



## **“Mind the gap: Supporting young disabled people’s right to live independently and to be included in the community through exploring mental health as a disability issue”**

Study session organized by European Network for Independent Living and Euro-Youth Mental Health in cooperation with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Strasbourg, 17-22 June 2019

This group photo was taken in the European Youth Centre, in Strasbourg, France on June 2019.

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**Mind the gap: Supporting young disabled people’s right to live independently and to be included in the community through exploring mental health as a disability issue**  
**Final Report**



## Executive Summary

This is the final report of the “Mind the gap: Supporting young disabled people’s right to live independently and to be included in the community through exploring mental health as a disability issue” Study Session organized by the European Network on Independent Living Youth Network (ENIL Youth) and Euro Youth Mental Health (EYMH), in partnership with the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe between the 17th and 22nd of June in Strasbourg, France.

This study session has brought together participants from European Network on Independent Living Youth Network (ENIL Youth), Euro Youth Mental Health (EYMH) and other interested people not related to any of the two organisations. There were 16 participants and 7 Personal Assistants from 15 countries, with different backgrounds and experiences related to disability and mental health issues. The group thrived in this diversity and cooperated during the different sessions and during the free time to build a safe and inclusive space to connect and share ideas, expectations and personal experiences.

The full composition of the group included other than participants and the personal assistants also two Palantypists (Speech to Text Service Providers), four members of the programming team - supported by one Educational Advisor by the Council of Europe Youth Department.

During the study session the group welcomed external guest speakers. Jolijn Santegoeds, Board member of ENUSP (European Network of (Ex-) Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, and member of the Board of Directors of the European Disability Forum was invited as a key speaker.

The Programme also included a presentation by Alfredo Ferrante, a former Chairperson of the Committee of Experts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at CoE and an exchange with Dunja Mijatovic, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe.



The study session run by ENIL Youth & EYMH has been the outcome of the collaboration between the two organizations. The main input to the starting of the application for a Study Session on this topic has been given by ENIL Youth Network. In particular, the team members Beyza Unal and Agnes Sarolta Fazekas have been wanting to run an activity to study the connections between Independent Living and Mental Health issues for a long time and have been using their previous experience as participants and organizers of other Study Sessions run by ENIL Youth.

### Organisers

The European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) is a Europe-wide network of disabled people, with members throughout the Council of Europe Member States. ENIL is a cross-disability forum for all disabled people, Independent Living organisations and their non-disabled allies on the issues of Independent Living. Its main aim is to advocate and lobby for Independent Living values, principles and practices, namely for a barrier-free environment, provision of personal assistance support and adequate technical aids, together making full citizenship of disabled people possible. Young disabled people are among the core aims and activities of ENIL. There is an extraordinary focus to empower and support the involvement of young disabled people in becoming future leaders of Independent Living.

Euro Youth Mental Health (EYMH) is a Non-Governmental Organisation currently run by passionate and enthusiastic young people who volunteer in order to share their expertise and experiences to improve the support to young people across Europe to have happy and healthy futures. Euro Youth Mental Health (EYMH) acts in order to create a Europe that enables young people to access support and talk openly about their mental health and well-being. By encouraging collaboration across services, sharing of best-practice and ensuring that young



people are empowered to have a voice in all matters that affect them around the promotion of mental health and preventing the impact of mental illness.

### Background and Overview of the study session in a nutshell

The organizers of the Study Session have worked and volunteered in youth organizations for many years. They noticed that in many cases disabled people organizations make effort to use an intersectional approach that involves also the perspective of persons with mental health issues. The topic is however underestimated so the rationale behind the organization of this study Session has been to provide information and raising awareness on the in this field. This approach means that young persons disabled and non-disabled can express the same rights to live independently by taking into account that mental health issues are to be considered as disability issues. Through the exploration of the intersection between mental health issues and disabilities it will be possible to promote inclusion in the community and to make the topic a mainstream in the debate concerning human rights and disability. It has then been necessary to provide participants to the study session the necessary knowledge and skills to understand the common ground on which disability and mental health meet.

