

4th of October 2017

Event rationale

Culture and health

Using arts and cultural activity to promote and improve mental health wellbeing have over the past decade proved to have an impact on various mental health problems. The question is how we can best implement such activities as part of social and health care solutions.

Culture and health is an interdisciplinary field that is gaining momentum in Denmark, with inspiration from especially the UK and Sweden. Projects such as `Culture on Prescription´ and `Time for Reading´ have illustrated that culture can play an active part in increasing the wellbeing of people with especially mental health issues such as depression, stress and anxiety.

The overall financial costs of mental illness, including direct medical, as well as indirect costs through care and lost productivity, amount to billions of euros every year in the EU.¹ Exploring new ways of treating health issues are therefore essential to reduce health inequalities and spending on EU level.

Reading groups for vulnerable people, choral singing for lung disease patients, dance with Parkinson's patients, singing and theater for people with dementia, and much more, can offer holistic solutions to both young and old people with health problems and provide empowerment and self-efficacy to support them in coping their social wellbeing and health².

Health care has the potential to use culture “to improve public health care outcomes, enhance the quality of care to patients and respond to unfulfilled needs”.³ Using culture in health care also has the potential to open up for new types of audiences in the cultural field and extend access to cultural works to under-represented groups.

Using cultural activities and approaches in health care support the Third EU Health Programme 2014-2020 and the Work Plan for Culture 2015-2018 that state empowerment and cultural diversity among people are important. It is likewise, written in the Work Plan for Youth 2016-2018 that Europe should “support to young people's health and wellbeing, including mental health”⁴.

Event objectives

The aim of hosting an event on the topic `Culture and health´ is to create an opportunity for stakeholders in the cultural field and the health care sector to meet and learn by each other's experiences and work. Together, stakeholders will be encouraged to discuss new methods and approaches exploring where culture potentially can be used in health care. Presentations and a following discussion will be centered on evidence from the arts and health field, governmental approaches on how to include the use of cultural activities in health care sector and practical knowledge from stakeholders in the field.

¹[http://www.mentalhealthandwellbeing.eu/assets/docs/publications/Framework%20for%20action_19jan%20\(1\)-20160119192639.pdf](http://www.mentalhealthandwellbeing.eu/assets/docs/publications/Framework%20for%20action_19jan%20(1)-20160119192639.pdf)

²http://vbn.aau.dk/files/238425704/2016_08_Kultur_og_Sundhedsfremme_WEB.pdf

³https://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/policy/2014-2020_en

⁴[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42015Y1215\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42015Y1215(01)&from=EN)

Outcomes of the workshop:

- Raising awareness of cultural activities within health care
- Addressing European policies on health and culture

Target group

Universities, regions, municipalities and organisations working within culture and health.
European Commission, European Parliament, EU-local and regional offices.