



ECO-THERAPY

Ecotherapy for people with substance abuse disorders



Substance abuse is one of the biggest challenges EU societies are facing. According to WHO, per capita alcohol consumption in the European Union is the highest in the world. Eco-Therapy is a two-year project that aims to improve the skills of professionals to better support people with addiction problems by introducing an innovative approach of ecotherapy in vocational training institutions and treatment centres. Its benefits can have a tremendous impact on the rehabilitation process of people suffering from substance abuse disorders. .

A Guide on ecotherapy

To fill this gap, the project Eco-Therapy for people with substance abuse disorders aims to develop educational materials and interactive training resources in the field of ecotherapy for training and therapy centres, trainers and counsellors. One of these resources is a Guide on ecotherapy that the partners have now completed.

The guide is based on the results of desk and field research carried out by the project partners in Germany, Spain, Denmark, Greece and Portugal. The desk research consisted of mapping good practice in the field of ecotherapy at local, national and EU level, as well as studies of current curricula with the aim of identifying gaps. The field research consisted of interviews with professionals and trainers about ecotherapy and its potential. In each partner country, interviews were conducted with drug and alcohol counsellors, VET trainers and representatives of therapy centres.

With the Guide including good practices from the partner countries, we offer new theoretical and practical resources and knowledge not normally found in VET curricular.



Despite its potential, which is supported by relevant research, ecotherapy has not yet been utilised and adopted in VET training for any kind of professional groups. On the other hand, desk research has also shown how ecotherapy, although known, is not regularly used as a main treatment in therapy centres but as an alternative therapy. A further aim of this guide is therefore to shed more light on the potential of ecotherapy as a therapeutic method and to break down some of the prejudices surrounding the method. In the guide we will highlight the strengths and opportunities of the therapy and make suggestions on how to address and work with barriers in the use of ecotherapy as a therapeutic method in VET training and therapy centres.

The Guide is available on our project website in the [download section](#).

Next steps

The project partners are currently developing an ecotherapy curriculum and Open Educational Resources aimed at introducing the topic to drug and alcohol abuse counsellors. The curriculum will consist of the following modules:

- What is ecotherapy? – Theories, general benefits, ecotherapy professionals, application of ecotherapy
- Is there space for ecotherapy? – Physical and psychological well-being, therapy process, ecotherapy in practice, challenges
- Organising indoor and outdoor ecotherapy activities – planning, methods, learning, implementation
- Special considerations in ecotherapy for people with substance use disorders – suitability, barriers, the therapist's role
- Practical ecotherapy activities – practical examples

The Curriculum shall enable and inspire drug and alcohol abuse counsellors to implement ecotherapy sessions in their everyday work.

The Curriculum will be complemented by an ecotherapy digital toolkit for VET trainers with exercises, methodology and training material, to implement such courses.

More information

Eco-Therapy is a European Erasmus+ project co-funded by the European Union. It involves five partners from Germany, Spain, Denmark, Greece and Portugal with long experience in innovative educational projects in different thematic areas.

Project website: <https://ecotherapy.bupnet.eu/>



Partners

Coordinator

BUPNET GmbH (Germany)

<https://www.bupnet.eu>

Ovar Forma (Portugal)

<https://centroqualificaovarforma.com>

KMOP Education Hub (Greece)

<https://education-hub.kmop.org/>

SOSU Østjylland (Denmark)

<https://www.sosuoj.dk>

DEFOIN (Spain)

<https://defoin.es>

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