Furthermore, the two organizations have aimed to support participants to realize the essential role of Independent Living as a human right that applies to all people equally facilitating inclusion in society, as well as to encourage participants to explore disabilities, to reflect on their intersectional identities and to develop an identity that is based on pride. Finally, an outcome for the participants has been to be leaders in promoting mental health, Independent Living, and human rights of young people.

The profile of the participants selected for the Study Session responded to the following criteria:



- Motivated participants who have experience or an interest in the areas of disability, mental health, and/or human rights and who identify/have identified themselves as disabled or having a mental health difficulty.
- Participants willing to share what they have learned in their local groups or communities following the study session.
- Participants confident in either of English and speech-to-text service.
- Residents of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe and parties to the European Cultural Convention (Belarus, Holy See, and Kazakhstan).

Participants were selected based on their application form and the selection team ensured there was a gender, geographical and organizational balance. The specific needs of a participant were not part of the selection criteria. Therefore, the team requested to be honest and open about access needs for the study session so that every person could be receiving the right support and the necessary adjustments could be in place from as early as possible.

## Detailed Overview

The main aims of the ‘Mind the Gap’ study session have been the following:

- to support young people’s right to live independently and to be included in the community through exploring mental health as a disability issue and
- to provide participants the necessary knowledge and skills to understand the common ground on which disability and mental health meet.

Other aims of this activity have also been:

- to promote leadership in learning about independent living and among a group of participants coming from a very different background.
- to create an inclusive environment so that it could be possible to promote cultural awareness, tolerance and solidarity among people that identified themselves as disabled and people that had experienced mental health.



Furthermore the effort of the organizers of the study session has been oriented towards

- Understanding the framework of experiences of intersections between mental health and disability;
- Make participants be aware and familiar with the concepts of inclusion and disability, including the concept of social model of disability;
- To develop the skills and competence of participants around designing activities to promote independent living and inclusive environments for persons with disabilities or mental health issues
- To enhance cooperation and leadership between young people with different backgrounds and interests;
- To find out from participants which methods and tools they could take to their local communities in order to promote inclusive activities

## Programming Team & Invited Experts, Guests

The members of the Programming team have been the following:

- Agnes Sarolta Fazekas is 31, female and comes from Hungary. Agnes Sarolta has been a member of the ENIL Youth Board between 2015-2017. She has been delivering various inclusive non-formal education training with ENIL Youth and the Erasmus Student Network. She has been working on several projects fostering the mobility of students with disabilities in Erasmus Programme. She is a former member of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe.
- Marco Carnesecchi is 39, male, and comes from Italy. He has been ENIL Office Manager since ENIL established its Brussels Office. For the preparation of the Study Session, Marco was the main contact point for

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COE Staff for what concerns logistics and administrative issues. He prepared the sessions to present the work of ENIL on Independent Living and the different projects ENIL has worked on and he has supported the sessions on the social model of disability. He also facilitated the session with the invited guest speaker Jolijn Santegoeds.

- Beyza Unal is 31, female and comes from Turkey. She is a clinical psychologist. She completed her Ph.D. in clinical psychology on mental health and physical disabilities. She is a member of the Board of ENIL Youth Network and of the Association of Women with Disabilities in Turkey. She has taken part in several national projects involving women with disabilities, as a guest lecturer and facilitator.
- Hugo Metcalfe, male, 33, United Kingdom, Freelance Research Psychologist, Consultant and Trainer. He is currently working primarily as a freelance Consultant, designing and delivering Mental Health, Resilience & Leadership Development Training Programs.

The programming team has been supported and worked in an equal partnership with Mayssa Rekhis, Educational Advisor who acted as a full member of the programming team. We also received support from Stefan Manevski in the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. The commitment of the educational advisors has been key for the effort to deliver a high quality study session which is in line with the overall aims, values and principles of the Council of Europe and especially with the aims, values and priority areas of the Council of Europe's Youth Department.

