCHOLOGICAL problems of employees

- Tension - Anxiety

- Situations of neurotic reactions

- Stress
  - Caused by fatigue, dissatisfaction, private life problems, participation in mission

- Still present:

  - Consequences of exposure to war trauma

  - PTSD and comorbid disturbances (alcoholism, betting..)
Realized so far...

- We have built our own functioning and stable system!
- Workshops in CMH = 20 (135 present CMH staff)
- Creating a Handbooks for the work of a psychologists, brochures for members, methodologies ...
- More than 10 000 people involved in different activities in 3,5 years of work
- Activities in 2018. year
  - Military Service Candidates - officers and NCO = 206 (3062 activities)
  - Individual counseling = 361
  - Assessment of personality structure = 290
  - Rehabilitation measures (decompression) = 92
  - Educational workshops in AF = 2413 people present
    - Teaching hours = 128
- In progress – cooperation with the police DBrčko and „transferring“ experiences from the project and capacity building
CONCLUSION:
- Highly relevant project according to user needs
- The project’s effectiveness is assessed by high rating
- It is early to evaluate the work results of the psychologist and the impact of the project, but it can be predicted on multiple levels
- The results achieved are proof of the commitment of all involved in the project “Preventiva“ – MoD/AF, MH, IOM, donor support countries Norway and Denmark

RECOMMENDATION:
- Continue building capacity and share experience
• The military structure is more difficult to adapt – Time needed
• Many administrations, Materijal resources are limited

• A large number of different areas of work – Needed more psychologists in system (more 4 – 5 person)

• Needs patience, understanding and perseverance - 
  - The result will not be missed!
Remindness!

HEALTH

BIOLOGICALLY          SOCIAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL

BALANCE

W E L L B E I N G
Welcome!

Questions?

More info on:

www.mod.gov.ba or www.preventiva.ba