

# Hungary: Mental health at schools – how holistic health promotion (HHP) may promote it

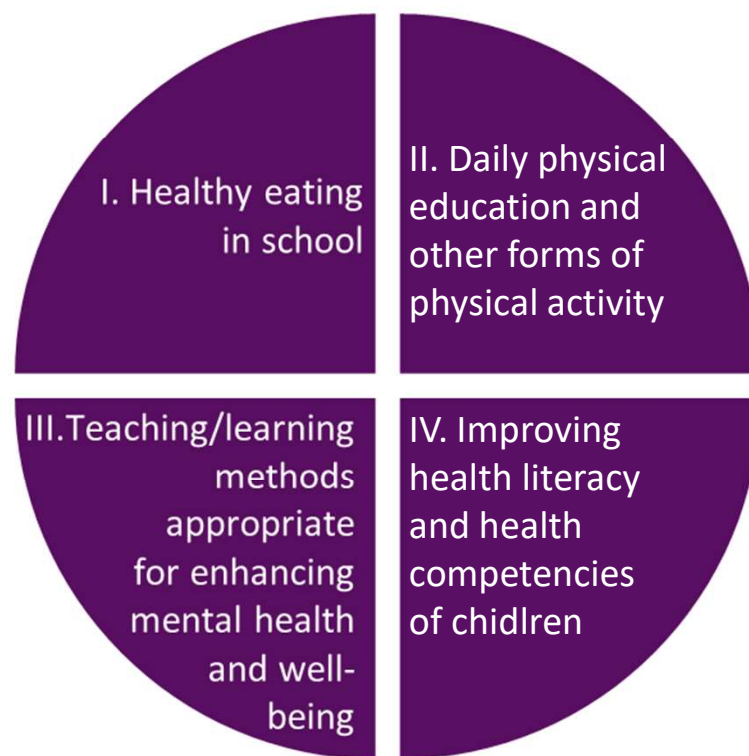
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**HHP prescribed for all schools since 2012:**  
Four main health promoting tasks for teachers  
to do in their daily work - with participation of the whole school

**BETTER HEALTH = BETTER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**



## HHP: Four practical tasks for teachers in their daily work

- I. Healthy eating: children should understand and like healthy meal
- II. Daily physical education according to health promoting criteria + other forms of physical activity
- III. Pedagogic methods and the arts to enhance mental health – in all classes and subjects
- IV. Improving health literacy and health skills



# Help, evaluate, improve HHP

For complex follow up of schools in HHP:

- Online questionnaire for principals was sent to all schools in February 2020
- Questions regarding the 4 tasks most practically

**Results show, that we have to improve the work of teachers in all their 4 tasks!**

**Now we will see only the 3rd task (mental health).**



# Mental health to be enhanced in the daily work of teachers

The 3rd task of HHP:

## III. Pedagogic methods and the arts to enhance mental health – in all classes and subjects:

- Teachers use several appropriate methods but not as part of their daily routine work: to change „old” methods to the appropriate ones would need a big extra work for them! – No motivation till now for this. Here we have to improve.
- COVID could have helped here a bit! Teachers were very much creative in the 1st wave and they may use their new methods even now and further.



# Mental health to be enhanced in the daily work of teachers

There are several projects in the education sector for schools, to prevent:

- bullying
- dropping out
- drug, alcohol problem and smoking;

and to enhance:

- social skills
- academic achievements.



# Common goal of education and health sector

Development of the methods of teachers to enhance mental health and academic achievement – common goal.

How to help it?

Projects alone: this is not enough.

We need long lasting changes.

But the continuous attention may give motivation for teachers to the needed „work-investment”.



# How should a mentally flourishing school look like?

Teachers are cooperating with each-other, and they all are working in their classes/everyday work with methods which are appropriate to enhance social skills of children.

Children's social skills are developing, so they like to be together with their mates and their teachers.

Teachers see that children like school, and so they have success and they also like school.





## HBSC 2017/2018 in Hungarian schools: some aspects of mental health

- Family affluence scale: strong improvement since 2014.
- Tobacco smoking: slight improvement since 2014.
- Alcohol consumption: slight improvement since 2014.
- Drug consumption: after a decrease in 2009/2010 it has not changed – it is still to improve.
- Bullying and fighting: rate relatively low, has not decreased (but problem awareness has risen)
- Peer support: rate is extremely high now, as it was in 2014, too
- Problematic social media use: 9,5 %
- Problematic playing of video games (1-4 symptoms): 14,4 % to 0,6 %.



# HBSC 2017/2018 in Hungarian schools: some aspects of mental health

- Subjective well-being: no change since 2014 in many points:
  - General life satisfaction: 7,40
  - Excellent or good health: 75 %
  - Chronic health problem needing regular medical attention: 20,8 %
- But we do not like the increase of feeling nervous, exhausted, irritated.
- We are happy that a slight decrease was detected in depressive mood (3 of 10 students).
- Perceived Family Support mean score: 24,2
- 90 % of students can discuss problems with mother.



# HBSC 2017/2018 in Hungarian schools: some aspects of mental health

Role of school: no changes since 2014

- Liking school: 71,7 %
- School is not really stressful: 77,9 %
- Higher school pressure perceived: 8,5 %

Internationally: this data is very low in all age groups.



# National or local indicators of wellbeing at schools?

- Generally: HBSC – this means a representative sample, not used in all schools.
- In projects there are some indicators.
- There is no site where a school could look after all projects to find one which would suit the school.

But schools hear from each other, there are conferences for good practices – so they may learn from each other.



## Now extra attention on antibullying and prevention of dropping out

**General: HHP - 3rd and 4th task means tool for prevention of bullying and dropping out.**

**Huge ongoing project: 35.000 teachers use methods to enhance mental health of children.**

Digital Strategy for the Safety of Children

Psychologists in schools: now 1754 (in ca. 3500 schools)

Social workers in schools, with some qualification in mentalhygiene - since 2018

Program for catching up as a system since 2018

National Crime Prevention Council

„School policeman” helping schools on demand

Programs and trainings for teachers:

- 10 types recently
- 17 types from earlier



# What should be done?

We should build up a system to better motivate teachers in general:

- The whole school has to decide and start working with appropriate methods to develop social skills of children.
- The mental health of the students of the whole school should be measured at the beginning and later again.
- When it is developing, teachers should get premium salary – not once, but continuously.

This is an idea yet, no decision or planning yet.





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