The composition of the preparatory team was agreed so that ENIL and EYMH were organizing the Study Session. The team as a whole was mostly working for what concerns ENIL's side on agreeing the content of the single sessions and each team member supporting each other. The input from EYMH was mainly to the

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sessions on Mental Health issues. ENIL would have appreciated the presence of the facilitator for both days of the preparatory team meeting in June and for the whole duration of the Study Session. In any case, the contribution from EYMH was very important and appreciated by the participants and it helped creating a positive space for participants to reflect on mental health and disability.

Besides the programming team members, the following experts, guests were also invited to make an invaluable contribution during the study session.

Julia Jacobie and Norma MacHaye are coming from the United Kingdom. As Speech to Text Reporters (Palantypist), they are providing real-time captioning, both onsite and remotely, at conferences and symposia throughout Europe and worldwide at Global Real Time Captioning LLP. Their expertise was essential to the study session in order to accommodate access needs of all attendees.

During the course of the week the study Session welcomed as an invited speaker Jolijn Santegoeds, activist and advocate for the well-being and rights of (ex) users and survivors of psychiatry. Her personal experience in different psychiatry centres, Jolijn is now the Co-chair of World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, (WNUSP), Board member of European Network of (Ex-) Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (ENUSP) and Board member of the European Disability Forum (EDF)<sup>1</sup>

Alfredo Ferrante, former member of the CAHDPH, contributed as an invited lecturer to present the work of the Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023 and the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of experts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CAHDPH), presented the past developments of the Council of Europe regarding the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

The participants have also had the opportunity to have a session with Dunja Mijatovich, Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner, and thus got to

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<sup>1</sup> Video interview with Jolijn Santegoeds available at this link  
<https://twitter.com/coe/status/1141301687824470016>



know more about her work, and discuss with her some of the Human Rights & Disability / Mental Health related issues in their own countries.

A presentation from the European Youth Foundation was also part of the program, and participants got to know more about their work within the youth sector, and the opportunities for funding and support.

Stefan Manevski have also presented the program of the youth department and invited the participants to take part in it as a follow up to the StS.

- All sessions were designed and implemented based on the Human Rights Education approach developed by the Youth Department.

## Profile of the participants

We invited participants from ENIL Youth, member countries of Erasmus Student Network and from other organisations who have interest, or experience in the topic of the study session. ENIL Youth is a wide network of young disabled people from the Member States of the Council of Europe. ENIL Youth network is loosely structured, therefore their members' work varies greatly and participants might

have no specific organisational affiliation or if they have, that it is an affiliation of their local, regional or national Disabled People's Organisations or Independent Living Centres, rather than directly affiliation to the ENIL Youth.

Participants, affiliated with no organisations have been welcomed as well to apply to this study session. Participants were required to be multipliers after the study session sharing what they learnt with their local groups or other communities. Participants were selected based on their application answers. The programming team has created a criteria system to support the fair selection and taking into



account the age, gender, geographical and organisational balance. Regarding the gender aspect, we have followed an inclusive and non-binary approach in order to create a space for self-identification. The specific access needs of participants were not part of the selection criteria. The age criteria have been set between with a broad age range between age eighteen (18) and thirty-five (35). Regarding the age dimension, we have taken into account the social barriers that might hinder the participation of disabled youth in different activities. We have experienced a broad age range, a good gender and geographical balance among selected participants. Regarding the organisational affiliation, approximately half of the participants have indicated their identification with either with ENIL Youth or EYMH and few participants without specific affiliation have been among the selected group. Other

diversity aspects of backgrounds, such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc. have been respected, protected and given as a choice of non-disclosure or self-disclosure. In order to create a safe(r) and harmonious atmosphere among participants. To support this, the programming team created in advance an “About Me” form where all participants could indicate three things about them with an additional voluntary question – “What you want people to know about you so that you can be fully included?” With the attendees' consent, the programming team have circulated their answers among them in order create a smoother start for the group bonding and group dynamic for study session. At the beginning of the study session, the programming team created a "buddy system" in order to support the mixing of the participants with different organisational affiliations. This approach also helped participants individually and interpersonally support and look for each other during the entire duration of the study session. The programming team have been supported the individual bonding and support additionally mainly with small and voluntary activities, such as during energizer activities or free-time activities when "buddies" did small activities together.

