NEWSLETTER ISSUE 2

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ADDfreeTraining

A European initiative aiming to build and implement innovative training on the prevention of Smoking, Alcohol and Internet addictions among children and adolescents: A family-oriented approach for adult learners and educators

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The ADD-freeTraining Research Findings

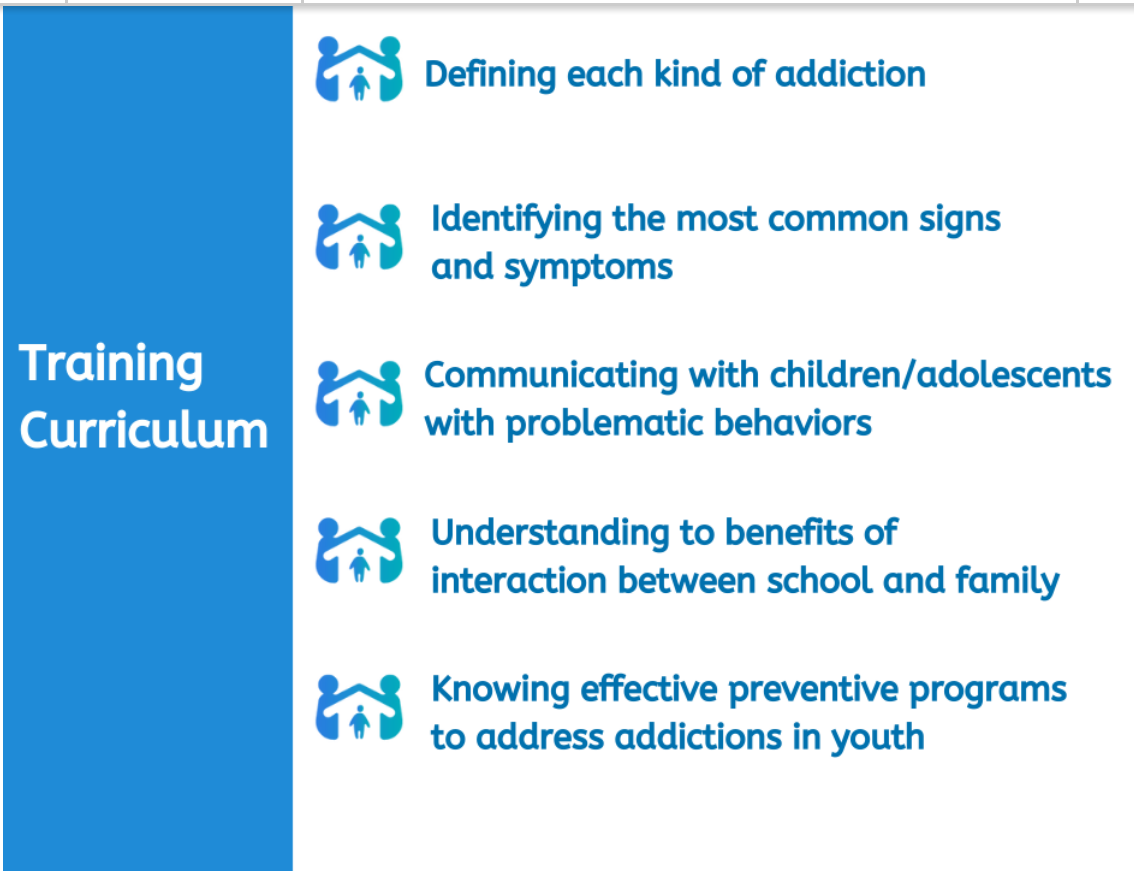
The EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 supports the health and well-being of young people, focusing on mental health promotion as well as addictions and substance abuse prevention. During the first year of the project, **the consortium achieved a mapping of the addiction prevention ecosystem through an extensive desktop research among 28 European countries. Focus groups were also performed in the consortium countries with parents and teachers.**

courses have a long history, unlike problematic Internet use, it is important to continue to find new techniques for dealing with these issues in line with current challenges and upcoming research findings.

Among the addictions on which the ADD-freeTraining focuses (i.e. smoking, alcohol and Internet), parents and teachers in all focus groups were mostly concerned about problematic Internet use since the use of the Internet has escalated in recent years and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Knowledge and practices concerning prevention and management, especially among young people, have yet to be fully systematized and dispersed. Effectively preventing and dealing with any kind of addiction in youth requires prevention programs of family-oriented approach. On the other hand, school interventions building social competence skills have a significant effect on reducing the initiation of use of substances or unhealthy behaviors like smoking and problematic use of the internet.

The development of a training program for adults

Within the last months, the ADD-freeTraining project team works on the development of a training program regarding the prevention of specific kinds of addictions in early life stages, focusing on addiction to alcohol, smoking, and problematic use of the internet. The training can be attended by parents, teachers, adult educators, and by any adult who is related with children and adolescents.



The training curriculum consists of two parts. The first part includes some general thematic units regarding the condition of addictions in Europe for children and adolescents, definitions regarding addictions as well as relevant signs and symptoms. Additionally, **communication techniques that can be used in young individuals** to address problematic conditions will be presented. Finally, a thematic unit will be dedicated to the interaction between family and school on early addressing unhealthy behaviors in childhood and adolescence.

The second part follows a more practical approach including specific thematic units separately for parents, teachers, and adult educators. In specific, **parents and teachers will have the opportunity to attend case studies and scenarios** that will be related with the prevention or early detection of each kind of addiction examined in ADD-freeTraining project (i.e. alcohol use, smoking, and Internet use). As for the adult educators, they will learn **techniques for development, implementation, and evaluation of preventive programs** in young individuals aiming to deal with problematic behaviors as well as which of these techniques have been shown to be effective.

The ADD-freeTraining is a three-year project (01/11/2019- 31/10/2022), funded by the ERASMUS+ Program of the European Union. The project aims to develop comprehensive educational tools for the prevention of smoking, alcohol and internet addictions among children and adolescents through a family and school oriented approach.

Six partners from Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece and Serbia facing common challenges in youth addictions will work towards achieving the objectives of the project. The Ormylia Foundation from Chalkidiki, Greece is the project coordinator.

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