



ECO-THERAPY

Ecotherapy for people with substance abuse disorders



Substance abuse is one of the major challenges that EU societies face. According to the 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 eco-therapy 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.

Exploring Ecotherapy: An In-depth Training Overview

We are pleased to present an insightful report on a three-day training session held in Espinho, Portugal, from 14 to 16 November. Organised by our project consortium, this training initiative aimed to provide participants from Germany, Greece, Denmark, Spain and Portugal with a comprehensive understanding of ecotherapy – a therapeutic modality centred on the beneficial interplay between the individual and nature.

An immersion in ecotherapy: An Introductory Exploration

The training began with a careful examination of the basic principles of ecotherapy. Participants were immersed in an exploration of the question "What is ecotherapy?" through a methodologically diverse approach that included discussion, didactic input and teamwork dynamics. This multifaceted approach enabled participants to gain a nuanced understanding of the therapeutic potential inherent in nature.



Creating a Framework for Ecotherapy: A strategic evaluation

An integral part of the training agenda was an evaluation of the viability of integrating ecotherapy into the contemporary social context. Participants were encouraged to move beyond theoretical discourse and engage in pragmatic discussions, considering the logistical and societal implications of integrating ecotherapy in different settings. The consensus emphasised the indispensability of creating a dedicated space for ecotherapeutic practice, thereby highlighting its central role in promoting holistic wellbeing.

Tailoring ecotherapy to specific demographic groups: Addressing Substance Use Disorders (SUDs)

Recognising the diverse needs of individuals, a special segment of the training was dedicated to exploring the intricacies of tailoring ecotherapy for people with substance use disorders (SUDs). This specialised discourse sought to shed light on the nuanced considerations required to adapt ecotherapeutic interventions to effectively address the unique challenges faced by this population, thereby enriching the inclusivity of ecotherapeutic practice.

Empowerment through knowledge and tools: The Ecotherapy MOOC and Toolkit

A key facet of the training was to introduce participants to the Consortium's resources – in particular, the Eco-Therapy Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and Toolkit. These resources have been carefully designed to equip individuals with the necessary knowledge and tools to seamlessly integrate ecotherapy into their professional or personal lives. Participants had the opportunity to engage with these resources first hand, enhancing their practical understanding and application skills.

Navigating organisational dynamics and engaging in practical ecotherapy applications

Recognising the need to understand the organisational implications that underpin the implementation of ecotherapy, the training provided participants with insights into relevant organisational issues. In addition, participants actively participated in practical ecotherapeutic activities, translating theoretical knowledge into tangible skills for application in diverse settings.

In summary, the three-day stay in Espinho proved to be an instructive expedition into the field of ecotherapy. As we anticipate the continued evolution of this therapeutic modality, we envision that the knowledge disseminated during this training will contribute significantly to the ongoing advancement and widespread adoption of ecotherapy practices.



Next steps

In the remaining month, the partners will finalise the project activities and ensure the comprehensive achievement of all objectives in anticipation of the upcoming culmination in February. Consortium members will conduct a thorough review of the achievements, challenges and valuable lessons learned during the two-year journey. The final transnational meeting of the two-year Erasmus+ Eco-Therapy project will bring together all the members of the international consortium in a virtual meeting on 18 and 19 January 2024. This videoconference event will be of paramount importance in consolidating the final elements of the project's activities.

As the project comes to a close, sustainability has emerged as a central theme of the discourse. Participants will engage in in-depth conversations about the lasting impact of the Eco-Therapy project, highlighting the critical importance of sustaining and expanding its positive impact on individuals and communities.

The partners will also organise a multiplier event at which they will pass on the results and findings to interested audiences. These will take place in January and February 2024.

If you are interested, please contact the partners in your country to find out the exact date!

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

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<https://www.bupnet.eu>

Ovar Forma (Portugal)

<https://centroqualificaovarforma.com>

KMOP Education Hub (Greece)

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