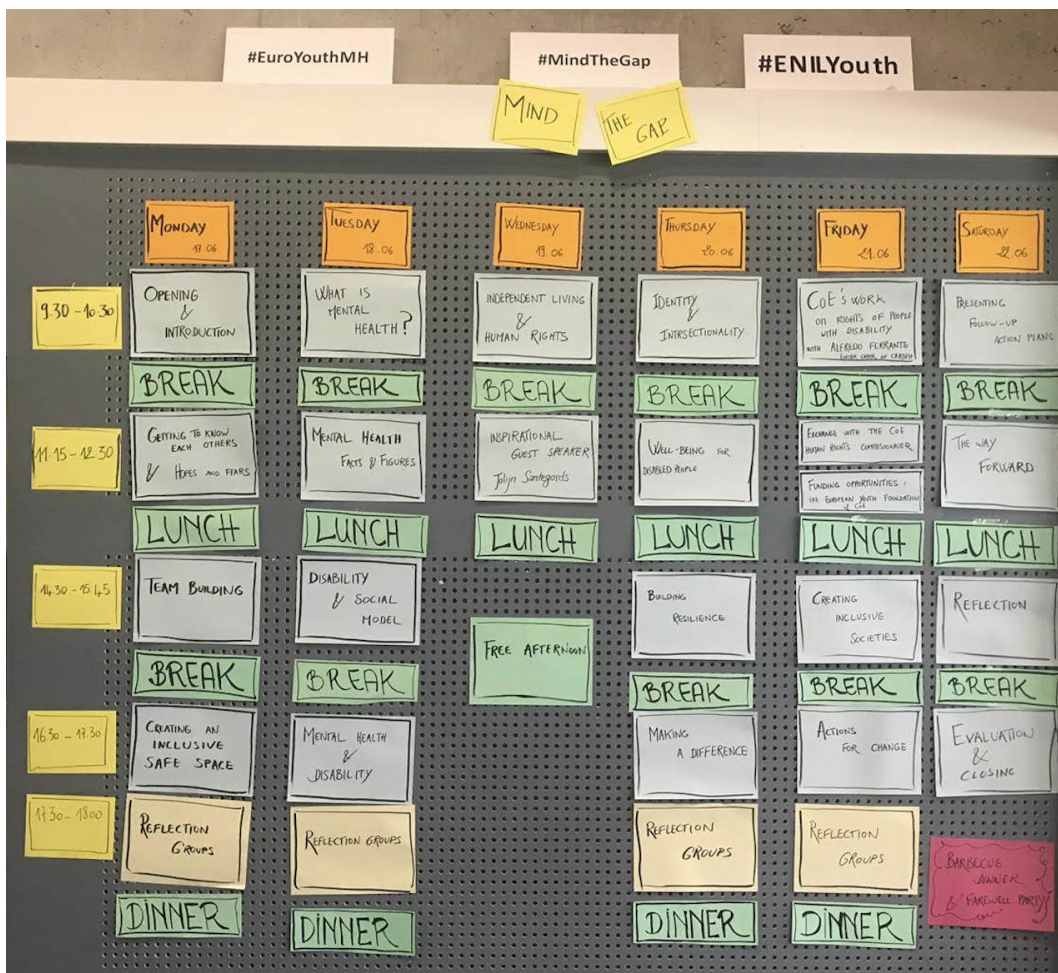


## Programme of the Study session

The Programme included discussions about the concepts of disability and mental health and the interaction between them. With the contributions from the guest speakers, these discussions were followed by human rights approach to disability, the right to live independently in the community and deinstitutionalization. Other topics that were covered during the week were identity, intersectionality, and multiple discrimination, along with the ways to maintain well-being and to build resilience in the face of negative events. All of these discussions have contributed to the development of a framework for the next step: action planning for an inclusive society. During this step, the main issues were determining challenges to inclusive society and forming a problem tree. Lastly, the issue of access needs was an overarching theme for the whole study session.

