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East Lille community mental health service network

France



The mental health network of East Lille promotes the concept of “citizen psychiatry”. Serving a population of 88 000 in the south-east region of the Lille metropolitan area, the network has been built over 40 years of mental health system reorganization and reform. The East Lille network demonstrates that a shift from inpatient care to diversified, community-based interventions for people with mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities can be achieved with an investment comparable to that of more conventional mental health services. The approach supports respect of human rights of individuals who use mental health services, and their empowerment – even while operating in a more restrictive national legal context.

Coordination of services and foundation principles

The East Lille mental health network is made up of a range of community-based mental health services that maximize independence and promote citizenship. All services work together, including sharing access to health records, to create a coherent care pathway for each individual across the network. An important emphasis is enhancing a person’s quality of life, their social network, their achievements and their strengths.

The Public Mental Health Institution Lille Métropole (*Etablissement Public de Santé Mentale Lille Métropole* (EPSM)) is responsible for the day-to-day administrative management of the network, and regional oversight and planning mechanisms are in place. Six municipalities of the East Lille metropolitan region comprise the Intermunicipal Association for Health, Mental Health and Citizenship – a forum for community stakeholders to meet, discuss and plan services and activities. It is chaired by the mayors of the local authorities and is co-led by the East Lille mental health network. Activities are organized according to four main themes including: prevention and health promotion, culture, housing allocation, maintenance and planning, and the local health context – which aims to ensure that regional priorities are implemented.

Key services and how they operate

Local medical-psychological services (Services Médico-Psychologiques de Proximité (SMPP))

Based in two dedicated ambulatory EPSM services and integrated into 12 other health related facilities, SMPPs are the first point of contact for people with the mental health network in East Lille. Professionals include: nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, psycho-motor therapists^{ad}, social workers, peer support workers, and an adapted sport coach who works with people with special needs and disabilities. A person is referred to a SMPP by their general practitioner. Referral is followed by an assessment of both mental and physical health needs within 48 hours. Each assessment is then discussed by a multidisciplinary team, which identifies care and support needs. Consultations take place at a range of venues, such as a social and support centre for youths where they can directly access the SMPP without a doctor’s referral. There is no waiting list, and the service can also undertake home consultations.

^{ad} Psychomotor therapy is defined as a method of treatment that uses body awareness and physical activities as cornerstones of its approach. It is widely used in a number of European countries, including France.

Mobile crisis and home treatment team (Soins Intensifs Intégrés dans la Cité (SIIC))

SIIC provides crisis response and intensive care at home for up to 15 people at a time. The team is multi-disciplinary and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week^{ae}. All workers in the service are sensitized to using the recovery approach, the rights of service users, and handling crises without coercion. When all of these resources are considered, there is nearly one full-time equivalent worker for each individual seeking care (0.96 FTE ratio) (541).

Jérôme Bosch Clinic (Clinique Jérôme Bosch)

Ten beds and a multidisciplinary team are available for people with mental health needs at the Jérôme Bosch Clinic situated in a General Hospital. Hospitalization, and especially forced admission, is avoided as much as possible in the East Lille network. At any given time, there are seven people in the clinic who remain for seven days on average ([Medical information service], [EPSM Lille Métropole], unpublished data, [2020]). Upon admission, both written and verbal information about an individual's rights and obligations is provided. A person can nominate a trusted person for personal support during their time at the clinic. The clinic relies on the support network of the person in order to help with negotiation, safety and avoiding conflict. To facilitate these connections there are no fixed hours for visits (542) and two rooms have a second bed for support people who want to stay overnight at the clinic. Practical and general health needs during a person's time at the hospital are discussed, along with mental health. All health professionals receive specific training to prevent instances of conflict and violence. Any use of restraints is considered to be a major adverse event in care, and is investigated in order to ensure a continuous process of improvement, which also invites input from service users and their families. Seclusion is never used in the hospital or other East Lille mental health services.

Therapeutic host families

One special feature of the Lille network is the existence of a system of "therapeutic host" families who welcome individual mental health service users as a member of their family. It is an alternative to the traditional patient/caregiver relationship and hospitalization. Host families receive training in their role as a host as well as training on mental health issues, the recovery approach, and the rights of people with mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities. They are also trained on ways to help with agitation and crisis avoidance.

