

## “Bringing restorative justice and art into mental health settings”: E- book

The COVID-19 pandemic brought global community in front of new challenges. This urgent and unknown situation has brought about changes in almost all areas of life. The long period of social distancing has brought to the surface the mental health problems that many people face today which need to be addressed. In this context, we believe that the MHM project can be a new proposal for the implementation of treatment in individuals with mental illness based on Art Therapy and Restorative Justice principles.

Thus, the consortium of the MHM project is glad to announce the completion of the first Intellectual Output of the project and the development of the e- book “*Bringing restorative justice and art into mental health settings*” in two versions, the initial summary findings from the partner’s countries (the UK, Greece, Hungary, Spain, and Cyprus) in English and the long version in the partners’ national languages.

The e-book forms part of the project’s results and it is the first step in developing its evidence-based tools. The e-book is the result of the partners’ collective effort as they conducted primary and secondary research with the aim to depict the implementation of restorative justice and art for mental health. More specifically, each partner organization conducted a literature review as well as 10 in-depth interviews based on a semi-structured guide: 5 with mental health professionals and 5 with art therapists. The interviews were analysed through qualitative analysis methods, which resulted in several conclusions for each one of the participating countries.

This unique publication offers in-depth information regarding the implementation of restorative art at mental health structures in the partner countries while at the same time underlines the variations that exist throughout Europe. The main conclusion is that art and restorative justice in compilation can be a very effective tool for mental health structures and people in need.

### Find us on the Web

We are very excited to announce the launch of our newly designed website. Visit <https://mentalhealthmatters.eu/> to find out more about our project, to get informed about our news and activities, to read our publications and stay tuned to get informed about the trainings and the online tools that will be developed in the context of this project.

You can also find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/MHMerasmus>. Through our Facebook page, you can have access to continuous updates on all the developments of the MHM project, as well as news related to the field.

### Learn more about MHM

The idea of the project derives from the fact that in many countries, mental health challenges are the leading cause of disability. People suffering from mental illness and especially those who live in mental health structures are in the forefront of socially disadvantaged groups, suffering even more from social stigmatization and marginalization. These people often also suffer from societal injustices.

Although art’s healing effect on mental health is being acknowledged more and more, it is not an optional therapeutic approach for most of mental health structures in many European countries. *Moreover, there is an obvious need for more contemporary approaches, which will possibly get closer the understandings between patient and therapist and may increase the mental health state and the social inclusion.*

At the same time Restorative justice can have an empowering effect on the mental health patients, breaking the stereotypical power-authority relationship, between the therapists and the patient while facilitating the relief of mentally ill and their social restoration. The potential and benefits of combining therapeutic art with restorative justice are still not translated into educational material and programmes, leaving many adult learners and professionals in the field unaware.

Mental Health Matters through Restorative Art (MHM) aims to respond to this by bringing together a cross-sector, strategic partnership to support innovation in the adult education field by creating, piloting, and disseminating educational material and tools tailored to the needs and realities of mental health professionals, restorative justice practitioners, and artists in the participating countries and across Europe. The project started in November 2019 and will be completed in October 2021.

### Objectives of the project

MHM aims to enhance the skills, knowledge, and experience of mental health professionals using art and restorative justice values. MHM also aims to train artists to use art in order to facilitate the relief of mentally ill patients and their social restoration. The ultimate goal is to create innovative tools that enhance the healthcare provision and self-representation of those who live within mental health structures. Thus, the main aim is to create a methodological approach that puts together the benefits of art therapy with the values of restorative justice. MHM will also design and accredit e-courses that will enhance the skills and knowledge of adult learners, supporting in this way the setting up of, and access to upskilling pathways.

The consortium includes 6 partner entities, the coordinator Restorative Justice for All (UK) and five other partners: Center for Social Innovation-CSI (Cyprus), Kinonikes Sineteristikes Drastiriotes Epathon Omadon - EDRA (Greece), Lélekben Otthon Közhasznú Alapítvány (LOKA) (Hungary), Fundacion INTRAS (Spain), and Anotati Scholi Kalon Technon -ASFA (Greece).