### **Saturday and Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> June**

The team started working on the preparation of the Study Session on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June and worked on setting the space and preparing the material during the weekend. Participants arrived on Sunday, 16 June and there was an informal welcome evening activity so that they could get together and get settled in the Youth Centre. They also met with officers from the council of Europe and discussed practical issues such as logistics for a participant not hosted in the Youth Centre and to discuss about the reimbursement for their stay.



### Monday, 17 June 2019

The first day was opened with an Introduction to the Study Session by the preparatory team and the participants were welcomed by Tina MULCAHY, Executive Director of the European Youth Centre Strasbourg. After the presentation the participants discussed with the team about the aims & objectives of the Study Session. It was important at this stage to start with team building activities so that the participants could feel more at ease in discussing openly about their expectations concerning the Study session and also about their access needs and what they saw as the main features an inclusive environment should



have to facilitate the discussion about Independent Living and Mental Health issues.

## **Tuesday, 18 June 2019**

During this day there was an Introduction to the topic of Mental Health and discussion about Mental health and Human Rights run by EYMH and also ENIL introduced its work about Social model of disability. It's worth discussing the details of this session which lies at the hearth of Independent Living. The session focused on introducing the Social Model of Disability, followed by a “Where do I stand” activity, where participants expressed their opinions based on different statements connected to inclusion. The main outcomes of the session were identified as follows:

- Independent Living means having choice and control. It's having the same range of options and the same degree of self-determination that people without a disability take for granted.
- Spaces are needed to be designed to ensure all can be included.
- People's needs change all the time, therefore it is impossible to be fully inclusive at all times.
- Positive attitude brings a change in behaviour and mindset and can be a good start towards inclusion.
- Segregation is wrong when it's forced, but segregation can happen because of needs - to ensure learning happens effectively. Separate individual spaces are welcome if it's by choice.
- Charity is not only about pity; it's helping with the financial costs - an inclusive process costs money. The people are picking up the pieces that the states are failing to take care of. However, charity can also be seen as



preventing those with disabilities from having an independent life, takes away opportunity and ownership.

- Equality is essential for inclusion. Inclusion is accepting the differences.

### **Wednesday, 19 June 2019**

During this day Human Rights and independent living Connections and challenges were discussed and users had the chance to meet about Mental Health and Independent Living, and have an input and exchange with Jolijn SANTEGOEDS, Board of Directors, European Disability Forum, and a survivor of psychiatric institutions.

### **Thursday, 20 June 2019**

The topics of Identity and intersectionality were largely discussed and with the input of EYMH the participants also had the opportunity to make a good reflection on Well-being, Promoting well-being for young people with disability and also have a Practical workshop on how to build their resilience. This continued during their Reflection groups and also gave participants the start on thinking how to develop their take-away message from the Study Session so that they could be initiating follow-up ideas and plans.

### **Friday, 21 June 2019**

On Friday the Council of Europe's work on rights of persons with disability

Exchange was presented by Alfredo FERRANTE, former Chairperson of the CAHDPH. The presentation concerned many years of work to promote



inclusion of young people with disability in the Youth for Democracy programme at European level. After the session the participants had a very important opportunity to listen to Council of Europe's work in protecting Human Rights, in an exchange with Dunja MIJATOVIC, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe. They also showed interest in a presentation about Funding support from the European Youth Foundation.

### **Saturday, 22 June 2019**

On the final day, participants continued their work in 3 groups aimed at creating Inclusive societies and designing their Actions for change planning.

They finally presented the groups follow-up ideas and action plans and summarized their key messages.

The days closed with a Reflection on the experience of the week and the follow-up and Evaluation of the study session with recommendation for the organizers. There was a social event with a closing ceremony and a Barbecue dinner in the garden.

