

PAUL BOMKE, CEO OF PFALZKLINIKUM, ON THE 'ROADS TO RESILIENCE' PROJECT, A DUAL-CORE INITIATIVE FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THE PALATINATE REGION

Roads to resilience

After the Germanwings tragedy we have realised that coping with issues surrounding mental health requires a multi-agency and preventive approach. Wishing to strengthen the Palatinate region in southwest Germany in this respect, experts from the area of science, health and social and labour policy and from Pfalzlinikum want to highlight roads to resilience with the region and for the region.

At Kurhaus Trifels in Bindersbach they continued working on an innovative approach to mental health during a three-day event in March.

As part of the group's desire to create fundamentally new roads, the focus has begun to shift away from one which concentrates on the treatment of those who are already ill towards one that understands the importance of prevention – and key to this is resilience; that is, the ability to cope with changes and the general turbulence of life, as well as to develop and evolve under adverse conditions.

To achieve this, we must not only build strengthening factors and reduce risks for individuals, because organisations (such as companies, schools, and so on) and, indeed, communities or cities can also promote resilience.

Vision

During group work the participants of the Bindersbach workshop discussed their ideas of what the resilient Palatinate region would look like in 2025. With this vision in mind, they discussed and collated ideas for possible activities, target groups, and concepts. The common initiative was to bring all activities under one umbrella.

In addition to these projects, the resilience initiative has a second core interest: a different public opinion on mental health and prevention is

needed so as to be able to change the health system and society in a truly sustainable manner. Therefore, the group co-operates with the FrameWorks Institute in the USA. This research institute helps non-profit organisations to find the most strategically appropriate messages for use in attracting the attention of both citizens and politicians alike. This method has been used successfully in North America and, since the end of 2014, also in Europe – in Blackpool, UK.

The idea of a Palatinate resilience project emerged from the international networking of the Pfalzlinikum in the Transnational Leadership Program (TNLP) and the co-operation with the Canadian Norlien Foundation. By the end, attitudes and structures concerning the subject of mental health will have undergone measurable and noticeable changes and preventive and health-preserving measures will have been expanded.

The initiative is called 'The Palatinate region makes you/itself stronger' (Die Pfalz macht s/Dich stark) and is still in its infancy and much work therefore remains to be done, including continuing networking activities and finding sponsors. Nevertheless, a number of activities, particularly in the field of initiatives for mental health at work, have already been started in the region, and the FrameWorks concept has demonstrated the power of 'social communication' for an innovative preventative concept. As such, social communication can be preventative communication.

Experts from Pfalzlinikum met to work on an innovative approach to mental health during a three-day event in March



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