Intersectoral family and systemic therapy centre - specialized external consultation centre

The intersectoral family and network therapy centre (Don Jackson) is a service that delivers psychotherapeutic interventions for families and couples.

^{ae} Psychiatrists, nurses, psychologists, special educators, psychomotor specialists, peer supporters.

Rehabilitation and supported living services and initiatives

The mental health network in East Lille has a comprehensive set of complementary initiatives to support individuals who use mental health services to lead meaningful lives and actively participate in their communities.

- *Habacité* – Habacité is an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) (543) team, staffed by nurses, social workers, peer supporters and psychologists, that provides long-term, intensive support to 80 individuals with mental health conditions to stay in their homes within a recovery framework. The service also offers a range of communal housing, with 13 apartments providing group housing for up to 26 people. Access to housing has recently been democratized by including community representatives in the process. The service is now also based on the “housing first” philosophy, meaning unconditional access to housing and support (423).
- *Frontières* - This service focuses on enhancing social inclusion and wellbeing through physical, artistic, cultural, creative and professional activities. Initiatives include the Service d’activités d’insertion et de soins intégrés à la cite, providing activities for people with mental health conditions or psychosocial disabilities. There is also a “Sagacités” system that supports people who wish to attend community activities with people outside of the mental health system. This support can either be focused on specific activities or take the form of intensive coaching. Peer support groups can also be offered if people have a common project or interest. The service also facilitates access to employment through partnerships with local actors and stakeholders. An occupational therapist is available to develop career and professional plans, and a psychologist is available for supporting, motivating and evaluating a person’s competencies at work.

The East Lille network has established active links with many other community-based services and organizations over the years, networks which involve social and cultural institutions, elected officials, user and family support groups, and various other health sector partners, such as general practitioners, pharmacists and private nurses. It uses these links to assist people who are using mental health services to re-establish their place in the community (544). Several support groups are also available to service users to promote inclusion in the community and active citizenship.

Impacts and achievements

An important achievement of this network can be seen in the steadily decreasing rate of hospital admissions, from 497 admissions in 2002 to 341 admissions in 2018, despite the considerable increase in the number of people receiving care in the network over the same period, from 1677 people in 2002 to 3518 people per year in 2018. The average length of stay at the in-patient unit also decreased from 26 days to seven days over the same period.

An independent assessment team conducted a WHO QualityRights evaluation (545) in September 2018 across all of East Lille’s mental health services. Three of the potential five themes were fully achieved: i) the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, ii) freedom from coercion, violence and abuse, and iii) the right to live independently in the community. The remaining two themes: (iv) the right to an adequate standard of living and v) the right to legal capacity and personal liberty and security, were partially achieved (541). The existing French legal framework was found to be an important barrier for the full achievement of these latter two themes.

Additional resources

Website:

https://www.epsm-lille-metropole.fr/recherche?field_tags=All&search_api_fulltext=G21

Videos:

Les SISM, c'est quoi ? Avril 2014, https://youtu.be/D7_1SQSiNb4

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Useful figures

- In East Lille hospitalization represents only 28.5% of expenditures on mental health, compared to 61% nationwide in France (541).
- Overall costs for mental health services also are lower in East Lille than the surrounding metropolitan areas, with an average per capita cost of €132 (US\$ 158)^{af} per annum.
- The average cost per person using the services has been decreasing steadily from 2013–2017, from €3131 (US\$ 3759)^{af} to €2915 (approximately US\$ 3480)^{ff} per year (541). These figures include costs associated with the whole care pathway, from the initial consultation to hospitalization (541).

Innovative features

- The East Lille mental health network demonstrates that it is possible to provide human rights and recovery-oriented services even within contexts in which mainstream practices and legislation at the national level are still heavily oriented towards institutionalization, with considerable human rights restrictions.
- The network has successfully reached and engaged local politicians, authorities and community organizations in the decision-making about the design and delivery of East Lille's network of services to promote the active engagement of people with mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities in the community, and the sustainability of the service.

^{af} Conversion as of March 2021.