### **Learning outcomes of participants**

*“Before this study session, I thought I wouldn't be able to connect with participants who have physical disabilities. I thought they wouldn't understand me, and I wouldn't really understand them because I don't have any physical disability – but now, I understand that we all have a lot to share. We all have common problems.”*

This comment made by one of the participants who identified themselves as having mental health problems during the evaluation session indicates that the main aim of this study session was fulfilled successfully. Participants have expressed that they did not only understand the similarities and differences between the experiences of physical disabilities and mental health problems, but

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they also could have meaningful conversations and build deep relationships with participants who have different types of disabilities. The study session was evaluated as a prototype of an inclusive environment. Below are some other comments from the study session evaluation form:

- *Overall, my experience was very positive. It was awesome, lot to learn and lot to share.*
- *I mostly gained confidence and competences to continue working on the themes of the session and I learned a lot about the theme of the study session and health related issues, and surely I will use them in my community/job etc.*
- *This study session was mostly a positive experience in participation. This was the best group that teamed up after just a week, in what I have ever participated.*
- *We created our own little inclusive and accepting universe within the group and that is amazing.*
- *It was all positive week. I think I will always remember it on my positive memories. Also, I feel from other participants reflection and outcome very positive. For me personally all the fellow participants were inspiration.*
- *The first full day was difficult as we had to quickly get comfortable and communicate with each other; but the concept of the session helped us do just that. Great.*
- *Everyone at the centre did an amazing job, and the accessibility issues that did come up were taken care of the best possible way in that moment. I as a participant always felt respected and cared for.*

Many participants have stated that they learned a lot about mental health, mental health problems, well-being and inclusion of people with all types of disabilities. They have also reported that what they take home from this study session is “broader perspective on mental health issues, new experiences, new skills, knowledge, and friendships.”



## Blogposts

- ENIL

website:

<https://enil.eu/news/enil-youth-and-euro-youth-mental-talk-mental-health-in-strasbourg/>

- EYMH website (by EYMH activist and Study Session participant, Carmen): <https://eymh.org/2019/06/29/mind-the-gap-mentalreport/>

Furthermore the visibility of the overall preparation and during the actual study session has been managed with the various social media channels which to reach out to the public during the entire duration of the study session, from the open call and recruitment of participants till the dissemination. Social Media Appearances with hashtags: #ENILYouth #MindTheGap #EuroYouthMH and most of the posts have been sent via handles of: @ENILYouth, @agnessarolta @ENIL\_EU and many more.

- <https://twitter.com/hashtag/ENILYouth>
- <https://twitter.com/hashtag/EuroYouthMH?src=hash>
- <https://twitter.com/agnessarolta>
- <https://twitter.com/coe/status/1141306273423593472>
- [https://twitter.com/ENIL\\_EU/status/1141327311993806848](https://twitter.com/ENIL_EU/status/1141327311993806848)
- <https://twitter.com/coe/status/1141301687824470016>
- <https://twitter.com/EuroYouthMH>
- <https://twitter.com/EuroYouthMH/status/1143069746478419968>

The communication department of the Council of Europe was also present during two mornings of the Study Session and interviews with experts and Team Members have been conducted. Moreover, the team have shared photos, and content in their social media via the Facebook channel<sup>2</sup>:

<sup>2</sup> see link

[https://www.facebook.com/ENILsecretaria/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=1514249152039609&\\_\\_xts\\_\\_%5B0%5D=68.ARBHFriIy9XMP95\\_OcWa4fZ01zWxpy6lgXqWE-EJU-kWEhQ7j6Z3CnXs4ZVALfRPFesK2G38i-UajWljO76lurOSoXIESapUiuqlo\\_M8y68IUngSUDJJ1bPuSDDLHbcotZ8Ik7oc01a23Um8qOu6ieiHWQXKm0VIZW4Mp0iHS27ngshGqWdkYXOBYWVKVdikEkN0dd6cAyfpoP5uDN1BNkz9AVwF\\_raPSNGBQKbkQHClid-qD\\_hokUJE7wkoYEnlv5ovjG2io5IWVVFvuokr6hIwzh\\_Lj27DwawjEHKXjk](https://www.facebook.com/ENILsecretaria/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1514249152039609&__xts__%5B0%5D=68.ARBHFriIy9XMP95_OcWa4fZ01zWxpy6lgXqWE-EJU-kWEhQ7j6Z3CnXs4ZVALfRPFesK2G38i-UajWljO76lurOSoXIESapUiuqlo_M8y68IUngSUDJJ1bPuSDDLHbcotZ8Ik7oc01a23Um8qOu6ieiHWQXKm0VIZW4Mp0iHS27ngshGqWdkYXOBYWVKVdikEkN0dd6cAyfpoP5uDN1BNkz9AVwF_raPSNGBQKbkQHClid-qD_hokUJE7wkoYEnlv5ovjG2io5IWVVFvuokr6hIwzh_Lj27DwawjEHKXjk)



