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INTIT

*INtegrated Trauma Informed Therapy
for Child Victims of Violence*

Newsletter 4

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Awareness - raising and national dissemination activities

There is growing evidence of the importance of integrated care provision in meeting the needs of child victims of violence and yet the systems that need to work together (child welfare, mental health, justice) often encounter difficulties in establishing the necessary working relationships.

Integration is essential given that fragmented interventions can cause repeat victimization. Interconnections between assessment and therapy for child victims of violence underscore the need for trauma informed therapy and services.

In the **INTIT project**, several awareness-raising workshops have been held in all partner countries (Italy, Germany, Estonia, Cyprus and Spain) with the aim of informing and raising awareness about evidence-based integrated systems of therapy and care for child victims of violence. These workshops were aimed at ensuring a broader acquisition of knowledge and awareness amongst practitioners in the justice system and other professionals involved in interventions directed to crime victims, children exposed to trauma and violence, offenders, as well as in restorative justice processes involving victims with trauma.

The workshops can facilitate the implementation of possible intervention practices following the standards and recommendations of the Trauma Informed Care approach and of the **Directive 2012/29/EU**.

National seminars and other communication and dissemination activities were also carried out to disseminate the results of the project.

To extend cooperation beyond the duration of the project and strengthen an integrated system of care for child victims of violence, multi-agency meetings were organized in each partner country with professionals and managers of justice, social services and health care, policy makers and local authorities. For example, in Italy, multi-agency meetings were held with representatives from the professional associations of social workers, psychologists and educators while in Germany, meetings were aimed at exploring how to incorporate TIC and INTIT training material in the CV for Judges.



Country – Focus Spain

In Spain the concept of trauma-informed care is familiar to some professionals and organizations but there is no widespread knowledge. The Barnahus model is just emerging in Spain. In Catalonia the first Barnahus was launched in Tarragona in 2020. Other Autonomous Communities are also preparing the implementation of the model.

There are other multidisciplinary models, such as the pilot plan carried out in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, in the first specialized Spanish Court in violence against children and adolescents. This plan includes a Good Practices Guide for children, a reception protocol and accompaniment to the underage victims, dedicated waiting rooms and a Gesell room. They have received a national award for the quality of Justice for their improvements in the field of child protection

Legal changes:

Recently, there has been an important advance in Spain in relation to integrated care models for minors who are victims of violence, since the Law of Integral Guarantee of Sexual Freedom, which has just been approved in September 2022, establishes the basis for the implementation in Spain of the Anglo-Saxon Children's House or Scandinavian Barnahus which has been spreading to other European countries for the last decade.

This model places the child victim of sexual violence at the center of the intervention, which requires the joint and coordinated work, tailored on the child specific needs, and under the same “roof”, of all the professionals involved in the care and justice process. From the point of view of the judicial proceeding, the Barnahus/Children's House approach responds to two important objectives: it drastically reduces the sources of re-victimization for the child and, by offering greater guarantees of obtaining testimony in conditions of security and peace of mind, it increases the chances of successfully concluding the investigation of facts that are themselves complex to prove.

This law provides for the creation of specialized and accessible comprehensive assistance services for child victims of sexual violence: services tailored and adapted to their needs, providing psychological, educational and legal assistance, and constituting a point of reference for victims, which can be attended by all professionals involved in the assistance and judicial proceedings.

It is also important to mention the Law for the Integral Protection of Children and Adolescents against Violence, approved in June 2022, which makes the trial testimony of minors under fourteen years of age exceptional, establishing as a general rule the use of pre-constituted evidence.



This law has among its purposes to:

- **Promote** the early detection of violence against children and adolescents through interdisciplinary, initial and continuous training of professionals who have regular contact with children and adolescents.
- **Promote** the exercise of the right of children and adolescents to be heard, to be listened to and to have their opinions duly taken into account when they are victims of violence, ensuring they are protected and avoiding secondary victimization.
- **To guarantee** coordinated action and constant collaboration between the different public administrations and professionals from the different sectors involved in awareness-raising, prevention, early detection, protection and reparation activities and interventions.

Awareness – raising actions and national seminar in Spain

The training course on the trauma-informed approach organized in April 2022 as part of the INTIT project stimulated great interest among professionals, reaching 162 registrations in Spain. As it was designed as an interactive course, admission was limited to 33 participants. Because of COVID 19, the course was held online.

The national seminar and awareness raising meetings were also organized online, reaching professionals throughout the country.

The National Seminar, which was held on July 13, 2022, was presented by María Rosa Álvarez Prada, Dean of the Colexio Oficial de Psicoloxía de Galicia, a collaborating entity of the INTIT Project. This seminar presented the interventions carried out in Galicia and in the Autonomous Communities of Catalonia, Cantabria and Valencia to improve the care of minors who are victims of violence in order to prevent their involvement with the protection and justice systems from causing retraumatization and secondary victimization.

Finally, multi-agency meetings were organized with public services and private organizations involved in the care of child victims of violence in different areas of intervention (professional associations, police, justice, child protection and NGOs) to extend collaboration beyond the duration of the project, proposing the signing of a commitment document.

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