ENIL's website Short article after the Study Session - published: 28/6/2019

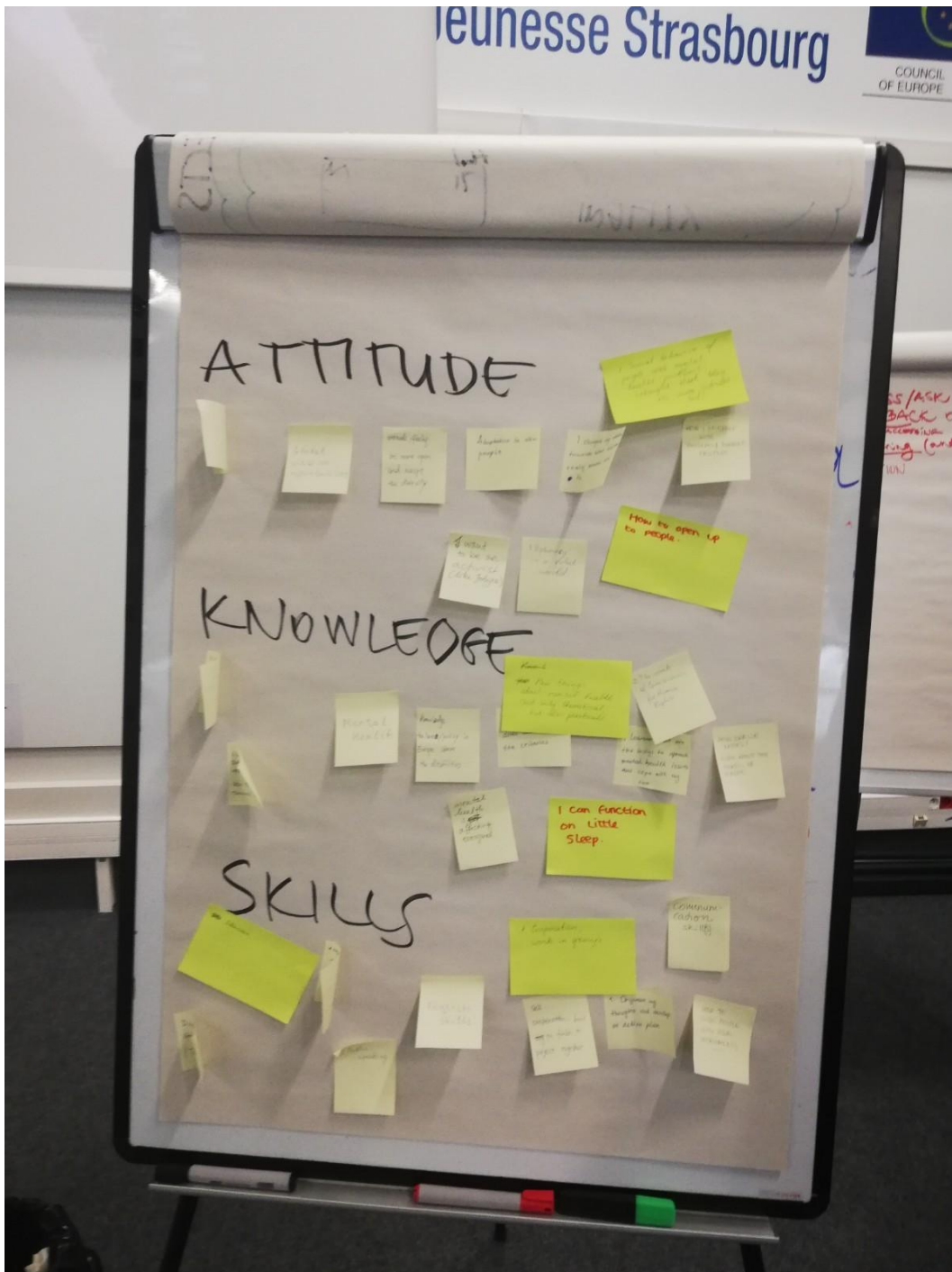
<https://enil.eu/news/enil-youth-and-euro-youth-mental-talk-mental-health-in-strasbourg/>

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## Skills

Participants have mentioned that they improved their skills to cooperate and work in groups by taking different access needs into account. Although this was a challenge for the group at the beginning, they could adapt and apply what they learned very quickly, and they could create an inclusive environment right from the start. They have also stated that they improved their communication skills, especially with people who have different types of disabilities. Lastly, the study session has been useful for them to develop the skills to plan action for change.

## Knowledge

The knowledge provided during the study session was not only theoretical but also practical. For instance, participants' evaluations have indicated that they learned new things about mental health but especially the information regarding on resilience and well-being were important for them because they can use this knowledge in their daily lives. They have also stated that they learned new ways to approach mental health, by exploring it as a disability issue with human rights perspective.

## Attitudes

Many participants have stated that the study session was life-changing in the sense that it provided a safe environment where they could learn how to open themselves up and how to relate with others. This attitude change has also enabled them to become more inclusive towards people with different types of disabilities. They were also inspired by the guest lecturer, Jolijn Santegoeds, who talked about her experiences of forced institutionalization and her fight for Independent Living, and some of the participants have expressed their wishes to become an activist.

## Suggestions

At the end of the week, participants were asked to make suggestions for the organizers of the study session (ENIL Youth Network, and Euro Youth Mental



Health), and European Youth Centre Strasbourg. These suggestions included ideas for future study sessions, accessibility, inclusion, and further action. Some of the suggestions for ENIL Youth Network and Euro Youth Mental Health are listed below:

- Keep treating both topics (disability & mental health) at once, so that we can spread the idea that mental issues and invisible illness are a form of disability.
- I'd like you to organize some project/activities not focusing only on disability-related issues but maybe addressing the topics which are important for both able-bodied and disabled youth, like looking for what we have in common rather what differentiate us from each other (I mean there is enough segregation, let's be inclusive).
- Information (maybe also a study session) on UN Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities.
- Raise awareness about mental health issues by organizing public discussions, forums to stop stigma and taboos.
- Restructuring youth organizations to be more accessible when campaigning (focusing on intersectionality).
- Try to push governments to actually recognize mental health issues and conditions as disabilities to facilitate people's access to treatment

Below are suggestions from participants to European Youth Centre Strasbourg:

- Tactile map of EYCS to navigate different floors
- Screen readers to computers
- Tables for laptops for the participants
- Orientation of space (more specifically with visual and sign language)

## Conclusions from the Organizers

The organizers reviewed the participants form after the Study Session. Almost all the participants submitted their impressions in a google form, and the remarks

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from participants were overall very enthusiastic. The study session was rated by participants, 80% of them indicated it a very positive experience, and 20% of them indicated it positive experience. 90% of participants indicated that the overall aims and objectives were achieved (good) or fully achieved. The reasoning behind high satisfaction is due to the small group, 16 participants. Although the programming team was disappointed to see last minute drop-outs, but at the end it was a benefit to all-. The group really became very supportive and inclusive towards each other. Participants appreciated the atmosphere and all initiatives to make the environment inclusive. After the Study Session, the main aspect to stress is that participants coming from different countries and with different experiences came to together to understand that they could consider Mental health as a disability issue. The need for support services for Mental Health users was widely discussed and participants learnt much about the importance of a tool such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This topic was widely recognized as very interesting given that it was at the centre of the presentation of the invited speaker Jolijn Santegoeds that participants particularly appreciated. For many participants, joining the Study Session was an opportunity to learn about topics they had never experienced before: one participant who had experience with Mental Health issues reported for example that they were feeling worried about being perceived different by people with physical impairments. Experiences causing stress like this one are common in the everyday life of many participants and participating to the group activities organized during the study session provided the needed non-formal environment to promote inclusion of all persons.